



kaadaa!

Svaroopa® Yoga: Experience Your Divine Self

Volume 1 No 9

September 18, 2013

Editorials By Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

Master Yoga Foundation

The One Being Two

The one ever-existent Divine Reality is *jagat-sharira*, universe-bodied, the sage Kshemaraja tells us. The One (which we call Shiva) has manifested a Divine Body for Himself — the universe. This includes you, includes me and includes everything that exists. The individual experiences this as a duality: the mundane and the Divine. Yet the Divine has become the mundane, just like when you put on a Halloween costume and play at being someone other than yourself.

Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

The Two Become One

You start yoga because of pain: physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. That pain is caused by the duality that Shiva took on in order to be you. Looking for a way to heal the inner split, you search through lifetimes of detours and mistaken goals. Eventually you find your way to a path that works for you, and begin the process of Self-Discovery. The goal is often called “yoga” — meaning union. It is a reunion, of yourself with your Self.

The Yoga of Yoga Organizations

People sometimes ask me, “Why two — Shiva and me?” The sages say you cannot understand the answer to this question until you’ve had the experience, just like if I try to describe the taste of a freshly-picked mango to someone who’s never picked and eaten one. But here’s the answer: Shiva became two for the delight of being two, and for the ecstasy of the reunion.

Unfortunately I cannot give you the same answer for why there are two organizations: Master Yoga Foundation and Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram. The two were not created out of joy; they were created for

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Editorial *continued from page 1*

protectionism. It is now obvious that such motivation meant it could never work, but it wasn't obvious then. Before I accepted initiation as a swami, Master Yoga's Board and I met together. I supported their decision that I start over, creating a new organization for the Ashram rather than bringing my new role as Guru into Master Yoga. From then on, Master Yoga tried to find a way to balance (a) their continuing reliance on and respect for me with (b) their decision to protect students from the Ashram and thus from me. The problem is that Guru's Grace has always been the source of Master Yoga's teachings and programs. Thus the increasing separation created pain, essentially the pain of duality.

In our recent Collaboration Questionnaire, even though we didn't ask about it, an astounding 85% of your comments were in favor of consolidating programs under one organization. This gave me a new question to contemplate, "Does having two organizations make us better able to serve?" My answer is a resounding, "No!"

Thus I asked the two Boards to create a "yoga" of the yoga organizations, by bringing all the teachings and programs under the roof of Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram. We are now consolidating the Svaroopaa® Yoga and Svaroopaa® Vidya offerings to make it simpler; simpler for you in selecting and taking your programs, as well as simpler for us in organizing and presenting your programs. See our baby steps in our new website, www.svaroopaa.org, featuring a comprehensive program calendar. We'll be adding more information every week or so.

Any menu in a good restaurant offers more than you can eat in one visit, though you can plan for many return visits. This means that the breadth of our program offerings is a promise for your future. *None of that is changing.*

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The breadth of our offerings is complemented by the depth of each one — you always get more in a Svaroopaa® program than you imagined possible. *None of that is changing.*

You have always been able to choose which programs interest you and which ones to pass up, as well as which teachings capture your interest and which ones to ignore. *None of that is changing.*

Our co-sponsored programs have featured both yoga poses as well as meditative practices. The consolidated programs make this easier to do. *That is not changing.*

The Svaroopaa® Sciences are all about you. That is not changing. Every teacher, Board member, staff member and sevite, me included, is inspired by our mission to serve you. We know it's really about you having a yogic experience. We know it's about you getting what you want, or getting even more than you knew to ask for. *None of that is changing.*

If we continue to provide all of the above, with none of those things changing, does it matter what the name of the organization is? Does it matter if it is two or one? It's a yogic question, because the Sanskrit word *yoga* is often translated as "union." It means that which became two has now become one. That's the goal of yoga.

OM svaroopaa svasvabhava.h namo nama.h

The Power of Choice

By Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver



Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver

Choices, choices — you have a wonderful dilemma when it comes to the rich and varied offerings of the *Svaroopaa*® Yoga Conference 2013: **Alignment with Grace**. There's the Ashram track to deepen your meditation, the Teacher track to refine and expand your teaching techniques, the Foundations track to return to or maintain current Continuing Education standing, the Community track to network and connect with Master Yoga and the Ashram, and the Yoga Weekend track to focus on asana and core opening. What's a Svaroopi to do?

Actually, the choice is easy. No matter which track you select, you'll be steeped in the *Svaroopaa*® sciences and aligned with Grace. Grace flows through everything *Svaroopaa*® — asana, chanting, meditation, even meetings and presentations! Still, there's a choice to make.

Two years ago, a Meditation track was offered. That Conference included Swami Nirmalananda in her dual role as Guru and Master Teacher for the first time. I went back and forth, trying to decide between the Teacher and Meditation tracks. Having just finished Meditation Teacher Training, I longed to spend more time with Swamiji. Yet there was a pull

to improve my skills as an asana teacher, so I chose the Teacher track. I was pleased that Swami Nirmalananda led two main sessions, both of which included meditation. Still, it wasn't as apparent to me then that my choice would lead me to the same place — to the opening of my body, mind and heart through Grace.

This year I've chosen the Ashram track. I knew I had to choose one track, even though my busy mind always wants to dabble and to "mix and match" — some asana workshops, some meditation workshops, some community presentations from the Boards of Master Yoga and the Ashram. But, inside, I know that when I pick a path and stay on it, the experience is deeper and more fulfilling.

Rukmini Abbruzzi, who is helping Swami Nirmalananda with Conference organization, says, "Whichever track you choose, the workshops will build from one to the next over the weekend. You'll get progressively deeper openings, becoming more and more steeped in your Self. That said, if you take the Ashram track and you also want to include asana, you can take Vidyadevi's pre- or post-conference asana workshops. Or if you're taking one of the Teacher tracks or the Yoga Conference track, you can add the Ashram teachings and practices by participating in Swamiji's Shaktipat meditation retreat post-conference."

