

Kadaa!

Svaroopaa[®] Yoga: Experience Your Divine Self

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Editorial

Magical, Mystical Yoga

By Swami Nirmalananda

In 1983, returning after almost 7 years in the Ashram with my Baba, I found that yoga had surged in popularity. The surge was concentrated in athletic clubs, featuring an athletic approach that was new to me. I had already completed four Teacher Trainings, including a classical yoga training in India, so this new approach interested me. I took a few classes but felt that something was missing, yet I couldn't put my finger on what it was. A few months later, a teacher in one of these athletic styles made it clear to me, describing that the goal was to "de-mystify yoga." I was shocked! After all, yoga is a mystical path. How do you de-mystify mysticism? Is it like taking the wet out of water?

Svaroopaa[®] yoga is and has always been mystical. I never tried to take the mysticism out of it. It would be impossible to do, because the mysticism is imbedded, not just in the yoga, but it is imbedded in you. It's an inherent part of you, the hidden dimension you've been seeking, yet few find how to access it. This inner dimension is your own Self, called "svaroopaa" by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. In *Svaroopaa*[®]



Swamiji

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yoga, we use your body to open up this inner access, using your nervous system to its highest purpose — for you to experience your own Divinity. Your spine is the key. In *Svaroopa*® Vidya meditation, access comes through initiation and your spine is still the key.

Svaroopa® yoga is magical, in addition to being mystical. The word “mystical” comes from “mystery,” the hidden dimension. Magical means it’s easy; the results you get are far greater than the effort you put forth. That’s why I named a series of four poses, “The Magic Four.” They are amazingly easy and amazingly powerful — the magic opens up the mystery inside.

In our “Tadaa!” e-zine, you come to know the power of our magical, mystical yoga through the experiences of others. Their generosity in sharing their experience is heart-warming. They not only support your progress on this spiritual path, but they lead by their own example, a living example of our practice and teachings.

OM svaroopa svasvabhava.h namo nama.h

Tadaa!

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I Can Fly!

Rudrani (Rosemary) Nogue



Rudrani (Rosemary) Nogue

I can fly! This summer, my ATT Abs training course introduced me to my new favorite pose, full Pigeon or what our group dubbed "Full Flying Pigeon." The completed pose is a Pigeon backbend, with both hands holding your back ankle, while your back foot is actively pushing back and lifting you higher and higher.

I was fully supported and empowered at my ATT Abs training as Grace permeated the whole course. Arati (flame circles), chanting, meditation and the study of the Shiva Sutras with Swamiji and Vidyadevi

opened me more to the Grace. It was easy to immerse myself in the training surrounded by like-minded yogis in our wonderful residential setting. Our joy and laughter filled the training room. With Vidyadevi and Kusuma's (Karobi's) expert guidance we delved into Svaroopa® yoga's ab activators on their own and in related poses. What a difference abdominal muscle support can make in a pose! I am grateful that I finally had the experience of my engaged abs releasing my spine. I knew the theory, and now I've actually had the experience. Yay!

Over the seven-day training, we worked in a variety of poses, but we returned to alignments, variations and adjustments of Eka Pada Raja Kapotasana (Pigeon) every day. We started to "coo" a lot when we did yet another Pigeon. (Maybe you had to be there?) Day by day we were building towards full Pigeon, although I didn't realize it at the time.

On our last day of training we moved into the "finale" — Full Flying Pigeon. What a challenge and what fun! It's not soft like many of the Svaroopa® poses. It's powerful and dynamic, yet it's still possible to soften into it. You must have both strength and ease to fly! I volunteered to demo the pose for the class, although I had never done it before. Vidyadevi talked me into it step by step. Once in the pose, I finessed the use of my abdominals, changing from Navasana abs to Yoga Sit-Up abs to support my spine. My upper spine lifted and opened even more. I was close to my edge and it felt wonderful. I felt strangely like a figurehead at the prow of a sailing ship — strong and unafraid of what lay ahead. I had never felt that open in my upper spine before. Ever! I had never had my active abs make such a big difference in a pose; they supported my spine so it could release and lengthen.

I was able to actually do an "impossible" pose because of the seven days of consistency that built up to it. I understood that even the chanting, meditating and sutra study contributed. So one of the first things I did after my long flight home was to release my spine tail-to-top and then do full Pigeon. Simultaneously, I returned home to my physical home and to my inner home, svaroopaa.

Amazingly, I have done it every day since, so it has quickly become my new favorite pose. When in the pose, I am fully engaged, fully aware and fully present. I am breathing and leaning into the support of the blanket roll. My back leg and abs are engaged so my spine can release. I know this pose and my understanding of it will continue to develop as I practice it more.

My upper chest, collapsed for most of my life, had slowly started to lift and open last year after I committed to doing Swamiji's 2013 Pose of the Year: Plow (followed by Fish pose) every day. Through this tenacity and



consistency, I learned firsthand that doing something every day creates long lasting change and new insights. Now doing Full Flying Pigeon every day is the "icing on the cake," as it enhances and builds on the more open chest and neck that Plow and Fish had already created.

I am motivated to do full Pigeon daily because of the impact in both mundane and profound ways. It serves as a strong counter pose for all the forward bending I do in life, especially the hours sitting at the computer. Plus my upright spine makes it easier to settle into Self in meditation. Having my spine more easily upright helps me to stay more Self-connected in my life. I feel stronger, clearer, more empowered, and decision-making is easier. My mind is quieter. And lastly, it is so much fun to fly!

