



Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

Kaadaa!

Svaroopaa® Yoga: Experience Your Divine Self

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Editorial

Conscious Community

By Swami Nirmalananda

Much of yoga practice is done alone. While your yoga class or meditation group is wonderful, you close your eyes to do your Inner Work. Your inner world is incredibly captivating, whether you're tracking physical changes, mental processes or the dawning of enlightenment. The sages describe the inner world as greater than the outer world, even unto the edges of the universe and beyond. In a group situation, you still do the work alone. You open your eyes, see others and follow your teacher's cues, but your attention is drawn inward. After all, it's yoga! It's about turning inward! Yoga and meditation classes are classes; you're supposed to be learning. *Svaroopaa*® yoga themes begin with "Daily Practice," to empower you to do it at home. You get more out of it when you do it at home. Alone.

However, your yoga community is incredibly important. Dogs are pack animals. Horses and cows are herd animals. What is a human being? A *consciousness connection*. Instinctual impulses driving most animal behaviors are only part of human needs. The experience of consciousness is essential for your mental-emotional health and even for your physical health. Research has proven this conclusively with the amazing health benefits of meditation! You must experience the Consciousness-that-you-are, which is both bliss and beyond bliss.

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Tadaa!

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Swamiji

Yet everyone around you is also consciousness — each is a distinct form of the One Ecstatic Exuberant Reality that is Being Every Thing. When you know the Consciousness-that-you-are, you see all revealed as consciousness. Being Consciousness, you delight in the connection between the different forms of consciousness. The One, being Two. When you don't

know you're consciousness, you use others to create a connection to consciousness, without realizing what you're really doing. It's dependent bliss, but it's still bliss, which is essential to a human.

So, what happens in a community of yogis? Your relationships are based on shared experience, of your-own-Self-as-Consciousness-Itself. Together, you are experiencing the One— being Two. This is so *different* from other relationships, where you experience the Two — trying to become One.

In the busy-ness of life, don't forget your yoga family. They are essential to your health and well-being. They are essential to your process of becoming Self-Realized.

Full Spectrum Yoga Conference

a photo essay

By Karuna Beaver

Forty Svaroopa® yogis gathered in San Diego, CA from December 4 – 6 to dive deeply into yoga’s many practices at our Full Spectrum Yoga Conference. Participants did asana, pranayama, vichara, bhakti practices from the heart (including arati), meditation and more. Swami Nirmalananda and the other teachers explained each practice and how they contributed to the science of body and mind that is yoga. Swami Nirmalananda’s two keynote addresses put it all into perspective and gave participants a framework with which to understand the deeper levels of their Divine Selves.



San Diego teacher Sheynapurna Peace prepares to send her workshop partner Laurie into bliss with a Sukhasana sacrum lift.

Photo by Karuna Beaver



Swamiji shares a moment of delight with conference attendees.

Photo by Kusuma Sachs



Swamiji observes as Daya Ma (Amanda) Ahern and Kelly Sullivan wave candle flames (arati) to the Babas, Nityananda and Muktananda.

Photo by Karuna Beaver



Soraya Pereira, a long-time San Diego teacher, receives a sacred ash imprint from Swami.

Photo by Kusuma Sachs

Seated Side Stretch: What's Not to Like?

By Aanandi (Annie) Ross



Aanandi (Annie) Ross

Seated Side Stretch (Pawanmuktasana) wasn't always my favorite pose. At the start of my *Svaroopaa*® yoga experience, I couldn't believe that I needed to move thirteen blankets around to set up for this pose. I needed six to sit on, a wedge and three supporting blankets under each knee. I thought, "Do people really do this? Is this really necessary?" But I couldn't discount the fact that sitting on a lower stack felt very uncomfortable. I should be able to feel my sitbone sinking down into the blanket and come back up, with free and easy movement of my sitbone and hip. Instead, I had that "hit a brick" feeling on both sides.

Thus, all the way up on six blankets I sat for a couple of years. If I had done more yoga in those days, my body might have changed more quickly. Yet gradually, as my spinal muscles released, my spine lengthened and my skeleton began to undergo shifts and transformations. All the Foundations poses work on these changes, which I found especially in this pose. My hips became more stable, and I was able to sit on fewer blankets.



For another long while I sat on four blankets with no internal bricks in the way. I was amazed at this transformation and began to really understand what was meant by the statement I heard so often in trainings: "Support equals release." Blankets became my friends! I realized that the weaker areas of my musculature were gaining strength and mobility as they released. The teaching that "a tight muscle is a weak muscle, and a weak muscle is a tight muscle" became an actual experience. At the same time, other significant changes happened.

