



Tadaa!

Svaroopa® Yoga: Experience Your Divine Self

Volume 1 No 1

January 24, 2013

Editorials By Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

Master Yoga Foundation *Begin at the Beginning*

Every *Svaroopa*® yoga class begins with Shavasana, thus our first articles must be about Shavasana! Everyone's favorite pose, it is deceptively simple. The first pose you learn, it is the last one you master, for true mastery means you can relax all your muscles as quickly and easily as you tighten them. The deceptive part of the simplicity is found in Shavasana's purpose. This pose is not about relaxation. It's about who you are — who is the person that is relaxing? Who is there, inside that body resting on the floor? Who are you, really?

The stillness that Shavasana provides is where you find its true purpose. As Patanjali promises, you experience *svaroopa*, your own Divine Essence, in the moment that your mind is still. The mystery of the yoga's poses is found in

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Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram *Staying on Target*

I want to giggle as I welcome our new magazine with an exclamation, "Tadaa!" We have arrived! All of us who work to bring you the *Svaroopa*® Sciences are collaborating in this great adventure, a magazine dedicated to the discovery of your own Inherent Divinity.

All the practices I teach share the same purpose, taken from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras:

Tadaa dra.s.tu.h svaruupe'vasthaanam —
Sutra 1.3

Tadaa [in the moment your mind is stilled], you are established in *svaroopa* [your own Divine Self].

I was inspired by this sutra to give the name *svaroopa* to our practices, both in *Svaroopa*® Yoga and *Svaroopa*® Vidya. The name itself

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Tadaa!

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

MANAGING EDITOR

JenMarie Macdonald

EDITORS

Rukmini Abbruzzi, Marlene Gast & Rudrani Nogue

WRITERS

Priya Kenney, Ekamati Tsurutani, Jennifer Saville, Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver, Rob Gold, Bhakta (Leslie) Johnson, Tanmayee (Theresa) Reynolds

COPY EDITORS

Connie Mohn, Joanna McNeal, Wendy Hickey

GRAPHIC DESIGN & TYPESETTING

Rosalena Graphics

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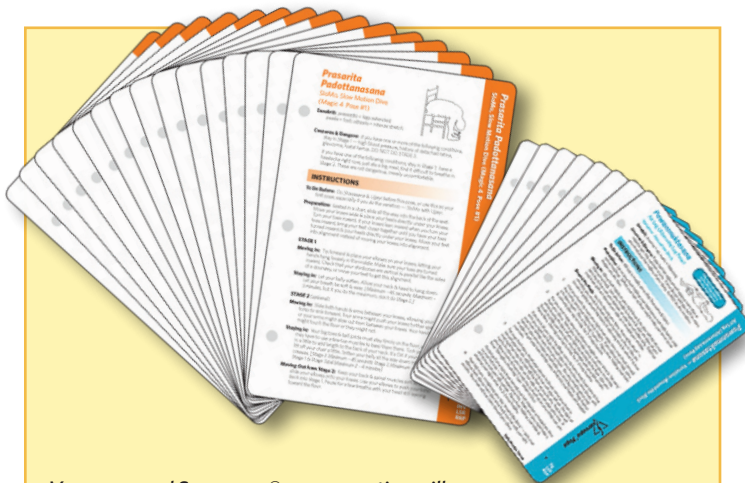
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Your personal Svaroopa® yoga practice will be easier and more powerful than ever before with our new Pose Instruction Cards. Svaroopa® Yoga Basics includes the Foundational Poses — the reliable core opening poses that provide the foundation of your practice. Daily Practice build on your Basics set while providing you with advanced variations plus three new poses for your personal yoga and support for your meditation practice.

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- Benefits
- Type of Movement
- When to Do

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Get 10% off when you use coupon code TADAA Expires 2/28/13

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Master Yoga Foundation

their ability to place you in stillness. I know that western yoga looks a lot like acrobatics or athletics, with an endurance contest playing out in a 100° room, but the yoga I learned from my Guru preceded these modern innovations.