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From Pain to a Quiet Mind

Maitreyi Wilsman



Maitreyi (Margie) Wilsman

I have a 53-year old male yoga student and *Embodiment*® client who started coming to beginning yoga classes late summer 2013. His wife started beginning yoga classes first, in the early summer, and easily convinced her husband to start. When she moved on to Continuing Yoga classes, he continued coming weekly when he was in town. Since he travels a lot, he bought an extra set of yoga blocks to carry with him, and practices the Magic 4 poses when he is away.

With each four classes he would do one *Embodiment*® session. By mid-December, four months later, before an *Embodiment*® session, he excitedly told me that the prostatitis that he developed about age 45 was now gone!

Prostatitis is inflammation of the prostate gland, a walnut-sized gland located directly below the bladder in men. The condition is diagnosed via rectal exam where the urologist can feel the size of the prostate and finds it is enlarged. That leads physicians to think it is inflamed, and to seek a cause for inflammation such as infection; so Western medicine sometimes treats prostatitis with antibiotics.

My student's prostatitis was quite painful, leading to a lot of agitation, frequent urination, and difficulty in sitting for long periods of time. He reported, "I could definitely see that it was very connected to high stress, which is part of the work that I am engaged in. A number of times, I was treated with antibiotics. So it would come and go, but was definitely connected to stress in my life."

He added, "In many cases it is not a bacterial prostate infection at all. After I first came in contact with you and *Svaroopa*® yoga, I discovered this after a couple of months, when I went to see my urologist and indicated to him that I was finding quite remarkable relief through this yogic practice."

My student's doctor then told him that the CDC (Center for Disease Control) has now actually recognized that a lot of what they thought were prostatitis conditions in middle-aged males (where it is quite prevalent) is not related to the prostate gland at all. They have now identified and labeled an illness that they call chronic pelvic pain syndrome.

Based on this diagnosis, my student's urologist now recommends physical therapy to patients to relieve the pelvic muscles. "So," continued my student, "my urologist was not surprised at all that I was finding relief, particularly from *Svaroopa*® yoga since it emphasizes opening up the pelvic area. After being introduced to *Svaroopa*® yoga for only a few months, I remember being utterly amazed. I was sitting in my office chair, sitting for three hours and not having to get up, which is something I had not experienced for a very long time."

My student adds, "What I have now learned from this urologist is that the rectal exam is a pretty imprecise measure of how large the prostate is. So in many cases it is misdiagnosed. It is much more about the state of the pelvic area."

This student is now in Continuing Yoga classes and, as before, receives one *Embodiment*® session with each set of four yoga classes. After his March *Embodiment*® session, when asked, "What are you aware of?" he reported, "My quiet mind. I understand what embodied means for the first time."

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By Jaideva Singh

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Change Your Mind

By Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver



Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver

Many of us came to *Svaroopa*® yoga to soothe our bodies' aches and pains, but we've found more. Much, much more. While I recognized the physical benefits of the asana practice right away, it took me longer to understand what was happening beyond my body's changes, to understand that my whole way of being and notion of my Self was changing, too. What has taken me the longest, what I am just now beginning to understand, is how I'm changing my mind, but not in the ordinary sense of the phrase.

What changing your mind usually means is that you adopt a different opinion, idea, or plan. You move from one point of view to another. You revise your thinking. But this is changing only the thought content of your mind, not the structure of your mind or the nature of your mind.

In a Vichara (self-inquiry) Therapist Training, Swami Nirmalananda likened the internal structure of the mind to the Eiffel Tower, the girders making the structure a visual feast. These girders are like the unconscious convictions that limit your mind's capacity, while the content of your thoughts are like boxes of stuff you've stored in the Eiffel Tower, blocking the view of the sky. With all that stuff stored in there, it's not pretty any more.

Our teachings and practices, including poses, therapies, meditation and mantra, change both the structure and the content of your mind. Instead of a support system that can barely be glimpsed through the overload of content, your mind's stuff is being cleared out, plus your mind's structure is being expanded and reshaped. Swamiji compared such a mind to a geodesic dome, which still has a support structure, but has a different purpose and offers the viewer a different experience. Such a mind functions in a way that magnifies Consciousness instead of cluttering it up.

One of the most powerful practices in making this change is repeating mantra, and not just for meditation. My meditation students find this to be true. While the preparation we do for our weekly group meditation (satsang) is slightly different each week, when we chant Om Namah Shivaya or repeat mantra out loud (japa) participants tell me their entry into meditation is quick, easy and extraordinarily deep. This is the power of mantra, recognized in the ancient texts.

Cittam mantra.h — *Siva Sutras* 2.1
Mind is mantra.

Chittam means mind. It means your mind is already made of mantras, but what you are repeating is "mundane mantras." What if, instead of weaving tangled webs of thought about external things, you applied your mind to the Divine mantra? Would it mean that your mind couldn't function, or that it would be so bathed in Consciousness that it wouldn't want to operate in the world? No. Just the opposite is true. Instead of reacting to and creating more thoughts, when your mind devotes itself to mantra, you recognize your own true nature, *svaroopa*. Now, making decisions and taking actions is a completely different thing. Instead of being trapped in the crisscrossing beams of the Eiffel Tower, you have more space in which to operate.

Vidyadevi describes mantra as "scrubby bubbles" for your mind. Your mind is so full of clutter and random, even unhelpful thoughts that it needs a good scrub! Japa does the job. Mantra doesn't merely clear your mind of what you're obsessing on at the moment, it begins to deprogram all the negative self-talk and install a new operating system, upgrading your programming, so that your mind is sparkling clear. Swamiji says that meditation will do this eventually, but japa does it quickly.

