



Awake Yoga
Meditation

Darshan

Summer Solstice
2022



Our Book of Life

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

Awake Yoga Meditation is a vibrant spiritual community oriented around awakening to our true divine nature. With love and good humor, our community helps each other to wake up through yoga philosophy, Advaita Vedanta, and the mystical teachings of Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Zen, Hinduism, and Judaism. Meditation, Kriya yoga, Self-inquiry, and devotional practices are integral to these teachings.

We offer weekly meditations for adults and children, spiritual discussion, and meditation instruction. All are welcome.

Schedules and Information

Sunday Morning Meditation for Adults
Sunday Morning Meditation for Children (currently suspended)
Every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday Night Darshan Meditation, every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.
Friday Night Healing Meditation, every Friday at 7:30 p.m.

Please note: Our Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday meditations continue to be live streamed. Connect by Zoom, phone, or YouTube. You are also invited to join us in person at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays at Waldorf School of Baltimore, 4801 Tamarind Rd., Baltimore, MD 21209.

Visit our website: AwakeYogaMeditation.org for more information on schedules and special events.

Additional Resources

Join our free eYogi Community at AwakeYogaMeditation.org/eYogi

Swami Nityananda offers private instruction in meditation (including Kriya yoga) and private spiritual counseling sessions by appointment. Call Lakshmi at 410-591-2646 or email Swami@AwakeYogaMeditation.org to schedule a conference.



Every one of us, no matter who we are, is writing a book of our life. From the Library of Consciousness, we have checked out this particular Book of Life. This life is ours on loan. It always belongs to the Library of Consciousness. It always belongs to the whole. It always belongs to the Divine.

Some aspects of this Book of Life are already written before we come into this particular lifetime. As you reflect back over your life, you can probably identify aspects that were appointed, part of a divine calendar that was prewritten. Other aspects of this Book of Life we get to create as we go. Part of the fun is figuring out which is which! The *Bhagavad Gita* says we have free will within cosmic will. We get to choose how to respond to the prewritten aspects of our lives.

Everything we learn as we write our Book of Life benefits the whole. All the efforts we make toward resolving conflict and healing crises go back to the Library of Consciousness. When we respond with peace and creativity and grace in the midst of incredibly intense pressures in time and space, that same peace and creativity and grace become available to the whole universe. The efforts we make are never just for ourselves alone; they are always an integral part of the whole.

With this conscious awareness, our life trajectory is able to share fully and gracefully through us. We become aware that there is an unfolding, a life energy that is moving and living and breathing through all of us. Grace is always gleaming and winking and glinting and shining and shimmering at us and through us in the realm of time and space. We are invited to remember this always and to clear any aspect of our seeing, hearing, and awareness that blocks our direct realization of it.

Simply love, honor, respect, and revere every single moment of life. Create with joy. Remember your Book of Life is a gift. It is a blessing. It does not belong to you; it's on loan. You will be returning it to the Library of Consciousness. Be good library citizens. Enjoy your gift. Enjoy every line, every word, every syllable. Love every moment!

Forbearance

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

Although Krishna calls forbearance a noble quality, I must confess I hesitated spending a meditation on the idea of forbearance. I realize there is an old concept about forbearance I simply could not forbear or relate to; God wants you to forbear. Grin and bear it. That's a Puritan ethic.

Scripture gives us an idea that is very workable, but what I'd like to do is enhance the scriptural idea by giving another perspective to forbearance that I know we can all bear more joyfully. Here's a workable definition: to forbear is to be patient or self-controlled in the face of adversity.

Then I started thinking of forbearance in terms of the positive aspect: the ability to be patient under provocation. To be patient requires a certain kind of self-control. If we have self-mastery, the proof is that we are patient. Let's look at a couple of these exemplars of forbearance.

Buddha recognized forbearance as one of the supreme virtues. One day a man, a high caste Brahmin, traveled a great distance to reach the Buddha and wanted to challenge him. After the man finished his diatribe, Buddha asked him a penetrating question, "Suppose someone brought you a gift and you refused to accept it. What would you do with it?" Answered the man, "Well, I would give it back." Then Buddha said, "I do not accept your gift." The Brahmin understood and asked Buddha for forgiveness.