The two most important poses are Shavasana and the seated pose — but it takes all the other poses to get your body to the point that you can become still in Shavasana and in your seated pose. Once your body becomes still and relaxed, your mind will do the same. Now you're really doing yoga!

Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

reminds you of the goal. Similarly, this magazine is named to remind you of how easy it is to reach the goal — in the moment, "Tadaa!" Your own Self is right here, in you, being you, right now. In your breath, in the space between your breaths, in the light that shines through your eyes, you are YOU.

I have been publishing a teachers' magazine for over 12 years under the name "Tadaa!" and am grateful to Master Yoga and the editorial staff for allowing the name to expand to serve many more yogis. The teachers' publication will continue under a new name, SATYA Newsletter (including the Q&A), while Master Yoga and the Ashram work together to bring your story into a new format. For "Tadaa!" is about you.

This is the story of your yoga experience. This is the story of your quest, your path, your progress toward svaroopaa, your own Self.

Can't Get Anything for FREE? Who Says?

By **Tanmayee (Theresa) Reynolds, CSYT, SVA Board Member**

You didn't know? Well then, please allow me to share this with you!

Svarroopa® Vidya Ashram has a long list of website treasures— at absolutely no charge. Just click on the “Freebies” menu item! We are grateful to have these many benefits at our fingertips, thanks to the generosity of our Ashram Donors. Especially their monthly gifts provide us all with a way to support and deepen our practice as well as our experience of the Self — even when our budgets are tight. Check out this list...

FREE Audio Recordings – Enjoy Swamiji's talks in over 500 audio recordings, available online whenever it is convenient for you to listen. Catch up on all of her satsang teachings, listen to her Shiva Sutras lectures, learn the Food Mantra that is sung before every meal at the

ashram, and bask in the wonderful Guru Gita pronunciation lessons and commentary on the meanings of the verses. There is also a webpage of recorded teachings just for [Shishyas!](#)

FREE Contemplation Articles – Read over 20 years of Swamiji's monthly articles, including those published in her first book, “Yoga in Every Moment”, in her second book, “Yoga: Inside & Outside Carrying Inner Bliss Into Your Life” – and more! New ones are added to the Library collection monthly, along with [other free articles](#) of interest from past E-Letter contributors.

FREE Telephone Satsangs with Swamiji – Call in to have your meditation and yogic lifestyle questions answered, and learn from other yogi's questions. What a great way to deepen your understanding of your Self and your life!

FREE Mantra Card – When you're ready, the initiation mantra of our lineage is available to

you. Requesting a mantra card is a thing of great significance and meaning, and can change your life in ways you never imagined. Ready to know your own true Self? Start here.

FREE In-Person Programs – Swamiji is committed to making herself available to you, both for formal programs at [Downingtown Yoga Meditation Center](#) and as an invited guest at the Ashram. Our Ashram [B&B program](#), you choose how best to soak in Swamiji's presence and teachings during your stay.

FREE Blog from Swamiji – Step in this doorway to enjoy some rich food for thought, and take in the immensity of her love and gratitude flowing from her personal web log to all who read it.

FREE Teacher Directory – Are you looking for a Certified Meditation Teacher or Group Leader in your area? Look no further! This state-by-state listing will make your search fast and easy.

More Fully Grounded in Shiva Reports by Students

Studying the deeper teachings from home, making them accessible in the midst of life. That was Swami Nirmalananda's goal when she created the year-long study programs in 2010. Living in Canada, Livia (Priya) Suver appreciates this way of staying in contact with Swamiji, “The writings and phone calls with Swamiji and the discussions were very powerful and meaningful. Nirmalananda always ‘translates’ the teachings in such a ‘digest friendly’ way that it is easy to absorb and retain. The teachings, enlivened by Baba's and Nirmalananda's grace, have been transforming my life for over 15 years. This course opened me up yet more into my own Self — Shiva.”

