



kaadlaa!

Svaroopa® Yoga: Experience Your Divine Self

Volume 1 No 7

August 14, 2013

Editorials By Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

Master Yoga Foundation

The Power of Touch

Svaroopa® yoga is a high-touch yoga. We train our teachers to touch you in precise and respectful ways, to help you find something in the pose that is eluding you. In Teacher Training, we spend hundreds of hours refining the adjustments as well as teachers' gentle, yet firm touch. It is profoundly supportive without being invasive and moves you farther in a pose than you dreamed you could go. Going farther in the pose is not about going farther; it's about getting a core opening. We use touch to facilitate your inner opening.

Yet "touch" means more. When someone touches you, it could be a tap on your arm or a bear hug, or it could be that they said something deeply meaningful without the

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Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

Touching Infinity

Bliss is the feeling of touching infinity. It's a tangible and undeniable sensory experience. My Baba said, "God is in your bhav." Bhav is a multi-modal feeling, including your thoughts, emotions, quality of being and physical expression — all at the same time. It's easy to see when someone is angry or sad. Their face changes along with their tone of voice, their physical posture, their breath, the look in their eyes, their thoughts and words. You do it, too.

Consider what happens when you are experiencing God. Your face, your tone of voice, your posture, your breath, the look in your eyes, your thoughts and words — these all change. You experience being the way you always wanted to be.

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Tadaa!

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Master Yoga Foundation

intimacy of physical touch. Meaningful connection with others is an essential part of human life.

Beyond physical contact or the way the teachings touch you, Svaroopaa® yoga trains you in how to feel. "What's the difference between your two sides?" "What do you notice?" These questions are embedded in our teaching. Our Guided Awareness in Shavasana cultivates the other aspect of touch, your ability to feel. Your ability to be aware of your toes is related to your ability to open your heart, and both of these help you with feeling your way into the deeper dimensions of your own being. Svaroopaa® yoga will make you one who is easily touched. This means you will laugh easily, cry easily, give easily to others and deepen into your Self easily.

Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

Yoga's ancient masters devised methodologies to mimic those changes, including the poses and breathing practices. You chant, repeat mantras and study the wisdom of the sages so your thoughts and words will change. You meditate to dive deep within and your eyes change. It works as if you were nervous about giving a public speech, you'd reach a point where you simply stand up straight, hold your head high, smile and step into it. The change in your demeanor makes a change in the way you feel. Thus you do yoga's practices, conditioning your body and mind to consciousness. You cultivate the bhav.

But what if it could be easier? What if someone could just touch you — whether a physical touch or by saying something meaningful, something that opens you up to your own Self. This is yoga's true gift, the gift of the Guru, who gives you your own Self. Then God is already in your bhav. You become that Infinity, that Divine Reality, your own Self. And it shows. And it overflows to touch everyone else.

Becoming a Yoga Therapist

By Kathy Gardner CSBT (as told to Marlene Gast)



Kathy Gardner

I went into nursing 40 years ago because I wanted to help people heal. Over a period of 14 years as a registered nurse, I worked in emergency services and pediatrics, before my children were born. Personally, I am acquainted with western medicine through my own cancer diagnosis and treatment, and I have observed the medical approach to pain: Immediately, pills are prescribed or a shot is given. Often, medicine is about fighting issues in separate body parts and always looking for something else to be wrong.

I enrolled in ATT 262 "Treating Pain" because, again, I wanted to help others, especially since I know how much *Svaroopa*® yoga has helped me with pain and healing. Even more, however, I wanted to see what you can do to heal your own body, because we're creatures with fabulous healing powers. I also wanted to learn how yoga views pain. For six months

before the course, as required, I gave *Embodiment*® Yoga Therapy sessions regularly (at least 50) to family, friends and students. Of course, each and everyone loved it! I wondered what "Treating Pain" could possibly add to the blissful healing effects of *Embodiment*®.

Starting with the very beginning of "Treating Pain," I was impressed with the capability of the breath — the practice of Ujjayi Pranayama — to bring about healing. In partner pairings, I saw profound changes take place in my partner's body. Then I had the same experience in my own body. More than merely physical changes and the reduction or elimination of pain, there's an exquisite sense of affirmation and acceptance. For me this experience cultivated a foundational sense of true healing with the Ujjayi breath as the primary factor. Of course, it makes sense: Without breath, life ends. It's so simple. We take it so much for granted.

Besides learning to guide clients in Ujjayi Pranayama, we learned to use asana (poses) specifically for healing. Through taking the client into a pose, the *Svaroopa*® Yoga Therapist learns how touch communicates the healing bhav (quality of mind and feeling). All of the poses are familiar to anyone who has completed YTT Level 2. Because of deeper adjustments, propping and individual attention, these poses enable the client to release much more than in a group class. He or she goes deeper inward, and releases more deeply into Being, the Source of all healing.

One of my *Embodiment*® clients, with hip pain, was eager to serve as my "guinea pig" for my "Treating Pain" DTS. She benefited from her first several sessions, but then went on a trip for a week and returned with a painful hip. She hadn't done her assigned homework — Ujjayi Pranayama twice daily. But after one "pain

treatment" that included Ujjayi, her hip pain was gone again. It's so magically beautiful to see the response that the client receives! Now she is off on a trip to Italy — with my reminder that Ujjayi Pranayama is a miraculous tool that costs her nothing more than a little time.

Since beginning *Svaroopa*® yoga, I recognized that this ancient tradition is very different from medicine. The sutra basis is so much longer than the history of medicine. *Svaroopa*® yoga is clearly an outgrowth of yoga's sutra-based practices. I often have in mind Patanjali's sutra 1.3, "Tadaa drashtuh svaroope 'vasthanam": When you quiet the mind, you abide in the bliss of your own Being. In "Treating Pain," when Vidyadevi and Karobi spoke about the "pain sutras," it was a light-bulb moment for me. These sutras describe how prana (life force) moves through our body to bring us healing and well-being. Hearing that, I felt everything connect and make sense. That's how *Svaroopa*® yoga pain therapy can provide the magical healing that we experience! It was amazing, and I continue to seek to know more.

Now I approach life, and myself, with more love, peace, and compassion. Coming from a medical nursing background, I'm a giver and get good feelings from that. But now I'm first caring for myself. My focus has shifted to my own asana practice, to chanting and my own meditation, and to that miraculous tool of twice daily Ujjayi Pranayama. I am delving deep into my own Being. That enables me to see light in others and shine my light to them.

Are You Breathing?

By Swami Nirmalananda

How often do you catch yourself not breathing? Your breath stops because of intense mental focus, usually combined with anxiety. When you start your breath up again, your anxiety level drops significantly. Breathing is important!

The yogic science of breath is profound. The practices called pranayama are actually about creating an ease-full and natural suspension of breath.

Especially when you are doing yoga poses, your breath should be easy, steady and smooth. Exercise physiologists explain that your breath should not become rapid even when you are doing aerobic exercise. Their point is that you can do strenuous physical activity without breaking a sweat and without having to pant. Of course, Ujjayi Pranayama will give you all of this as well as more.