In relationship to our subject of forbearance, I asked my Inner Being, where did Jesus actually go that allowed him not to react to the persecutions, the torment? What made it possible for him not to react? The answer came very clearly: He kept his attention fixed on the presence of Divine Love. He focused on the Father, the Beloved dwelling in him. Love does it all.

So forbearance indeed is a spiritual quality. It's the ability to be lovingly and joyfully patient. And in doing that we are indeed accepting our divine inheritance, the divine quality called forbearance.

God bless us.

Peace on Earth

Srimati Shanti Mataji

Contemplating peace in the world, trying to visualize it, brought a scene of nature. A beautiful setting came to the inner eye: a small pond fringed by wild iris among the reeds and cattails, sunlight playing on the water, the quiet pond reflecting the blue of sky, and a deep, green stillness all around. I relaxed into this peaceful image, into the depth of nature's peace. Then, like an explosive intruder, came an awareness of the unseen activity amidst this scene of stillness and peace. The frog dozing on the lily pad flicks its tongue and snares the emerald-winged dragonfly; the snake bellies forward stealthily and, in one lunge, seizes the frog; and the bird swoops down and catches the snake in its claws.

How to reconcile this devouring activity of nature with peace? God granted the realization that since all forms are God, all this activity is only God consuming God, God entering God, God merging in God. Only when we focus on the outer form and separate the frog as frog and dragonfly as insect do we think of their predator-prey relationship as violence, or lack of peace. When we see beyond the separated forms to their underlying essence, when we see that it is the same energy everywhere melding forms, that everything is God flowing into God, then all activity remains within the context of peace.

When we recognize peace within and behind and beyond all activity, it becomes possible for us to visualize and to realize all parts of the world as embodiments of peace. In this realization, we can dwell in the consciousness of peace, even in the face of what the world calls war. And when we dwell in the consciousness of peace, we have peace to radiate and to share with all people, all nations, all events, all beings, all planes of existence.

The Gift of Love and Compassion

Karuna

Compassion, acceptance, forgiveness, comfort, and unconditional love are divine qualities that are innate within each of us. Meditation helps us access these qualities within ourselves. And if we're having difficulty accessing these qualities within, we can awaken to them by practicing *being* these qualities. If we can share compassion and unconditional love with one not fortunate enough to have been raised with love, it can be a life-changing gift.

I recently read an article by a woman whose birth mother was abusive and left the family when the writer was in the 8th grade. Her father left two years later to start another family across town, leaving his high school-aged daughter with the house and a car. The writer essentially raised herself, channeling her anger and confusion at being abandoned to completing high school, college, and becoming fiercely independent. Years later, her boyfriend's mother became the mother she'd never had. The young woman experienced the healing balm of being told "you are so easy to love," instead of being told she was ugly and unlovable. The boyfriend's mother offered the unconditional love the writer had longed for all her life, but had convinced herself she didn't need.

As we become adults (and often sooner), we realize we can't always look to someone else to provide the nurturing we deserve. When that happens, where do we go for the comfort and love we need? We can go directly to the Source within. We ask to awaken to the realization of the divine qualities we wish to experience, and then we listen. When we awaken to these qualities within ourselves, we become our own eternal friend, able to extend to ourselves the compassion we long to experience.

Learning to extend this gift of love and compassion to ourselves makes it possible to share this gift with others. We are here together to share in this giving and receiving, to provide eternal friendship to one another, to make one another aware of the divine life that we are. And no matter our earlier experience, it is never too late to love and be loved. To love and to feel loved and to know that we are that love is the Divine's plan for all of us.

Revelations of a Cosmic Traveler

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

May we always rest in the divine awareness that is known as the Lotus of the Heart, the depth of consciousness, the grace, the compassion within ourselves that is present always in the heart. May we always rest in that deep spacious consciousness, allowing the heart energy of fresh, creative life force and possibility to share through us right in the midst of our daily lives.