She continues, “I am having glimpses and experiences of being Shiva more often, and can stay in that state a little longer each time. I am also getting better at seeing Shiva in everything and everyone around me, and it is an ecstatic way of being that I have to remember to cultivate.”

Connie Clews, an aloha gal from Molokai, agrees, “I am even more fully grounded in Shiva. I realize even more fully the essence of meditation.” She reports that her medi-

tations are much deeper now and “I understand the process more fully.”

Reporting that the course definitely affected her life, Connie Mohn said, “There is less me and more Shiva; a blurring of the lines between God, Guru, Self, self, thoughts, me, you, Grace, success, failure. All [are] just different expressions of the same.” A Downingtown yogi, she describes how this One Reality extends inside and outside, even to the Guru, “Blurring the lines between the 3 Gurus — only one Guru. [I have] a clearer knowing of the ‘bliss that transcends the Void.’ Eternally grateful.”

The year-long programs always offer several levels of enrollment, with yogis choosing what their time and financial budget will allow. The articles alone are deeply meaningful, with the audio recordings expanding upon them, especially through listening to Swami Nirmalananda's voice and being able to replay the audio as many times as you like. The phone calls are specifically for sharing and questions. Yogeshwari (Lissa) Fountain speaks of the calls, “Having other yogis sharing the depth of their daily sadhana with each other really

made me feel supported and empowered to Know the Truth of my own existence.”

The lasting effects are described by Maria Sichel, “As with any teaching, it has deepening and rippling effects often way beyond what you can articulate or be aware of. I know that I will continue to reflect on these teachings for a long time. I am very grateful that I was able to get an introduction to some deeper material. I would say it is still simmering.”

The yogis who attended the in-person retreat near the end of the course found the opportunity to spend time in-person with Swamiji to be very valuable. “Being in the Presence of Swamiji is an incredible experience, says Jyoti (Rebecca) Yacobi, who flies down from the Toronto area. “Each time I spend time with her, it gets deeper and deeper and the effects are tangible when I get back home. Whatever the program is, being with Swami Nirmalananda makes all the difference.”

Ah, Shavasana

By Karuna (Carolyn) Beaver CSYT and Marlene Gast CSYT

The Shavasana Course is a Master Yoga Extension (MYX) program immersion, which offers participants six one-hour-long Shavasanas in one weekend! Going deeper and deeper within through each Shavasana, participants experience illuminative insights and profound physical changes. In discussion periods, individual descriptions are shared, and the teacher provides explanations of the meaning and significance of what is blossoming within.

Over the weekend of December 7, 8, and 9, Vidyadevi Stillman taught *The Shavasana Course* at the Niantic Yoga Center in Niantic CT. Vidyadevi says that the course is designed "so that each Shavasana is deeper than the last one, each one a preparation to go into the next a little more deeply."



Vidyadevi Stillman

Photo courtesy of Master Yoga

When asked what students are supposed to experience in the pose, Vidyadevi said, "Well, my first response is the Self! To have an experience of their own Self. There is a guided awareness through the body in the pose. The body is a doorway to a deeper level of their own Being, beyond their bodies, beyond their minds and into the deepening levels of their own Being."

What else do they experience in the pose? "Everything!" she said. "Along the way they may feel what gets in the way of that; aches, itches, pain, busy crazy mind, but they do get dips into the vastness of their own Being."

Vidyadevi added, "When they describe their experience at the end of each Shavasana, to me they sound like the ancient sages describing the Self, the interior realms of their own Being. Through the discussions they also come to understand the profound experiences they are having and letting that imprint on their mind so they stop doubting their experiences."

From the "simple" guided awareness in the pose, another experience is "being in their bodies. Some people don't really inhabit their bodies," said Vidyadevi, "They do flybys and live more in the energy body, their minds and emotions."