This seems like a pretty good reason to repeat mantra to me! Yet there is more: it's not just the act of repeating the mantra that has an effect. It's the way you repeat mantra. The mantra is not just chatter with which to fill your mind. "OM namah shivaaya" means "I honor my own Self as Consciousness-Itself." So do it! Honor yourself! Invest yourself in your mantra repetition. Say it like you mean it and notice the effect. Too often you repeat mantra the other way around. Random thoughts that come up have meaning, but your mantra is in the background. Your mind brings other things up because at some point you've told it, "This thing is important." What if you tell your mind that mantra is important? Say mantra to yourself in a way that conveys this importance.

You can do a little experiment: repeat OM namah shivaaya to yourself for a few minutes like you really mean it, trying to experience what the words mean. Bring an attitude or feeling or understanding of your own Divinity to this practice. Cultivate a quality that helps you understand the meaning and the depth of the mantra as you say it. What do you notice happening to you?

Swamiji says, "Pour yourself into your Self," not to pour the energy of your thoughts into external things. Yes, external things still require your attention, but when you turn your mind inward, and use your mind to bow to your own Self, your mind is transformed. Now those external things don't consume and confuse you in the same way.

Do more yoga — repeat mantra! Say what you mean and mean what you say.

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Why I Donate

By Chudala (Lizabeth) Darling



Chudala (Lizabeth) Darling

I know that it is through our donations that programs, services and the Ashram are created and are given opportunity to exist, but more than that, to thrive. As a child I went to church, and I recall the donation bowls passed around at a certain time in the service to allow the congregation to provide financial support to the church. So I already knew that giving to a service that depends on the

support of its members, followers and believers is critical for that service to grow or at the very least to be sustained. Yet this memory doesn't fully answer the question of why I regularly make financial donations to the Ashram.

When I look deeper, I see that I have been blessed in so many indescribable, palpable ways by the teachings, and by the service and love of my Guru. I live on the West Coast and only a few times have I been able to make the trip to stay in the Ashram on the East Coast. Yet even with infrequent visits I have noticed a presence that words cannot fully capture or describe. Spirit exists within the Ashram and one begins to feel the presence in the others who are there. The teachings from the ancient texts are present, and Swami gives us the teachings in a way that enables us to apply them to our current culture and situations.

Through her teachings, one begins to understand that there is nothing, no thing, that is not Shiva. The Ashram is a sacred place, a retreat to spend time and offer seva. My donations help to support these services and my Guru. Through the websites I am able to read and see what is happening when I'm not physically in the presence of Swami or at the Ashram. Through the teachings and listening to the recordings, I am able to feed my soul and my mind.

In my heart and mind, I believe and feel that the monthly contributions that I am able to make have an impact. I trust the Board, all those serving Swami and Swami herself to make wise choices on how the monetary gifts that come from heart are to be used to feed and nourish all of us, those of us who are a distance away as well as those who can be there physically. We are all still able to listen and read and feel the presence of Shiva through all the avenues that Swami has opened up and has used to reach out to all. For these things and much more, I am happy to be a part of this community and this family. My monthly donations are one way that I can give back a little; I also get the opportunity to provide seva to support Swami and the Board of Directors.

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— Carolyn Beaver

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Steeped in What We Do

By Aanandi (Annie) Ross



Mangala (Cayla) Allen

Mangala (Cayla) Allen, CSYT, E-RYT 500, has a rich and varied Svaroopa® yoga background. She is a Certified Weekend Workshops Leader with certifications that allow her to teach Pregnancy Yoga, Gentle Yoga, Yoga for Your Back, Bliss Yoga, Half-Day Workshops, Svaroopa® Vidya Meditation, and to lead Yoga Philosophy Discussion Groups. In addition, she is a Meditation Group Leader, is certified in Yoga Therapy and Vichara, and has the Living Yoga — Business Certification.

It's perhaps surprising that, with such a full range of study and practice in Svaroopa® yoga, Mangala's early interest just fell into her lap. Having previously been trained as a dancer, particularly ballet, she had been working with a movement discipline that involved body, mind and spirit, and had been teaching her student

"Why do I teach?" I enjoy it for myself as well as what I see in my students. I learn so much from them. Their journeys feed my journey. There are so many paths out there; if I can offer this and help create an easy life for people, I'm glad...I feel blessed."

dancers essentially where and how to place their bones. At that time, Experiential Anatomy came to her town. Curious, she enrolled in the course, and soon after she began taking Svaroopa® yoga classes, getting Embodiment® sessions and meditating. In 2006 Cayla registered for Foundations and her training as a Svaroopa® yoga teacher began.

The principles of Svaroopa® yoga showed Mangala a whole system built around what she was beginning to discover on her own. Through this experience, she came to understand that all the hyper flexibility that had served her so well in the dance world was really revealing a tight spine. So she slowly moved away from the dance world and began immersing herself in yoga.

Mangala is just now getting established with her teaching in Texas, her home of only two years after moving from Atlanta. She says that it has taken a while because in the area where she resides now no one had ever heard of Svaroopa® yoga. Surrounded by many other styles of yoga in the two studios where she works, the students weren't sure what to think of Svaroopa® yoga, or even how to pronounce the name. But through word of mouth, more people have tried it and returned to Mangala's classes for more. Where she used to have three or four students in class, recently there were fourteen.