As an esthetician, my arms and shoulders were constantly in an outward and upward

position. I had been using my back muscles for years in a stressful way, which in turn affected my arms, neck and shoulders. I once raised the question in an esthetics training, "How are we supposed to hold our body or perform this treatment without stressing our back, neck and shoulders?" There wasn't a clear answer. I was constantly visiting a chiropractor. I decided to get a big ball to roll on to ease the pain. This wasn't the answer either.

Fortunately, I found *Svaroopaa*® yoga. In my early days of doing Seated Side Stretch, my upper arm would always be forward and far away from my head and ears. Eventually, with continuing spinal opening from tail to top, my need to visit the chiropractor dissolved completely. If anything did tighten up, I knew how to breathe, open my spine and find relief. I knew how to take care of myself.

As time went on, I was amazed to find movement in my upper back in areas that I never even knew existed. The area all around my armpits (front, back and below) and my side ribs became alive with sensation, as though awakened from nonbeing. I experienced significant increased range of motion of my arms, now aligned near my head and ear in SSS. The sides of my body began to have a lot more length — from my hip, throughout my waist and on up. My breathing space expanded and my ribs found a new placement in line with my hips, rather than jutting forward.

Looking at the benefits of SSS, I find this pose easy to love: it lengthens and massages my spine. Just like it says on the Foundations pose handout, it relieves neck and shoulder tensions and pain. I can feel it open up my ribcage and breathing. It takes pressure off my internal organs, improves my respiration and circulation. It even lengthens my abdominal muscles and trims my waistline. The awareness of more space in the diaphragm is so blissful. The pose also massages my internal organs and nervous system, and stimulates all systems: immune, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, elimination, reproductive and glandular. Plus Seated Side Stretch balances ida and pingala nadis. What's not to like?

I have discovered such transformation in this pose throughout the years. It continues to be a valuable Marker Pose as I journey along this amazing yogic path.

Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga

Upcoming DATES

Feb 17 – 21 in Downingtown PA

Mar 21 – 25 in Downingtown PA

May 13 – 17 in Downingtown PA

July 13 – 17 in Downingtown PA

Aug 29 – Sept 2 in Downingtown PA

Nov 2 – 6 in Downingtown PA

Are You A SATYA Member?

SATYA Members in Current Standing get a **40% discount** off tuition when they retake a Foundations Course in PA!

To register or for more information, call 610.806.2119 or email programs@svaroopayoga.org

How Could I NOT Teach?

By Rudrani (Rosemary) Nogue



Rudrani (Rosemary) Nogue

My husband recently retired, so I asked myself if I would stop teaching yoga and meditation. After teaching for 20 years, I wondered if it was time to do what people do when they retire. But I soon discovered that I was not ready to walk away from a calling that brings me into my Self time and time again. After much contemplation the question became, "How could I NOT teach?" Here are my answers to this question.

GRACE

Teaching is one of many practices that immerses me in the Grace of this lineage, specifically from Swamiji, my Guru. Grace, combined with my consistent yoga practices, gives me access to my own Self — to the truth of my being. When I walk in to teach a Svaroopa® class, a workshop or "Learn to Meditate" course, no matter what "stuff" is clouding my mind, concentrated Grace consistently transforms me. I open and close my Deeper Yoga classes with "Om svaroopā svasvabhāvah namo namah." Simply repeating these Sanskrit words at the beginning of class places me in the flow of Grace that allows me to teach from my true Self. Such is the power of Grace.

GROWING INTO THE SELF

I increasingly understand that teaching is not about me — it's about me being the Self. It is a calling that is beyond a job or career. It consistently leads me to a new way to be in the world **all of the time**, not just when I am teaching. Teaching is an integral part of my path to enlightenment. To teach effectively is to step into the Self and the Grace that opens me to infinite possibility. As I reciprocally adapt to the one Self being all, so do my students.

My students help me recognize my blind spots. I learn from them what works and what doesn't work. As a teacher I continue to develop my skills, developing clarity and precision in my words and sharing my knowledge of the teachings. I stay in Current Standing in both asana and

meditation as there is so much more to learn; the trainings help clear the drift that happens to us all. In trainings I have a tangible experience of what is possible. I get to see what I don't get yet, what I can't hear yet, where I am stuck and where I am going. How can you change what you do not know?

I SERVE MY GURU BY SERVING MY STUDENTS

I teach because I am empowered and supported by Swamiji and by our Teacher Trainers to do so. In the way they do, I inspire and support my students: lighting the path by providing a reliable set of practices, which are a doorway to the inner experiences that yoga promises. As my students change and grow, so do I. We challenge each other.

I help build a Svaroopa® yoga community of students and teachers in Calgary (and beyond), through weekly classes and through co-hosting Weekend Workshops, Foundations trainings and Shaktipat Retreats. I help yogis connect with other yogis and expand the footprint of Svaroopa® yoga in my corner of the world. I help mentor the new generation of yoga teachers.