"When they are not in their bodies, their bodies suffer and tighten, and they are on an emotional roller coaster ride in life. So this course pours them back into their bodies and helps their bodies open in amazing ways. It calms their minds and emotions, helping them live from a deeper sense of Self."

"In Shavasana," Vidyadevi said, "you learn that you already are the Self. You don't have to do more to become the Self. You can get everything by doing absolutely nothing and deepening your awareness into and through your body, looking deeper. Your Self is there, full and complete."

Tadaa! also invited participants to talk with us about what they got from the course, and Gina Smith generously agreed to be interviewed.

A student of *Svaroopaa*® yoga for four years, Gina has also taken Foundations. When asked what led her to register for the Shavasana Course, Gina said that her interest in the course actually pre-dated Foundations. She explained, "I had always thought if 20 minutes of Shavasana is good, than an hour is better, and a day or a weekend even better. So when I first heard about the Shavasana Course that Vidyadevi was teaching at Kripalu, I wanted to do it, but the scheduling didn't work out. Then I signed up for Foundations, and did the hour-long Shavasana. But the experience didn't match my expectations: It was horrible! I was twitching throughout, and because of discomfort I had to pull my knees to my chest several times."



Gina Smith

Photo courtesy of Gina Smith

"But when I saw that Vidyadevi was teaching *The Shavasana Course* at Niantic Yoga Center, where I attend classes and offer the seva of keeping the puja replenished with flowers and chocolate, I had to sign up. I took *Meditation Made Easy* led by Vidyadevi several years ago, and I feel that she is a wonderful teacher. Also, I was curious to see how I might have evolved since Foundations."

"In *The Shavasana Course*, I soon realized that I have grown a lot. I had no problem at all during the hour-long Shavasanas. I just went deeper and deeper. It was marvelous!"

"Initially I was going into trance, going away. That was lovely. But with more Shavasanas, I was more able to 'be there'. I got behind my mind — it was remarkable — I didn't want it to stop — I just wanted to do another weekend!"

"There is something unique to this practice of Shavasana. I was amazed. I meditate for an hour a day, but I was amazed at the depth of the place that I got to through repeated Shavasanas. It's not always easy to quiet my mind in meditation. But over the weekend in Shavasana I got to a very deep place, very beautiful. It was more than I could have imagined ever.

Never has anything before been like that. It was deeper and deeper and deeper (even though I have been deep in meditation)."

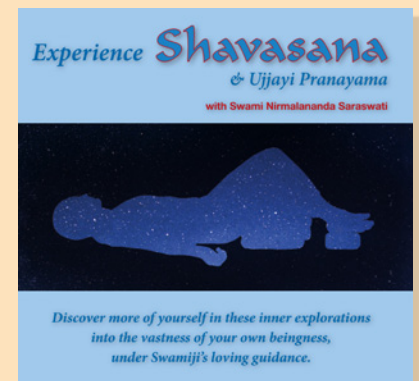
When asked what she has noticed since the weekend, Gina replied, "It's hard to say. My meditation right now is more difficult, with more active thought. But I am able to say 'it is what it is', and I'm going with it. I have incorporated Shavasana into regular daily practice."

"And there have been positive effects. I have a steadier state than I had before the weekend. I feel that it's due to having had that remarkable firsthand experience of getting behind my mind. I'm now more able to access the place behind my mind even in going about my daily life. As a therapist, I'm coming from a different place for my clients. The effect on my clients is visible. I can see how this yoga is supposed to work. I have this yoga so I can share it. I have it, and if you'd like some I want to share it with you!"

Ah, Shavasana. So simple. So sweet. So profound.

Experience Shavasana

Discover more of yourself in these inner explorations into the vastness of your own beingness, under Swamiji's loving guidance. The sound of her voice will guide you into a deeper experience, called "The Shavasana Experience."