Lahiri says again and again, "Meditate, remain in the peace that follows meditation, and do your work." Right here. That's all any of us is ever asked to do. Divine grace, vastness, and creativity are right here in the midst of everything—in every daily chore, in dutiful traveling, and in patient waiting. Every single day. Lahiri tells us, "As long you have bones in your body, meditate." The Buddha was equally emphatic that we are never done with meditation and our spiritual practice. Meditate, keep your mind in the peace that follows meditation, and do your work, which is whatever is right before you.

In this way we all become the Lotus of the Heart. We all flower forth. Divine grace flows forth effortlessly from us as patience and peace because we have steadily been practicing our meditation. This devotion allows grace to share through us. We can't force grace; it happens in a divinely appointed moment. When we trust divine timing, there is no strain. Even if we're working a twelve-hour day, we will be resting in the support of the earth beneath our feet and the sky above us, in the steady strength of the mountains within us, in the freshness and vitality of the waters of life, in the breeze flowing through us. We will be dancing with all those life energies in a way that is vaster than the individual human awareness can ever imagine or comprehend. We will blossom!

Light that Leads to Light

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

It is only when scriptural knowledge, instructions of a preceptor, and true discipleship come together that Self-knowledge is attained. All these melt together in Realization.

—*Yoga Vishishta 6:1*

On Guru Purnima, we celebrate the energy that leads from darkness to light. We honor the energy and the teacher who always invites us to be our highest selves, our truest, most generous selves. We tune into the Absolute Self in each and every one of us. The ancient tradition of Guru Purnima honors what is often referred to as guru's grace.

It's accurate to call it guru grace. Let go of the possessive case, which suggests that there is anything separate from grace. Grace pours through the guru who has realized there is nothing apart from grace. The guru is of grace totally, has given all to grace. The guru is energy of kindness and awareness that shares through a human who has merged with pure Love, who has realized non-separateness. The One is working through the teacher who is serving the One in all. Through a teacher the One sings light that resonates with light within us knocking on the door of our hearts, asking us to open up so that light can shine brighter in and through us. Light calls to light. Pure Love leads to Pure Love.

The teacher is an emissary or an ambassador on behalf of the One, reminding everyone that each of us is inseparable from sacred light. Sacred light is with us and within us and guides us always, brightening the way before us. *Yoga Vishishta 6:1* refers to the preceptor that invites us to come into contact with the heart of yoga. And yoga means divine union with the purest love of our hearts, the truest love of our beings. We're invited to commit and recommit ourselves to the Oneness, the ideal, the bliss, the blessing available to us right now. Tune into it.

In a single breath, in a single moment, it is possible for every one of us to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. We can feel this in moments of meditation, during our chanting, during our singing of the Alleluia. There are moments when the doors open wide and there's pure unity—all the voices are working together in harmony as one. That's a glimpse, that's a taste of the bliss, the spiritual ecstasy that every one of us is invited to encounter, not just in drops, but in showers of it, oceans of it, realizing that nothing is separate from bliss.

Prepare to expand. In very practical ways, prepare to receive more blessings in more ways than you ever have before. To enter into that, we might need to remain in the stillness. We might need to remain steady in

our daily stance and postures to allow expansion to happen through us.

Say yes to awareness, helpfulness, universal kindness. Say yes to expansion. Even if humanly you have no idea how the yes is going to be fulfilled through you, say yes. Say, I'm willing. You may say, What are you asking me to do, Lord? And then you say, All things are possible to one who believes. All things are possible to one who loves. All things are possible to one who says yes.

There are different ways teachers show up in our lives. Everyone we meet can serve as a teacher. For example, a young girl was asked to sweep the dust from the floor. She cleaned the dust but left traces of resentment as she swept and tossed the broom aside carelessly. Her grandmother let her know that God is in the broom, in the form of Shiva. In yoga, Shiva represents the aspect of the Divine associated with spiritual perfection and transformation.