Rukmini has been assisting Svaroopis in choosing which track to enroll in, and she advises, "It comes down to what you really love to do; which doorway is attractive to you? There are people who love to do asana and open their bodies in that way, and there are some people who love to chant to open their hearts." She adds, "All the workshop tracks will open your mind and your heart and your body."

Rukmini explains, "The underlying reality of the *Svaroopaa*® sciences is Grace. It was a gift from Baba Muktananda to Swamiji, and it's her gift to us. There's no way to take the Grace out of *Svaroopaa*® yoga. So whether

you utilize the poses to open your core and align yourself, or if you chant to open your heart, or if you do Vichara to open your mind, they're all different forms of Grace that open you to your own inner source. And they each affect the whole of you. Your mind, body and heart are not separate — each practice is a doorway to your Self."

What are your Conference choices? Even though you choose one track, you have many opportunities for overlap. Rukmini says the "practices are interwoven throughout the weekend." For example, you can choose to chant and meditate or to do an asana practice in the early morning before breakfast. Swami Nirmalananda's keynote addresses on Friday and Saturday nights will pull things together. Concluding the Conference, the final gathering with her gives you one more opportunity to bathe in the Grace of the *Svaroopaa*® tradition.

Plus, you'll see all your yoga buddies at the wonderful vegetarian buffets. You can pop into a side room to dine with special groups such as DTS Mentors. At the India lunch, watch the continuous slide show of the 2013 India trip and talk with its participants. Shop for yoga supplies, or bid on fabulous items from India as part of the Silent Auction. Take in teachers' success story posters, or have a new photo taken by a professional photographer. Even though you choose one Conference track, you still have many other choices!

The Conference is the largest gathering of Svaroopis under one roof. Immerse yourself in our community. The Grace is palpable. Click here to register, and come share in it!

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

Registration: \$595 - 720 based on track. Your vegetarian meals are included. To register or learn more, visit www.svaroopaconference.org

Do the practices, catch the Grace!

Cosponsored by Master Yoga Foundation & *Svaroopaa*® Vidya Ashram



Alignment
with Grace

Svaroopaa®
Sciences
Conference
2013

October 4 - 6
Philadelphia PA

Community Is Fundamental

By Marlene Gast & Rudrani Nogue (based on an interview with Swami Nirmalanada)

The Texts Describe...

Yogis gather together and practice in community to reap the benefits of reciprocal adaptation. Sutra 3 of the *Pratyabhiñahrdyam* describes this phenomenon:

Tannaanaa anuruupa graahya graahaka bhedaat.

The universe is multifaceted because of the differentiation of reciprocally adapted objects and subjects.

This sutra describes how the One manifested and continues to manifest the tremendous diversity in the universe including different species and human groups, all having lots of different kinds of experiences. The enormous variety is not limited to the physical level. You can conjure experiences with your mind alone. In addition, subtleties exist, including angels, spontaneous healings, extra sensory perceptions and more. Yoga acknowledges all of these in our universe, which is multidimensional as well as multifaceted.

This sutra explains that everything affects everything else. In simplistic terms, a boulder rolling down a hillside scrapes and gouges it. The boulder is also changed: its edges are knocked off or it splits on impact. The fact that everything affects everything else is true of human beings as well. What's going on with other people affects you, and you affect them.

"This truth is beautiful, powerful, and scary," says Swamiji. "Ultimately, it means you have no control over life or your state of mind. Even the stranger driving the car next to you has more influence on how you feel than you do, by what they do or don't do next. The yogi next to you in class affects you as well, reinforcing your yoga state."

When you begin yoga, you open to an expansive inner state of joy. In the next stage of your process, you don't want to be involved with anyone, because they so easily pull you from your great state. Yet, as you continue to practice yoga in community, you become more solid in your expansive inner state. Over time it's easier to stay inner-based. Other do not pull you out; instead, you have an effect on them!

Yoga is not about living in isolation; yogis have always lived in community. The ideal of the lone ascetic deep in the forest or in a cave in the Himalayas is bogus. Someone appointed by the Ashram brought him food twice a day while he did intense practices for a time. After a week, a month, or a year, he left his retreat and returned to communal living with other yogis.

Yoga Is a Family Affair

Yoga has always been a group endeavor, as is true of all the meditative traditions. What this means to 21st century yogis is that your yoga community can be looked at in two ways — your immediate family and your extended family. With your immediate yoga family, in your local classes, you share a class weekly or twice weekly, and you share your lives with one another in weekly or twice weekly communication. Swami Nirmalananda recalls, "I have seen students who refused to talk with others in their class. After a while, these stern faced and silent people stopped attending class. It's always other people who touch your heart most deeply. Who do you want to trust your heart with? Another yogi will touch your heart with love and respect."

"Your extended family," explains Swamiji, "is the place where your teacher studied, and all the others who also studied there. Your teacher's teacher is like your grandparent. All the others who studied there are your yoga-sisters and your yoga-brothers. As a yoga student, you have thousands of aunts and uncles, and their students are your cousins. Remember attending a reunion of your own extended family? Perhaps you met cousins you didn't even know. Maybe you hadn't seen your cousin Emily in a decade and met her children for the first time. To you, they were brand new cousins! Yet you feel a bond with them; blood is thicker than water."

Swamiji clarifies, "Yoga 'blood' is found in the stream of Consciousness, and that's even a deeper bond. Imagine you're on a plane, and your seatmate turns out to be a Svaroopi from another part of the country. You begin to talk like long-lost cousins, because you have so much in common through your openness to that stream of Consciousness."

Community Yoga Gives You More

Swamiji underlines the importance of this connection. "It is vital to you for your progress in yoga, whether your goals are physical (health and strength), mental and emotional (relaxation and transformation) or spiritual (to know your own Self). Regardless of your goal, your progress is significantly bolstered, supported and increased by your having yoga buddies. This isn't true just in yoga; it's true any time someone starts a new endeavor such as learning Italian or photography through a community education class. If you have a buddy, you'll learn more and progress faster. If you start an exercise program or seek to learn a musical instrument, connecting with others doing the same will support your progress. This is true in yoga in more ways and in deeper ways. That's reciprocal adaptation!

