

# The Centered Place

## Newsletter

### January 2020



**Namaste**

It's not just another year: it's a new year. Coming with the new year are many new opportunities. May this year give you all the best. May you experience great clarity and peace of mind. May love flow easily from your heart. May joy fill every one of your days. May you realize your full potential – who you really already are. May the radiance of your Divine Nature shine forth to bring light to all those you see. May you have **2020** vision to see how Divine and Beautiful you are, and to see the Divine and Beauty in all those you meet.



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## Contemplation of the Month: You're On the Way

This year, the focus of all contemplation articles is on enlightenment. Enlightenment is Self-Realization. It is knowing and living in the absolute, highest expression of all that you already are. In Swami's words, it is "a steady, continuing, reliable, expansive, blissful inner state which, if you allow, fills your heart, mind and life."\*

In this month's article, Swami Nirmalananda reveals that you are already on the way to enlightenment, even if you are not planning on it or trying to get there. She writes:

Life is teaching you lessons even when you don't go looking for them. You're growing and learning, and you're outgrowing stuff that used to hold you back.

The bad news is that for most people the process of becoming enlightened happens very slowly. Swami says, "You can wait for the decades to pass in order to get to this point, by having life wear you down like dripping water melts stone."

The good news is you have another choice. You can take the express lane to enlightenment. You are in that lane right now if you are practicing yoga and meditation. Swami proclaims:



The point of yoga and meditation is to get the lessons without having to go through life's messy stuff. It's called insight, meaning inner-vision. When you learn how to look inward, you can see all the way to God...

Being in the express lane means you are heading in the right direction but does not necessarily mean you are moving rapidly in that direction. To move rapidly, you must practice whole heartedly. Also, you must not be held back by old habits or swayed by pipe dreams. One of the most beguiling pipe dreams is that worldly accomplishments will give you everything. Swami cautions:

As thrilling as worldly accomplishments can be, the delight wears off. The first study of wildly successful businessmen was done in the 1960's. The key question, buried in the many interview questions, was, "Having attained the heights of success ... are you happy?" The answer was clear: 100% of the subjects said no. Yogis are not surprised by this response.

Swami continues with this conclusion:

While your life's circumstances are important, and you must do your part to maintain or improve them, they will not give you lasting happiness. You can either take decades to figure this out or you can aspire higher. This is the lifetime in which you can get enlightened, should you so choose. Do more yoga. Meditate.

We are so fortunate to have this opportunity to become enlightened. We are so fortunate to have Svaroopa® yoga and meditation to help us see our way to enlightenment. We are so fortunate to have the guidance of Swami Nirmalananda and the other new swamis (as reported [below](#)) showing us the way and supporting us along the way.

Read [this month's contemplation essay](#) to learn more.

\* From the year-long program "Enlightenment in the Midst of Life", presented by Swami in 2018.

## Introducing New Swamis

The Svaroop Vidya ashram now has five new swamis. These devotees have given themselves completely to the goal of yoga and to helping others attain that goal.

Some of you already know one of these new swamis: Swami Sahajananda, formerly known as Karobi (Kusuma) Sachs. She is coming to The Centered Place at the end of the month to give a [Meditation Satsang](#) and then a [full day retreat the following day, February 1<sup>st</sup>](#).

Some of you have met Swami Shrutananda, formerly known as Cathy (Vidyadevi) Stillman. She gave a Meditation Day retreat here several years ago.

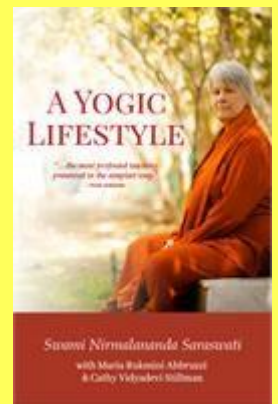


To avoid confusion, Swami Nirmalananda will now be addressed as Gurudevi Nirmalananda.

