



# The Centered Place Newsletter

June 2020

## **Namaste**

“Pandemic and pandemonium” — that was part of the title of my humor talk a couple weeks ago. We **are** definitely living in both pandemic and pandemonium today. And we do need to keep a sense of humor about it. Being able to laugh helps us rebound from life’s insanities, difficulties and tragedies. **But** we must not laugh off the pain and suffering we see in the world around us. We can maintain our ability to laugh, and laugh often, but we also must be able to act, and act often. We must act to confront and rectify the suffering, inequality, injustice, cruelty, bigotry and racism we see around us. We must defend and protect ourselves and others from the coronavirus, for sure, but we also need to protect and defend against the virus of ignorance.

As the yoga sages tell us, ignorance is the greatest cause of suffering. By “ignorance” they mean ignorance of our own true nature. We are divine but we forget or don’t recognize it. You are divine. I am divine. We are made in the likeness of God, as the Bible proclaims. We are each a spark of God, as the Hasidic Jews claim. We are all Shiva, the one the and only Divine Reality, as the mystics of yoga claim. In that regard, we are all equal.

The color of our skin does not make us more or less divine. The color of our skin should not make us more privileged or less. The color of our skin should not leave us more dignified or less. We should all respect and honor one another. And for that, we must know who and what we really are. That’s the main goal of yoga and meditation.

We can all do something to eradicate our own ignorance. The best way is, as Swami Nirmalananda says all the time: “Do more yoga.” At the same time, as she makes clear in this month’s contemplation article, we must not avoid or run away from the suffering and cruelty around us. We must act. She says: “... if all the yogis withdraw from the world, who will be left to run it? We have a responsibility to participate... to be even-minded while acting in the world.”

We must speak out. We must defend the good. We must protect the weak. We must lift the downtrodden. We must right the wrong. And to act well and effectively in all these endeavors, we must know our Self. Then we can act with dignity and recognize the dignity of others. Then we can act with equanimity, focus and love.

This month’s charity is NAACP Legal Defense for Justice and Education Fund. You can do something right now by donating to our [Facebook fundraiser](#). More information below.

Stay well. Take care. Read on.

Topics in this newsletter:

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## Contemplation of the Month: Equanimity & Enlightenment

This month's contemplation article brings to light how we can be both even-minded and activist, in times when both are so desperately needed.



The world needs you: the *enlightened* you. One who can contribute to the world while maintaining equanimity. Who is the enlightened you, and how can you be fully engaged in the world, contributing and caring without getting lost or distressed?

[Read the contemplation article](#)

## Online Classes: News and Updates

We have made it easier for you to join our online classes:

- **You no longer need to register for classes through Zoom.** All you need is the join information for the class, which I will provide on request. The join information for a class is the same from week to week (join link, meeting ID and password). But the information differs for classes held on other days and times of the week. One exception is the free Shavian/Ujjayi classes on Monday and Wednesday evenings, which you can join using the same link or ID/password. If you have been participating in an online class, I will be sending you a reminder email up to two hours prior to each class week to week. If you want to attend another class that you haven't attended before, simply notify me at [phil@thecenteredplace.com](mailto:phil@thecenteredplace.com) so that I can send you that class's join information.

Pay when you can and what you can.

- You can pay via Venmo now (@PhilMilgrom-TCP), as well as by check or PayPal. Check and Venmo are preferred, as PayPal imposes a transaction fee.
- You can get personal assistance with Zoom. If you have been hesitant about joining online classes, you are welcome to contact me to make an appointment for a one-on-one tutorial on the phone. I can start a Zoom meeting and show you how to join and use the Zoom features to make your class a good experience.

Please refer to our [Online Yoga Classes](#) web page for information about joining classes, setting up your laptop/device and a space for classes, schedule, and payment information.

## Updated Schedule

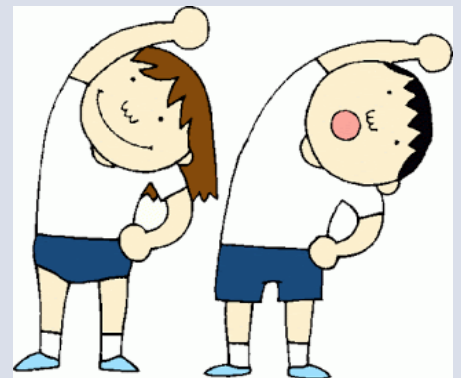
Two changes:

- We discontinued the Tuesday 10:00 AM class.
- We changed the starting time for the Experienced Thursday PM class from 7:30 to 7:00 (90 minute class, as usual).