"Perhaps you have even seen this happen in your yoga class. A student arrives five minutes late, while the teacher is in the middle of the Guided Awareness — what's the feeling in the room? Everything is quiet and peaceful, and the student slips into a spot set up by a buddy. Any agitation felt by the late arriving student immediately melts away. Contrast that to the times you have done Shavasana by yourself; yes, you can become aware of your own toes and feet. But if you're with two other people, your experience is deeper, and even deeper with 20. That's because everyone is affecting everyone else. As important as personal practice is, you get more by practicing in community."

"This is also true for teachers," says Swami Nirmalananda. "I remember one teacher who was just starting to teach. She told me that when she taught the Magic 4, she could tip so far forward she could bite her ankle, even though her usual angle was not so deep. Excitedly, she said, 'Let me show you.' But she was a long way from biting her ankle! 'I don't understand,' she said. I explained that her experience in the pose in class occurred because she was teaching, so she was in the flow of Grace, and the principle of reciprocal adaptation was in effect."

As you ponder these examples of the power of reciprocal adaptation, consider what happens in meditation. What happens when you meditate with a teacher who has 30 years of experience meditating? When you meditate with Swami Nirmalananda, you will have profoundly deeper experiences!

Thus, yoga community is essential for many reasons. Your community understands you in a way your non-yoga family never can. Yoga has opened up something in you that can be shared fully only with other yogis. They support your yoga perspective in the normal craziness of life. When you practice with your community and teacher (who is farther along than you), you get so much more from your practice — you are propelled. You ride on the coattails of all those who have gone before you.

And more — being in relationship with other yogis opens your heart. You allow yourself to be touched, and you recognize you have something to give. Swami Nirmalananda gives the example of a student who shed a few tears in class and another asked, "How are you?" The tearful yogi answered, "My sister died." Knowing that, after class the other yogis organized meals to be delivered to the grieving yogi for the next two weeks. Swamiji asks, "What was that like for her? Even more importantly, what was that like for the people who got to give?"

We're human beings. Community and connection are an essential part of the human experience, and they are an essential part of yoga.

Ashramites Celebrate 4 Years

By Sarvataa Christie

Remembering the Beginning

Pat Morrison: "It takes me right back! The birthday provides an opportunity for me to think back to when everything started. For me, it was an email stating that Swamiji was starting an Ashram. I fired off a reply 'Oh joy! What can I do to help?' I felt joyousness, that what I had been waiting for was coming to fruition."



Photo by Larry Morrison

Pat Morrison

Kavi Peppell: "When I found out about the Ashram, I didn't know what it was. Simply by reading an email asking for donations, something clicked. I felt compelled to give. As I became more involved with Swamiji, a point came where I couldn't imagine life without the Ashram."

Lisa Spangler: "I was longing for something...but what? I saw a newspaper advertisement and took a free yoga class. I was hooked. Soon after, I dove deeper into the teachings. I am now a Shishya and teaching at Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center."

What Has Been Accomplished

Pat M: "The celebration is an opportunity to see what's been accomplished on the outside and how I have changed because of the Ashram's programs; a time of experiencing gratitude. In the world, things are easier for me. I am not as reactive; there is this sense of equanimity. I am more level, with deep contentment."



Photo by Sarvataa Christie

Kavi Peppell

Kavi P: "...overall contentment and happiness. I am more peaceful".

Lisa S: "I am not the same. I recognize Shiva in myself and others. I am more gentle, peaceful, and find less fault with others."

Pat M: "In my practice, it's those tantalizing glimpses; senses of Self. They are more frequent and real, along with being Realized in this lifetime. It could really happen!"

The Celebration

Kavi P: "It's amazing celebrating the fourth year! Amazing how much I and the Ashram have grown. Amazing it's the Ashram's birthday, yet it feels like my birthday! This current runs throughout our community. The Japathon will make this obvious. It'll be sweet."

Pat M: "The Japathon is wonderful! I'll feel as though I'm really participating, although I won't physically be there."

Kavi P: "The celebration means growth, expansion, change, and gratitude." He laughs and adds, "Time to get down with your big-S Self and Swamiji!!!"



Photo by

Lisa Spangler

A Birthday Gift

Lisa S: "The birthday gift is for us, from Swamiji and the Ashram...the Gift of Grace!"

Kavi P: "I am so thankful Swamiji involves everybody, regardless of distance. We're so lucky to have Her. She gives everything to us! Thank You for everything...what else can I say?"

Lisa S: "Swamiji devotes her life to sharing the teachings; this fills me with enormous love and respect for her. She makes these ancient teachings digestible and accessible to each of us through all kinds of channels."

Serving All Ashramites

Swami Nirmalananda: "The Ashram is in your heart, the Ashram is in your core, if you choose to find it there. You are an Ashramite because you have chosen to be, even if you reside in a different location. You are the Ashram...The Ashram is a way of life. The Ashram is about where you live within yourself."



Svaroopā 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 recording 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

TRAINER PROFILE

Kamala (Michelle) Gross CSYT, RYT 500

Foundations Teacher Trainer

By Marlene Gast



Kamala (Michelle) Gross

"What is this? This is amazing!" was Kamala's response to her own Foundation's course. She experienced layers of opening. She was grateful for the way that the immersion in *Svaroopa*® yoga broke down levels of resistance over five days. Kamala says, "In Foundations you get to feel things you wouldn't feel in daily practice alone or in just one class. I couldn't get enough."

Now serving as a Master Yoga Foundations Trainer, Kamala taught her first Foundations course in Atlanta in 2012. As well as teaching weekly asana (yoga) classes in her own studio, Kamala is a full-time *Svaroopa*® Yoga Therapist and Meditation Teacher. Kamala is committed to helping others find what this style of yoga has to offer, and to spreading the practices of *Svaroopa*® yoga beyond her local community.

