

COMPASSIONATE MOTHER



We are firmly held by the arms of the Divine Mother always. Always! There is nothing we can do and nowhere we can go that can take us out of that divine embrace!

Divine Mother is beyond gender and names the universal life energy which gives rise to all that is. Allow yourself to feel embraced by this beautiful energy that adores and cherishes all of us so much that we are never alone, never separate. Connect with this underlying pattern of unity, perfection, harmony, and grace, the divine light energy that is shining and shimmering everywhere.

In every human experience, even the most anguishing, the mystical path is present right there. We gain a laser vision of love, able to look through human pain and chaos and focus instead on the underlying glorious perfection that allows everything to come into existence. As we tune into that, we gain in the strength, the wisdom, and the ability to share the light with every single person on the planet—the ones we find it easy to relate to and the ones that deeply challenge us.

The light says, “You’re here for a reason.” Sometimes it’s not about doing, but about being—being wherever we are and simply being ourselves. We may not even be aware that just our presence, our signature vibration, can be of incredible service wherever the Divine sends us. When we remember this, it becomes so much easier to be in a human body and to move through human relationships gracefully and gratefully.

Your energy extends far beyond the boundaries of your body, out into the infinite. Let yourself explore. It feels very different being in a human body when you remind yourself, *my energy is fluid*. Invite this vast, invisible part of yourself to flow before you so that a pathway is laid down for you to walk in beauty and grace. Everyone who encounters you also encounters this mystical pathway of beauty and is invited to walk in beauty and in grace, in harmony, compassion, love, and oneness.

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Visualize that this vast, infinite aspect of yourself, this energy that is fluid, moves through a shimmering curtain of light. On the other side, you encounter the purest energy of adoration. Allow this energy of adoration to fill your whole being from the bottom of your feet all the way up to the crown of your head.

The energy of adoration leads very beautifully and directly to the energy of bliss, which is your true nature. As you connect with that which you adore, you're also connecting with the energy of bliss. You are a wave of bliss, a vibration of bliss expressing itself as love throughout your life. Feel what a remarkable thing it is to be a wave of bliss in a human body.

The soul has a very different perspective than the human does. From the soul's perspective, we all gladly go through things to help us be more understanding, more compassionate. No matter what we are going through, in humility we invite the light to be bliss through us, to be understanding and compassion through us. The light will respond and share the most incredible gifts through you as you allow this to happen.

Let's ask the Divine Mother to heal through us all that is ready to be healed. Invite the cool compassion of the Mother to wash away from your heart, from your body, from your awareness, anything that troubles you, that is bruised, that is thorny or prickly.

The Divine Mother is sacred consciousness speaking in all of us. In all we see, we can perceive the all illuminating consciousness of the Divine Mother. Hold firmly to your connection with Divine Mother, inviting your vision to be so clear that you can see that bliss energy, that shimmering, shining vitality in all.

Connect with that. Honor that. Be of service to that. Dedicate yourselves to that. And then we truly are able to see clearly that the Divine Mother is all there is and we live gratefully in adoration and compassion and bliss.

Thank God and God bless us all.

— *Sri Swami Nityananda Giri*

LIVING SUCCESSFULLY



Simplicity. Oh, what a simple meditation! I had a wonderful time meditating on simplicity. Tracing it back to the Latin word in its original meaning, the word simplicity derives from the root meaning (are you ready?) *one-fold*. Isn't that an interesting word? So the root meaning of simplicity, that which is simple, is one-fold...in other words, unified. That meaning leads us into a deep contemplation of the nature of becoming one-fold, or

unified in consciousness.

Being childlike is the first aspect of simplicity. I was immediately reminded of that statement of the master yogi of Galilee. He reminded his listeners that we must become childlike in order to enter the kingdom of God. What are the characteristics of a childlike nature that are prerequisite to entering the kingdom of heaven?

One characteristic of a childlike simplicity is an inward knowing instinctively and intuitively, that all is well, that all is very, very, well indeed. To enter that kingdom of unified consciousness of harmony, of peace, of oneness, that internal state of completeness, we have to know that all is well. As it says in the poem *Desiderata*, "The universe is unfolding as it should."