<b>Mondays</b>	5:30 to 7 pm	Continuing Svaroopa® Yoga
	8:30 to 9 pm	Free Relaxing Shavasana/Ujjayi
<b>Tuesdays</b>	6:30 to 8:30 pm	Svaroopa® Yoga+Meditation
<b>Wednesdays</b>	8:30 to 9 pm	Free Relaxing Shavasana/Ujjayi
<b>Thursdays</b>	10 to 11:30 am	Continuing Svaroopa® Yoga
	7 to 8:30 pm	Experienced Svaroopa® Yoga
<b>Fridays</b>	10:00 to 11:30 am	Experienced Svaroopa® Yoga
<b>Saturdays</b>	10:00 to 11:30 am	Continuing Svaroopa® Yoga

## Notes:

- If you still have unused classes on your pre-pandemic studio class card, we will credit you for the value of the studio classes you paid for (online classes cost less than studio classes). If you want to know the remaining \$ value remaining on your studio card, [email](#) us.
- If you miss a class that you paid for, you have an extra week to make up for it, or you can attend two classes a week to make up for it. If you are ill or on vacation for two or more weeks during the 4 or 8 weeks for which you made your purchase, let us know and we'll extend your expiration date.



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## Other Online Classes and Events

- Free Satsang (Optional Donation to Ashram accepted)  
Friday June 26th 7 to 8:30 pm  
Be in the online company of others, listening to the wisdom of the great yoga sages and then immersing in the peace and bliss of your Self in meditation.  
Donation: Send us a check made out to Svaroopaa Vidya Ashram or go to <https://svaroopaa.org/donate>
- International Yoga Day (Sunday June 21)

## International Yoga Day Events

International Yoga Day was proclaimed by the United Nations in 2014 and has been celebrated every year since 2015. The 21st of June was chosen because it is (usually) the day of the year with the most hours of sunlight, and yoga is known for its ability to bring to light the best in you.

“Svaroopaa” is Sanskrit for your inherent nature, or the bliss of your own being. Svaroopaa® yoga removes the layers of tension that prevent your true nature from coming to light. It is a user-friendly and profound style of yoga that you can easily do while getting amazing results for body, mind and more.



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*“From my first class, I knew Svaroopaa® yoga was something different, something more, something deeper than other practices I had tried previously.” – Christopher Kavi Peppell*

Svaroopaa® yoga teachers all over Greater New England will be honoring International Yoga Day by offering free events with optional donations requested to support Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram, home of Svaroopaa® yoga. The ashram is a spiritual resource for thousands, through free online services and onsite retreats and trainings. It has been the inspiration and training center for our teachers and several of our students. [www.svaroopaa.org](http://www.svaroopaa.org)

The Centered Place will offer the following events on Sunday June 21st:

- 10 to 11:30 am - Introduction to Svaroopaa® Yoga
- 2 to 3:30 pm - Introduction to Svaroopaa® Vidya Meditation

If you attend Saturday’s 10 am class, we can donate your fee to the Ashram. To register, simply contact us. (We are assuming the studio, which is now air-conditioned, will still be closed because of the pandemic and for safety precautions.)

For information about IYD events sponsored by other studios in Greater New England, see <http://thecenteredplace.com/wp-content/uploads/IYD2.pdf>

## **Charity of the Month: NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.**

Given current events, we thought this charity appropriate. The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF) was founded to strive for justice for African Americans. According to their mission statement, their aim is to make "structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans."

Through advocacy and litigation, LDF focuses on issues of education, voter protection, economic justice and criminal justice. Outside the legal system, the LDF also does advocacy work and policy research, puts on educational programs, and provides scholarships for outstanding African-American students.

As per Charity Navigator, they have an outstanding record of transparency, scoring a 96 out of 100. Your contribution goes a long way to support the goals of the charity and the lives of many.

We have established a [Facebook Fundraiser](#). Please donate. A little goes a long way, especially if everyone donates a little (or a lot!).