So honor the broom! Let's give ourselves a joyful gift of a broom, a metaphorical broom of spiritual perfection and transformation. As long as we're in a body and have a mind, we get to practice housekeeping. Things are going to get tracked in, which means we get to sweep things up. We can invite freshness into our lives. Ask yourself about the things in your life, as well as habits and concepts. If you don't love it, if you don't want it, if you don't need it, let it go. Take the broom of spiritual perfection and gather into one pile all pain, detritus, debris. Sweep it up!

Thank you, Divine Grace, that you are that light that shines within the heart of each one of us. The light is urging us onward, inviting us forward, loving us into fullest possible joy, greatest possible healing, infinite creativity, gladness, delight, wonder, awe, magnificence and humility.

God bless us all.

Teachings of the Gurus

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

“As we move forward on the path of ever increasing Awakeness, we are invited to let fall away concepts and external frameworks. We’re invited to step out of shoes we have been wearing that keep us from feeling the earth of Beingness beneath our feet. Our non-local awareness is already beyond all finiteness. That which abides unchanging is beyond words, concepts, duality, effects of the mind. Imagine yourself beyond time and space. In truth, you are already there. We are already there together, always One, always welcome, safe, loved, at home.”

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

“To live in divine perfection, we must also live at peace. We can live in this awareness by realizing that peace is already within us. As Krishna mentions in the Gita, ‘There can be no peace without meditation.’ Perennial peace is finally known in its fullness when we depend exclusively on our own inner self. When we discover our own transcendent peace, we increase the consciousness of peace in the world. Every time we pass any house, any business, any school, church, or hospital, we can offer peace to it. Let us chant, ‘My peace I leave unto you.’ Let us start sharing the peace that is within us, whatever measure of peace we now have. Every word we send forth with love, with feeling, with awareness, comes back to us a thousandfold. As that word travels throughout the whole universe, peace spreads, changing what no human policies have ever been able to change and no peace treaty has ever been able to accomplish.”

Sri Swami Premananda Giri

“Because it reflects the light of the sun, the moon shines in heavenly glory. Even so I will keep my mind and heart ever identified with thy divinity that I may manifest thy righteousness amidst all negative and adverse circumstances. Teach me to accept this world with its brightness and shadow and yet live by the illumination of thy truth and the joy of thy presence within me. The star that shines in the heavens above does not withhold its light from my vision. Then how can I deprive my fellow men of the illumination of my spiritual realization?”

Swami Yogananda Paramahansa

“God is Love; His plan for creation can be rooted only in love. Does not that simple thought, rather than erudite reasonings, offer solace to the human heart? Every saint who has penetrated to the core of Reality has testified that a divine universal plan exists and that it is beautiful and full of joy.”

Shyamacharan Lahiri

“To think, love, and act in the consciousness of God is the supreme virtue of life. To live in the conscious awareness of the abiding presence of God in the universe around as well as within one’s own self is the essence of righteousness and the beauty of holiness.”

Joy of the Infinite

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

Trust that the Divine is taking care of everyone and everything. Be present, aware, and responsive, align with the Divine, and ask: *Where would you guide my effort? How would you like me to open to your grace? How would you like to be awake through me? How would you like to be hopeful through me? How would you like to be helpful through me?*



Check in with yourself and ask: How have I been in terms of remaining in contact with my original nature of kindness? How have I been in terms of honoring the eternal law of oneness? We all know what it's like to be in harmony with the Divine. And we also know how painful it is to be out of harmony with the Divine. We're invited to set aside again and again and again anything other than kindness, until we have more access to kindness and more capacity to share it.



To free ourselves, to heal ourselves, to empower ourselves to live in the light, to live joyfully and gladly, to dance through life, choose kindness. Choose caring. Choose to focus on the best and highest in absolutely everyone and everything.

Light calls to Light; Love calls to Love. We place ourselves consciously in the Light, in pure Love, knowing that whatever comes into contact with Light becomes Light. Whatever Love touches remembers, "I, too, am Love." We ask to participate gladly in our true, sacred wholeness, so that all 37 trillion cells in our body remember their illumination, and light fills our energy field with coherence, steadiness, and warm strength, reminding everyone of what is possible and true for all.