Mangala tells of a student telling his friend, "I don't know what happened there, but you have to take that class." Mangala also described a peak experience in her teaching where, after the final twist in Sukhasana, nobody was fidgeting; nobody was restless. They all sat there, so still. The whole class had dropped in deeply; it was beautiful to see this happening with new students who had not had this experience before. She said to them, "This is yoga," and used that moment of Grace

as a beautiful teaching point. She notices now that they are returning to class more regularly because they are finding Consciousness; it's starting to seep into them.

The most significant change Mangala has seen in her students is that they used to rush to put all the blankets away. Now, at the end of all her classes, she says to students, "Before you get up and start putting your props away, take a moment to stand in your feet... Notice what it feels like to be standing with an open spine, and then take this feeling, this sense that you have, into your life." She's noticed that they move much more slowly, helping each other to put the props away, even lingering for conversation about their experience.

I asked, "Why do you teach?" Mangala answered, reflecting on her move from Atlanta and starting over in Texas, "I've learned a lot of patience. It was a little rough at first; I was bumping into myself, my small self everywhere I turned. It took me a while, but I'm becoming more and more steeped in what we do. I enjoy it for myself as well as what I see in my students. I learn so much from them. Their journeys feed my journey. There are so many paths out there; if I can offer this and help create an easy life for people, I'm glad...I feel blessed."

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Why YTT Levels 3 & 4?



Rama (Ruth) Brooke

When I read the course description for Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga and learned that it was four and a half days with little down time, I thought, "Wow, the training must be intense for a beginning level course!" Indeed, it was. After completing the course, the changes I experienced were dramatic, and I was excited to share them with others, embarking on a new journey as a yoga teacher. Although I began teaching friends and family, I knew right away that I needed more training. I signed up for Yoga Teacher Training (YTT) Levels 1 & 2, which

began six months later. I knew, of course, that they would be even more intense than Foundations. I was not disappointed.

At that time (2007-2008), there were no certifications for completing Foundations or YTT 1 & 2. There was only the full Certified Svaroopa® Yoga Teacher (CSYT) certification after Level 4. I was certainly aware of the benefits of becoming certified as a Svaroopa® yoga teacher, but it really wasn't that which motivated me to continue with the training. There was more going on.

Every YTT course begins with each student sharing their name, where they are from and what they hope to get from the training. I would squirm in my seat as my turn approached, wondering how I could possibly answer the "why" part of the question in just one or two sentences. I found it difficult to put my reasons for being there into words. I still do, even as I write this article. I could say that I was looking for more openings or healing in my body, or that I was looking forward to

It is this "something more" that keeps me coming back again, through YTT and now into ATT and other Ashram courses. I can only describe it as a deepening into my Self, svaroopa, which has an increasing effect on myself and the choices I make in my life.

bringing new poses home to my students; or that I was thrilled to be with my Teacher Trainers and the other Svaroopis in the course. These answers are all true, but they don't fully express the "something more."

In fact, I never knew why I had taken the course or what I had gotten from it until, after returning home, I could reflect and begin to steep in the experience. I would know during the course that I was getting something profound, something life changing, but I couldn't put my finger on exactly what or how to describe it. It is this "something more" that keeps me coming back again, through YTT and now into ATT and other Ashram courses. I can only describe it as a deepening into my Self, svaroopa, which has an increasing effect on myself and the choices I make in my life.

Enrolling in Levels 3 & 4, to earn the CSYT 700-hour certification, teachers make yet another major leap and commitment. Why do they do it? Below are some responses from students who've signed up for Level 3 this October.

Cherie Bronsky is the Health & Wellness Director for Sun City Community Association, a retirement community serving 18,000 residents in Hilton Head, SC. When she told her employers about Svaroopa® yoga, what it had done for her and how she could develop a

By Rama (Ruth) Brooke

Svaroopa® program for facility residents, they agreed to pay for her full certification in Svaroopa® yoga:

I signed up for all four YTT Levels because I was in tremendous back and hip pain... I can honestly say that after one session of doing this yoga with the DVD (Primary Practice), the pain went away. It later reoccurred with a vengeance, but I have since learned how to manage it.... I wanted to bring this yoga to Sun City and to teach something that would help me get out of pain.

Cherie took Foundations in February 2013, only three months after her introduction to Svaroopa® yoga. In October 2013, she received her Certified Svaroopa® Yoga Basics Teacher (CSBT) certification after completing YTT Levels 1 & 2 and *Embodiment*®. Cherie is looking forward to attending Level 3 this October and to completing her CSYT certification:

My associate, Kathy Phillips, and I now teach 4 classes a week at Sun City Retirement Community. I am interested in teaching Gentle Yoga and the therapeutic courses too. They are right up my alley with most Sun City residents being age 72 and older, and often dealing with chronic pain.

From Bern Switzerland, Zoë Ghielmetti writes:

I have been practicing for a bit more than three years. I don't have a teacher here, so I practice on my own. My experience as a student is very limited: The major part of it is in the YTT courses. Recently, I have been able to attend a Svaroopa® yoga class in another city in Switzerland, but this is only once in a while.

At the very beginning, I went to Foundations for myself, as well as YTT Level 1. I didn't have the intention of teaching afterwards; I went to learn for myself. During Level 1, I somehow got engaged and thought I should try teaching. And to my surprise, I really liked it.

Why am I going on with Levels 3 & 4? I still do it for myself. From experience I know the intensive trainings will be, in one way or another, very beneficial for my body and my mind. Also, when I am interested in something, I would like to know more about it. I am a curious person. And I need to know more in order to become a better teacher.