When she began taking *Svaroopa*® yoga classes with Yogeshwari (Lissa) Fountain in 1997, Kamala had always wanted to try yoga. One of Kamala's neighbors took classes from Yogeshwari and told Kamala about this wonderful yoga style. Kamala says, "On a physical level, I had suffered from migraines for years, and after a year of *Svaroopa*® yoga I had no more headaches. Before *Svaroopa*® yoga I had consulted a neurologist who wanted to prescribe high-powered medication. I decided to do yoga instead. Once I started, I knew it was exactly what I needed to do, yet it was the transformation that kept me doing the practice."

As a Foundations Trainer as well as a studio owner, Kamala's plan is to travel for Foundations courses six weeks per year. "It's good for my students to have substitute teachers and hear instructions and the teachings in a different way. Sometimes students hear instructions differently from a substitute *Svaroopa*® yoga teacher, and they get something in a way that they didn't before. When I return, they appreciate me and they have learned something!"

"In Foundations courses," says Kamala, "I watch people transform before my eyes. In weekly classes, everyone is there for a different reason, and for many it's to reduce or eliminate pain. But in Foundations, students have enrolled because they love *Svaroopa*® yoga for the transformation as well! It's that opening that they get, and they begin to see there's so much more than the work in their bodies. The room feels fuller, and they feel so different at the end of the five days. Sparking their interest in sharing the yoga — that, too, motivates me to teach Foundations as widely as I can."

Travelling to India twice with Swami Nirmalananda, Kamala was struck by the love of God that vibrates in everyone and everything. "In the West," she says, "we don't live with people offering rice and flowers to Ganesha and Shiva on every street corner. In India that love of God is woven into everything. Most of us don't live like that. Yet once you see that love for God and feel it, you see that's it's

not that it doesn't exist in the West; rather, it's just not honored here the same way."

Kamala continues, "This practice has so much to offer, and there are a limited number of people who can pass this on. I want to contribute to the spreading of these teachings. The next generation should be able to learn these transformative techniques and practices! Everyone I know who has gone on to teach has done so because they were called to teaching. When you're called to it, you can't imagine doing anything else. It's a gift that you want to keep on giving. You have that urge to pass it on. It's wonderful to see students completing Foundations with that powerful inspiration."

"This practice has so much to offer, and there are a limited number of people who can pass this on. I want to contribute to the spreading of these teachings. The next generation should be able to learn these transformative techniques and practices!"

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There Is Always More

By Vibhuti (Sandy) King



Vibhuti (Sandy) King

I first fell in love with *Svaroopa*® yoga as a student in 1999. I then deepened my commitment to that relationship as I became a teacher, and took two major trainings per year until I had completed the two tracks most dear to my heart, or so I thought, teaching Bliss Yoga and doing Yoga Therapy.

Then Swami Nirmalananda (then Rama Berch) offered Meditation Teacher Training, and my relationship deepened even more. After that I had that “some-

thing more,” something deeper to teach. And, as is always true with yoga, there was more: Meditation Group Leader Training. It was this training more than any other that created the most change in my life as a teacher and as a member of a yogic community.

It was always clear to me that I wanted to serve my students as a teacher, but I had not thought of us as a spiritual “community.” Becoming a Meditation Group Leader brought my students and me into yogic community. Coming together to meditate on the Self and actively explore our relationship with the Self brought us into relationship with one another; it has knit us into a community. This sharing of the Self has made our yoga studio a holy place. Swami Nirmalananda says,

“When your relationships in your family or community are coming from the deepest dimension of your own being, you discover a new way of being in relationship. It is relationship of Self with Self, of Shiva with Shiva. It is the way you always wanted relationship to be.”

I am embracing the community that we have become and this has brought us to contemplate the “conscious community” Swamiji speaks of. As is always true with yoga, there is more. Stay tuned...

Being More, Offering More

By Swami Nirmalananda

Everyone comes to yoga with a need, whether it's pain, stress or the yearning that you cannot understand or describe. No matter where you start, yoga makes a difference. You feel better.

Then you discover that yoga offers more. So you do more yoga: you take a Weekend Workshop or Foundations, maybe become a teacher or simply carve more time out of your day for your yoga.

At this point, people in the athletic styles of yoga go try a different style. But in *Svaroopa*® yoga, we have deeper levels of practice for you. This is why your teachers keep going back in for trainings, so they can offer you the next level when you are ready for it.

When you've gotten enough physical openings, you naturally get interested in meditation. The ancient sages explained that, after enough time, asanas (poses) lead to meditation. In other yoga styles, you have to go somewhere else to find a meditation teacher, but I brought the whole spectrum of practices with me when I came home from India. So you can learn *Svaroopa*® yoga meditation, titled *Svaroopa*® Vidya. So you learn to meditate. Now you discover a whole new realm to explore — an inner realm.

Yet you want more. But now the more is found on the inside. It's not a matter of going to a new class or finding a new teacher. It's a matter of finding which outer supports will deepen your inner experience and fuel your continuing process of finding your Self. This is why teachers teach: to serve you in your quest. It's a Divine occupation, a Divine way to serve. It's a Divine way to live!

Why Do I Teach?

Through teaching, I am able to share all that I have learned — to share all that has benefited me in my body, in my mind and more! I am so grateful for what I have received and my trainings with Master Yoga have given me a way to share it.

— Pam Church

I am very proud to be a Svaroopa® yoga student and teacher. The practice has transformed my life, enabling me to regularly access a deep inner peace, leading me into a regular meditation practice, and much more which is not easily put into words...but which others experience/see in my being.

— Sheilaigh

I teach because I am driven to share the great joy and deep experience that I receive from Svaroopa® Yoga. There is a sweet connection that establishes without the need for words.

— Kyno Ravelo

I love teaching because I want others to experience the same life changing benefits of Svaroopa® yoga. I feel I am at my best when I teach and I want to give people the best of me. I also feel so close to Swamij when I teach — like she and Baba are in the room with me.