Another factor in returning to the wonderful childlike state is to be thankful for all that there is to enjoy and to experience. If we have lost that sweet innocence, we have to find out how we lost it and why. Once we have discovered the answer to how we lost it, we will also know how to regain that wonderful pristine state of well-being that says, *all is well*.

Those of a childlike nature live and move and have their being and their joy, their playfulness, their resourcefulness and their creativity within that domain of consciousness. So it is and will be forevermore. God bless.

— Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri



SWEET UNION

The feeling of connection is what remains when all that blocks that feeling has been cleared away, released, let go of, surrendered. That connection itself, Oneness always is; it is eternal and constant. We are either in the experience of it or not. Whether we are in the experience of it or not does not alter its presence, its reality. Oneness, our unalterable inter-relatedness, is changeless, formless, and beyond time and location, beyond geography and culture—and yet it is visible in and as forms, is given names, and is known in this place and at this time. It is impersonal and yet is the most intimate experience possible—the merging in Oneness and then bringing that into our relations with other human beings and with all of life. Oneness is infinite; it has no beginning and no end and yet it is not at all remote or distant or apart from us; it is always available to experience in our here and now. It is the very essence and is at the core of who we are and of all that is. Oneness is uncaused and unconditioned and yet can be experienced in all circumstances and conditions, in all our relations and activities.

Let us not confuse impermanence with eternal connectedness. Such confusion causes suffering. Suffering takes many forms and has varied qualities, manifesting in infinite ways in our personal and our collective experience. Removing the root cause of suffering heals, resolves, and dissolves the symptoms, the manifest qualities of suffering visible in our lives. When suffering shows up in our lives as the qualities of disharmony, anxiety, worry or fear, the removal of suffering feels like harmony, quietude, ease, or peacefulness. As beautiful as the experiences of the qualities of harmony and quietude and ease and peacefulness are, in their conditioned state they remain linked to and bound by their opposite qualities. What we may call “pure Oneness” is empty of qualities. Our opportunity is to move beyond all suffering, beyond all causes of suffering, beyond all qualities, and beyond all limitation—to have as the basis of experience, thoughts, words and actions being pure Oneness. By touching that again and again in meditation and in loving, selfless action, the delusion of separation melts away and we awaken to the always-and-everywhere reality of Oneness. Then we bring this to life to offer and share with the love and joy of our entire being. This I offer with all my love.

— Achariya Premadas



UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

We do not have to wait for God realization to realize God.

But, we may say, “I have this to learn, I have that to overcome, I have bridges to cross and healing to do, atonements to make. I have so much to learn, therefore I have so many lessons left in order to earn my way out of ignorance.”

Then tell me this: If we wait to realize that we are God, who are we in the meantime? If we think we have to do all this work to realize God, is this God to be found at the end of a struggle or a work schedule? Who is making up the work schedule, we ourselves or God? If we think there is a finish line, what happens on the other side of the finish line?

What if we start saying and recognizing this:

I am God right here and now, unfolding ever greater levels of perception and manifestation of my Godhood. I am God-realization now, ever expanding into new awarenesses of that God-realization.

Since we are God, naught else but God, why not start with what we are instead of what we are not and then struggling to become what we already are and ever will be? If we want to make a cake, do we go to the store for flour, turn around and go back for eggs, back again for butter, and yet another trip for sweetening? Is it not better to get all the ingredients at once, then come home and make the cake? In other words, why not go straight for the recognition of who and what we are instead of parceling out lessons and learning and karma and struggle and more trips and more learning?

I am where I am going.

Isn't life a grand adventure?

— Srimati Shanti Mataji

THE DAY OF HOPE

THE days of absence and the bitter nights
Of separation, all are at an end!
Where is the influence of the star that blights
My hope? The omen answers: At an end!
Autumn's abundance, creeping Autumn's mirth,
Are ended and forgot when o'er the earth
The wind of Spring with soft warm feet doth wend.

The Day of Hope, hid beneath Sorrow's veil,
Has shown its face—ah, cry that all may hear:
Come forth! The powers of night no more prevail!
Praise be to God, now that the rose is near
With long-desired and flaming coronet,
The cruel stinging thorns all men forget,
The wind of Winter ends its proud career.