Enjoy Guided Awareness & Ujjayi Pranayama, the Shavasana experience that begins every Svaroopaa® yoga class, with or without tamboura. Dive in deeper with Swamiji's Long Guided Awareness, which provides you a more detailed exploration and full half-hour of Shavasana that is part of the Foundations of Svaroopaa® yoga course. Tracks also include the purpose of Shavasana as a yoga practice and propping instruction.

To order this CD [click here](#)

Bondage and Freedom

By Priya Kenney

Based on a conversation with Swami Nirmalananda

Anyone doing even one of Svaroopā® Yoga's practices already has some understanding of bondage and freedom. "No matter where you start in the Svaroopā® Sciences," says Swami Nirmalananda, "you experience the Self. This is yoga's promise. Yoga is the means by which you move from bondage to freedom." It is also the means by which we understand our bondage.

The ancient sages describe our human condition in one word, bondage, contrasting that with our human capacity for absolute freedom. "The difference between the two is stark," says Swamiji. If you are reading this, no doubt you know the pain of bondage, yet you have had experiences of small steps and perhaps even giant leaps from bondage to freedom.

I must have lost the capacity to breathe into my back very early. Did it happen while I was in the womb, or before my first birthday? Perhaps a bit later? What I do remember is that fear was an early companion. For decades, I was practically afraid to breathe at all. I held my breath regularly. It was misery. In one retreat with Swamiji, understanding arose that my back was 'dead' to my breath; it was bound beyond belief. Later in the same retreat, the bondage in my back unraveled and I gratefully felt breath move through my back. Even now, when I become aware of that freedom to breathe in my back, I feel immense gratitude for the release of that particular bondage.

Regardless of which [practice\(s\)](#) you use in your journey from fear, pain and suffering to peace,

bliss and freedom, your practices illumine the layers of bondage that you didn't even know existed. Once you see the layers that bind you, the practices, fueled by Guru's grace, mercifully melt them away.

There are stages and experiences along the way to freedom. It's important to understand the powerful factors involved in your process, both internal and external factors. Internal factors include your thoughts and decisions that create pain. The most important external factor is how someone else, the Guru, can intervene and lift you out of bondage. Gradually you learn how to accept that upliftment more and more fully. Gradually you learn what yoga means by "surrender."

Swami Muktananda explained that there are two possibilities for the human being, the state of bondage in which the individual is contracted and loses the awareness of his or her glory, or the state of absolute freedom. The Guru's job is to bestow Grace, to awaken an individual's own inner Shakti through Shaktipat. Then his or her own Shakti blossoms from within, and gradually he or she is freed from all limitation to achieve full union with the Supreme Self.

In the Ashram's 2013 Bondage & Freedom course, Swami Nirmalananda says she is "dedicating the full year to your enlightenment." She's starting with a [free introductory phone call](#) on January 25, 2013 from 11 am to 12:30 pm EST. Don't miss it!

Bondage & Freedom

Phone Course with Swamiji

January 25, 2013
from 11 am to 12:30 pm EST

Spanning from bondage all the way to freedom, this course starts at the beginning and covers the whole of human existence including the chakras as a GPS system to the Self and how to live from your heart.



No prerequisites are required, other than being in a body.

A steady stream of teachings: articles, audios and conference calls about every ten days all year long.

[Click here](#) to enroll for a **Free phone call** with Swamiji for more information and if you are thinking of enrolling.

To Register for the course [click here](#)

Lentil Loaf with Spicy Mustard Sauce

We served this at the Ashram Luncheon during Level 4 training on January 16, 2013

2 cups water
1 cup green lentils
2 Tbs chai seeds + approx 4 Tbs water
1 medium onion, chopped
1 tsp olive oil
1 cup cooked quinoa
1 cup canned diced tomatoes (drained)
½ cup sunflower seeds
1 tsp garlic, minced
1 tsp scallions
1 tsp chopped cilantro
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
¼ cup tomato paste (if needed)

Instructions:

Boil water. Once boiling, add lentils and let simmer for 20-30 min or until all the liquid is absorbed. Mash them up a bit, and transfer to a mixing bowl.