The yogic science of breath is profound, offering insights that modern medical science hasn't figured out yet. The practices called pranayama are actually about creating an ease-full and natural suspension of breath. You regulate your breathing in order to fill up, physically and energetically, with prana, the "jet fuel" that keeps you healthy and powers you through life. Once your reserve tank is full, you can glide into a profound meditation, suspended in the pause between your breaths for up to 3 hours! This extended period has been well documented by medical researchers. It's quite blissful.

So when you notice that you are not breathing, is it happening because of a profound yogic immersion or a profound anxiety state? It's really easy to figure out. If you are meditating, you're diving deeper into your own Divine Essence. If you are not meditating, you need to do more yoga, and meditation.

Studying Bondage and Freedom

By Bhavani (Belle) Mann



Bhavani (Belle) Mann

I know that Swamiji has only one message that she keeps teaching over and over again in different forms: YOU ARE SHIVA. So why have I heard this simple message so many times, yet I'm still not Self-realized?

I'm not alone in needing to hear the same information in different ways over and over again. One of the things I learned in my many years of yoga teacher training is: when you give information or instructions in class, say the same thing at least three times, in different words. I'm no different than my students in needing this repetition.

Perhaps that explains why I'm enrolled in Bondage & Freedom, the year-long course that Swamiji is teaching right now. Bondage & Freedom has deepened both my philosophical and my practical understanding — meaning that I'm more able to take the theory and put it into practice.

Here is an example: the most recent course article, titled "Renunciation," is about desire. Swamiji teaches that "When you understand that self is Self, the only thing that gets in your way is desire.... Desire is embedded in small-s self."

We all know about food desires. Last week I was doing an Ayurvedic cleanse, eating a mono-diet of kitchari (dal, rice, and vegetables). This limited menu helped me to observe more carefully my decisions of when and how much to eat. It became much easier to clearly see when I was eating because I was truly hungry, and when I ate simply for the taste or the activity of chewing, when I was eating from desire, and when I was eating for nutritional needs. This careful observation continues into this week, and is generalizing to a greater range of my activities.

Bondage & Freedom has helped me to understand desire at a more subtle level, and to begin to look at my desires in a different way: I don't have to satisfy them, even if they seem reasonable and don't do any harm to myself or others. I can first stop and ask about the motivation for my action: does it come from desire or intelligent choice?

I know that I learn best when I get information from more than one modality, so I've chosen to receive both the Bondage & Freedom written article and the audio talk by Swamiji. Another thing that helps is that she often uses different wording and examples in each. I like being able to refer back to the article or listen again to the audio recording, and have time to let the messages sink in and assimilate them. And the way that Swamiji ties yoga's teachings into real-life really helps.

I know that I'll need to hear these same messages again, and hearing them from Swamiji is the most powerful path. To that end I'm already signed up for the Q&A phone calls, Shishya calls, the Svaroopaa® Sutras phone course, and the Svaroopaa® Sciences Conference in October. I'll take all the help I can get.

Year-Long Programmes

"Taking a year long course has been the most insightful of my Svaroopaa experiences to date."

Bondage & Freedom

You may still benefit from our 2013 course with Swami Nirmalananda by utilizing our multi-media format. Two enrollment options remain available until October 11:

Understanding your own dilemma can help you surmount it. Swami Nirmalananda dedicates the full year to your enlightenment, clarifying and grounding the teachings in your experience of your own life while showing you the pathway that is already under your feet. Let her guide you through the sages' descriptions of the Ultimate State, your own human condition, karma, ego, detachment & renunciation as well as how to make it all easy.

[Option #1](#) — monthly articles

[Option #2](#) — monthly articles & online audios

I Am "Siva"

You might ask, "Who or what is "Siva?" Swami Nirmalananda uses ancient mythology, psychology, classical teaching stories and yogic practices to answer that question, revealing your inherent Divinity, in Sanskrit named svaroopaa or "Siva (pronounced Shiva). Choose from four enrollment options, beginning October 23, 2013:

[Free intro phone call](#) — Wednesday October 16 from 7:00 - 8:30 pm

[Option #1](#) — monthly articles

[Option #2](#) — monthly articles & online audios

[Option #3](#) — monthly articles, audios and phone calls with Swamiji

[Option #4](#) — articles, audios, phone calls plus weekend retreat

Japathon!

By Gayatri (Barbara) Hess & Deborah Woodward

Celebrate the Ashram's upcoming third birthday with Svaroopis around the world in our Japathon! September 28 - 29. This community event will support and fuel your japa (mantra repetition) practice, Swami Nirmalananda's emphasis in her Ashram teachings for 2013 — the Year of Japa.

To weave japa into your day is to live a divine life. Swamiji says, "Your mind has a tendency to repeat things over and over again. It loves repetition. You can harness your mind's ability to do this by pouring it into japa. Japa is the heart of meditation. It unties the knots and sets you free."

When you weave japa into everything you do, your being, your food, your clothes, the rooms where you live and work become saturated with the song of Self, "Om Namah Shivaya," which means "I bow to myself as Consciousness-Itself." Allow japa to fulfill its promise, which is to give you everything. See how you feel and how your days flow, while at the same time you join in an event that supports our growth as yogis and as a yoga kula, yoga family. This is our birthday present, from the Ashram, to the Ashram and to each other.

How You Participate

Birthday Celebration

Celebrate the Ashram's birthday — join the 20-minute japa event on September 28. Hosted by the Ashram, the Japathon! will be led via conference call by four designated Meditation Group Leaders, who will chant for 5 minutes each.

We will begin the Japathon! at 10 am on September 28 with a brief pre-recorded talk by Swamiji. Her talk will be followed by 20 minutes of group japa on a conference call, so Svaroopis everywhere can join in. Meditation Group Leaders, trained by Swamiji, are leading the phone call. For listening quality, you will be able to hear the leader and repeat mantra with them. Your phone line will be muted to other yogis on the

How to Mala

When you use a rudraksha mala for repeating mantra, you move one bead with each repetition. This engages another of your senses, keeping you more fully engaged. Rudraksha beads are seeds from the rudraksha tree, sacred to "Siva". You can wear your mala when you're not doing japa, but take it off for sleep, sex and bathing. Do not use your index (pointer) finger! Lay the beads across your middle or ring finger and use your thumb to move them. This gives you the most benefit in the shortest time. 108 repetitions counts for 100, assuming you spaced out somewhere along the way. When you get to the dangling bead (the Guru bead or Meru bead), don't cross over it. Use it to turn around and go the other way. Your mala becomes more powerful the more often you use it. Don't let others touch it or use it. If it breaks, you've completed some karmas. Celebrate! And get a new mala.



call due to disparate phone transmission times. Nonetheless, as yogis we understand the power of simultaneous, out-loud japa. It will be amazing! It is a blessing and a gift to ourselves, our Ashram community, our Svaroopaa® community and the world.