— Melissa Hoffman

Lighting Your Path

By Priya Kenney

A Limitless Pot of Gold

Swami Nirmalananda has created a treasure chest of online resources for us on the [Ashram](#) and [Master Yoga](#) websites. These resources come directly from her and are embodied with the force of Grace that comes through her living form.

Besides the fact that there are so many resources available to us, unlike many resources, these don't get used up! Go ahead, use them again and again. I do. Something that meant a great deal to me five years ago has a new and deeper meaning today. These resources and the teachings contained within them are limitless. There is no rationing and no one will tell you that you cannot have more. Quite the opposite! They grow and expand and unfold the more you delve into them.

When you go to the Master Yoga site, the Freebies tab is on the far right side of the menu bar. Click [Freebies](#) to find a list of 24 audio recordings of talks given by Swamiji: audios of Contemplation Articles or talks that were part of a Teacher Training, all of which illuminate our understanding of Consciousness, Revelation and Longing, just to name a few. Swamiji has been creating these for a year and a half and will be adding more on a regular basis.

"The Guru Is the Means"

On the Ashram site, the Freebies tab is on the left and connects us to a tremendous collection of resources: Click [Freebies](#) to access 20 years of Contemplation articles, Satsang and "Siva Sutra audios, videos, and the greatest jewel of all, the [Guru Gita Project](#). This whole section of Guru Gita resources supports a practice that is of central importance in the Ashram.

Swamiji's Guru, Muktananda, says of the Guru Gita: "This is the one indispensable text." Why is this so? Because, "The Guru is the means" ("*Siva Sutra* 2.6), and this one chant contains in it all the teachings of Kashmiri Shaivism. There is one resource available in the Guru Gita Project that is not free — Swamiji's CD and recording of the [Honorable Guru Gita](#) — but the cost is miniscule compared to the priceless value of this chant.

Like jeweled breadcrumbs lighting our path back home to the Self, each of these nuggets puts us right into the flow of Grace (whether it's listening to Swamiji's voice from a recorded talk or chanting the Guru Gita with her CD or simply listening to it). It was supremely delicious to get to chant it every day with Swamiji



while in India. Regardless of where you are, you can chant the Guru Gita with Swamiji on Thursdays (Guru Day), in person if you are in the area, or by signing up to chant with Swamiji live over the phone. Click [here](#) to register for the chant.

The Guru Gita Project includes articles that describe [Why Is This Chant so Powerful?](#) and [The Guru as Grace](#). Swamiji has also done [pronunciation lessons](#) for every verse of the Guru Gita as well as [English translations](#) up to verse 75. In India, Swamiji gave us the translation of five or six new English verses every day, and then we would chant the growing list of English verses before chanting it in Sanskrit. The poetic, rhythmic translation in my native language, English, enhanced my understanding. I especially love the [commentaries](#) for each verse. So far, Swamiji has provided a rich dissection of the first 14 of these beautiful verses, bringing them to vibrant life.

Unloading the darkness of ignorance can happen in an instant if we are lucky, but most of us work at it in 20- or 60-minute intervals, or a week at a time on retreats. Some days, I have

to be creative at finding time to bathe myself in the Grace of the Guru. If I'm in the car for an extended time, like when I drive my son to soccer, I listen to the Guru Gita during the drive and then chant it in English in the car, while he's at practice.

When I have access to my computer, I listen to one of the Guru Gita pronunciation lessons or listen to Swamiji's commentary of a verse. Just learning one Sanskrit verse strengthens my confidence for chanting any of the verses. I wonder, how is it that learning a single verse opened up my capacity to also chant other verses? Similarly, I listen to the commentary of one verse, and not only does my understanding of that verse explode into vastness, the next morning in my daily ritual of randomly opening the Guru Gita and contemplating the verse my eyes fall on, I find my understanding of that verse is exponentially greater for having listened to the commentary of another verse. Twenty minutes of looking into the light has immense power. And that is what the Guru is, both the light that shows the path and the Light Itself.

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What's the Difference?

MYF & SVA Phone Courses

By Marlene Gast

How do Master Yoga phone courses differ from Ashram phone courses? Students who have experienced both find overlap as well as differences. Rama Ruth Brooke and Sandy Rushton are now enrolled in SVA's **Bondage & Freedom** phone course, which began last April, and both have taken MYF phone courses in the past. When I talked with them, they pointed out that the continuity between MYF phone courses and SVA phone courses comes from the fact that Swami Nirmalananda has taught both. They found Swamiji's approach to presenting the courses similar, though the MYF courses are of shorter duration than the SVA courses.

After enrolling in **Bondage & Freedom**, Sandy, a Certified *Svaroopaa*® Yoga Teacher in Atlanta GA, took the MYF-sponsored **Bliss Sutras** phone course. Sandy says, "It's the philosophy that intrigued me from the get-go! Both courses teach Kashmiri Shaivism philosophy, and the approaches are complementary."

In **Bliss Sutras**, Sandy loved the homework — working on one's own between calls with dharanas from the *Vij-nanabhairava*. She says, "All of our students would email our experiences to the whole group. Part of the wonder of this course was to know that many (or most?) of the dharanas this text describes are things that we've all done before in our lives to trigger bliss. For example, one is to view a beautiful vista; I've been in the Georgia mountains recently, and I know how easy it is to look at a scenic view there and notice how it stops your mind. Even before yoga, I knew that stopping my mind is pleasurable, and sought out the experience especially through my art. It was wonderful to read the experiences of other students, and know that we were all having very similar experiences. While other courses may teach about the philosophy, this course brought it home to me in an experiential way, which helps with integrating the information. The other great aspect of this course was that everyone who took it was already familiar with the experience of Self in some form."