The ultimate reality is undifferentiated oneness. You don't lose yourself in undifferentiated oneness; you lose only your limitations. In undifferentiated oneness there is no hierarchy. There is only pure Light and pure Love, which is what each of us is. Every one of us is invited to clear the blockages, the obstructions, and dis-identify with pain, the causes of pain, and the consciousness of pain. The world is not helped if we go around saying, "Woe is you, woe is me." The world is helped if we connect with eternal truth, light, love, kindness, caring, and compassion. We stand steady, calm, clear, and still, wherever we are, and say, "How can I help?" That's it. And the Divine will share through us whatever is helpful in that moment.

Swami Shankarananda's Pearls

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

Here's a key to manifesting abundance: *Jesus turned his attention away from appearances.* If we are to manifest the power, the qualities, the nature, the attributes of our being, we have to know the power to manifest is within us, not outside of us. Everything you see on the outside started on the inside.



Scripture reports, "He lifted his eyes to heaven." What most people who hear this don't understand is that heaven is not outside of us. The only heaven you'll ever discover is the one that is within you. And that is the heaven of love and peace and joy and light, of expansiveness, limitlessness, beauty beyond words, abundance beyond measure, creativity beyond our wildest imagination, and imagination with which to create anything!



You have to raise your consciousness beyond the appearance, beyond the manifestation, to the Source of manifestations. Heaven is the limitless state of pure consciousness within us. It's waiting to be called on, to be given the opportunity to come into experience in the world of manifestation. God is the substance of all forms. God is creative consciousness. That creative spirit exists in all of us. It's not separate from us, it is us.

The danger is that if you focus on any lack or limitation, that is what you keep experiencing. Our habits are nothing but what we've repeatedly focused on till that focus became a habit. That habit of focusing on something, wanted or not wanted, is what keeps us experiencing having or not having what we have or don't have.



I want you to know something about yourself. You are the magnificence of God, the glory of God. You came forth from the heart of God. You are here because of the love that God is. Love is that God, that Reality that's always existed and that contains everything within Itself that could ever possibly exist or come into being or be desired by any of Its self-expressions for their livelihood and well-being.



Whatever need you have is always surpassed by the supply. Are you grateful for everything you have? Then you will have more to be grateful for.

Becoming An Ocean of Mercy

Padma

In the *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*, Adi Shankar's teachings on Vedanta, he describes the attributes of a true teacher and a sincere seeker of truth, aka the student. The student needs to have discrimination, detachment, calmness, and a burning desire for liberation. The teacher, already liberated and firmly established in the consciousness of the Self, must also have discrimination, detachment, and calmness, as well as deep knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, and the ability to understand and address the challenges faced by all types of students.

All these qualities are commonly known and unsurprising, but unexpectedly, at least to me, Adi Shankar adds another descriptor: a true teacher is "an ocean of mercy that knows no reason." Just the phrase itself feels like a warm wave of loving acceptance that washes away all self-judgment, doubt, regret, sense of failure or unworthiness.

We are blessed throughout life with many teachers, not all of whom meet Adi Shankar's lofty qualifications or possibly even think of themselves as teachers, but who provide invaluable lessons in support of our unfoldment. And thank goodness, not all illumined teachers require their students to already be masters of discrimination, detachment, and calmness, with one-pointed desire for liberation. Such is the grace of mercy that knows no reason!

Reflecting on the teacher-student relationship over the years, I have usually focused on how grateful I am for the embodied presence, guidance, and kindness of my teachers, and how deficient I often feel as a student. Lately, however, my perspective has shifted. When I consider the unwavering soul commitment our teachers have to help us unfold, to realize what they have realized, I recognize how unhelpful it is to focus on self-judgment. We honor our teachers by doing our best to live the teachings. These embodiments of mercy are not judging us when we fall short of our own intentions; they're calling us to also become loving embodiments of mercy.

Ramana Maharshi told us, "Your own Self-realization is the greatest service you can render the world." Wherever we are on our journey, we are already sharing the fruits of our practice, both silently and outwardly. The more we commit to our own unfoldment, the sweeter the fruits become. Our appreciation for our teachers deepens as we recognize our responsibility to honor their commitment to us by living it forward until we too become pure embodiments of the one ocean of mercy that knows no reason, with love, peace, kindness, joy, understanding, forgiveness, and friendship for all.



Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

QUESTION:

I'M FEELING OUT OF SORTS, NOT AT MY BEST. PLEASE SPEAK TO THIS.

ANSWER:

Let's begin with the reminder that we are of the nature and energy of balance. Our natural state is poise, awareness, and responsiveness. We place our hands together at the heart to remind ourselves of what is true for all beings always. We raise our hands to the center of our foreheads with the willingness to see clearly, to let go of human vision, categories, concepts, ideas, expectations, and judgments. Let us be open to vision and awareness so clear and calm and expansive that it does not even fit into human words. We lower our hands to the heart as a reminder that we are inviting ourselves to live in the human body, heart, and mind with an expansive awareness that allows new possibilities, connectedness, unity, harmony, and healing to emerge for ourselves and for all.

We place our hands on our thighs, palms turned upward, in willingness to let go of anything that blocks the full receiving of the light that is always present within us. Let us consciously connect with our feet on the floor, reminding ourselves we are here to be of service. We are connecting with our humility and our courage, our steadiness and our awareness. The whole universe is with us and within us, supporting us and blessing us and all of life.

Let us connect with the four-cornered foundation present at the base of the spine, which reminds us that all is well. Poise is always possible. Peace is always present. When we have that awareness, our consciousness naturally rises up the spine and lifts us into a calm, clear, wise, caring spaciousness.

Now we can invite our awareness to flow back into both the human and the energetic heart. Let us rest and be renewed, blessed by the eternal kindness and eternal strength that we are forever.

Light of the Upanishads

Prashna Upanishad, Ch 1, verses 5-8
translated by Swami Premananda

Consciousness is the light of illumination. Life is enlightened by consciousness. The relationship between consciousness and life is comparable to that of the sun and the moon. All that exists, either as a form or in the formless state, is essentially life-substance. Among these, obviously, all living beings are life-substance.

Consciousness, by its very self-revealing nature, imparts the laws of self-consciousness to all beings. Every being manifesting in east and west, north and south, above and below, and in other intermediary planes of existence, receives its intelligence from consciousness.

The universal and all-pervading consciousness, like the effulgent sun, is self-revealing. Thus has been declared this truth.

Self-conscious, self-revealing, eternal and one is consciousness. The whole manifested universe is its form. According to the diverse nature of the multiplicity of beings, it appears to be different and multitudinous. It is the source of illumination and the eternal life of all beings.

Our Line of Teachers

Swami Nityananda

Joyfully following the path blazed by our founding teacher, Swami Shankarananda, our presiding teacher, Swami Nityananda, emphasizes our connection and oneness with all life, selfless service, meditation, Self-realization, and unconditional love. She is dedicated to helping us apply these ideals in our everyday life and promoting the progress of all beings – our global family.

Swami Shankarananda

The spiritual founder and preceptor of the Divine Life Church of Absolute Oneness in Baltimore. He was a disciple of Swami Premananda. Swami Shankarananda left the body on November 24, 2014. He appointed Swami Nityananda as his successor.

Swami Premananda

A direct disciple of Swami Yogananda. Swami Premananda established the Self-Revelation Church of Absolute Monism in Washington, D.C.

Swami Yogananda Paramahansa

He was the first of this line of gurus to come to America, and was the guru of Swami Premananda, ordaining him as a minister in India and later consecrating him as a Swami in America.

Swami Sri Yukteswar

A man of profound wisdom, a great astronomer, and adept in the science of astrology. He was a self-dedicated humanitarian. He was the guru of Swami Yogananda Paramahansa.

Shyamacharan Lahiri

He attained the supreme illumination of God-realization while living an exemplary family life. He was the guru of Swami Sri Yukteswar.

Aum Babaji

A guru of divine revelation and a man of supreme compassion. He was the guru of Shyamacharan Lahiri.



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DARSHAN is a nonsectarian magazine
dedicated to the preservation, perpetuation,
and dissemination of the ideals and the
philosophy of Absolute Oneness.

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