The long confusion of the nights that were,
Anguish that dwelt within my heart, is o'er;
'Neath the protection of my lady's hair
Grief nor disquiet come to me no more.
What though her curls wrought all my misery,
My lady's gracious face can comfort me,
And at the end give what I sorrow for.

Light-hearted to the tavern let me go,
Where laughs the pipe, the merry cymbals kiss;
Under the history of all my woe,
My mistress sets her hand and writes: *Finis*.
Oh, linger not, nor trust the inconstant days
That promised: Where thou art thy lady stays—
The tale of separation ends with this!

Joy's certain path, O Saki, thou hast shown—
Long may thy cup be full, thy days be fair!
Trouble and sickness from my breast have flown,
Order and health thy wisdom marshals there.
Not one that numbered Hafiz' name among
The great-unnumbered were his tears, unsung;
Praise him that sets an end to endless care!

— *Hafiz* (1325–1389)

CHINTAMANI

The *Bhagavad-Gita* should remain the constant spiritual companion of every Kriyaban. The illumination which can be attained through the practice of Kriya, a specific subjective technique of spiritual unfoldment, helps immeasurably in the discovery and understanding of the spiritual significance of this profound scripture. But it is also true that the regular study of the *Gita* aids inestimably in the comprehension of the various states of mystic unfoldment which are experienced with advancement in Kriya meditation. A Kriyaban is one who is initiated by a Guru, a spiritual teacher or guide, in the technique of Kriya. Kriya is the specific technique of meditation. Kriya is a very simple yet, at the same time, the most sublime method of self-illumination which I have ever known and practiced. It is scientific in its every detail. Its philosophic idealism is transcendently superb. Kriya is appropriately called by another name, *Sahaja Sadhana*, because of its inherent simplicity and naturalness. I am well acquainted with many methods of initiation and meditation, and I unreservedly recommend the Kriya meditation to men and women everywhere. It brings forth and produces wholeness of the body, serenity of the nervous system, tranquility and enlightenment of the mind, and revelation of the Self. In the spiritual text* I have interchangeably referred to Kriya as subjective meditation.

The mysticism of Kriya is indicated in almost all the great scriptures, and in all systems of mystic initiation, throughout the civilized world. The Book of Genesis, the life and words of Jesus, and especially the Book of Revelation, abound in allusions to Kriya. These texts of the *Holy Bible* must be studied with much insight and contemplation in order to understand the sublime mysticism enshrined within them. Personally, I have received Kriya through the succession of four great gurus of India, namely, Babaji, Sri Shyamacharan Lahiri, Swami Sri Yukteswar, and Swami Yogananda.

— Sri Swami Premananda Giri

**Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita, The Revelation of the Supreme Self*



REVELATIONS OF A COSMIC TRAVELER

Infinite God of mercy and holiness, grant us the clarity to rise above our shortcomings, and the grace and good humor to enter into infinite wholeness. Grant us the courage to correct our errors, and the delight of melting into perfection. Grant us the blessing of embracing divine beauty in ourselves and in all, allowing the entire world and our whole lives to be lit through with your illumination and gladness. We rejoice and give thanks for infinite vitality, renewal, and oneness, available to us in every breath and every moment.

Blessed Lord of peace and light, we thank you for your healing balm of Self-recognition, which reminds us we are never alone. We thank you for your light of recognition, which tells us, no matter in what strange lands we seem to wander, our every step is guided. Our every moment is loved and blessed. God is. God loves us. God lifts our care. And we are home, in all the highways and byways of all the lands. We are home.

The depth of peace is our soul sharing its blessings, offering itself in open-hearted service, showering benedictions upon all beings. The depth of peace is our heart's calling, our heart song, the beauty and meaning and dignity and lightness of being that each of us is, at our core. The depth of peace is what we find if we offer all to the Infinite, bowing in reverence and devotion, bowing in gratitude and appreciation, recognizing, *All of life is thine, Lord, and all of it is divine.*

— In Joy, Swami Nityananda Giri



PROBLEM? WHOSE PROBLEM?

Imagine one of those enormous Hawaiian waves barreling towards the shore. Now imagine this wave has forgotten it has risen from the ocean. It looks at the shore and fails to look behind it. It forgets its source from where it emerged. It stares at other waves crashing and disappearing and cries out, “Being a wave is a big problem! I have a big problem! This whole wave thing is so wrong!”