[Click here](#) to register, which will sign you up to hear Swami's japa talk and participate in the 20-minute Japathon! Yogis can participate individually or can gather a group to repeat mantra together while on the conference call.

Weekend Birthday Celebration

Interested in holding a local event? Gather within your community at any time during the Ashram's birthday weekend, September 28 - 29, and listen to Swami's talk, available on our japa webpage and then repeat mantra together.

Leading up to the Birthday Japathon! Celebration—Month of September

In addition to Swami's talk, our japa [webpage](#) will feature a downloadable poster and links to japa articles, audios and other information. Yogis can share japa experiences on the Ashram Facebook page. Groups holding local events — please post photos and results on our Facebook page as well.

Let us deepen our practice of and commitment to japa as we join Swamiji in this Year of Japa. Join the Japathon! and create the world's largest japa event. Swamiji says, "Japa steepens you in the fullness of Consciousness...when do you want that to stop?" Om Namah Shivaya.



Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

Japathon!

Happy Birthday to the Ashram

September 28 - 29

Saturday 10 am
conference phone call led by Meditation Group Leaders



Including an audio recorded by Swami Nirmalananda, plus 20 minutes of group mantra repetition (japa)

[Click here](#) to register for individual or group participation

Share your experience on the Ashram's [FaceBook page](#)

DO MORE JAPA

MYF Board Report

By Marlene Gast CSYT, Vice-President of Communications



Photo by Amanda Jordan

bottom: Swami Nirmalananda; and clockwise-Prakash (David) Falbaum; Peter Gallagher; Marlene Gast; (in green) Saguna (Kelly) Goss; (in white) Louise Davis; Shuchi (Sue) Cilly.

We gathered together, for our annual in-person meeting, July 19-21 in PA. Our annual task is to evaluate where we stand as an organization, as well as how to best to serve *Svaroopa*® yoga teachers now and in the future. We clarified this as our purpose:

Master Yoga serves those who serve others by teaching *Svaroopa*® yoga and providing *Svaroopa*® yoga therapy.

As an organization, we serve teachers and therapists by offering lifelong learning, empowering them as they serve their communities.

So where does Master Yoga stand as a reawakened organization? Our reawakening process in the past 10 months has been successful. You could say that we have revived our sea legs.

The initiatives that Swami Nirmalananda designed and executed, with critical support from MYF Board, staff and sevites, has rescued the organization from being swamped by the storm of financial crisis last October. Since then, Swamiji has worked 80 hours per week for free. Her contribution of time and organizational expertise has resulted in improvements long overdue: streamlined accounting and clarified financial reporting; a new scholarship program for *Svaroopa*® yoga teachers; a new Enrollment System that radically streamlines course administration; more abundant and informative communications; a more robust course calendar; a free training in marketing for SATYA members and more. Together with your generous donations, clarified financial management has resulted in a balanced budget that is ample to support current operations and scheduled programs, including our upcoming 2014 calendar.

Now, sailing on newly calmed seas, we are looking ahead — where do we need to be in five years, in order to continue on course? We are dedicated to serving you better. With your input, we are exploring deeper collaboration with the Ashram as a pathway to help us deliver on that dedication. It is clear that two administrations, with overlap and duplication of operations, create inefficiencies that weigh us down as we seek to move forward.

Where does Master Yoga stand as a reawakened organization?

Our reawakening process in the past 10 months has been successful. You could say that we have revived our sea legs.

In June we began a collaboration between Ashram operations and Master Yoga operations, by appointing Sharada Macdonald to serve as Business Administration Manager for both organizations. In seven weeks since being approved by the Board, Sharada has accomplished a great deal. Sharada and Seva Coordinator Joanna McNeal together have built more seva teams, so five times as many sevites now contribute to our operations and projects. Our Data Input team has supported the installation of the Enrollment System, with our Technology Team available to assist yogis in their use of the new system. Sharada has also clarified the infrastructure for communications and for our October Conference, so that you can count on experiencing the excellence you expect from Master Yoga programs.

Our accomplishments in the first half of this year are now giving rise to future plans, include training more Teacher Trainers as well as creating a more expanded *Svaroopa*® yoga community. As Swami Nirmalananda says, "People are looking for us; we want to make it easy for them to find us as well as all the teachers we've trained." We are working together to find ways to ensure that teachers and therapists are fully supported in serving their communities, as well as being uplifted professionally and personally through training and immersion programs. It is our honor to serve you.

know your Self

Ayurveda—learn your constitution and how to come back into balance through simple daily and seasonal lifestyle habits.

Vichara—yogic self inquiry. Unravel your deepest mental and emotional tensions and return to clarity and understanding.

AYURVEDA or VICHARA Phone Consultations
With Bindu (Maureen Shortt) Vichara Therapist and Ayurvedic Practitioner

215.262.1532 | maureen@wildfire-ent.com | maureenshortt.com

Svaroopaa-palooza!

By Sarah Hunter, based on an interview with Swami Nirmalananda

Don't miss our October Conference: Alignment with Grace, in Philadelphia October 4–6. You can look forward to the whole Svaroopaa® Sciences enclada! Options include concentrations on Svaroopaa® yoga breathing and asana as well as the Ashram track focused on meditative practices.

Whether you are new to Svaroopaa® yoga or experienced in the practice, you may be called to register for our Yoga Weekend track so you can immerse in the uniquely reliable and always delicious poses. Or perhaps you are coming to enjoy community and strengthen our yoga family. Maybe you are a Svaroopaa® yoga teacher eager to spend three days refreshing and expanding your teaching skills. Perhaps you seek to immerse in Self via our Ashram track, or to serve by learning about building community through our Community Track.

Any Conference choice is a doorway through which you can find the Self — Consciousness-Itself being you. With any choice, count on experiencing a process that is both yogic and scientific. It will give you access to the inner experience of svaroopaa — your own Divine Essence.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to move through the physical practices and into subtle levels of inner opening. Over three days, and in the company of so many brother and sister Svaroopis, you have a fresh opportunity to realize the value of inner experience. Swami Nirmalananda's two keynote addresses will help you find inner answers and dive ever deeper within.

As you reach new levels within, you have questions and you want more. Ancient sages predicted this, designing the yoga system so that the asanas (poses) are an entryway to the deeper levels of Self-fulfillment. The sages knew that after you practice poses for 10–20 years, meditation is your natural next step. In Svaroopaa® yoga this happens faster through spinal openings. It's guaranteed. That's the science of Svaroopaa® yoga, which is the yoga of Grace.

Our theme of alignment with Grace will make clear to you how that inner shift happens. It's not mechanical, but fueled by the mystical science of Grace. The invisibility of Grace becomes visible.

There is no better place than the Conference to travel the whole spectrum of the Svaroopaa® Sciences. With all the foremost teachers gathered under one roof, you can look forward to an amazing amount of access and interaction with them, for guidance and upliftment on this path.

Let Swami Nirmalananda put you on the superhighway of Grace. You can anticipate a break-through experience and shift to a new level, smoothly and easily. Experience this profound difference while you're there and learn how to invoke it in your home practice.