## Gurudevi Nirmalananda Has a New Book

Swami's new book *A Yogic Lifestyle* is now available on amazon or at the ashram's [online site](#). It is co-written by two of the new Swamis. We will have extra copies to sell at our studio. The following is a description:

Swami Nirmalananda is a modern-day representative of the authentic, ancient yogic traditions. She translates the ancient truths of yoga into principles and practices for busy, present day lives. This book is a collection of teaching articles and lectures with practices that have been tested by thousands of Swami Nirmalananda's students over time. She guides you in applying the writings of the ancient sages to your modern life. You will learn how to improve the quality of your life by uplifting your state of mind. Step-by-step instructions lead to you opening your heart more fully as well as looking deeper within. Whether you are a beginner or have practiced yoga and/or meditation for years, this book gives you easy ways to make rapid progress.



So now you have another support tool to make rapid progress in the fast lane to enlightenment!

## Charity of the Month: Ronald McDonald House Charities

As many of you know, Shanti's young grandson Brooks has been fighting cancer for over a year now. To get the best treatment possible, Brooks' family has resorted to Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York City (Brooks and family live in New Hampshire). Though the cancer treatments are painful and tiring – definitely not fun – the Ronald McDonald House (RMH) nearby the hospital provides an oasis for Brooks. Shanti shares the following:

The RMH is within walking distance of Memorial Sloan... Most of Brooks' treatments are administered on an outpatient basis and often are every other day for a number of days. Being able to return to the RMH to recover between treatments ... allows him to be treated at a world class hospital that specializes in his disease. The atmosphere at RMH is supportive to the entire family. The staff and volunteers make the time there as pleasant as possible and as kid-friendly as possible.

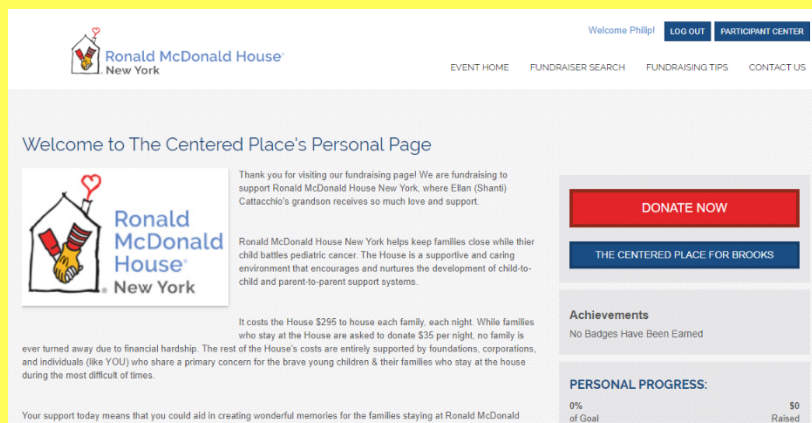


Shanti and Brooks' family are able to stay at the RMH. The RMH brings more fun into Brooks' life. It gives him something pleasant to look forward to and gives him a place where he can more easily recover from the stress of the treatments administered at the hospital. During holidays, the RMH staff throws a party for the children and their families. At Halloween, for example, the entire staff was in costume.

So let's give back to the Ronald McDonald House this month! We have started an [online fundraiser](#) to support the Ronald McDonald House in NYC. Click on [this link](#) or the figure to the right to go to The Center Place's personal fundraising page.

Alternatively, you can donate at the studio.

**Last month**, we raised \$470 for the Sharing Cupboard Food Pantry in West Brookfield. We thank Molly Irvine for her especially generous donation.



## Class Schedule Changes and January Calendar

- Friday morning classes will now be ongoing regular classes for experienced students only (similar to Monday 7:30 classes).
- A new Yoga+Meditation class will be offered as an 8-week series on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 7:15 pm. The class is open to all, including to those who took last year's Yoga+Meditation class.

Special class fees apply: \$136 for the series (\$120, retirees), paid by the first class. The series starts January 7<sup>th</sup> and continues to the end of February. **Note:** If you have regular classes remaining on your current class card, their value will be deducted from the series cost (depending on the expiration date on your class card).

Pat (Sumati) Morrison, who has been a regular student here for many years, shares the following about her experience with last year's Yoga+Meditation series:

"I recently completed a wonderful twelve-week Yoga-Meditation Course at the Centered Place. This course included yoga poses, breathing technique, chanting, mantra repetition and a brief discourse to prepare us for a delicious meditation experience. Individual instruction was provided to insure we each had a comfortable meditation seat. At the end of each class, there was an opportunity to share our experience or ask questions. I thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from every aspect of this course and would highly recommend it for beginning as well as experienced meditators."