We are all washed up in the same situation since the time we learned that we are only this very vulnerable body and mind—just a simple separate somebody. When this separate self takes charge, our entire life revolves around that deluded identity. Only one storyline is generated by that illusion but it has a very long title: Something Is Wrong! There Is a Problem! Something Is Wrong with Me! Something Is Wrong with You! Something Is Wrong with the World!

This stressful storyline revolves around fixing and fighting wrongness in all we perceive. The separate somebody is devoted to solving the problem of my health, my relatives, my finances, my work, my love life, and even my spiritual life. Why would I pursue enlightenment if I did not perceive problems everywhere?

Observing the surface of life, the separate self sees countless flaws in everyone’s personality and thinking, as well as its own. Everything appears as problematic because the one who sees believes they are a limited being with unlimited problems. Vedanta challenges our most fundamental assumption by asking us to find this separate self. Where is it? What is it?

This sincere inquiry can only lead to the discovery that the separate self is simply an idea with no reality. So then we ask, how is life experienced without the idea of a separate self who sees problems and is forever trying to control and change them?

The pure spiritual impulse to realize your identity comes from Reality itself. The impulse does not come from mind and cannot be answered by mind. The impulse is the ocean tapping the wave on the shoulder and urging, “Look behind, below, and inside and see what you are—you are the ocean itself, you are myself!”

When following that impulse becomes more important than anything else, including *every belief*, then nothing can stop the revelation of truth. Nothing!

TEACHINGS OF THE GURUS

“The word ‘Buddha’ means ‘one who is awake.’ The Buddha was very clear. His teachings tell us the light is in every one of us, but we do not experience it unless we practice. No one is going to do it for us. And, so, are we practicing? Are we waking ourselves up? As we wake ourselves up, are we then sharing the awakeness with others? Are we sharing the kindness and the laughter and the light? We invite people into the light of love, not by talking about it, but by being it. So, Buddha says, ‘Wake it up!’ Every one of us, wake it up! Do your practice.”

— *Sri Swami Nityananda Giri*



“The all-healing power is ever available to every being, for it is ever present throughout the universe. Spiritual healing is the grace of God. When we unify our mind and heart with the light of God, what human beings call great miracles become tangible realities. Everyone contains healing power. It is the most natural power in the universe. Supreme healing takes place when you are liberated from all ignorance and from the sense of self separateness. Realize, O devotee, that with every act of pure love you contribute to the healing of countless beings and to the upliftment of the whole world.”

— *Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri*



“With open eyes, I behold myself as the little body. With closed eyes, I perceive myself as the cosmic center around which revolves the sphere of eternity, the sphere of bliss, the sphere of omniscient living space. I feel the Lord as a gentle breath of bliss breathing in my body of universes. I perceive Him shining through the bright twinkles of all luminosity and through the waves of cosmic consciousness.”

— *Swami Yogananda Paramhansa*



“Spiritual advancement is not to be measured by one’s display of outward powers, but solely by the depth of one’s bliss in meditation.”

— *Swami Sri Yukteswar*



THE BANQUET OF LIFE

“Accepting pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, as of equal import, join the battle.” — *Bhagavad-Gita* 2:38

The *Gita* invites us to accept pleasure and pain as of equal import, and to “join the battle.” Rather than a battleground, I prefer to imagine life as a glorious banquet, at which we are encouraged to sample myriad dishes.

Most of us participating in this human drama tend to gravitate towards what gives us pleasure and attempt to steer clear of what causes us discomfort or pain. But at the banquet of life, our plates are piled high. We are invited to accept that whatever is on our plate is exactly what we need to feed our soul at this point in time.

The banquet table groans with the weight of the feast that offers a whole range of experiences. Sometimes we’re surprised by what we find on our plate. *I don’t recall ordering a painful divorce! My mother’s untimely passing? No thanks!* We may be more inclined to crawl under the table and hide than to partake in all the banquet has to offer.

How do we savor a plate of chicken livers with the same enthusiasm as a warm piece of chocolate cake? We let go of judgment—embracing all offerings as bounty at the banquet of life. We focus on opening our hearts, being totally present to what is—allowing resistance to evaporate. With time, a painful experience can give way to appreciation of divine grace, a deepening of our understanding, and compassion for ourselves and others. By choosing to be present in every moment, we can recognize that *every* experience, even (or especially) the most difficult, enriches our lives.