Living far away and not having a teacher on a regular basis, I feel very much on my own. I think a regular training is necessary for me at my stage, to check if I am doing ok and to acquire further knowledge. And, as mentioned, I would like to progress personally.

Finally, when comparing teacher trainings in Switzerland, they are all more or less the equivalent of 700 hours. My intention, once I have completed the Svaroopa® training, is to apply to the Swiss Yoga Association for accreditation. This would make certain things easier. For example, my students might one day be able to get some reimbursement from health insurance for attending Svaroopa® yoga classes.

When reading the premise of this article, that "...teachers make a major commitment by moving into Level 3-4 and the 700-hour certification," I wonder whether I might not really be aware of what I am up to. Well, I will see. In general, my approach to life is more through the mind. For yoga, however, I chose another approach: The experience comes first.

My Yoga Journey

By Polly Peterson



Polly Peterson

"It's just pain," Swami Nirmalananda told me recently. "You are much more than your pain." She looked at me knowingly with her penetrating eyes. Instant tears flooded me with the knowing of that truth.

For several decades, I have embraced various forms of yoga, always drawn to its promise of hope and healing. However, I often hurt a lot after a yoga session. Then several years ago, a friend suggested I try Svaroopa®

yoga, "bliss" yoga. I valued her opinion, so I attended a class taught by Matrika, then Marlene, Gast. I was puzzled by all the blankets and other props, but felt better after the experience. Svaroopa® yoga really appealed to my Type A personality and not only left me more flexible and energized but more peaceful. I also was appreciative of the contemplations offered at the end of each session.

Over the years since, I have been inspired to do a daily practice and to purchase my own set of blankets. Now I begin each morning with Ujjayi Pranayama, asana and meditation. Observing this schedule makes each morning start off on a positive note.

I have meditated for years, first learning Transcendental Meditation, which helped me succeed in graduate school. But the last few years, I felt disorganized and undisciplined in my meditation. When Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver, offered a meditation class in the fall of 2013, I enrolled eagerly and found it extremely helpful in deepening, smoothing out and understanding my meditation.

My wonderful yoga teachers Matrika, Karuna and Betsy Ayers sponsored a Shaktipat Retreat with Swamiji in my hometown, Boise ID, in May 2013. I knew nothing about what that entailed, but I knew what a special occasion having Swamiji come to Boise was, so I signed up. Holy, moly! I was not prepared for the considerable Sanskrit chanting, meditation and ceremony! Being exhausted from too much work, all I wanted was Shavasana. But I was deeply moved by Swamiji, the depth of her knowledge, her enlightened beingness and her sense of humor. I was also struck by her head-to-toe orange clothing. I knew after that weekend that I wanted to study with her.

"It's just pain... You are much more than your pain." Swamiji's words have helped me reframe a very challenging physical experience. I now understand the meaning of Guru and am grateful to the center of my Self for the opportunity to have Swamiji as my Guru. I am grateful for the entire range of the Svaroopa® sciences and to all of the programs beneath that umbrella.

My next step was to enroll in Swamiji's "I Am Shiva" yearlong course, which consisted of her monthly articles, audios and conference calls with the other participants. The culmination of this fascinating course was a retreat held at the Desmond Hotel in July. I felt at home meeting the other yogis who were participating in the course. I had found "my tribe!" I spent much of the retreat in tears, deeply resonating with the truth of what Swamiji was teaching

and living. Her message of honoring your inner Divinity and that of others touched me deeply.

For the last eight years of my yoga journey, I have been in significant physical pain. I hoped against hope that yoga would relieve the pain. I have tried multiple therapies in addition to Svaroopa® yoga asana sequences and Embodiment® sessions, but the pain and condition persist. I am now trying patiently to wait for surgery, which is scheduled for December. At the "I Am Shiva" retreat I was saddened to see Swamiji walk in slowly with the aid of a walker. Part way into the retreat, I told her of my condition, asking her if she had any thoughts. Her response was the words that begin this article:

Fall Veggie Curry

If you are new to Ayurveda, you will find this delicious, warming recipe a nice choice for September meals and on through fall. This dish is also balancing for all constitutions.

3 tablespoons ghee
1 onion chopped
3 teaspoons black mustard seeds
2 tablespoons red curry paste
1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
2 cups cubed zucchini
1 15-ounce can red kidney beans

Instructions:

Sautee the onion and mustard seeds in the ghee. When the seeds start to pop, add the curry paste and cook, stirring for another minute or so. Add the zucchini and beans and coconut milk, and cook for 10 to 15 minutes. Salt as needed.

Serve over basmati rice with chopped cilantro. Papadum or chapattis are also great with this curry

योगा युल्लोड्ड

By Bindu (Maureen) Shortt

Reflections on Shaktipat, July 2014

By Antarajña (Deborah) Mandel

For over a year, an eye disease made me unable to drive further than the mile to my office. But after spending several weekends at the Ashram with Swamiji in the spring, my eyes healed and I was able to drive myself to a Shaktipat Retreat on beautiful Cape Cod in July. For the three-and-a-half hour trip from Connecticut, as I drove myself (notice the small-s in "self"), I listened to a recording of a chant to Nityananda, "OM Namō Bhagavate, Nityaanandaaya." I sang along with it; it transported me back to Nityaananda's Mahasamadhi Temple in India, where they sing this chant every morning, playing it over loud speakers outside, to be heard throughout Ganeshpuri. By the time I arrived at the inn, I was ready for what I knew would be another life-enhancing, bliss-filled weekend with Swamiji.