Mix chia seed and warm water and let sit for 15 minutes, to form a semi-thick, mucilaginous fluid (like an egg).

In a skillet, heat olive oil. Add onion and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and mix the onion in with the lentils along with the quinoa. Add sunflower seeds, chia mixture, tomatoes, garlic, scallions, cilantro, salt, and pepper and stir to combine. If mixture seems too dry (it should be like cookie dough), add tomato paste. If too wet, add more sunflower seeds, quinoa, or your choice of nuts.

Spray an 8x4 in. loaf pan with nonstick spray and spoon in lentil mixtures. Press mixture in place.

Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes, until firm and golden. Let sit for about 10 minutes in the pan, and then run a knife around the edge to get it out. Invert on to serving platter.

Spicy Mustard Sauce

1 cup Veganaise 2T prepared dijon mustard 1T prepared horseradish Salt/pepper to taste

Whisk all ingredients together in a small bowl. Adjust seasonings to taste - it can be as spicy or as mild as you like! Serve with lentil loaf.

योगा पुस्तकें

By Jennifer Saville, Ashram Chef

This Stuff Works

By Rob Gold

For years Kerry suffered from neck, back and hip pain as well as treatment including two rounds of steroids, physical therapy and sleeping on ice packs to keep the pain at bay. Kerry had been told the only option left was surgery. However, a Groupon ad for classes located at a studio between her home and son's soccer field, together with a thought of "I can go do something for myself" were the impetus for buying a four-class pass with Patricia Kilpatrick CSYT in May 2011. Having sporadically

and *Embodiment*® Yoga Therapy training in January 2013. "I know this is what I want to do. It could help a lot of people. It's the first thing that I've ever felt really passionate about in my life. I'm an accountant, but I am ready to truly love what I do."

That changed a bit this past June when she was laid off from her full-time job and began doing contract work part-time. She credits the yoga for why she isn't "afraid or freaked out at all" by her employment situation. "I feel so cared for, and it'll come together," says Kerry, as she works to build her weekly classes and income stream and eventually do less and less accounting work.

Like a lot of other teachers, Kerry sees family and friends that really need *Svaroopa*® yoga. She says "I see people and have to hold myself back — I want to run over and help them." Recently, at a soccer tournament, another mom approached her between games and said, "Show me your yoga." Not having any props with her, Kerry grabbed a nearby cooler and had the woman lie down using the cooler instead of blankets or chair to prop her knees and legs. After Kerry took her through Four on the Floor, the mom couldn't believe how different she felt, telling Kerry she felt "so blissed out I can't even drive a car!"

Over Thanksgiving, Kerry visited with family in Florida, none of whom had seen her since she began *Svaroopa*® yoga. Their immediate response was "Whoa, you're taller!" Admitting to having had "really crappy posture and slumpy shoulders" since age 9, Kerry reports, "I now stand better, and I can get rid of the sinus headaches."

Kerry has mild scoliosis as well and would love to have another X-ray to see the changes. She finds that things in her body are a lot more subtle than they used to be. "Sometimes I have to stop and ask myself, 'What am I experiencing?' This helps me understand what others may be experiencing."

"I feel it's the answer...*Svaroopa*® yoga changed me so much!" says Kerry Penney, of Tucker GA.

She also notes that for her it's not all just about the body. "I've always been a person exploring a spiritual path and *Svaroopa*® yoga has helped so much with meditation. I tried it in the past on different retreats, centering prayer, etc., but they had you sitting in a hard chair. All I could do was wiggle around in my seat. Now I feel like I'm floating in a river going where I need to be taken. I don't mind aging whatsoever...might as well lean into it."



Patricia Kilpatrick (left) and Kerry Penney (right)

practiced a couple of other yoga styles over the years, Kerry went to class just once a week. Kerry admits to not being very "gung-ho" about it at first but noticed a change within two months: "My neck wasn't killing me anymore." This testament is impressive, considering Kerry has a herniated disk and C6/C7 is bone on bone.