While the SVA courses also present the teachings of Kashmiri Shaivism, Sandy points out that the SVA courses are longer. **Bondage & Freedom** is a year-long course. In addition to participating in phone calls, students

receive articles and an audio recording before a call. On the calls, Swami Nirmalananda chooses a thread and asks students to share how it applies in their lives. These discussions have a similar effect for Sandy as the MYF calls and homework, in that everyone is sharing their experience. Of course, the longer time span, Sandy says, gave her more time for study and for processing experiences. Sandy says, "I appreciate considering how the teachings apply to my life as well as Swamiji's guidance for integrating the knowing. At the same time, the course has been informational and educational."

Rama Brooke

Also enrolled in **Bondage & Freedom**, Rama Brooke, a Certified *Svaroopaa*® Yoga Teacher in Vermont, is a frequent-flyer! She has taken the MYF-sponsored **Yoga of Food** course twice (because she loved it so much!) as well as the **Bliss Sutras** course earlier this year. She also completed **The Shiva Course** in 2010; **Nothing Exists That Is Not Shiva** in 2011; and **Grit & Grace** in 2012. Rama states, "Because Swami Nirmalananda teaches phone courses for both MYF as well as SVA, my experience has been that the courses are indistinguishable as belonging to one organization or the other. No matter the sponsoring organization, I am immediately propelled into Grace. The practices to me are indistinguishable because they take me to the same place. This is because of Swamiji's presence in both courses."

Rama does, however, note some differences in format on further reflection. "In the MYF courses," says Rama, "the teachings were more easily digestible. By contrast, had I taken the Ashram courses before taking the MYF courses, the Ashram courses would have been a lot to wade through. Still, the teachings clearly come from the same tradition — it's just a matter of which text you are studying. It all comes from the same Source. So I think of the MYF courses as the first step in a progression along the same path — the path being the Guru lineage."

Along with Meditation Teacher Training, two trips to India, and the biannual Conference, phone courses are yet another area in which Master Yoga and the Ashram have collaborated since the inception of the Ashram. Clearly, the goal of each is the same: to serve you!

Corn Chowder Quinoa Casserole

2 cups milk (for vegan, use unsweetened coconut (like So Delicious or almond milk))
1 ½ cups fresh corn kernels (may use frozen if fresh is unavailable)
1 or 2 diced red potatoes
1 cup uncooked quinoa
1 cup vegetable stock
½ cup diced onion
¾ cup diced red bell pepper
2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 large bay leaf
1 can (14 oz) cannellini or navy beans
Salt, pepper
Cayenne pepper or hot sauce
1 - 2 teaspoon fresh lime juice
Parsley or cilantro to garnish

योगा पुस्तक

By Jennifer Saville, Ashram Chef

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a blender, puree ¾ cup corn with 1 cup milk. In a large bowl, mix corn & milk puree and all remaining ingredients (except lime, hot pepper/hot sauce & parsley/cilantro) together. Pour into a casserole dish. Cover with foil & bake for 30 minutes. Remove from oven & stir. Re-cover with foil & bake another 20 - 25 minutes until quinoa is cooked through.

Remove from oven. Add lime, hot sauce/hot pepper to taste & stir well. Top with cilantro or parsley. (Note: more milk can be added if a thinner consistency is desired.)

A Secret Rare Gem

The I Am Shiva Course

By Bhanumati Cunningham



Bhanumati Cunningham

A Fabergé Egg — that is what the **I Am Shiva** course is. Layer after layer of the most masterfully crafted treasures, each filled with unbelievable wonder.

The monthly articles were so extraordinary in their unfolding of the many aspects of Shiva that I could clearly see those aspects in myself. Shiva began to open within me, revealing remarkable beauty in even the ugliest parts of myself. ALL of me is Shiva — not just the nice parts.

Then the recorded talks immersed me in the sweetest meditations I have ever had. I still remember the splendor of that inner grace. Those talks and meditations still inspire me with *mumukshutva* — divine longing.

And then the miracle of the phone calls! My home and life were transformed by those phone calls. As I glided through our normally hectic dinner preparation, phone to ear, I saw that I can be Self-Realized, without having to leave my husband and daughter to go sit in a cave in the Himalayas. I was able to take Shiva off a pedestal and believe that it might actually be possible that I am Shiva just as I am. A long time ago I asked myself, “Does Shiva take out the garbage?” Yes, I learned, Shiva does take out the garbage, and is exalted in doing it.

The most delightful mystery of those phone calls is that we were all Shiva, doing what we do in our individual lives, while talking and listening to Shiva, from different corners of the globe, all in my kitchen. How rich and penetrating each word became!

Then there was the exquisite intimacy with Swamiji at the Weekend Retreat. There were five of us at Temenos, surrounded by all the *murtis* (statues) of Shiva, bathed in candle light and the Grace of the Guru. There is no blessing more permeating than the moments spent at the feet of the Guru. We all felt it. How blessed are we?

There was the adventure of delving into the multi-dimensional aspects of Shiva within myself, of seeing myself in each murti. After savoring the stories in Swamiji’s monthly articles for a full year and identifying with the deities like characters in a movie, I was able to actually experience myself as each Deity. As I gazed deeper into each Divine Form, I became Divine to myself. Such humbling acceptance I had never felt before.

There were the intoxicating pujas, so simple and silent. Like the Great Void, that silence was laden like a tree heavy with fruit. That fruit was the culmination of a whole year of continuous immersion in the anticipation and wonder of each layer of the Self that Swamiji so skillfully illuminated for us.

The gifts of the **I Am Shiva** course continue to unfurl for me just like a Fabergé Egg. All of my practice today springs from the revelation of this course. I cannot imagine not having taken it. It is like a secret rare gem, not to be overlooked.

I Am Shiva

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 *svaroop*a 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



Coming Soon!

By Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver

Sometimes there are incremental openings — the reliable and progressive alignment of your spine in *Svaroopā*® yoga poses or in *Svaroopā*® Vidya meditation. Sometimes there is a major rush or a flow of energy into your body or into the depths of your own being. That's the power of the *Svaroopā*® sciences! Look to your mailbox soon for a concrete representation of their power.