Swamiji began the weekend of meditation by talking about the importance of Grace as the "revelation of your own Self." Grace is the gift we receive through our Guru. Grace opens the door, allowing us to fully know our Self. Throughout this immersion weekend, chanting and receiving Shaktipat from Swamiji as she moved around the room of meditating yogis, gently batting us with the peacock feathers, my body/heart/mind/soul/ opened further and further. I became more expansive; I burned up lifetimes of accumulated sadness.

I had many experiences: images in my meditations of explosions and fire, of God shooting laser beams from His/Her eyes. I saw a blue pearl in the center of radiant diamond-like energy. Swamiji, my Self and everything merged in an orange light. I was filled with, surrounded by, and the same as the Guru — the One Self: "The infinity of your own Divinity," as Swamiji says.

Then the weekend was over. I got in the car to make the three-and-a-half hour drive home. I wanted to stay with my Self, and, as is my pattern, felt I needed support in doing that. So I played the chant again. About half-way home I realized that it wasn't the chant that was keeping me connected to my Self. I was the chant. I am the chant. I healed my eyes so that I could drive my Self to Cape Cod. It was not something Swamiji did to me, as I had been thinking. Through the Grace of the Guru, I heal my Self, I know my Self, I am my Self.



YTT

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module #1A	Daily Practice	Mar 18 - 22, 2015
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module #2A	Abdominals	Sept 2 - 6, 2015
module #2B	Backbends	Nov 18 - 22, 2015
module #2C	Standing Poses	tba 2016

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Arati

by Rukmini Abbuzzi



Rukmini Abbuzzi

Even if you're not feeling reverence, devotion and love when you begin, arati arouses these feelings, giving you a way to honor and connect to the Divine. Arati is a traditional flame ceremony that honors the Divine in a form. You choose the Divine form. You can do arati to a person, a river, a mountain, a sacred statue, a picture, a Guru. Whatever you're focusing your attention on, your mind and heart use the form to access the Divine that's present in every form.

Yoga recognizes and honors the Divinity of everything that exists and beyond; there's nothing that's not Divine. There's nothing that's not Shiva. But most of the time, your own Divinity is hidden from you, as is the Divinity of everything around you. When you do arati, offering a circle of flame to the Divine in the form you've chosen, you turn your mind and heart towards Divinity itself, invoking your ability to see that deeper, scintillating level of existence that's always there.

The Ashram residents offer arati to Swami Nityananda at the open and close of each day. They also offer the flame circles to every murti (sacred statue) and to every photo of the Gurus, as well as to the images of Shiva and other deities populating the meditation hall and Ashram walls. Arriving guests are greeted by an Ashramite, who circles a small tray containing a candle, flower blossoms and a bit of ash from Swamiji's sannayas initiation, honoring and recognizing the guest's Shiva-ness as he or she steps into the front door.

Arati can be as simple as holding a tea light in the palm of your hand, and waving it in gentle clockwise circles to a photo, murti or person. Or arati can be much grander and more elaborate as is the arati ceremony done every evening to the Ganga (Ganges River), the sacred river that flows through Varanasi.

Every religion and meditative tradition that has lasted for 1,000 years or more uses certain sacred objects — bells, flames, flowers, incense — to honor the Divine and invoke your ability to see that dimension that's always there. The ringing of the bells, the glow of the flame, the fragrance of the incense engage your senses, calm your mind and open the doorway into the Divine. Everyone is looking for a way to the Divine, whether they recognize it or not. It is a human need, the feeling of reverence and devotion. It's not just love, but it is devotional love, a whole special kind of love. That's what the arati ceremony is about.

When Swamiji is in India, one of the places she likes to go is Sarnath, the town with the deer park where Shakyamuni Buddha first gave teachings. Only a half hour away from Varanasi, the most significant Hindu pilgrimage center, Sarnath is a major Buddhist pilgrimage center, with a beautiful meditation temple featuring a statue of Buddha. On one of Swamiji's visits, the monk attending the temple invited Swamiji into the

sanctum sanctorum. They walked to the front of the temple, through the gate that usually prevents people from going too close to the statue of the Buddha, and then around behind the statue. Built into the pedestal was a little alcove with a little door. The monk explained, "Inside this door, there is a fingernail of the Buddha." He didn't open the door. The whole



temple was built to house a fingernail of Siddhartha Gautama.

Building a beautiful temple around a fingernail of the Buddha is not for the benefit of the fingernail or the Buddha. The temple was built by those who revere the Buddha, so they and others can go there to honor Buddha and experience their love for him, the kind of devotional love that motivate them to build an entire temple around a fingernail. What an extraordinary experience!

The arati ceremony can look like it's for the river, the picture, the statue, the Guru. But while the arati to Ganga does honor Her Divinity, it's not for Her benefit. It's for you and for everyone who is watching the ceremony, and especially for the person who is waving the flame. This is why we make arati available for you to do as a seva (service) in every retreat and training.

Speaking about arati, Baba Muktananda said, "From ritual you get stillness of mind and pure feelings. From ritual the flame of peace arises from within... If you love someone with great respect and honor, who enjoys that love? In whose heart does joy spring forth — you or the other person? That joy springs forth within you. So whatever you do, you do for your Self."

I was raised Catholic and my favorite part of going to church was the rituals. I loved getting to light a candle and say a prayer to Mother Mary, adding my little candle to the glow of the many candles offered at the feet of Her statue. I loved when the priest swung the thurible, the incense holder, and when the smoke from the charcoal and incense wafted up into the rafters and towards my pew. Something about these rituals spoke to me and gave me the "stillness of mind and pure feelings" that Baba describes. But it wasn't until I found Swamiji and began to do arati to our lineage that the deeper gifts of this ceremony began to blossom forth within me.