- Monthly Discussion Group (currently not on our calendar handout): Sunday January 12, 11 am to noon

For our class schedule see <http://thecenteredplace.com/classes/>.

For our January calendar, see <http://thecenteredplace.com/calendar/>.

**Flex Schedule:** Some of you might not realize that you do not have to commit to the same class every week. Feel free to move around as your own schedule sees fit.



## Birthdays This Month

We wish the following active students and friends a very happy birthday. We offer you a free class this month. Names in **bold** indicate students who are currently active. **Note:** The number after each name is not the age; it's the day of the month!



**Louise Douglas** (11), Melissa Delargy (12), **Kara Legault** (16), **Kim Kvaracein** (20), Peter Wojtowicz (20), Pat Mallory (25), Paul Regan (26), **Jim Baron** (27), **Kathy Cody** (31)

## We Still Have Blankets for Sale, \$22 each

We still have a good number of blankets. Purchase them at the low rate of \$22 each and take them home with you for your home practice.



## Upcoming Events and Special Announcements

- **Free** Meditation Satsang with Swami Sahajananda (formerly known as Kusuma Sachs) Friday January 31, 7 to 8:15 pm  
Those of you who came to last year's Free Yoga Pain Clinic or the retreat that followed the next day know how wonderful Kusuma Sachs was as a teacher. Kusuma has recently returned from India ordained as a Swami and with a new name. Friday evening she will lead the Meditation Satsang. Meditation instruction will be included for those who have not meditated before. Register with us.
- **Full Day Retreat with Swami Sahajananda** Saturday February 1, 9:00 to 5:00 (two-hour lunch break)  
Stop the world, just for a day. Give yourself a yoga-day; think of it as an adult time-out. You'll feel greater than you can currently imagine. See how one day can bend your life in the direction you really want to go.  
Early rate is \$141 paid by January 25<sup>th</sup>. \$161 thereafter. Register and pay online at <https://svaroopa.org/fdp-warren-200201> or bring a check to register directly with us.
- **Next Free Newcomers' Class** Saturday, January 11: 2 to 4 pm
- **Next Monthly Discussion Group** Sunday January 12, 11 am to noon (free)  
*This was omitted from the original January calendar that you might have picked up last month at the studio. We discuss the month's contemplation article. This gives you a chance to deepen and share your understanding of yoga's wisdom teachings and how they apply to your life.*



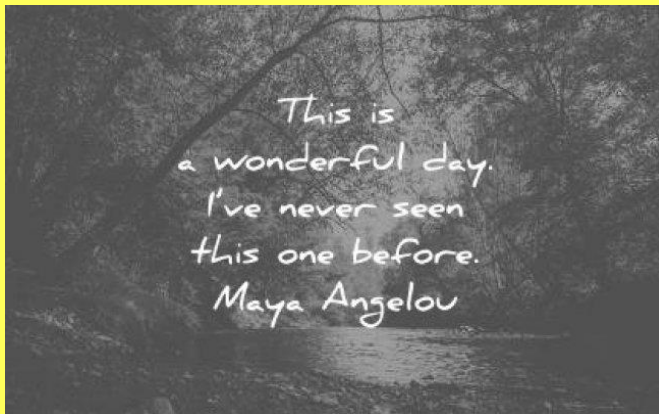
**Free Audio Recordings of Sadguru Nirmalananda** Free audio recordings of Swami Nirmalananda discourses online. Listen from home or during your travels. Listen from your cell phone or PC.  
<https://svaroopa.org/audio-recording>

**Enlighten Up!**



*I'm so glad to be out! I was running out of womb.*

### More to Ponder



Approach the New Year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day. **Michael Josephson**

Time for another year to begin. ... As the new year begins, stay focused on your goals and let your attitude be happy, positive, and encouraging to others.

[Stay Focused Quotes](#)



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*Giving thanks to you, for giving us the opportunity to teach and support you! Love from us.*



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