I am privileged weekly to be with yogis who are bumping into their small selves. I am privileged weekly to be with students who are deepening into clarity, humor and kindness — into the light of Consciousness. I serve yogis whose enthusiasm makes them arrive early for class, so that they have extra time in Shavasana. I have the delight of seeing their faces when they come up from their last Shavasana glowing, relaxed, the Self shining through their eyes.

I TEACH BECAUSE IT MATTERS

Recently, a long time yoga and meditation student was hit by a pickup truck when out for a bike ride. She was badly injured. As she waited for the paramedics to arrive she fell into repeating mantra, which supported her greatly. It continues to support her through her daily Ujjayi breathing, simple poses and meditation as she continues to heal. She will be back in classes soon. The practices of Svaroopa® yoga have been a lifeline for her. I teach because every day it makes a real difference in someone's life.

I serve Swamiji as I serve my students and as I serve I am filled with the knowing that we are all Shiva and Shiva is enjoying it all! For this I am so grateful.

Swamiji's Chai Recipe

With love & blessings for the New Year, Swamiji

4 cups water
1 decaf English Breakfast teabag
16 green cardamom pods
½ teaspoon of ginger (or more to taste)
2 cinnamon sticks
¼ teaspoon vanilla (or more to taste)
4 black peppercorns

Instructions:

Simmer the above together for 10 minutes, which will reduce the water by about ½ cup.. Replace the missing water with ½ cup milk or dairy substitute and simmer together for 5 minutes. Serve hot and sweeten if desired.

Makes 2 mugs

पुष्पा पुष्पलमेडइ

Miracles Beyond Miracles By Sandra VanOosten



Sandra VanOosten

Even before my ATT 252: Yoga Therapy — Treating Pain course ended last January, I had invited a current client for my homework sessions. She signed up for a series of five sessions to address emotional pain. In her sessions she experienced significant improvement and decided to take Foundations a few months later. Inspired by her results, I sent a “special offer” email for Treating Pain sessions to 25 students and clients. That’s when more and more miracles arose! Everyone who came to these

private sessions and practiced the Ujjayi homework for 14 days reduced their pain levels.

With just two sessions my longtime student Cynthia improved miraculously. Age 51, Cynthia is an administrator in a Washington DC university, as well as the mother of two children in college and one still in high school. When she attended classes consistently in 2004, she was able to eliminate high blood pressure medication. Yet she has reported neck and back pain as high as 8 (on a pain scale from 0 to 10) over the years. When she came for her two “special offer” sessions, Cynthia had level-3 neck pain and level-6 emotional pain in response to rumors of staff layoffs where she works. Even in her first session, Cynthia’s neck pain dropped to 0 and her emotional state settled to level 1.

Her first session was “just” 10 minutes of Ujjayi breathing. In her second session, Cynthia came in with level-3 lower back and foot pain, as well as level-2 neck and emotional pain. With 20 minutes of Ujjayi, her emotional, back and foot pain fell to 0 and her neck pain to 1. Recently, Cynthia sent this photo of her practicing



cartwheels! She has resumed classes now and her conditions have continued to improve. She credits her continuing daily Ujjayi practice.

In Cynthia’s sessions, I learned that it is not just the sound of the breath that treats pain. It is also the environment in which this breathing practice is taught. I am so aware now of the critical role of being present for my clients and deeply listening to them. This “healing bhav” is a secret ingredient that we learned as part of *Svaroopa*® yoga therapy training, which reliably results in positive change for our clients.

My personal experience of *Svaroopa*® yoga pain treatment was also a miracle. After a bout of sciatica in 2010, I had a pain treatment session with Tanmayee (Theresa) Reynolds, a Certified *Svaroopa*® Yoga Teacher. It led to increasing my practice of yoga and Ujjayi Pranayama daily, having *Embodiment*® sessions and taking *Svaroopa*® yoga classes. Since

I already was practicing Ujjayi twice daily, Tanmayee’s treatment included a few poses with special alignments and adjustments for pain. Afterwards, I had so much less pain and anxiety about my condition that I told Tanmayee I planned to enroll in the Treating Pain training!

However, full-time care giving for my late husband in his final illness intervened. I waited until January 2015 to enroll. Participating in the training vividly demonstrated the power of the *Svaroopa*® Sciences teachings, since I saw the radical effects of twice daily Ujjayi practice in myself. While my sciatica had improved since Tanmayee’s 2010 session with me, I have still had intermittent lingering pain and sensations. Yet in last January’s training, I had much less pain and, at times, no pain, even though participating in yoga-full days for the eight-day immersion. Credit and thanks go to Vidyadevi, Kusuma and Devi for their dedication and deep knowledge of the curriculum. They were masterful in helping us all become certified Treating Pain Therapists! That result has rippled out with miracles beyond miracles for our clients at home.