One morning at a program we were doing arati to Nityananda while chanting, "Jaya Jaya Arati Nityananda, Jaya Jaya Arati Nityananda..." I was waving the candle flame. As I waved the candle and chanted and looked into Nityananda's eyes, love began to well up in my heart and spread through me. On the currents of love came the understanding that Nityananda is there in the photo, and Swamiji is Nityananda, and the air and the floor and the blankets and the candle flame and all of us, and the sound of our voices singing these Sanskrit words of praise and honor and love — all are Nityananda. And I was Nityananda, waving Nityananda in the form of the flame, honoring Nityananda. Everything was Nityananda, everything was Divine, everything was the one Self that is the Self of all. Everything IS Nityananda, everything IS Divine, everything IS the one Self that is the Self of all.

Baba also said, "We do the arati for ourselves, to purify our own selves, so that Nityananda can bless us to receive his grace. We don't do this arati for someone else's benefit, but for our own.... Even though we do this prayer in front of a photo, you attain the peace of your own Self."

When you can honor and see the Divine in a form, you cultivate your ability to honor and recognize the Divinity of all forms. Including your own.



Sweet Seva

By Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver and Matrika (Marlene) Gast



Lisa Spangler

Lisa Spangler feels fortunate to live so close to the teachings of *Svaroopa*® yoga — literally and figuratively. She lives near Downingtown PA, the home of Svaroopa Vidya Ashram, so Lisa first experienced *Svaroopa*® yoga through introductory classes at Downingtown Yoga and Meditation Center (DYMC) in early 2010. Not knowing anything about this style of yoga, she was intrigued by a local advertisement for the new center.

After experiencing the inner opening attained through the practice, Lisa became a devoted student. She furthered her study with a more in-depth yoga class series, a meditation course with Swami Nirmalananda, and then completed Foundations, the first stage of Teacher Training, over the summer.

Since then, seva has become important to her. "It took me some time to make seva a given part of my *Svaroopa*® yoga practice," she says. "I had to first understand the whole concept of the Guru. I had no idea of the wonder I was going to be exposed to by just taking a *Svaroopa*® yoga class. Then I took the Meditation 101 course with Swamiji. I still was not fully educated about seva, but I did enjoy bringing sweets to special events at Kashi (DYMC). When I had completed the yoga offerings at Downingtown Yoga, I enrolled in Foundations. I did not even realize until the end that I would be qualified to teach introductory *Svaroopa*® yoga classes. The thought was thrilling to me. It was something I had always wanted to do."

That thrill brought Lisa to her first major seva. "One evening, I heard Swamiji speaking with someone, and she said that teachers were needed

at Downingtown Yoga. The thought that I could offer something that might be of service to Swamiji, who had taught me so much, was as thrilling to me as teaching yoga poses would be. I offered my service to teach free classes for those interested in a glimpse of *Svaroopa*® yoga.

Lisa adds, "My seva grew from teaching free introductory *Svaroopa*® yoga classes at DYMC, to looking for opportunities to be of further service," a by-product of attending a Shaktipat weekend retreat with Swamiji. "It was at this weekend that I 'got it.' I began to understand what was going on.

"Until then I was being blissfully carried, but at Shaktipat Weekend I began to realize the significance of the gift that I was being given by the Grace of the Guru. I had prayed for so long to be relieved of the torture of my puny mind, and I realized it was being delivered to me via Swamiji," Lisa says.

Since then, she has looked for any opportunity to be of service, and has found many. "For all of the weekly public events at Kashi, I arrive early, most often in the company of my dear yogi friend Kanchan (Connie) Mohn, to straighten up a bit, to set up the chairs and blankets for the guests, and to bring in flowers and offer puja. Once we have readied the venue, it is a pleasure to help visiting *Svaroopa*® yogis and other guests get comfortable." Lisa continues, "My favorite seva is that of bathing the murtis (sacred statues) at Kashi and the Ashram — what a blessed and loving experience, especially when Kanchan and I do it together with chanting!"

When asked what effect seva has had on her, Lisa says, "Seva adds sweetness. It is icing on the cake. It always feels good. Seva keeps me connected to Swamiji and the Ashram in a very personal and loving way."

UPCOMING PHONE COURSE



SUTRAS: From Here To That

Teacher: Vidyadevi Stillman

Dates: four Mondays 9/5, 10/6, 10/20, 11/10

Time: 3:30 - 5:00 pm (Eastern Time); calls are recorded

Here you are, but where are you going? The ancient sages laid out a road map that makes it easy to find your way. Vidyadevi is your GPS, leading you through an important text at the heart of the *Svaroopa*® Sciences. These sutras help you understand how you came to be here, how you (still) get stuck and how you get to THAT.

To register or for more information, call 610.806.2119 or e-mail programs@svaroopayoga.org.