You may have already received another beautiful, full color, multi-paneled poster. Similar to the one Master Yoga sent last June, the poster is folded into a size equivalent to a large postcard, suitable for mailing. But once you have it in hand, you can unfold the panels into a single wall-size poster.

Check out the panel with the 2014 Program Calendar. It integrates *Svaroopā*® Vidya Ashram programs with Master Yoga Foundation programs. When you are interested in programs from both of these sister organizations, this integrated calendar lets you see them all at one glance, eliminating the need to go back and forth

between two websites to plan for courses and studies in the *Svaroopā*® sciences. Overall, the poster/mailer format allows you to take in diverse yet related information incrementally, panel by panel. Or you can marvel at the complete and rich offerings all at once, poster style. It's a visual treat either way.

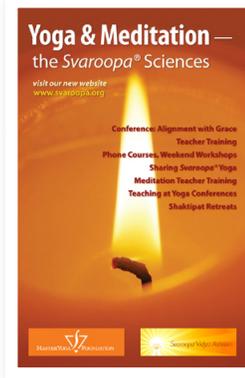
But it's so much more. As a description of all-things *Svaroopā*® — from Master Yoga courses to Ashram events — it demonstrates the deepening collaboration of the two organizations, providing a range of programs while offering us what we need individually.

While we can use the information to choose our next level of involvement with either organization, teachers can make them available to students as well. Polly DiBella, owner of DiBella Yoga in Paoli PA, still has copies of the May version in her studio. "Students look at them and take them. They are so colorful and inviting," she says.

Marlene Gast, who teaches *Svaroopā*® yoga in Boise ID, says, "I love to see students picking up

the folder piece from a shelf in the studio entry way. They open out all the panels, sometimes looking a bit puzzled at first and then clearly enjoying graphics and photos. Often, they'll ask a question or two about programs. It's great that students as well as we teachers are now signing up for phone courses as a result."

Sheynapurna (Sandy) Peace, of Rancho Bernardo CA, says the mailer is helpful to her students and to her. "The poster is handy in that I can see what classes are coming up, see what's available. It keeps me in line with possibilities." She adds, "It's a quick reference guide in times when I am not near a computer and can even be quicker than the computer."



Beautiful, informational, quicker than a computer! Look for it in the mail soon. This new version will make it easier than ever for you to continue lifelong learning in the *Svaroopā*® sciences!

Upcoming Programs

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

September 2013		
20 - 29	YTT Level 1	Karobi & Polly in Exton PA
24	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
26	Shishya Guru Gita 6:30 am:45 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
28	Japathon! 10 am (EDT)	Phone call
28	Teaching Svaroopā® Sutras 1:30 - 3:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji phone
28 - 29	Happy Body, Peaceful Mind	Addie in Atlanta GA
29	Swami Sunday 8:30 am - 12:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
30	Meditation Made Easy 8:00 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
October 2013		
1	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
3	Shishya Guru Gita 6:30 - 7:45 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
4 - 6	Svaroopā® 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
8	Meditation Made Easy 8:00 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Karobi at DYMC
10	Meditation 101 begins 7:30 - 9:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
11	Bondage and Freedom article #7	Swamiji
15	Marketing Course call #6	Phone call
15	Shishya Call 11:00 am - 12:00 pm (EDT)	Swamiji phone
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	ATT 464: Yoga Therapy — Spine, Knees & Feet	Vidyadevi & Karobi in Exton PA
17	Shishya Guru Gita 6:30 - 7:45 am (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
17	Meditation 101 (2 of 3) 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm (EDT)	Swamiji at DYMC
22	Meditation Made Easy 8:00 - 9:00 pm (EDT)	Vidyadevi at DYMC

PLAN AHEAD

Plan your trainings for the coming year with the calendar below.

SEPTEMBER 2013		
20 – 29	YTT – Level 1	Exton PA
28 – 29	Happy Body — Peaceful Mind	Atlanta GA
OCTOBER 2013		
4 – 6	Svaroopa® Yoga Conference	Philadelphia PA
6 – 8	Shaktipat Retreat	West Chester PA
16 – 22	ATT 464: Yoga Therapy — Spine, Knees & Feet	Exton PA
19 – 20	Clarity, Decision & Action	Central VT
23	I Am Shiva Course begins	Multi-Media Course
25 – Nov 3	YTT – Level 2	Exton PA
NOVEMBER 2013		
2 – 3	Connect with Your Breath	East Falmouth MA
6 – 11	Foundations	Brisbane Australia
8 – 12	Foundations	Exton PA
9 – 10	Svaroopa® Yoga & Meditation	Canton NY
15 – 24	YTT – Level 3	Exton PA
22 – 24	Gateway of Your Heart at Kripalu Center	Stockbridge MA
30 – Dec 1	Gateway of Your Heart	Niantic CT
DECEMBER 2013		
3 – 9	ATT 403: Lower Spinal Release	Exton PA
JANUARY 2014		
4 – 8	ATT 201: Teaching Half Day Workshops	Exton PA
17 – 21	Foundations	Exton PA
13 – 18	Svaroopa® Sutras Teacher Training Retreat	Downingtown PA
24 – 26	Shaktipat Retreat	West Chester PA
26 – 28	Experiential Anatomy	Exton PA
28 – Feb 2	Embodiment® Yoga Therapy Training	Exton PA
FEBRUARY 2014		
7 – 9	The Shavasana Course	Rhode Island
14 – 16	Foundations Review	Exton PA
16 – 18	Embodiment® Weekend	Exton PA
18	Guru & Self begins	Multi-Media Course
19 – Mar 2	Meditation Teacher Training	PA Retreat Center
21 – 23	Weekend Workshop	Atlanta GA
28 – Mar 2	Weekend Workshop	Brisbane Australia
MARCH 2014		
1 – 2	Weekend Workshop	Australia
7 – 16	YTT – Level 2	Australia
19 – 23	ATT 201: Teaching Half Day Workshops	Australia
19 – 23	Foundations	Exton PA
28 - 30	Shaktipat Retreat	Calgary Canada
APRIL 2014		
4 – 13	YTT – Level 2	Exton PA
11 – 15	MYF – SVA Retreat	PA Retreat Center
25-26	Gateway of Your Heart	Virginia