We learned statistics showing many people suffering acute and chronic pain who could use our help. I found corroboration for these statistics and the effectiveness of yoga in treating pain in an August 11, 2015, Press Release from the NIH National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH). Reading it, I felt thankful that *Svaroopa*® Yoga Therapists (including myself) already know about this effectiveness from the experience of our clients. Treating Pain allows me to offer ways to help students and clients become their own self-healers and to co-create their healing process and yoga practice.

Upcoming YTT, EYTS & ATT Courses 2016

January 2 - 5	Leading Teacher Training
January 8 - 17	YTT Level 2
January 22 - 25	EYTS: Foundations Review
Jan 25 - Feb 15	3 Meditation Teacher Trainings
February 17 - 21	Foundations of <i>Svaroopa</i>® Yoga
February 24 - 28	EYTS: Intro to Teaching Gentle Yogis
March 8 - 11	EYTS: Foundations Review
March 11 - 20	YTT Level 1
March 21 - 25	Foundations of <i>Svaroopa</i>® Yoga
March 25 - 30	EYTS: Enrich & Advance - YTT Level 2
April 1 - 3	Radical Anatomy for Yogis
April 5 - 10	<i>Embodiment</i>® Yoga Therapy Training
April 22 - May 1	YTT Level 4
May 9 - 12	DTS Mentor Training

Click on the course titles for more information.

Contact our Enrollment Advisors for more info at **610.806.2119** or programs@svaroopayoga.org

How Much Can You Take In?

By Dhananjaya (David) King, interviewed by Priya Kenney



Dhananjaya (David) King

Sometimes unfortunate events take you to the right place. Dhananjaya (David) King was an athlete who hurt his back and found relief in *Svaroopa*® yoga. He quickly recovered after taking yoga classes where he worked and has been hooked ever since. "Yoga ultimately sunk all the way into my bones and I realized it was my ticket to where I really wanted to go," said Dhananjaya. He took Foundations, went to special programs when he could, and, when a Shaktipat Retreat came along, he knew it was what he needed and wanted.

"I'm now hooked on Shaktipat and go every year," he says.

Anticipating the recent Boston Shaktipat Retreat, Dhananjaya stepped up his practices. That helped prepare him to receive more than ever before. On the first night, Swamiji talked about the Grace that is bestowed and said the amount you receive is truly up to you. She used the analogy of a dry season or drought. Who are you when it starts to rain? Are you the one that runs out naked in the rain or do you put on boots or grab an umbrella? Who are you during Shaktipat? How much do you take in?

Dhananjaya was ready to take in more. "I've been through many retreats and heard people talk about feeling the energy move but had not experienced it for myself. On Friday night during that first session, it was clear this was going to be something different, something special; I could feel the energy move."

A manufacturing engineer by trade, Dhananjaya regularly uses his mind for detailed thinking and calculations. Up until this retreat, his mind had to go through a lot of calculations to understand his Shaktipat experiences, but this one was different:

This was the first time I was able to actually hear what Swamiji was saying. When she asked us to talk about our experiences, for the first time, I didn't have to do a calculation. It was like I found the Rosetta stone. Being from the USA, I think of temperature in Fahrenheit; so if I want to know the Celsius value, I need to calculate. This time I didn't need to calculate, I didn't need to translate. I didn't need to think about it. I knew it. I knew THAT.

I understood the role of my mind clearly. That kind of registration for me was phenomenal. It changed the way I saw everything, including people at the Shaktipat. To look across the room and see the woman I've been married to for years and to see her fully for the first time was just indescribable. For the first time I really experienced the person inside. Everyone I looked at was bright and vibrant, shining through.

I understood how Swamiji sees us. She sees us and who we really are regardless of how the outside looks. That's why her look is so strong. With a glance she can blast you through the galaxy or let you know you're not tracking. This time I was able to hold that glance for more than a few seconds, without feeling I wasn't worthy, not looking away before she was done. For her to acknowledge the vastness in me was an incredible experience. I was taking in as much as possible and realized: I am THAT, I am. When I looked into her eyes, I saw it reflected back to me.

On the last day of the retreat, Dhananjaya wrote in his journal, "I choose to live in the river of Grace and my mind is beginning to see the benefits." Since the retreat, he hasn't been plagued by a spinning mind. "It's been more that I've been reassuring my mind what it's supposed to be doing for me. The anxiety goes away and I'm no longer creating reasons to worry. There's no reason for my mind to whirl around calculating all the potential outcomes."