Over the course of several recent weeks, I enjoyed the wonders of the Galapagos Islands, my niece delivered a healthy baby, and my father made his transition. I wept with joy as I snorkeled above an enormous Galapagos sea turtle. I wept with joy upon greeting my newborn great-nephew. I wept with sadness and gratitude when my father’s soul left his body, his work during this lifetime complete.

In Psalm 23, David says, “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.” May we all celebrate the abundant feast spread before us.

— *Karuna*

JOY OF THE INFINITE

- Every time you snap your finger, that's 65 moments. Every moment is an opportunity to wake up. Can you imagine how blessed we are? We have 6.4 billion opportunities to wake up every day! Your snap gives you 65 chances to choose a fresh choice, to make a fresh beginning, to choose a kind, healing, caring word, to allow silence to share if that's the most joyful way for the Divine to share itself currently.
- The Buddha and Jesus are magnificent in knowing exactly when to practice noble silence. I would invite us to study at the feet of those masters and invite ourselves to ask, "When in my life would it actually be most healing and helpful, most of service, most kind, most beneficial for me to practice noble silence?"
- When in my life is it best to align with the Infinite and to ask that grace, that inspiration, to speak through me? Sometimes just turning to the Infinite, just asking the Divine to speak through us, the words might stay the same but their quality, their energy, their effect, can change dramatically and be transformed by connecting with the light before we open our mouths.
- It happens sometimes through the course of the day that we feel like we've fallen into disharmony. Snap yourself back awake. Remember: *Every moment I have 65 opportunities to wake up.*
- The whole universe is being created anew every time you breathe. The Divine Mother is breathing with you and through you. That's how connected we are to the energy of grace, the energy of light, the energy of forgiveness, of inspiration, healing, and gladness.
- Thank yourself for your courage, your good humor, your gladness and your willingness to let go, your willingness to see with clarity, your willingness to allow the fog to dissipate, your willingness to see, not only is everyone on the planet my sister and my brother, they are my own self. I cannot possibly have hostility toward any if I realize that everyone is my own self. How can I be angry with any if I realize, that person is my own breath? All of life itself is my breath.

— In Joy, Swami Nityananda Giri

SWAMI SHANKARANANDA'S PEARLS

- Be the well-wisher of all beings. Rejoice in their success, and you'll be the happy one.
- The moment you expect anything from anyone, you're going to be disappointed, because it's not the job of anyone else in your life to make you happy.
- When you're miserable, give credit to yourself, you are perfectly capable of making yourself miserable, but you know you are also perfectly capable of making yourself happy. It's all a matter of choice.
- Remember, you always have the freedom to choose how you want to feel in every moment.
- Decide how you see yourself, where you want to be in life, where you want to be the next minute in your life, in your consciousness. Then feel your way into the reality of what you want to be or have.
- If you are unhappy right now, you are not practicing forgiveness.
- All the human emotions and dualities are impermanent. They are not who you are, they are what you experience.
- If your old habit doesn't make you happy, why hold on to it?
- The more conscious we are of "things," the less conscious we are of our Self. The more conscious we are of our Self, the more conscious we are of our connection between our Self and that of which we are conscious.
- Desire is not unspiritual. To pray or to desire ignites the responsiveness to bring that which is desired to us.
- You have created who you are by your thoughts, perceptions, and feelings—no one else.
- I cannot experience love unless I love myself.

— *In Love, Swami Shankarananda Giri*

GARLAND OF TRUTHS

“What one heart can do for another heart, is there any beauty in the world that can match this?”

— *Hafiz*



“Gratitude is the highest form of acceptance. Like patience, it is one of the catalytic agents, one of the alchemist’s secrets, for turning dross into gold, hell into heaven, death to life. Where there is gratitude we get the teaching. Where there is resistance we discover only that it keeps us painfully ignorant. Of course, if we had enough acceptance to explore our nonacceptance, if we learned nothing but that resistance amplified our suffering, we would be eternally grateful.”