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

Upcoming Programs

September 2014		
14	Swami Sunday 8:30 - 12:15 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
15	Sutras: From Here to That (Phone Course)	Vidyadevi
16	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
19 - 23	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Vidyadevi, Bhakta, Kamala at The Desmond
20 - 27	Meditation Group Leader Training	Vidyadevi, Swamiji, Rukmini at The Desmond
20 - 21	Yoga and Meditation: The Bliss of a Quiet Mind	Yogeshwara Fountain
21	Swami Sunday 8:30 - 12:15 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
23	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
25 - 29	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Bhakta, Karmala at The Solebury Club
27 - 28	Choose Joy!	Mangala at Mountain Park Georgia
28 - Oct 5	ATT262: Yoga Therapy — Treating Pain	Vidyadevi, Karobi, Swamiji at The Desmond
28	Swami Sunday 8:30 - 12:15 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
28	Walk With Ease Through Life	Vidyadevi at DYMC
October 2014		
2	Sri Guru Gita 6:30 - 7:45 am	Swamiji at DYMC
4 - 14	Yogaimmersion - Out of Town	Swamiji in Australia
7	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm	Vidyadevi at DYMC
10	Shaktipat Retreat Pinbarren Queensland	Swamiji in Australia
10 - 19	YTT Level 3	Vidyadevi, Karobi at The Desmond
18 - 19	Connect with the Power of your Breath	Addie Alex in South Stafford VT
21	Q&A Phone Satsang 7:00 - 8:00 pm	Swamiji
23	Diwali Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
24	Experiencing Bliss 2:00 - 5:00 pm	Vidyadevi at DYMC
26	Swami Sunday 8:30 - 12:15 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
27 - 30	Foundation Primary Teacher Training	Vidyadevi and Swamiji at The Desmond
28	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00pm	Vidyadevi at DYMC
November 2014		
2 - 9	ATT 402: Deeper Practice	Swamiji, Vidyadevi & Karobi at The Desmond
2	Swami Sunday 8:30 - 12:15 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
4	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
6	Sri Guru Gita 6:30 - 7:45 am	Swamiji at DYMC
7 - 11	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga (San Diego)	Bhakta, Johnson, Margo at Expressive Art Institute
9	Swami Sunday 8:30 - 12:15 pm	Swamiji at DYMC
11	Taking It Into Fullness	Vidyadevi at DYMC
11	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm	Vidyadevi at DYMC
14 - 16	Slow Down!	Vidyadevi in Dekalb IL
17	Pose Clinic 12:00 pm	Vidyadevi in Dekalb IL
December 2014		
2	Satsang 7:30 - 9:00 pm	Vidyadevi at DYMC
5 - 14	YTT Level 2	Swamiji, Vidyadevi & Karobi at The Desmond

JANUARY 2015		
14 – 18	EYTS – Top to Tail	The Desmond Hotel
22 – 25	DIY: Heart Openers	The Desmond Hotel
28 – Feb 4	ATT 262: Yoga Therapy – Treating Pain	The Desmond Hotel
FEBRUARY 2015		
7 – 20	India Retreat – Ganeshpuri's Grace	Swamiji in India
21 – 25	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	The Desmond Hotel
22 – 27	Embodiment® Yoga Therapy Training	Brisbane, AU
27 – Mar 1	Experiential Anatomy	Brisbane, AU
27 – Mar 1	Yatra to Downingtown	DYMC
MARCH 2015		
6 – 10	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Brisbane, AU
6 – 15	YTT Level 2	The Desmond
10	Year Long Program with Swamiji begins	Phone Course
14 – 15	Weekend Workshop	Brisbane, AU
18 – 22	YTT Module #1A – Daily Practice	The Desmond
20 – 22	Shaktipat Retreat	TBD
25	Yogify Your Life begins	Phone Course
27 – April 3	ATT 402: Deeper Practice	The Desmond
APRIL 2015		
11 – 16	Embodiment® Yoga Therapy Training	The Desmond
17 – 19	Experiential Anatomy	The Desmond
23 – 26	EYTS – Foundations Review	The Desmond
26 – 29	EYTS – Deceptive Flexibility	The Desmond
MAY 2015		
01 – 03	Shaktipat Retreat	The Desmond
07 – 10	DIY: Knots in Your Neck	The Desmond
12 – 17	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	The Desmond
19 – 24	YTT Module #1B – Lower Spinal Release	The Desmond
29 – 07	Level 4	The Desmond

JUNE 2015		
16 – 19	EYTS – Foundations Review	The Desmond
19 – 28	Level 1	The Desmond
JULY 2015		
7 – 12	ATT 201: Leading Half Day Workshops	The Desmond
14 – 19	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	The Desmond
22 – 26	YTT Module #1C – Upper Spinal Release	The Desmond
28 – Aug 2	Meditation Teacher Retreat & Continuing Ed	The Desmond
AUGUST 2015		
5 – 9	EYTS – Embodiment Poses	The Desmond
20 – 23	DIY: Strength & Flexibility	The Desmond
28 – 30	Year Long Program Retreat	The Desmond
SEPTEMBER 2015		
2 – 9	Leading a Discussion Group	Phone Course
2 – 6	YTT Module #2A – Abdominals	The Desmond
11 – 20	Level 3	The Desmond
25 – Oct 5	ATT 465: Yoga Therapy – Neck & Shoulders	The Desmond
25 – 27	Shaktipat Retreat	Swamiji at TBD
OCTOBER 2015		
10 – 15	Embodiment	The Desmond
16 – 18	Experimental Anatomy	The Desmond
20 – 25	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	The Desmond
23	Shaktipat Retreat with Swamiji	Brisbane, AU
24 – 25	Weekend Workshop with Swamiji	Brisbane, AU
27 – Nov 1	ATT 262: Yoga Therapy – Treating Pain	Brisbane, AU
NOVEMBER 2015		
1 – 5	Retreat with Vichara with Swamiji	The Desmond
8 – 15	ATT 403: Lower Spinal Release	The Desmond
18 – 22	YTT Module #2B – Backbends	The Desmond
DECEMBER 2015		
4 – 6	Regional Conference – Full Spectrum Yoga	TBD

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