Driving to work the other day, he realized that in contrast to the male way of thinking, his mind was Shakti, the feminine. He is realizing that the mind is far kinder and willing to help than he knew. "Your mind is a tool," says Dhananjaya. "You wouldn't use a saw to hammer nails. You wouldn't use your mind to find God because it's not the right tool." Dhananjaya is finding God with the help of Swamiji in Shaktipat, japa, chanting and meditation. Dhananjaya is one of the names of Arjuna, a name of great honor. It means the loving warrior, the winner of all riches. Dhananjaya credits Shaktipat for allowing him to step into the fullness of his name.

Shaktipat Retreats

Swami Nirmalananda awakens your Kundalini, the spiritual power that is hidden within. Once awakened by the Guru, Kundalini climbs your spine from tail to top. Jump start your spirituality, to rocket light-years ahead in one weekend.



March 4 - 6 in Downingtown PA

May 13 - 15 in Boise ID

July 1 - 3 in Boston MA

Sept 30 - Oct 2 in Downingtown PA

Enrollment Advisors

Call direct 610.806.2119 programs@svaroopayoga.org

Established in Bliss By Prakash (David) Falbaum, SVA Board Member



Prakash (David) Falbaum

This bliss promise comes from Patanjali in sutra 1.3: *Tadaa drashtu svaroopam vashanam*. It gives the Svaroopa® Sciences and our yoga and meditation styles their name, "When your mind stills, you abide in the bliss of your own being (svarooopa)."

I feel that, together we are becoming established in bliss, as a community. Nothing has made this clearer than the great start on our Bliss Place Capital Campaign last fall. The generosity of many Svaroopis has provided some of the needed funds to move our renovations of Lokananda forward, to make it our full-service retreat center for our full-spectrum yoga. Lokananda means "bliss place," and is ready to welcome you into a center saturated with shakti, streaming with the Grace of the Guru.

I hope that you look forward, as I do, to receiving ongoing Teacher Training in this place, to attending satsangs and Shaktipat Retreats with Swami Nirmalananda, to being immersed in your home away from home. Here you will be nurtured with delicious, healthful vegetarian meals to support your practices. You will be housed in comfort and community and all this will be at a much lower cost than we had at The Desmond. Wow! But there's more: instead of needing to be transported by the hotel van to attend satsang or chant *Sri Guru Gita* with Swamiji, we just walk downstairs.

As I look forward to being in this new retreat location, I feel intensely how much the Ashram means to me, knowing now we are all housed in an Ashram campus, located just two miles away, in downtown Downingtown. I recall my

first experience of entering the Ashram building where Swamiji resides. Along with my YTT Level 1 classmates, I was invited to lunch with Swamiji. When we arrived and sat in the Meditation Room, I began to cry. That melting released me into a stream of Grace that has continued to carry me forward. The Ashram is the seat. When I sit in that space, my inspiration for spiritual practices, for teaching and for life arises. Now that we are housed, fed and trained in Lokananda, we receive an even more direct connection to all the inspiration that flows through Swamiji and the Ashram.

I now have a palpable feeling of connection to the Ashram, even when I am at home in Minnesota. When I began *Svaroopa*® yoga about five years ago, I lacked a feeling of connection to anything. But now I feel that nothing separates me from the Ashram in PA,

even though the physical distance is more than a thousand miles. Since this is true, I am eager for my next training at Lokananda, knowing it is just down the road from the Ashram.

I look forward to our whole community being in a place where the shakti can effortlessly build and build. When we go to Lokananda for immersions, we'll be so saturated with bliss that once home, we'll effortlessly infuse that into our own places immediately.

While our Capital Campaign has gotten us going on the updating of our "new" 130-year-old building, there's lots more to do. As we resume our appeal for your support of this important project, I hope you'll eagerly jump in, for you are creating your own spiritual home – for you and for others.

Even beyond our capital funding needs, let's keep our organization financially strong on an ongoing basis. I invite you to join me in contributing as generously as possible to continue to grow a robust organization. Your contributions bring our vision of fully establishing the *Svaroopa*® Sciences in the wider world to open us all to the promise of yoga: abiding in the bliss of your own being.

Lokananda: Your Bliss Place



Capital Campaign

Your support is needed to complete our renovations for our new campus. Our yogimmersions have moved into Lokananda with great success, as well as our local yoga classes and meditation program, but much remains to be done. Create your Bliss Place and support Svaroopis and teachers-in-training through your donation or pledge to our ongoing Capital Campaign — Lokananda: Your Bliss Place.

[Click to donate now or for more info,](#)
or phone us at 610.644.7555.

Immersion at Lokananda

By Rama (Ruth) Brooke



Rama (Ruth) Brooke

"I enjoyed Lokananda and felt the wonderful energy from the classroom all the way up to the apartment. I loved how it was in the same building as the classrooms."

— Sharon Spontak, Foundations student

The Sanskrit term for the energy she describes as filling the whole space is "shakti." In this case "Guru-shakti," the energy that emanates from one who is Self-Realized. This energy vibrates at a different frequency than the environment

in which you live. Lokananda is dedicated to shakti. This is why Swami Nirmalananda wants us to be able to practice, sleep and eat in an Ashram building.