— *Stephen Levine*



“As soon as their heart is willing, souls come under the influence of divine action, whose power over them depends on the extent to which they have surrendered themselves. Love is the way to this surrender. Love always prevails, is never denied. May not love long for what it gives? Divine action cares only for a willing heart and takes no account of any other faculty. It takes possession of that heart, controls all its faculties and everything turns out so well for souls that they find themselves blessed in all things.”

— *Jean-Pierre de Caussade*



“If a little flower could speak, it seems to me that it would tell us quite simply all that God has done for it, without hiding any of its gifts. It would not, under the pretext of humility, say that it was not pretty, or that it had not a sweet scent, that the sun had withered its petals, or the storm bruised its stem, if it knew that such were not the case.”

— *Thérèse de Lisieux*



“Contentment is falling in love with your life.”

— *Swami Rama*

QUOTES FROM RAMANA MAHARSHI

“Happiness is your nature. It is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside when it is inside.”

“Concentration is not thinking of one thing. On the contrary, it is excluding all thoughts, since all thoughts obstruct the sense of one’s true being. All efforts are to be directed simply to removing the veil of ignorance. Concentrating the mind solely on the Self will lead to happiness or bliss. Drawing in the thoughts, restraining them and preventing them from straying outwards is called detachment. Fixing them in the Self is spiritual practice. Concentrating on the heart is the same as concentrating on the Self. Heart is another name for Self.”

“You impose limits on your true nature of infinite being. Then you get displeased to be only a limited creature. Then you begin spiritual practices to transcend these non-existing limits. But if your practice itself implies the existence of these limits, how could they allow you to transcend them.”

“The solution to your problem is to see who has it.”

“The greatest obstacle to enlightenment is getting past your delusion that you are not already enlightened.”

“Correcting oneself is correcting the whole world. The sun is simply bright. It does not correct anyone. Because it shines, the whole world is full of light. Transforming yourself is a means of giving light to the whole world.”

“The question ‘Who am I?’ is not really meant to get an answer. The question ‘Who am I?’ is meant to dissolve the questioner.”

“Thoughts come and go. Feelings come and go. Find out what it is that remains.”

“There is neither past nor future. There is only the present. Yesterday was the present to you when you experienced it, and tomorrow will be also the present when you experience it. Therefore, experience takes place only in the present, and beyond experience nothing exists.”

SEEDS OF GRATITUDE



— Art by Devarati

SPIRITUAL READINGS

The Swami Premananda Digital Library

Divine Life Church is embracing 21st-century technologies to provide a selection of sacred texts on Kindle electronic readers. All of the texts listed below will be preloaded and the Kindle allows you to customize the type size to improve the readability of spiritual writings usually found in small print. DLC Kindles are available at the Sunday Morning Celebration and devotees may borrow one for two weeks at a time—or longer if no one else is waiting for one. The following books selected by Swami Nityananda are currently available:

- *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* – Swami Abhedananda
- *The Essential Sri Anandamayi Ma: Life and Teachings of a 20th Century Saint* – (editor, Joseph Fitzgerald) Anandamayi Ma
- *The Bhagavad Gita* – Eknath Easwaran
- *The Upanishads* – Eknath Easwaran
- *Great Swan: Meetings with Ramakrishna* – Lex Hixon
- *Mirabai: Ecstatic Poems* – Mirabai
- *Sri Sarada Devi, The Holy Mother: Her Teachings and Conversations* – Swami Nikhilananda
- *The Spiritual Heritage of India* – Swami Prabhavananda
- *The Eternal Companion* – Swami Prabhavananda
- *Narada's Way of Divine Love: The Bhakti Sutras* – Swami Prabhavananda
- *Cosmic Cross* – Swami Premananda
- *The Magnetic Power of Love (Bhakti Yoga)* – Swami Premananda
- *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: Commentary on the Raja Yoga Sutras* – Swami Satchidananda
- *The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom* (trans. Charles Johnson) – Shankaracharya
- *Radha: Diary of a Woman's Search* – Swami Sivananda Radha
- *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* – Swami Vivekananda
- *Autobiography of a Yogi* – Paramahansa Yogananda
- *The Holy Science* – Sri Yukteswar Giri

More titles will be added periodically. Please see the librarian after services if you would like to learn more about these divine devices.