APRIL 2014 (continued)		
25 – 27	Foundations Review	Exton PA
28 – 30	Teaching Without Props	Exton PA
30	Meditation Teacher Upgrade begins	Multi-Media Course
30 – Jun 1	Shaktipat Retreat	West Chester PA
MAY 2014		
1	Sutras on Self begins	Phone Course
3 – 9	Teaching at Yoga Conferences	Exton PA
16 – 25	YTT – Level 4	Exton PA
JUNE 2014		
3 – 9	ATT 411: Upper Spinal Release	Exton PA
11 – 13	Foundations Review Exton PA	
13 – 22	YTT – Level 1	Exton PA
20 – 22	Shaktipat Retreat	tba
26 – Jul 2	ATT 531: Abdominals	Exton PA
JULY 2014		
6 – 9	Enliven & Advance – Level 2	Exton PA
11 – 13	Svaroopa® Yoga & Meditation	Boise ID
11 – 13	I Am Shiva Retreat	tba
14	Purposeful Living begins	Phone Course
16 – 20	Foundations	Exton PA
AUGUST 2014		
8 – 10	Experiential Anatomy	Exton PA
10 – 15	Embodiment® Yoga Therapy Training	Exton PA
15 – 17	Shaktipat Retreat	West Chester PA
17 – 21	MYF-SVA Retreat	PA Retreat Center
22 – 24	Weekend Workshop	San Juan
September 2014		
3 – 5	Foundations Review	Exton PA
4 – 7	Meditation Teacher Upgrade Retreat	PA Retreat Center
5 – 14	YTT – Level 1	Exton PA
19 – 23	Foundations	Exton PA
20 – 27	Meditation Group Leader Training Retreat	PA Retreat Center
29 – Oct 5	ATT 262: Yoga Therapy — Treating Pain	Exton PA
OCTOBER 2014		
10 – 19	Swamiji on tour in Australia	Australia
10 – 19	YTT – Level 3	Exton PA
24 – 26	Guru & Self Weekend Retreat	PA Retreat Center
NOVEMBER 2014		
3 – 9	ATT 402: Deeper Practice	Exton PA
14 – 16	Weekend Workshop	Warren MA
15 – 16	Slow Down!	Dekalb IL
DECEMBER 2014		
5 – 14	YTT – Level 2	Exton PA

Pawanmuktasana

Alt Leg,
Alternate Leg Pose



Sanskrit: *pawana* = air, *mukta* = liberating

Concerns & Dangers: If you had hip replacement surgery more than 6 months ago, this pose is safe when well aligned. *Substitute Pose:* SloMo.

INSTRUCTIONS

To Do Before: Alt Leg is usually done after Shavasana & Ujjayi.

Preparation: Lie on your back holding your bent knees with your hands & arms. Make sure your knees are touching, side-by-side. If your big toes overlap, place them side-by-side. Allow your legs to soften so the weight of your legs leans through your hip joints to sink your lower back deeper into the floor.

Moving In: Move both hands over to your right knee & lower your left leg onto your Shavasana stack, resting it where it had been lying before.

Use your hands to support & align your bent leg so the middle of your kneecap is in line with your right ear. If you can intertwine your fingers, it's easier to hold your knee & your leg will soften more fully.

Don't let your knee drift out toward your side or in toward your midline. Use your hands to keep your knee in line with your ear.

Staying in the Pose: Allow your bent leg to soften so the weight of your leg leans through your hip, to sink the back of your hip deeper into the floor. This provides a deepening release from your leg through your hip & into your tailbone. [*Minimum* – 45 seconds; *Maximum* – 90 seconds]

Moving Out: Bend your straight leg to bring it back toward your chest. Hold both knees.

Resting/Observing: Notice the differences in your legs, hips & the two sides of your low back. You may be able to identify the length in one side of your tailbone. Do your other side.

To Do After: A pose for your sacrum. The best pose to pair with Alt Leg is Diagonal Alt Leg.

PROPS

Shavasana Stack: If you don't have blankets for a Shavasana stack, place your lower legs & the backs of your knees on a chair or couch.

Head Cushion: If your head tips back when you reach your hands & arms forward to hold your knees & it doesn't relax back once you have a firm hold on your knees, place a folded blanket or two under your head, making sure it is not placed under your neck & shoulders.

Pawanmuktasana

Alt, Alternate Leg Pose



POSE ANGLES

Bent Knee: The alignment of your bent leg is critically important, or Alt Leg will not provide a reliable tailbone release for you. There are several different ways to accurately assess your alignment:

- The middle of your kneecap is in line with your ear
- Your thigh is parallel to your spine
- Your knee is over your ribs

Hands Holding Knee: Your hands need to be holding near your knee in one of these ways —

- Holding the top knob of your shinbone, or in the soft space of your knee just above your shinbone knob. Intertwine your fingers if you can do so without having to pull your knee toward your ribs.
- Holding in your knee crease, which is on the back of your thigh. Get your palms in as deep as possible & tuck your thumbs in alongside your fingers.
- Holding fistfuls of fabric on the sides of your pant leg near your knee

Extended Leg: Your leg that is resting on the Shavasana stack must be in the Shavasana leg alignment, which is almost parallel to your spine, angled only slightly away from your midline.

Reliable Spinal Release: Your tailbone (T)

Possible Spinal Release: Your sacrum

Other Benefits: Relieves lower back pain. Hollows your abdominal cavity & massages your internal organs (good for relieving constipation); may create a release of abdominal gas. It also may help diminish head pain (including jaw, sinus or headache).

Movement Type: Lower Spinal Release (LSR); Forward Bend (FB); Re-Release Pose (RRP)

Pawanmuktasana

Alt Leg



T
FB
LSR
RRP