In one of my first YTT courses, our teacher explained, "We want you to get your money's worth, so we're not giving you a lot of free time while you're here." That is one way of describing what you get in a Svaroop® yogimmersion, but there is so much more! Not only are you immersed in what you are studying, in Lokananda you become gradually immersed in Consciousness, deeply immersed in the Self. In an Ashram building, even the environment is helping to change your patterns of consciousness (or unconsciousness). Swamiji describes this immersion from her experience of living in Baba Muktananda's Ashram. "Like dipping a white cloth in a vat of dye, each time you immerse the cloth, it absorbs more and more of the color." This happens to your mind and heart, not merely your body. Immersion fuels transformation.

Swamiji has been committed to providing an immersion environment since she and the Board first created the Ashram residence. Expanding into Lokananda guarantees a deeper experience than any prior locations simply because it is the Ashram. Yet an Ashram is not a luxury hotel, so your rooms are smaller and you share a bathroom with others, yet it's comfortable, newly updated and beautifully decorated.

"The older building has character. Each student has their own bed with a drawer underneath and shelving space to store personal items. It was nice not to have to live out of my suitcase for the week. I had one roommate, which was lovely."

— Sharon Spontak

"Loved the yoga blankets in the rooms. Mattresses, pillows, etc. are very nice! Love the little baskets in bathrooms - plenty of shelves." — Patti Ryan

"Love the instantaneous continuous hot water and bathroom setup with room for stuff." — Debra Klebesadel

"Thank you for the range of pillow firmness." — Cindy Rust

"Great accommodations, well decorated and comfortable."

— Lori Lepold

"It is cozy - very homey. I like the cubbies on the bed and the individual light." — Colleen Malone

Some of our upstairs apartments have been fully renovated while others are awaiting funding from our Capital Campaign, resuming soon. Our new dining room just opened, providing lots of space for meal and recess

times. A student lounge has been created with comfortable seating and already set-up Shavasana spaces, ready to go.

Since you are in the Ashram, you participate in some of the regular Ashram programs in addition to your program's activities, including *Shree Guru Gita* and Swami Satsangs when time allows.

Our Board President, Amala (Lynn) Cattafi, describes, "Your stay includes three generous catered vegetarian meals plus an afternoon snack, linen service, utilities, staff, and more, plus all the shakti you can absorb! While there is great benefit, there is also great expense to creating a retreat center. The Board really spent a lot of time and analysis in making it as affordable as possible."

Now we are immersed in Lokananda, our Bliss Place, dipping the cloth of self into deeper and deeper levels of Self. Lokananda is more than a "home away from home." It is imbued with the Grace of the Guru, every nail and board. What an amazing opportunity!

New Amaya Shop Items!

Svaroop® Yoga Calendar



Keep your practice in front of you. Every month features Svaroopis, Swamiji, sacred objects and more.

[Click to order](#)

Yoga Bear

Our custom made teddy's "true form" is fuzzy and floppy, but he provides an adorable reminder to "Do More Yoga." A great gift!

[Click to order](#)



Understanding Yoga: Understanding Life 2015

By Yogeshwari (Lissa) Fountain



Yogeshwari Fountain

My teaching has only one purpose: to reveal your own divinity to you.

— Swami Nirmalananda

After I taught a class recently, a visiting student mentioned how much she admired the excellent training of Svaroopa® yoga teachers and the skill with which we understand the body. She said, “You all must go through rigorous training.” I thought to myself, “She has no idea!”

While students trust that we “know our stuff” and will take excellent care of their bodies, what keeps them coming back is how we work with their minds. For this work, we need the teachings of yoga philosophy, found every month in our contemplation articles authored by Swami Nirmalananda, in collaboration with Rukmini and Vidyadevi. Understanding the teachings of yoga helps you understand your life. Our 2015 Contemplations gave us the “year of Consciousness maps.”

These maps seal our yoga practices in so we can live our yoga in the world from the inside out, experiencing the interweaving of the Divine with the mundane. Swamiji, Rukmini and Vidyadevi have been bringing us through a step-by-step process called “Understanding Yoga: Understanding Life.” The two cannot be separated. Each map they laid out for us has served as the foundation for the next, providing a rich and complex body of teachings.

The first map was the Four Goals of Life. This set of goals is comprised of:

- dharmā (fulfilling one’s responsibilities)
- artha (managing wealth)
- kama (enjoying life’s pleasures)
- and moksha (liberation and enlightenment)

I remember them this way: You have to be who you are, it is your dharma. Money is divine. It is never the problem — it’s your relationship with money that stirs up your mind. People pursue pleasure to have an experience of the Self. Nothing is truly fulfilling without liberation.