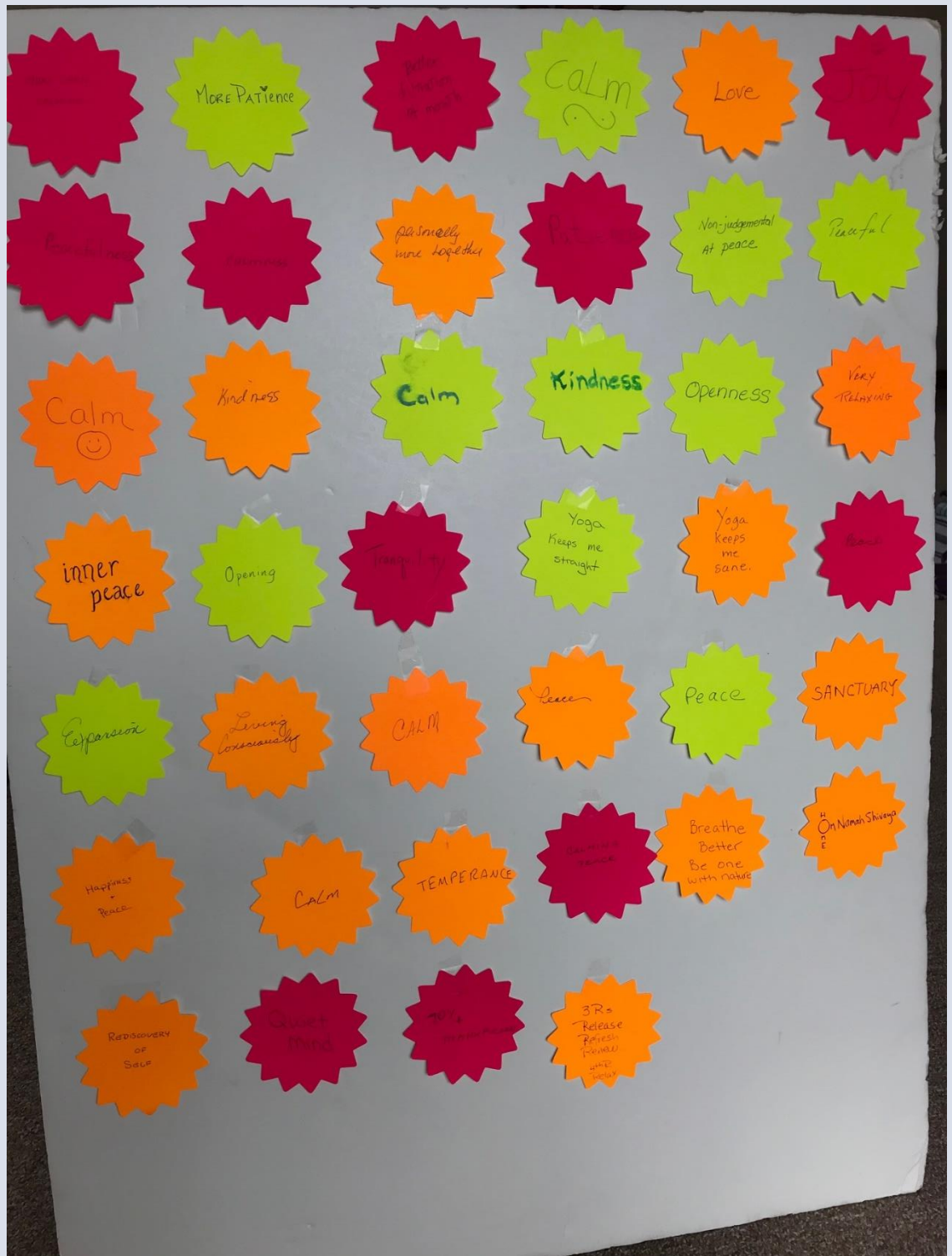
**Last month's charity totals:** We raised \$523 for Feeding America! Kudos and warm thanks for your generosity. You can still donate directly to Feeding America to [help end hunger](#).

## **Your Star Qualities**

If you were attending classes in the beginning of 2019, you were invited to think of a quality you would like to embody for the year. Do you remember yours? Maybe if you look closely enough at the photo, you can find it. Want to continue working on that quality? Or choose another?

Go for it!

Be your best Self.



## Birthdays This Month

We wish the following active students and friends a very happy birthday. Please note this observation by Reverend Larry Lorenzoni: “Birthdays are good for you. Statistics show that the people who have the most birthdays live the longest.”



*Maria Garcia Gervasi (2<sup>nd</sup>), Hari Ann Porter (7<sup>th</sup>), Cheryl Roberts (8<sup>th</sup>), Lynn Lak (8<sup>th</sup>), Jonathan Miller (9<sup>th</sup>), Roxann Callender (11<sup>th</sup>), Nancy Nowak (12<sup>th</sup>), Debra Mitchell (14<sup>th</sup>), Ellan Shanti Catacchio (16<sup>th</sup>), Kaye Boothman (17<sup>th</sup>), Laurie Simko (17<sup>th</sup>), Karen Kurr (17<sup>th</sup>), Linda Dorman (18<sup>th</sup>), Michelle McGrath (18<sup>th</sup>), Susan Rutherford (24<sup>th</sup>), Sue Wolfman (28<sup>th</sup>), Suzie Durand (30<sup>th</sup>)*

*If you have a birthday this month and were omitted from this list, either we haven't seen you in a long time or we didn't have your birth information. If the former, reconnect with us! We'll be happy to see you. If the latter, let us know the missing information. Thank you!*

## **Free Audio Recordings of Sadguru Nirmalananda and Her New Book and more**

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>

Swami's new book *A Yogic Lifestyle* is now available on amazon or at the ashram's [online site](#). We also have copies at the studio that you can pick up on request (we'd leave a copy in the mudroom with your name on it). We are selling them for only \$16.95.

Swami invites you to join her Japa Club, a free service available by conference phone call (and Zoom). No video required. It meets for a few minutes twice a day, once at 11:45 am and the other at 6:30 pm. Swami gives a short wisdom reading and then leads Japa (mantra repetition) for about 6 minutes. In the evenings, she leads a second round dedicated to all those who have died from COVID-19, are ill, or who are affected in any way by it (that makes all of us!). It's like praying for others and just as powerful if not more because of the grace of the mantra. For more information, click [here](#).

## **Enlighten Up!**

“Birthdays are good for you. Statistics show that the people who have the most birthdays live the longest.” Reverend Larry Lorenzoni



*Michael Kountouris-Greece*

## Wisdom to Ponder

“First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.



Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out— because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

~ Martin Niemoller, a prominent Lutheran Minister in Germany who emerged as an outspoken public foe of Hitler and spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps.



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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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