— Ananda

HEALING PSALMS

Commentary on Psalm 91

We have so many who promise us that we're always safe so long as they're around. We want that assurance. And then that night we find out they won't be around the next day. Suppose you're the only one left when you surface. Do you think you made the best choice possible under those circumstances? What will you do now? Dwell in the secret place of the Most High, that transcendental state of consciousness. The Most High is who you are when you say, "I Am." That is the Most High. There's nothing higher than that which you are. There is no God higher than that which you are. Hear it and rejoice and blast to smithereens every lie that has been foisted upon you to make you feel little, small, insignificant, unworthy. It's impossible for any of us to be unworthy of God's love. Do you know why? Re-perceive it: You recognize your worth when you are united in consciousness, united in worthiness.

There is nothing you and I need to do to make us worthy of God's love. God's love has no conditions to it. God's love does not judge. God's love does not condemn. God's love cannot withdraw itself from any of its self-expressions, which you and I are, in embodiment. God's love is not based on human love, bargaining love—I do this for you if you do such and such for me. That's not love. That's bargaining consciousness. That's ego games. Those are control mechanisms we use to delude the other into thinking we are the source of their well-being, livelihood, or happiness. Anyone who tells you that, let them know where they can go—to the secret place of the Most High!

Send them to the secret place of the Most High. It's also an H. When you tell them, "Go to H," it's up to them how to perceive it. High or low.

The Most High is that within you that says, "I Am." There can be nothing beyond it, because that which is I Am is one. And one is beyond duality. Only where there's duality can there be opposition. No evil can come unto you when you dwell in the consciousness of your true identity. That's when you can say, *My cup runneth over.*

—Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri



GETTING TO YES!

Spring is here, and all of nature is stirring, saying “yes!” to life in riotous color, joyous song, and exuberant activity. Who is not moved by this dazzling display of awakening energy? It is the inner impulse that drives us toward change on levels both mundane and profound: the impulse to clean our houses and toss out the old, as well as the impulse that yearns to awaken and know, “Who am I and why am I here?”

Spring is the fresh, unstoppable energy of growth, of moving forward, of seeds bursting forth to express what they are meant to become: the fullness of their nature. There is no resistance, it is all acceptance, all “yes!”

It is the same with us, except for the part about no resistance! Resistance takes many forms, including fear, complacency, attachment, a sense of unworthiness, and judgment—all things that keep us from being open and present to what actually is. Awakening to what is—the omniscient, omnipresent, all-blissful Reality that we are, and that underlies all manifestation—is what makes our heart sing the song of “yes!”

By grace, we have all the tools and divine assistance necessary to break through resistance. The wisdom and guidance of all masters and teachers, steadfast dedication to our own practice, and our support for one another, all help us awaken to the true nature of our being. And from the profound inner peace of our divine essence, we are able to accept each moment as it presents itself in its perfection, without the need to judge or change anything, including ourselves. From stillness, we are clearly guided to the highest response for the upliftment of all concerned, and “yes!” to all of life wells up from within in spontaneous waves of joy and gratitude.

Swami Shankarananda once said that “there’s a brushfire of illumination sweeping the planet.” Let’s join the chorus of “yes!” and leap into the fire, fulfilling the prophet Isaiah’s call to “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” May it be so for the bliss and benefit of all.

— *Padma*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question: Occasionally I feel desolate, that I have no real friends. How can I rise above this?

Answer: We are ever able to be a noble companion to all, including ourselves. Come into contact with the energy of friendliness, of compassion, of caring, of kindness within our own hearts. We can imagine at any time that we are kneeling down by the river of divine friendship and dipping our drinking bowls into the waters. We can drink that draft of divine friendship, its light, its illumination. We can feel that energy, that sacredness, that vitality filling us from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet. As we refresh ourselves in, with, and as the energy of divine friendship, it is able to share through us. We are each invited to put that truth into individual realization and to speak it in our own language.

Make friends with the energy of divine friendship. If your proverbial donkey knocks you off and you land face down in the mud, as happened once to St. Teresa, keep talking to God, even if you don't understand or are in pain. "God, I thought you were my friend!" We've all felt derailed from our desired destinations at certain times in our lives, in relationships, in jobs, in health. Have a running conversation with the Divine. Practice banter and repartee. "Lord, I thought I was on an errand of mercy, visiting a friend, and you knocked me off my donkey into the mud. Really, Lord?" God answers back with playfulness, "I treat all my friends that way!" See the humor in it. Teresa said, "God, if that's how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few of them!" That's a response that you give to someone you love so much that you can insult them playfully. That's the kind of intimacy that St. Teresa demonstrates with the Divine in that conversation.