Knowing these life goals has explained why, since becoming a yogi, I find myself no longer drawn to entertainment, vacations and pursuits, as they never fill me the way my inner Self does. In the article about moksha, Vidyadevi expressed this perfectly: “Once I experienced the depth of my Being through yoga, I never climbed another mountain. It truly is found inside.”

Next came “Life’s Four Stages.” You progress through your years as:

- a student (brahmacharya)
- then a householder (grihastha)
- to become a retiree (vanaprashā)
- and then you enter the stage of being a renunciant (sannyasa).

Each stage is interwoven into the map of your life’s goals, and many of the stages overlap. For instance, I find myself still a student of yoga and consciousness while I am a busy householder and in relationship with my family. Like so many yogis I know, I am running a business and managing money, caring for an elderly parent, planning for retirement, committed to meditation and doing Guruseva (service to the Guru).

There is nothing I want more than to know the Self, while being fully engaged and productive in the world! These teachings help me honor my deep yearning for liberation (moksha), while not abandoning or rejecting life in all its many manifestations of Shiva. Swamiji points out that you can become Self-Realized and still live with your loved ones, while enjoying being the Self in the midst of it all.

This year’s contemplation articles ended with one more map, taking you beyond the goals and stages of life into a deeper understanding of who you really are: Shiva. You are more than the life stage you are in, you are Consciousness-Itself. This map is called The Five Actions of God, and it explains everything! Shiva, while being you, is continually unfolding within himself, in these five actions:

- creating (Brahma)
- sustaining (Vishnu)
- destroying (Shiva)
- concealing (Maayaa)
- and revealing (Grace & Guru)

In everything I do and say, I find these cosmic forces at play, which keeps my life in perspective: God is the doer, not me. For instance, in understanding the source of my inner impulse to create, I can also trust when it’s time to bring something to an end, or when maintenance is needed. And because I still get lost in Maayaa’s worldly dance, thinking myself small and limited, I need Guru’s Grace to pierce the veil of my delusion. Swamiji does this for me and for all of us, lovingly and consistently.

I am grateful for Swamiji’s persistence and care in pushing each of us beyond our limited concepts and beliefs. She has often said: “My teaching has only one purpose: to reveal your own divinity to you.” In keeping with her promise, 2016’s contemplation articles will be based on the theme “Yoga and Spirituality.”

Are you ready to go even deeper? I am!

There is almost always a moment when I go to a program when I slightly hesitate about the effort and money needed to make it there. Yet again, not only do I not regret coming to the conference but, knowing the experience that I’ve had, I would have put in so much more money and effort for it. I always get way more than I could ever imagine! — Saguna Goss

Taking the Year Long Programme and Retreat has been the most insightful of my Svaroopa® experiences to date. Of course, any time with Swamiji is advancing and beautiful. The tenderness she tempers in her teachings is amazing. She takes me deeper and deeper into myself with every interaction. To help us work with our minds and bodies to see the light within is a great gift and to infuse the grace when we lose sight is phenomenal.

— Anonymous

Upcoming Programs

Click on [titles](#) for info about Programs. DYMC is **Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center**.

JANUARY 2016		
8	Half-Day Workshop: Support and Strength	DYMC
8 – 17	YTT Level 2	DYMC
10	Swami Sunday – Free Meditation Program	DYMC
12	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	DYMC
13	Phone Q&A Satsang	Phone
14	Shree Guru Gita	DYMC
14 – 28	Meditation 101	DYMC
15	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	Marlborough MA
16	FREE Newcomers Yoga Class	DYMC 1:30 – 3:00pm
16	FREE Newcomers Yoga Class	DYMC 3:30 – 5:00pm
17	Swami Sunday – Free Meditation Program	DYMC
19	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	DYMC
20	SATYA Marketing Call: Essential Website Elements	Phone
22	Half-Day Workshop: Lively up Yourself (thanks Bob Marley!)	DYMC
22 – 25	EYTS: Foundations Review	DYMC
24	Swami Sunday – Free Meditation Program	DYMC
25	Half-Day Workshop: The Gift of Your Own Self	DYMC
25 – Feb 5	Meditation Teacher Training	DYMC
25 – Feb 15	Meditation Teacher Training Package	DYMC
26	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	DYMC
28	Shree Guru Gita	DYMC
31	Swami Sunday – Free Meditation Program	DYMC
FEBRUARY 2016		
2	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	DYMC
3	SATYA Marketing Call: Inspire The Next Generation	Phone
6 – 8	Leading Short Meditations	DYMC
7	Swami Sunday – Free Meditation Program	DYMC
9	Half-Day Workshop: Be Here Now!	DYMC
9	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	DYMC
9 – 15	Meditation Group Leader Training	DYMC
11	Shree Guru Gita	DYMC
14	Swami Sunday – Free Meditation Program	DYMC
16	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	DYMC
17 – 21	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	DYMC
18	2016 Year-Long Programme FREE Intro Phone Call	Phone
20	SATYA Marketing Call: Strategic Placement	Phone
20	FREE Newcomers Yoga Class	DYMC
20 – 21	Stay Open in Life	Nashville TN
21	Swami Sunday - Free Meditation Program	DYMC
21	Half-Day Workshop: Tone Your Arms	DYMC
23	Satsang: Free Meditation Program	DYMC
24 – 28	EYTS: Intro to Teaching Gentle Yogis	DYMC
27 – 28	Discover Your Natural State - Bliss!	Exeter RI
MARCH 2016		
4 - 6	Shaktipat Retreat	DYMC
7	Q & A Phone Satsang	Phone
8-11	EYTS: Foundations Review	DYMC
11 – 20	YTT Level 1	DYMC
21 – 25	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	DYMC
21 - Nov 17	2016 Year-Long Programme	Phone
25 – 30	EYTS: Enrich & Advance – YTT Level 2	DYMC