Remember, our Conferences are held only every other year. Click [here](#) to visit our Conference website, and register before August 31st for a \$51 discount. Align yourself with Grace!

A yoga weekend, three days of core opening through Svaroopaa® yoga's amazing techniques and teachings. Align your body, heart and mind with Grace. Deepen your yoga experience, deepen your teaching, deepen your yoga relationships and deepen your Self-Knowingness. Discover what Grace really is and how it empowers your yoga practice and your life.

- ▼ Yoga Weekend Track
- ▼ Ashram Track
- ▼ Community Track
- ▼ Teacher Track
- ▼ Foundations Track
- ▼ Seva Team
- ▼ Pre-conference & Post-conference Programs

Registration: \$175 - 720 based on track.
Your vegetarian meals are included.

Enroll by August 31 and receive \$51 discount!

To register or learn more, visit www.svaroopaaconference.org

*Do the practices,
catch the Grace!*

Alignment
with *Grace*

**Svaroopaa®
Sciences
Conference
2013**

**October 4 – 6
Philadelphia PA**

Cosponsored by Master Yoga Foundation & Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

**\$51
OFF
Through
AUGUST 31**

Shaktipat Fireworks

By Priya Kenney

The power of Shaktipat is immense. It sets in motion powerful processes that lead us to our own Self. It's impossible to talk about Shaktipat without recognizing the One who gives this life-changing gift, the Guru. It is her presence that makes it possible for Shaktipat to occur. Two students describe their unique experiences at the June Shaktipat Retreat in Andover MA.

“My Shaktipat experience was profound. After years of daily meditation, the Shaktipat Retreat dramatically shifted the depth and focus of my experience.”

Susan Wardle-Mitchell has felt a strong connection to Swamiji since meeting her at an Ashram lunch. She was drawn to go deeper, having had profound experiences in her presence. Upon arriving at the Shaktipat Retreat, she was immediately aware of a welcoming, gentle flow of energy, and excited to be part of

“Amazing meditations, tangible Shakti, valuable insights, were all part of the weekend for me. The information about Shaktipat and Kundalini that Swamiji presented was uplifting, it made me very inspired about my own practices and meditation. I highly recommend this weekend and hope to do it again...”

the experience. During Shaktipat, she quickly dropped into meditation and felt very present. Her body vibrated and she was aware of being a part of everything going on. The nights during the retreat were even more amazing. She woke at 3 am, aware of shakti moving in her body. Suddenly, a big orange bubble came up through her body and burst open in her chest. Complete and utter bliss filled her whole being. She left the retreat feeling full and contented.

Susan appreciates being in a group coming together for the same purpose. She was the lone Svaroopaa® yogi in her town until she became a teacher herself. Learning poses from her sister, Michelle Gross, on visits, she was spurred on and took Foundations. “I knew then I was going to do Teacher Training. I wanted to

know more, to learn more.” Sharing the incredible experience of the Shaktipat Retreat with her sister made it extra special.

Since the retreat, Susan feels more grounded, more solid and aware of a strong connection with herself. The arati (candle flame ceremony) she did for the group during the Retreat is now a sweet daily practice before teaching.

Gerald Daoust had been practicing Svaroopaa® yoga for eight months when his teacher told him about the Shaktipat Retreat. Recently retired, Gerald was “looking for meaning and wanted to go above and beyond” his current life situation. He had high expectations about the Shaktipat Retreat and

knew what he wanted: “Instant enlightenment.” Nothing happened the way he expected.

The first day, he got “cheesed off” in a big way. At the mid-morning break, he went to Swamiji and let her have it. “I told her I was very angry and that I hated her. She was the one that was waking up all sorts of things in me.” Gerald was very taken with Swamiji’s receptivity. She listened; she was understanding.

“I think the metaphor of one lamp lighting another is an incredible understatement. So much “stuff” that I didn’t even know was there is gone. Even as I sit here to write this days later all the cells in my body are suffused with joy.”

The next day, he was able to let go and allow the blossoming Kundalini to sway him from side to side. He got immersed in the energy. To his surprise, he was easily able to meditate for two hours, with no problems from his mind. He was in complete bliss. Afterward he told Swamiji he wasn’t angry and didn’t hate her anymore. She said, “It will come back!” Gerald is not dissuaded. Shaktipat was life changing for him.

He feels calmer than he ever has in his life, so he isn’t as explosive or reactive. His mind is still playing tricks on him, but he comes back to the mantra as Swamiji instructed. What does he want now? To spend more time with Swamiji, lots of it.

Shaktipat Retreats

with Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

The profound inward path of Self-Discovery (svaroopavidya) begins with you receiving shaktipat initiation, awakening your Kundalini energy. This makes you able to attain the highest purpose of human life — the knowing of your own Divine Self. Kundalini is the force underlying the power and ease of all the Svaroopaa® sciences designed and taught by Swami Nirmalananda.



Experience the power of your inner force by receiving Shaktipat from Swamiji in 2013:

Aug. 30 – Sept. 1 in West Chester PA

Post Conference Workshop in West Chester PA
October 6 – 8

Questions? Need extra support?
Contact us at enroll@svaroopavidya.org or 610.644.7555.

Celebrating the Great Mystery

By Kanchan (Connie) Mohn

Guru Purnima, the full moon of the Guru, is celebrated as the day the world got its first Guru (Shiva). This was the day that people first came to know that through the Guru, through Grace, they can be Self-Realized. On this night every year, the moon is at its fullest and Grace is at its fullest. What a perfect night to make a pilgrimage to Satsang, to the feet of the Guru!

All over the world yogis travel far and wide to be in the presence of their Guru on this auspicious night. Is it any wonder that, in anticipation of Swamiji's arrival, our meditation hall at Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center was filled to the brim? Many of the yogis present had traveled great distances and many hours. They arrived bearing flowers, gifts and hearts full of Divine Love; wanting nothing more than to honor their Guru, Swamiji, while she honored her Guru, Baba Muktananda. Self honoring Self.

Swamiji spoke at length on the "Great Mystery of the Guru". She asked, "What does a Guru teach?" And with a smile she gave us the answer. "Nothing, really". The Guru "teaches you what you already are. You are that Divine Reality." There is nowhere that you (Shiva) are not. The Guru simply says "Reach in for it".

She offered illuminating commentary on Shiva Sutra 2.6, "Gururupaaya.h" — the Guru is both the path and the goal. "The Guru has done what you are doing," walked the path you are walking. The Guru is "the embodied reality who shows your future to you... the goal." The Guru is the means and the embodiment.