Practice even-mindedness and cheerfulness in the face of everything. Find the four corners of your feet so that you have an even stance. This increases your contact with divine friendship. Let yourself have a cue. Every time you drink a glass of water, say, *I'm drinking a draft of divine friendship*. When you're facing an area of congestion in your life—traffic jam, health problem, difficult relationship conversation, world crisis that's hard for you to move through—practice connecting with the energy of divine friendship. Sometimes the congestion is still there. The energy of friendliness removes the opposition and

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Q & A (Continued)

that feeling of difficulty and helps you navigate forward with ease and grace.

In simple, practical ways you can bring divine friendliness into your whole life, into your whole world. Please give yourselves this blessing. This energy of brightness is saying, "I am the friend of all beings." As we connect with the joy that others are feeling, it increases our own joy. As the Upanishads say, "From joy we come, in joy we live and have our being."

It's also important to practice nonattachment to those who are not joyful or loving. Practice dispassion towards those with whom you disagree violently. Take a step back. Transformation can be achieved in a situation where we think it is hopeless. Nelson Mandela said, "It's always impossible until it's done." Let go of expecting anything from any human being. When we ask human beings to fulfill for us what only the Divine can fulfill, it's an impossible proposition. It does not work.

The key is to find love in the midst of human beings, rather than finding love from human beings. We cannot ask a candle to do for us what only the sun can do. Go to the Divine first. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all else shall be added unto you." Go to the sunshine first and then you're able to celebrate the candle for what it is. Go to the limitless and then we're able to enjoy the finite as well. This brings us back to poise, even-mindedness, cheerfulness, and a sense of humor.

Yogananda says, let yourself be a bliss billionaire. Identify the ways you most clearly and directly are able to make deposits in your bliss bank. Some examples are meditation; gathering in a beautiful community such as ours in satsang; being of service to others. Sometimes we send a physical smile, sometimes an inner smile. Sometimes we send silent prayers. Sometimes we're given words to say out loud which are perfect to say in that particular circumstance. Sometimes we let go of thinking that we're right in order to stay in the field of divine friendship, in the field of divine oneness and divine love. This does not mean that anything goes. But it means that before we speak, before we act, we connect with unconditional love, with the energy of compassion. That is divine friendship.

— Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL



The Sunday school explored the idea that if we recognize God in ourselves, we will see God in everyone. How we experience the world depends upon how we choose to look at it.

DIET AND NUTRITION: Salmon with Parsley Salsa

This could also be called Parsley Salsa with Salmon, as it is the salsa that makes it more complete nutritionally and so tasty. I usually make double the salsa so I can eat that as a snack on its own. Preparing healthy food is nurturing and honoring my body/divine garment, and when the food is delicious also, it is a joyful double blessing!

Ingredients: (organic when possible)

- 12 ounces wild salmon
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar or coconut aminos
- Course grain of favorite salt, just a pinch or a few shakes, to your liking
- 2 tablespoons capers, roughly chopped
- 1 cup flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- ½ cup toasted almonds, chopped or ground to your preference (I prefer ground)
- 1–2 tablespoons virgin olive oil
- A song and/or dance around the kitchen while preparing!

Directions:

- Combine the shallot, vinegar or aminos, and salt in a medium bowl to sit about 30 minutes.
- Salt and pepper the salmon and cook 12–15 minutes at 450 degrees.
- Prepare the capers, parsley, and almonds, if not chopped or ground yet. Add them with the olive oil to the shallot and aminos.
- Bless and serve and enjoy the Salmon with the Salsa.

— *Cataki*



LIGHT OF THE UPANISHADS



Now, regarding the realization of Brahman, God, Consciousness-Existence-Bliss Absolute, within oneself: Awaken the mind to the consciousness of God; thus, let the mind be illumined by the truth that the divinity of God is within. Guide the mind subjectively and, in positive self-consciousness, practice meditation by constant remembrance of God with unqualified devotion and determination.

— *Kena Upanishad*

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