2016 Program Calendar

Currently planned events & trainings and Svaroopa® Yoga & Svaroopa® Vidya professional trainings plus retreats with Swami Nirmalananda.

JANUARY 2016		
8 – 17	YTT Level 2	Downingtown PA
22 – 25	Foundations Review	Downingtown PA
25 – Feb 5	Meditation Teacher Training	Downingtown PA
27 – 31	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Downingtown PA
FEBRUARY 2016		
6 – 8	Leading Short Meditations	Downingtown PA
9 – 15	Meditation Group Leader Training	Downingtown PA
24 – 28	EYTS: Intro to Teaching Gentle Yogis	Downingtown PA
MARCH 2016		
4 – 6	Shaktipat Retreat with Swami Nirmalananda	Downingtown PA
8 – 11	Foundations Review	Downingtown PA
11 – 20	YTT Level 1	Downingtown PA
21	Year-Long Programme with Swami Nirmalananda begins (theme TBA)	Multi-media course
21 – 25	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Downingtown PA
25 – 30	Enrich & Advance - YTT Level 2	Downingtown PA
APRIL 2016		
1 – 3	Radical Anatomy for Yogis	Downingtown PA
5 – 10	Embodiment® Yoga Therapy Training	Downingtown PA
22 – May 1	YTT Level 4	Downingtown PA
MAY 2016		
5 – 8	DIY 1: Deepen It Yourself (3-month mentored practice program)	
9 – 12	DTS Mentor Training	Downingtown PA
13 – 15	Shaktipat Retreat	TBD
13 – 17	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Downingtown PA
20 – 24	Australian tour: free programs	Australia
25 – 29	5-day Retreat with Swami Nirmalananda	Australia
18 – 25	ATT 221: Twists	Downingtown PA
JUNE 2016		
2 – 5	YTT Module #1-A	Downingtown PA
9 – 12	DIY 2: Deepen It Yourself	Downingtown PA
14 – 21	ATT 402: Deeper Practice	Downingtown PA
24 – 26	Radical Anatomy for Yogis	Downingtown PA

JULY 2016		
1 – 3	Shaktipat Retreat	North Andover MA
7 – 10	DIY 3: Deepen It Yourself	Downingtown PA
13 – 17	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Downingtown PA
19 – 22	Foundations Review	Downingtown PA
22 – 31	YTT Level 1	Downingtown PA
AUGUST 2016		
5 – 14	YTT Level 3	Downingtown PA
17 – 21	5-day Retreat with Swami Nirmalananda	Downingtown PA
24 – 28	YTT Module 1-B	Downingtown PA
29 – Sept 2	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Downingtown PA
SEPTEMBER 2016		
9 – 18	YTT Level 2	Downingtown PA
21 – 28	ATT 522: Beginner's Bliss	Downingtown PA
30 – Oct 2	Shaktipat Retreat	Downingtown PA
OCTOBER 2016		
2 – 6	Vichara Therapist Training	Downingtown PA
7 – 9	Radical Anatomy for Yogis	Downingtown PA
15 – 20	Embodiment® Yoga Therapy Training	Downingtown PA
21 – 23	Year-Long Programme Retreat	Downingtown PA
27 – 30	YTT Module #1-C	Downingtown PA
NOVEMBER 2016		
2 – 6	Foundations of Svaroopa® Yoga	Downingtown PA
8 – 15	ATT 415: Leading Weekend Workshops	Downingtown PA
19 – 22	Half Day Workshops	Australia
23 – 25	Foundations Review	Australia
25 – Dec 4	YTT Level 4	Australia
DECEMBER 2016		
8 – 11	EYTS: Deceptive Flexibility	Australia

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