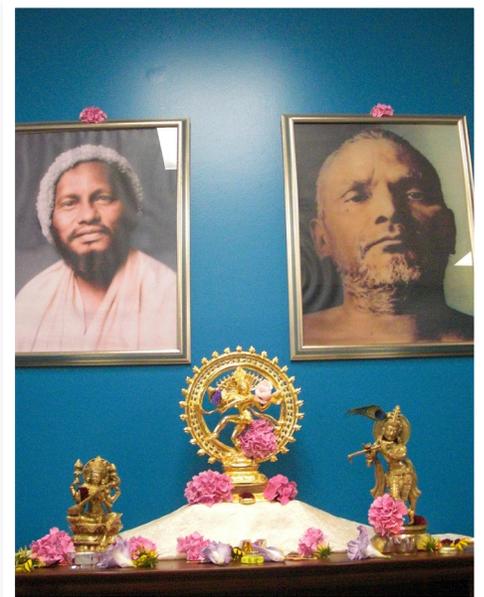
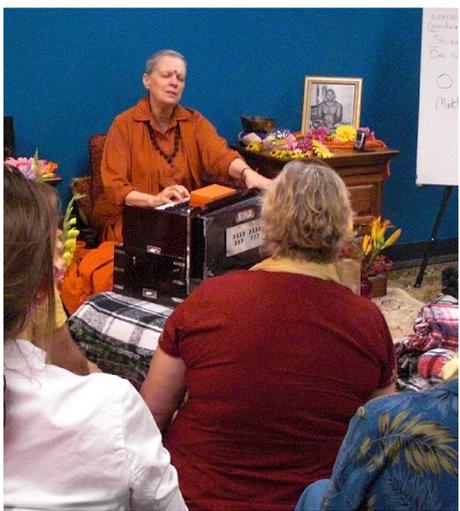
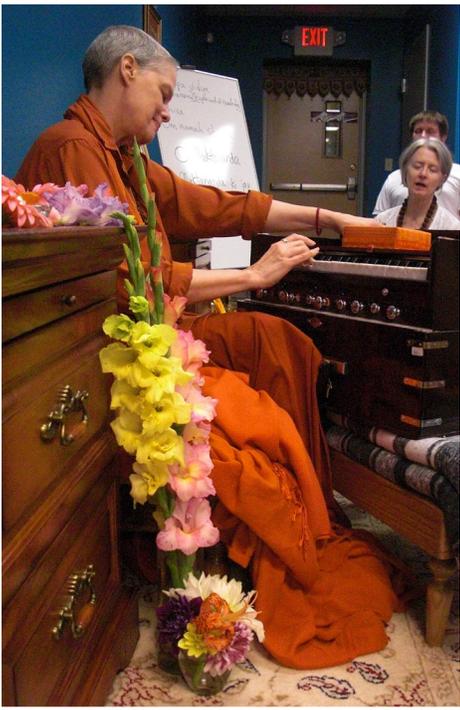
The Guru removes obstacles through the mystery of Grace and the transmission of Shaktipat. We need only reach out to her from our hearts, and our questions are answered, our obstacles to freedom dissolved. Yet, Swamiji was clear, as always, that "I do nothing. I am just Being." Such a glorious mystery!

She closed her talk with words of gratitude and celebration for her Baba. "My Guru freed me, so that I may free you." With this promise lingering in the air, Swamiji led the crowd in a chant for her Divine Baba (O Muktananda.

Muktananda ki Jay) and a deep, luxurious meditation, followed by an invitation to greet her personally.

Then slowly, ever so gently, sweetly, one by one, the yogis in the room approached their Sadguru, bowed and offered their gift and their gratitude. In turn, Swamiji honored and celebrated everyone who came forward by offering a flower and a soft "Om namah Shivaya." Self honoring Self. Profound silence filled the room, palpable and timeless. Grace-filled hearts were opened wide.

Sadgurunath Maharaj ki Jay!



Photos by Sarvataa Christie

Spending Time with Swamiji

By Sarvataa Christie



Sarvataa Christie

I love spending time with Swamiji. She makes Herself so accessible, and I've even been invited to stay with Her and the others in their Ashram home. She is my Guru; my main focus is developing my side of the Guru-Disciple relationship, so I may know the Self. Whether it is a satsang (free meditation program) or an overnight visit, my time with Swamiji is always so very sweet. In addition to doing the practices with Her, sharing meals and laughter, She meets with me asking, "How may I best serve you?" She is already doing everything for me, what more can I ask?

Swamiji told me I need to treat myself during this time as an infant. Not to expect too much of myself. Holding back is a challenge because I have been feeling great! Yet I know it is for the best. I do need lots of rest, as Swamiji told me, just like a baby, "Sleep, eat, and poop." I can see that I am not dealing with the same karmas I dealt with from birth, like shyness and other fears. I am different, yet more myself, more my Self.

Swamiji helps me even with my diet and my relationships at home; She is always right! It is so wonderful to have someone looking out for me in this way and truly caring about me and my Self-Realization. She sees me, truly sees me, and still tells me it's a pleasure to have me around!!! She is re-patterning my life, my impressions, and my mental-emotional patterns, showing me my Self, all in the midst of daily life. She is easy and pleasant to share time with (She has a great sense of humor!) and I spend every moment possible with Her.

Another aspect of this practice is Guru-service. My life has become seva. I enjoy serving my Guru in any and every capacity possible and am surprised at what I am able to accomplish! She shows me how I want to be, how One can be, in the ever-knowing of the Self. In one satsang, She allowed me to do arati (candle circles) to Her, give a full pranam (bow), splayed out fully face down on the floor and O! to touch Her feet again and again. I am lost there. I find my Self there.

In talking with Her about my life, I ask questions. Before the India trip, I went through a time of great desperation. She told me that I had essentially died. If I weren't a yogi, I would have left my body during that time. At the soul-level, we have clarity before we are reborn, so a yogi often takes on enough karma for several lifetimes. So, essentially I died, yet I am still here and I'm ahead of the game with all my skills and my abilities... like reading, driving, and writing, plus I have a body that already talks and walks! But, I am different. I am me, yet different.

Tacos de Papa (Potato Tacos)

योगा पुस्तक

By Jennifer Saville, Ashram Chef

2 - 3 large red skinned potatoes, cut in small cubes
 4 - 5 teaspoons olive oil
 2 poblano chile peppers, seeded, roasted & chopped
 1 medium onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, chopped
 2 celery stalks, chopped
 1 red bell pepper, seeded & chopped
 ½ cup white corn kernels, fresh or frozen
 Salt & pepper
 1 lime, juiced
 ½ cup sour cream (real or vegan)
 1 chipotle pepper (from a can of chipotles in adobo), diced
 1 teaspoon adobo sauce (from the can of chipotles in adobo)
 10 corn tortillas
 Fresh cilantro, chopped
 Fresh avocado, diced

Instructions:

In a skillet, heat apx 3 tablespoons olive oil. Fry the potatoes Until they are crispy on the outside & cooked on the inside (about 8 minutes). Remove to a paper-towel lined plate.

Add the remaining oil to the skillet & cook the onions, garlic, celery, bell peppers and corn. Add salt & pepper to taste. Add lime juice and cook on low for approximately 5 minutes, stirring often.

Meanwhile, mix the sour cream, diced chipotle & adobo sauce in a small bowl. Add more chipotle if you'd like more 'kick.'

Heat a new skillet or griddle and warm the tortillas on each side. (This makes them flexible, so they won't tear.)