Continuing with weekly classes through the summer reduced Kerry's chiropractor visits from weekly to every three weeks or so. In August, when soccer resumed, the other parents commented, "What have you been doing? You look so different!"

Kerry comments, "It was a really big eye opener for me. Not only was I feeling better, but I looked better. I had been wearing my pain and didn't even know it." She ceased chiropractic care in August 2011 and went to Foundations in Oak Ridge, TN in September.

Kerry had also been suffering with pain in both hips for several years. She had them evaluated several times, and the doctors said, "We don't see anything. It could be some arthritis or it could be bursitis.... We can give you shots."

"Oh no you can't," Kerry replied! While at Foundations, she had a private session with Kris Montigny that changed everything. Kris told Kerry the ligaments holding her femurs in the hip sockets were shot, but could improve with time and *Svaroopa*® yoga practice. Kerry says, "Now my hips are great! It's amazing! I remember asking Kris at the end of that session — why doesn't the world know about this? Why don't doctors know about this? Why isn't something this simple and effective common knowledge?"

Kerry began teaching in March 2012, completed Level 1 in April and Level 2 this past September. She is looking forward to Experiential Anatomy

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Svaroopaa® Calendar

Click on program titles for information about **Master Yoga** Programs and **Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram** Programs.
DYMC refers to **Downingtown Yoga and Meditation Center**.

January 2013			
29		Free Satsang	from 7:30 - 9:00 pm (EDT) with Swamiji at DYMC
31		Shree Guru Gita	from 6:30 - 7:45 am (EDT) with Swamiji at DYMC
February 2013			
1 - 3		EYTS Embodiment* Weekend	Kris in San Diego CA
2	New!	Open Your Heart (Half Day Workshop)	Vidyadevi in Cherry Hill NJ
2	New!	Introduction to Meditation	Vidyadevi in Cherry Hill NJ
2 - 3	New!	Lasting Joy through Yoga	Addie in Holliston MA
6 - 17		India 2013	with Swamiji in Ganeshpuri
9	New!	Open Your Heart (Half Day Workshop)	Vidyadevi in Cresco PA
9	New!	Introduction to Meditation	Vidyadevi in Cresco PA
9 - 10		Bliss Yoga Weekend	Polly in Paoli PA
16 - 17	New Title!	Finding Bliss in Movement (Weekend Workshop)	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
18 - 26		India 2013	with Swamiji at the Kumbha Mela
22 - 26		Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga	Vidyadevi & Polly in Exton PA
26 - March 2		Varanasi 2013	with Swamiji in Varanasi
28	New!	EYTS Pose Clinic	Vidyadevi in Exton PA
March 2013			
1 - 3		EYTS Enliven & Advance: Level 1	Master Yoga in Exton PA
5		Free Satsang (Welcome Home Swamiji)	with Swamiji at DYMC
6 begins		Meditation Teacher Upgrade	Swamiji's Multi-Media course
6	New Dates!	Karma, Reincarnation & You	Vidyadevi's Phone Course begins
7		Free Guru Gita	with Swamiji at DYMC7
7	New!	Yoga Business 101	Mentoring Program begins
8		Bondage & Freedom	Swamiji's Year-Long Course begins
8 - 12		Foundations of Svaroopaa® Yoga	Cherry Hill NJ
8 - 14		Meditation Group Leader Training	Temenos, West Chester PA
9		Free Guru Gita	Temenos, West Chester PA

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10% Discount for Personal Message Ads February - April 2013 (ads must be one of the sizes listed below).

ADVERTISING RATES

Size	1x	6x	12x	Graphics Charge
Business Card (3.625 x 2 inches)	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$18
1/6 page (2.375 x 4.825 -or- 3.625 x 3.125 in.)	\$60	\$55	\$50	\$30
1/4 page (3.625 x 4.825 in.)	\$85	\$80	\$75	\$40
1/2 page (3.625 x 9.875 -or- 7.625 x 4.825 in.)	\$170	\$160	\$150	\$80
Full page (7.625 x 9.825 in.)	\$310	\$300	\$290	\$100

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Shavasana

Corpse Pose, Death Pose,
Yoga's Relaxation Pose

Sanskrit: shava = corpse



Concerns & Dangers: If you have an arch at the back of your waist, you are compressing your spine — *Props Shavasana Stack. If your head is tilted back, you are creating neck tension — *Props Head Cushion. Substitute Pose: use a recliner, in the fully reclined position.

INSTRUCTIONS

To Do Before: Do Shavasana before you do other poses or at the end of your practice session. Shavasana may be the foundation for your Ujjayi practice, or you may even be doing Shavasana by itself.

Preparation: Lie on your back on the floor, with a Shavasana Stack under your knees so that the back of your waist rests easily on the floor.

Let your feet sink low & if your heels don't land on the floor, fill in the space under them. Begin with your heels almost touching. Then soften your legs & allow your knees & toes to spiral gently outward.

Extend your arms softly near your sides & turn your palms to face upward. Or bend your elbows & lay your hands on your belly with your palms facing down.

You may need a soft cushion under your head to level out your forehead & chin so the back of your neck will lengthen & soften.

A light eye bag or folded washcloth on your eyebrows (not your eyes) will help you settle more deeply inward.

Moving In & Staying In: [Set a timer for 5–20 minutes.] With tamboura music or silence in the background, settle into an easy stillness that takes care of your body & mind at the same time. You may listen to a guided awareness (not a guided visualization) if you like, to deepen your experience & the benefits.

Moving Out: Wiggle your toes & feet. Wiggle & stretch your fingers & hands. Roll your head from side-to-side. Move or reach in any direction you'd like. Roll to your side & rest for a few breaths, savoring your inner experience.

To Do After: If your Shavasana is at the beginning of your practice, Supta Garbhasana often follows, in which case you would not roll on your side as detailed above. Alternate Leg often follows so that you begin your practice with a tailbone release pose. JP is another good pose to do next, as preparation for the rest of your session. If Shavasana is your last pose or your only pose, you may want to Lunge before you stand.

Shavasana

Corpse Pose,
Death Pose, Yoga's Relaxation Pose



PROPS

Shavasana Stack: Stack 2 or 3 zeds (z-folded blankets) & place a blanket roll on top. Lie down with the back of your thighs & knees over the stack so your lower legs lean toward the floor. Use enough blankets to get the vertebrae at the back of your waist onto the floor. If you need higher propping, place your lower legs & the backs of your knees on a chair or couch.

Head Cushion: If your head is tilted, put a flat (wide folded blanket) under your head. Make sure your Head Cushion is not placed under your neck & shoulders.

Feet: Your feet must lean as low toward the floor as possible with your heels on the floor or on a block.

Eyebag: Place the eyebag on your eyebrows instead on your eyes.

Reliable Spinal Release: None

Possible Spinal Release: All

Other Benefits: Relieves all your tensions (physical, mental, emotional). Induces mental calm & ends fatigue, soothes your nervous system. Provides a complete relaxation, along with total refreshment & rejuvenation of your energy. Restores a feeling of peace & joy. Gives you an inner focus without effort & without distraction. Time disappears into timelessness.

Movement Type: Non-movement, non-action, non-doing, non-thinking; releasing & relaxing; receptivity & openness. Hip Joint Neutral (HJN — for your hip joint this is neither a forward bend nor an extension)

When to Use: At the beginning & end of your personal practice session. For profound rest, deep healing or as a sleeping position. As the basis for Ujjayi Pranayama (Yoga's Sounding Breath).

Shavasana

Corpse Pose, Yoga's Relaxation Pose



HJN