To serve: place so of the potato on a tortilla, the veggie mixture, poblanos, avocado & cilantro. Top with chipotle cream. (NOTE: you can add some queso fresco, if you'd like.)

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TRAINER PROFILE

Devi (Elizabeth) McKenty CSYT

Foundations Teacher Trainer

By Marlene Gast



Devi (Elizabeth) McKenty

Devi McKenty's first Crook'd Leg pose was extraordinary. When Devi returned her foot to the floor, her ankle felt sprained. Then in Lunge her back foot hurt as though with a sprained ankle. Devi was baffled. She had just begun a weekend workshop with Swami Nirmalananda (then Rama) at Kripalu in spring 2001. Longtime *Svaroopa*® yoga teacher Kim Abplanalp, a workshop assistant, noticed Devi's discomfort, checked in with her, and then spoke to Swami Nirmalananda, who said, "That's coming from her back."

Devi recalls knowing that was true: "In my work as a nurse I had hurt my back. Afterward I began having trouble with my ankles and feet. It didn't make sense medically, but I knew this was true." Swami Nirmalananda told Kim to give Devi a Thigh Twist. Later, Kim followed up with another Thigh Twist and a Dual-Knee Press. Though not swollen, Devi's ankle was hot and it throbbed. She couldn't walk on it; at night she couldn't

sleep. Even the bed sheet hurt her ankle. Devi was angry at herself for, as she says, "listening to these people when I should have been taking Advil."

In the morning, she hobbled to yoga class. Later at breakfast, says Devi, "Something clunked in my entire body. I told my husband, who was taking the workshop too, 'Something just happened. I think my ankle is OK.' It was mind-blowing. I had hobbled around from one session to the next for 24 hours, and then the pain was gone. I wanted to sing 'I'm a Believer,' the Monkees' hit song. *Svaroopa*® yoga was far beyond any technology I'd ever encountered, even though I'd practiced other yoga styles for 21 years. I told Swami Nirmalananda, 'I'm gonna teach this...' and she said, 'I hope you do.'" Devi says that while this physical experience was phenomenal, in Shavasana she was dropping in, knowing only that it was the best place she'd ever been and that it was some sort of spiritual experience.

Months later, Devi experienced a miracle, and knew that it was Grace. Even at the time, she attributed it to her weekend with Swami Nirmalananda. Devi had long been frightened about her parents dying. In November Devi's father was hospitalized for a heart attack and she drove from CT to Montreal to be with him. The ICU nurses let her sit by his bedside. He was sitting up with eyes closed, leaning back into pillows. Devi remembers, "Somehow I saw his form dissolve and saw something beyond his form. In that moment I felt and saw my own form dissolve." Though she'd been raised with traditional religious teachings about the soul never dying, it had no real meaning to her. Now she recognized this experience as actual contact with what she would have called soul at the time, but now names as the Self. "It's something I'd heard about all my life, only now

it was real. I knew that it arose from the same place that I'd dropped into during Shavasana in my spring *Svaroopa*® yoga weekend workshop. It was an experience of the Truth, not just a belief," says Devi.

Authorized as a Foundations Teacher in April 2012, Devi especially values that every student has some kind of epiphany in Foundations. "It may be about anything such as God, their mother, their life, or their feelings about yoga," she says, "Every Foundations has a different flavor. To me it's like a work of art, and all the epiphanies are a celebration. Foundations changes lives. That's why I do it," explains Devi.

Now Devi is looking forward to serving as a Teacher Trainer in our Faculty. "When students show up for YTT, they are impelled by a special level of commitment. For me the prospect of spending 10 days with these students who are committed to delving into themselves is wonderful. When I took Foundations, I already knew that I wanted to be a Teacher Trainer. I was inspired by the Trainers who were highly proficient in the poses, yes, but even more: I saw how they acted in class and how they supported students. That came from a place far deeper than proficiency in poses or knowledge of philosophy. From that place in them, I have been nurtured and cared for — through tears, incredible exciting insights and epiphanies, through my own journey. Now I get to do that for others.

"My 12 years of experiences in the poses will be refined as I go through the process of becoming a YTT Trainer. Knowledge is necessary for a Teacher Trainer, of course. But what is also essential is the capacity to stand in the Self when teaching and being with students. That's what I have admired in my teachers: Swami Nirmalananda, Vidyadevi, Karobi and Kris. It's not about being patient, but rather standing in the Self — along with providing reliable accurate information. I see *Svaroopa*® yoga as a living yoga that thrives in each of us. *Svaroopa*® yoga comprises a wonderful technology and methodology, but at its heart is Grace. It's very full; it moves through teachers and students. Being a *Svaroopa*® yoga teacher or a Teacher Trainer is not a job. It's life."

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Connect!

By Marlene Gast CSYT, MYF Board Member

Family resemblance in photos amazes me. A great-great aunt's 1910 features show up in my niece's graduation picture, cheekbones and eyes bespeaking connection over generations. My brother and sister-in-law adopted my nephew at birth; but now in photos of this young man, I see reflections of my brother's smile and straightforward gaze. For us Svaroopis, however, "family" connection is not so evident in the way we look. It reverberates in our voices and what we talk about.

We all speak the same language, about our Svaroopa® Sciences practices and what we find on the path to the experiential knowing of Self. We hear our connection in voices that have more resonance as well as shared conversation topics. Our practices open our breath, our spines and our rib cages, all of which makes a difference in the sound of our voices. And peacefulness is carried in our tones. Even blogs, ezines and emails from Master Yoga, carry the blissful sounds of "our family," talking about subjects dear to our hearts.

Listening to these voices and learning what's happening at Master Yoga amplifies the power of your practice. Reading about the experiences of other Svaroopis, identifying the next course to refresh your teaching, staying up to date on Master Yoga's organizational life — all this information let's you know what's going on "in the family." It affirms your own experience and inspires your progress toward your chosen destination, the experiential knowing of your own Self. So stay tuned through our various communication channels, even every day! Make Master Yoga part of your life.

Go to www.svaroopayoga.org, right hand column, **Community Updates**. You'll find a link to the latest MYF Blog. From there you can peruse archived Blogs in a range of categories: Birthday, Conference, Master Yoga Insights, Reawakening, SATYA Members, Swami Nirmalananda, Teacher Support, The Fire of Yoga.

With an MFY Blog open, sign up to receive **Blogs through email** as they are posted: Click on "Follow" at the bottom right hand corner of your screen, and type your email address into the sign-up box that is displayed. You'll get an email when a new blog goes up, so you always know what's up.

Wonderful! You're already reading our monthly **Tadaa!** ezine. Stay with this highly effective practice, and let the experiences of Master Yoga students as well as participants in Ashram programs inspire you.

Monthly **MYF emails**, titled "Do More Yoga," inform you of upcoming courses that are of specific interest for you, based on the programs you've attended before. In addition, there is information about important events such as the Conference. They are quick reads!

Be sure to "friend" **Master Yoga Foundation on Facebook**, for the latest information and updates. If you've taken Foundations, you get to participate in our Online E-Group. You will hear the spontaneous voices of your fellow Svaroopis through these social media avenues — a modern way of keeping in touch.

Swami Nirmalananda's **Monthly Contemplations** arrive by email to SATYA Members, in .pdf files so teachers can share them with their students, by printing as hand-outs or by emailing them. These articles are also available on our website (click [here](#)), both as an article and Swamiji's audio recording.

Other SATYA member benefits include our quarterly **SATYA! E-Letter** and our teachers'

Q&A. The E-Letter contains articles on the business of yoga teaching, "this stuff works" miracle stories, Master Yoga news, and Swamiji's article on asana. The other eight months of the year, the Q&A has Swamiji's answers to teaching questions, providing invaluable support.

Think of the various Master Yoga communication streams as the life blood of our Svaroopa® yoga community. Master Yoga serves you by offering lifelong learning in Svaroopa® yoga. Lifelong learning empowers your knowing of your own Self through your yoga practices. Lifelong learning for teachers empower them to uplift their local community. Hear the many Svaroopi voices speak of the experiences we all share through these healing, transformative, illuminative practices. These conversations knit us into our yoga family (kula in Sanskrit). We belong, and we are deeply nourished. And really, where else can you talk about and hear about tailbone opening? It's great to be able to always be growing!

Blogs: Keep In Touch

"Follow" our blogs — so you always know what's going on!

This is how we share our day-to-day news and behind-the-scenes stories. When you "follow," each time a new blog is posted, you will receive an email notice. In return, let us hear from you: you can comment on the blogs. We're listening.

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The Grace-full Moon
Freedom is the Goal
Grace Dissolves Fear
You've Made a Big Difference

The Nectar of Japa

By Priya Kenney

A personal experience of Japa

Japa didn't make sense to me at first. What really could be the point of repeating Sanskrit words that I didn't fully understand? Not only didn't I understand the magnificent expanse within those words, I really didn't understand my mind.

Practicing *Svaroop®* yoga has revealed a lot about the interior of my mind. It reminds me of my experience with the ocean. Before snorkeling, the ocean was an expanse of moving water. When I sunk below the surface and began exploring her interior, I was stunned at the abundant life teeming below. However it hasn't been so wonderful to discover what I have found in my mind.

Swamiji has been heard to say that our minds are full of chit. She always carefully spells it out, "c - h - i - t," so we will understand the wordplay. Chit is the manifestation of consciousness in contracted form — our thoughts and internalized images and the stories we spin about what is

happening, has happened and might happen. If the reach of our minds was limited to the space inside our heads, we would only have a small amount of chit to deal with. But the essence of our mind is limitless, because it too is consciousness, a vast ocean.

My mind has developed many, very bad habits over the years. I admit to being an expert at negative thinking and misery making, and then identifying with it. Since I thought it, I was sure it was me. Years of practice produced a muscular mind, an overbearing bully on steroids, pushing me around with enormous strength.

Sometimes japa is the only thing to do. I've had many meditations devoted to an internal battle, trying to see through the mess in my mind to the Self. It just didn't work. This is japa country. Bring out the jack hammers for the mind, baby, we have some serious density to pulverize.

When I first started practicing japa, I had to train my mind to "take" the japa. The Sanskrit words just bounced off the steady tirade of the mind. Annoyed with the interference of these strange words, my mind bullied harder. I persisted and with effort allowed the japa to interfere more and more with the usual stream of chit. Then japa turned my perception upside down. The mantra initially seemed like interference, but turned out to be the doorway to clarity and calm. I realized that my mind's tirade was the interference, interfering with my ability to know the vast expanse of consciousness, the Self.

No longer a string of foreign words, I now feel the enlivened vibration of the mantra wash through me. It is the vibration of God, the sound vibration of embodied divinity. I repeat it silently, roll it around in my awareness, taste it. It is nectar. I walk into the mantra. It envelopes me and we are one. Japa is re-training my mind. I offer gratitude for Swamiji and this enlivened mantra.

Do More Japa

Quotes from "Imprinting Consciousness upon Your Mind," March 17 2013, Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center.

By Swami Nirmalananda

How do you begin to purify the imprints that block consciousness from registering? Do more Japa.

How do you invoke the imprint of consciousness upon your mind. Do more Japa.

When you cannot take a full immersion bath in the Ganga River, take a mantra bath.

Use the mantra to wash your mind clear.

Wash your mind and whole being clear of the imprints that reinforce unconsciousness.

All those imprints that create and reinforce your pain are things you constantly renew and refresh, through constant and diligent effort.

What are you imprinting and re-imprinting on your mind? Not consciousness!

The imprint of consciousness in your mind is indelible.

You need the two-fold practice of imprinting consciousness on your mind plus purification, which is clearing the other stuff out. Japa does both.

You are consciousness. You are the Self.

What's gotta go? It says in the Guru Gita, everything about your small-s self has got to go! What, you were enjoying it?

Imprint consciousness upon your mind and heart.

Step your innermost reality in that flow of Grace.

If mantra were merely a thought, of a better quality, that is replacing other thoughts, of garbage quality, that would be good. Yet there's a lot more going on in mantra...

Your natural state is bliss.

Svaroopaa® Sciences Calendar

Click on titles for info about **Master Yoga** and **Ashram** Programs. DYMC is **Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center**.

August 2013		
14 - 16	New Dates! EYTS Foundations Review	Polly in Exton PA
15	Bondage & Freedom audio #5	Swamiji
16	New! Embodied Bliss, Half Day Workshop	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
16 - 18	New Dates! EYTS Embodiment® Weekend	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
18	Swami Sunday 8:30 am - 12:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
19 - 30	Meditation Teacher Training <i>rescheduled for February 19 - March 2 2014</i>	Swami Nirmalananda
20	Svaroopaa® Sutras	Phone Course begins with Swamiji
20	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
21 - 25	Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga	Karobi & Polly in Exton PA
24	Teaching Sutras	Phone Course begins with Swamiji
25	Swami Sunday 8:30 am - 12:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
26 - 29	New Dates! Vichara Training	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
27	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
30	New Dates! Lunge Is Your Friend, Half Day Workshop	Karobi in Exton PA
30 - Sept 1	Shaktipat Retreat	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
31	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 - 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
September 2013		
6	Bondage & Freedom article #6	Swamiji
8	Swami Sunday 8:30 am - 12:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
7 - 8	New! The Shavasana Course, Weekend Workshop	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
10	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
12	New! Yoga Business 101 (Phone Course)	Swamiji & Personal Mentor Team
13 - 18	Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga DATES AREN'T THE SAME	Janaki in Nundah Australia
4 - 15	Svaroopaa® Yoga & Meditation	Yogeshwari in Warwick RI
17	Muktananda Mahasamadhi Anniversary 7:30 - 9:00 (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
18 - 20	EYTS Foundations Review	Polly in Exton PA
20 - 29	YTT Level 1	Karobi & Polly in Exton PA
22	Bondage & Freedom audio #6	Swamiji
24	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
28	Japathon! 10 am (EDT)	Phone Call
28 - 29	Happy Body, Peaceful Mind	Addie in Atlanta GA
29	Swami Sunday 8:30 am - 12:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
October 2013		
1	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
4 - 6	Svaroopaa® Yoga Conference	In Philadelphia PA
6 - 8	Shaktipat Retreat	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
7	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 - 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
8	Shree Guru Gita 6:30 - 8:00 am (EDT)	Swamiji at Temenos Retreat Center
10	Meditation 101 (1 of 3) 7:30 - 9:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
11	Bondage and Freedom article #7	Swamiji
15	Marketing Course Call #6	Phone call
15	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
16	I Am Shiva Intro Call 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji
16 - 22	New Dates! ATT 464: Yoga Therapy — Spine, Knees & Feet	Vidyadevi & Karobi in Exton PA
17	Meditation 101 (2 of 3) 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
17	New! ATT 464: DTS program	First call on Nov. 5
19	Satsang — Baba's punyatithi 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
19 - 20	Clarity, Decision & Action	Yogeshwari in Central VT
22	Teaching Sutras 10:00 am - 12:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji

Supta Janushirshasana

Reclining Crook't Leg Pose, Reclining Head to Knee Pose, Thread the Needle Head to Knee Pose, Thread the Needle



Sanskrit: *supta* = reclining, *janu* = knee, *shirsha* = head

Concerns & Dangers: If you have knee problems, your alignments must be precise or you can injure the knee of your crook't leg.

INSTRUCTIONS

To Do Before: do a tailbone release pose first, the best is Alt Leg.

Preparation: Lying in Shavasana, bend your knees to place your feet on your top blanket, with your feet side-by-side. Push the top blanket off & put your feet on the front edge of the next blanket down, with your heels lower than your toes.

Stage 1: Moving In: Raise your right foot so you can place your right ankle on your left thigh, near your knee. Be sure to get the outer knob of your ankle centered on your thigh (side-to-side), so your ankle bone is on your thigh bone. Place your left hand on your ankle with your left foot remaining on your blanket.

Use your right hand to move your knee 1-2 inches toward your ribs. Use your left hand to slide your ankle toward your hip, keeping your left thigh parallel to your spine. Your left leg is your "supporting leg."

Place your right hand on the inner surface of your knee or thigh to support your crook't leg in the air. Use your palm or fist to gently push your right knee away from your ribs, but not too hard or your hips twist on the floor. Your right elbow may be straight or bent.

Staying in: Allow your legs to soften in these angles, so the changes work their way from your legs through your hips & into your spine.

[Minimum: 45 seconds; Maximum: 2 minutes without Stage 2.]

Stage 2 (optional): Begin with Stage 1 for the minimum time.

Moving In: Keep your right ankle on your left thigh as you hold your left knee with both hands & pull it toward your ribs. Intertwine your fingers so your leg can relax. Inhale to prepare. As you exhale, bend your elbows to pull your knee closer toward your chest.

Staying in: As you hold your left knee, brace your right elbow against your crook't knee or leg, pushing your right knee slightly away from your chest. Or use leg muscles to lift your right knee away from your chest.

Soften your back & belly, with your shoulder blades resting on the floor. If your hips lift off the floor, don't pull so hard — leave your hips & sacrum on the floor or return to Stage 1. Continue with easy breathing.

[Stage 2 timing: 45 – 90 seconds. Total maximum for Stage 1 & 2: 3 mins.]

Moving Out: Release your left knee & place your foot on your blanket stack, leaving your ankle on your thigh. Use your right hand to move your right knee 1-2 inches toward your chest. Use your left hand to move your ankle off your thigh.

Resting/Observing: Bring both knees toward your chest for Supta Garbhasana, pausing to notice the differences, even noticing the continuing changes. Do your other side.

Supta Janushirshasana

Reclining Crook't Leg Pose



S
FB
LSR
RRP

Daily Practice Theme

Supta Janushirshasana

Reclining Crook't Leg Pose, Reclining Head to Knee Pose, Thread the Needle



PROPS

Blankets: If there are 2 or 3 blankets under your foot, your stack might be unstable, which creates spinal tension. Your pose is harder if you have too many blankets, as your supporting knee is too close to your chest. Do one of these:

- Back up, a little away from your blanket stack
- Remove blanket(s), so you have only one or two zeds under your foot
- Stack the zeds up so they slope toward your foot.

Chair (Stage 1): If it is hard for you to put your ankle on your opposite thigh, place your legs on a chair (as in Shavasana). Your ankle will go on your thigh more easily. This may provide you with a deeper spinal release.

POSE ANGLES

Ankle: The ankle bone of your crook't leg must be on the thigh bone of your supporting leg, not slipped down "in the gutter" or hanging out to the side "off the cliff." Keep your ankle soft, not bent or flexed.

Knee: If you have knee problems, your ankle must be as close toward your hip as it will go, to protect your knee. Stay in Stage 1; don't do Stage 2.

Supporting Leg & Foot:

Stage 1 — Position your foot on your blanket with "toes forward," parallel to your spine. Your supporting knee & leg must also be parallel to your spine.

Stage 2 — Use your hands to keep your leg parallel to your spine. You must hold your leg firmly with both hands, ideally with your fingers intertwined. Hold at the top of your shinbone near your knee, in your knee crease behind your thigh, or hold your pants leg tightly.

Crook't Leg: This leg is supported both in Stage 1 & Stage 2.

Stage 1 — place your hand on your knee or thigh, using your palm or fist.

Stage 2 — use your bent elbow to support your crook't leg.

Dangling Foot (Stage 2): Let the foot of your supporting leg lean down behind your thigh, with your leg & foot soft.

Sacrum on Floor (Stage 2): If you lift your sacrum in order to reach your knee, you tightened your spine. Lower your sacrum onto the floor or return to Stage 1.

Head (Stage 1 & Stage 2): The back of your neck must be long with your chin & forehead level. If you used *Props — *Head Cushion* in Shavasana, use the same Head Cushion here. **In Stage 2:** If your head tilts, return to Stage 1.

Elbows (Stage 2): Both elbows must be bent.

Shoulder Blades Back (Stage 2): Your shoulder blades must be leaning or pressing back into the floor, which makes your arms stronger.

Reliable Spinal Release: Your sacrum (S)

Possible Spinal Release: Your tailbone, if your pose is well aligned

Additional Benefits: hollows your abdominal cavity & takes pressure off your internal organs; may open your sinuses, release jaw tension & relieve the head tension that causes headaches; helps prepare for Padmasana (Lotus Pose).

Movement Type: Lower Spinal Release (LSR), Re-Release Pose (RRP), Reclining Forward Bend (FB): Stage 1 is a mild forward bend; Stage 2 is a deep forward bend

When to Use: After your tailbone pose, most effective when paired with Alt Leg.

Poses to do After: Anjaneyasana (Lunge)

Substitute Pose: Ardha Mandukasana (Half Frog Pose)