

# Darshan

Summer Solstice  
2019



Awake Yoga  
Meditation

# AWAKE YOGA MEDITATION

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 (Sept - June)

Every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

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

Visit our website: [AwakeYogaMeditation.org](http://AwakeYogaMeditation.org) for more information on schedule and special events.

Temporary Location of Sunday Meditation

Waldorf School

4801 Tamarind Road

Baltimore, MD 21209

Temporary Location of Friday Night Meditation

Ruscombe Mansion Community Health Center, Hill House

4803 Yellowwood Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21209

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](mailto:Swami@AwakeYogaMeditation.org) to schedule a conference.

## WELCOME HOME

How do we live in such a way that we feel completely at home within ourselves? Swami Shankarananda said, "Do you want to be free? If so, choose wisely the luminous path." That path is always right there within us. It welcomes us home.

Invite yourself to feel a luminous lighthouse in your heart, a bright beacon of light. You might feel the light pulsing, becoming stronger. You might feel how steady, warm, cozy and bright it is. Lighthouses help travelers navigate, even when it's dark. They guide us home always, help us come safely into port, welcome us forever. Start beaming light from this lighthouse out into your day, out into your surroundings, through the streets if you're walking or taking a bus or driving. It opens the way before you as you travel, wherever you are traveling. Always this lighthouse, this homecoming beacon, is available to you. If you are to meet people later today, you can visualize this light beaming into the room where you will encounter them. You might also become aware they have a lighthouse within their own energy system. The light within you is always greeting the light within the other. When we move in this awareness, others are able to respond to us at a different level than we otherwise would find possible. This can make it possible to see even those we have known for many years with entirely fresh eyes.

Bring to mind something that is clear and simple and concrete that you would like to bring healing to in your life. Perhaps something like, "I might want to stop eating mindlessly." Or, "I might want to not be disturbed when so and so calls with annoying chatter." Whatever it is, name it and then come back to that warm, bright coziness of the heart. Allow yourself to be totally at home in that heart energy, in that resonance. Fill yourself with that beacon of light. Feel how steady you are and how nothing can possibly shake you. You are unwavering in this light. Then see if you can invite gently into your awareness whatever it is you would like to eat less of or be less frustrated by. Hold the light and the situation together. You do not do anything. The light is transformation. Illumination comes from the Infinite. Grace takes care of it. The only thing we're doing is holding fast to that warmth, brightness,

*(Continued from page 1)*

coziness, and security. And we're tenderly inviting whatever we want to transform into that light. Steadily, calmly, unwaveringly, gently hold it in the light. By grace, what happens is that whatever the light touches becomes light. Whatever we have experienced as a negative charge is transformed, and loses its charge, loses its hold.

With everything that we partake of ask a simple question: "Is this strengthening the light in me?" If so, it's a wonderful thing to continue to focus on. If it's not strengthening, ask the light for clarity about the best way forward. Have faith that as soon as you call upon and open to grace, it will step in and charge you with clarity and luminosity.

That would be a wonderful prayer to offer this week again and again: "Divine Grace, I open to you. Let my hands be hands of grace. Let my eyes be eyes of grace. Let my ears hear only grace. Let my voice speak only grace. Let my feet walk always in grace. Let me live in grace wherever I find myself. Whatever transformations my life and world are undergoing, let me understand them as the workings of grace. Grant me clarity of vision so that I can see that everything, even the things that humanly are very hard, all of it, is part of the pattern of divine grace. Let me see always the patterns of divine grace. Let me always be reveling in, adoring, blessing, giving thanks, cherishing, the pattern of divine grace. Let me be a kinder, calmer, clearer, more present person—a better neighbor, a kinder friend, a better partner, a better colleague, a better supervisor, more able to share healing energy, to share insight and inspiration, more able to share forgiveness. As I continue to open my heart and invite grace to forgive through me, may I be established in all that is real and eternal." Dwell in the abode of loving-kindness. Practice beautiful universal friendship. When we do that, not only are we always at home, but we are able to welcome everyone we meet, silently, through our hands, words, deeds, our very lives.

Welcome home!

—*Sri Swami Nityananda Giri*

## PRACTICING LOVE

My heart reaches out to everyone when I think about the human heart. There is one image that crystallizes itself. Whenever you see anyone suffer or act mean or angry, violent or cruel, you will recognize that what that being is wanting to communicate is this: “All I’ve ever wanted to do is to love. All I’ve ever wanted to feel is love.”

Please remember that when someone is angry with you, that person is pleading, “Why can’t you love me? Why aren’t you listening to me? Why aren’t you hearing me? What is it about me that causes you to judge me so much that you deny me the expression of love?” Do you hear it? That can really hurt if you go through life realizing all you ever really wanted was love, even in the midst of all the pursuits and recognitions you’ve gotten: fame, wealth, promotions, super jet cars and engines. No matter how much you are in a state of euphoria temporarily, inside there is no joy when there is no love.

To grow in love, to practice love, means also learning to be yourself. That’s a big issue. Review your day and ask yourself, “Have I been true to myself, my true Self, all day long in everything that I did and said and expressed? What motivates my actions, my thoughts, my love?” Is it Self-love, or is it expectations others have of you? Take inventory every day; it is crucial to your well-being. When you remember any time you experienced true happiness, you will recognize that not even once did that happiness depend on anyone else—because no one but yourself is the source of true happiness or joy or blissfulness.

When you choose to practice love, make your intention every day, “I choose to practice love, love, love.” That means I choose to bring love into every action. I will not take action unless I put love into the action; or at least I’m willing to put love into the action or find a way to make the action loving or lovely, whatever the task at hand. Will you do that?

The nature of love is that the more you choose to love, the more love you have in your life.

—Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

## CONSTITUTE YOUR LIFE

We have this brief, sweet time together to create something. In a practice of regularly turning to and abiding in a unitive state of consciousness born of meditation, and then striving to cultivate and express that in how I live, it has become clearer and clearer to me that this “life of mine” is not solely (“soul-ly”) “mine.” “I” truly am not a “separate self” and for me, my life belongs to and is a gift from the whole community of life. To the degree that there is an “I,” and to the degree that “I have free will,” I strive to graciously steward this life in a way that is true to and of service to life. From a point of view enlivened by a sense of Oneness, by joyful humility, by utter awe and wonder, by celebration of and thankfulness for life, and by practicing letting go of trying to get something from life I’ve asked, “What would I love to create?” or better, “What would love to be created through me?” Having asked and having listened, this is what I have heard: “Constitute your life as an opportunity for others to participate.”

Everywhere I look, I see life expressing itself: naturally, fully, and freely. All of us, as well, are expressing ourselves and, I believe, seeking to do so fully and freely. There is also in life an order and a balance. As we seek to express ourselves fully and freely, it behooves us to do so in harmony with that natural order and balance. “Constituting my life as an opportunity for everyone to participate” feels to be a stewarding of this life that is in alignment with the order of life. I’m excited about and look forward to exploring this more deeply, to discovering more and more about it. I invite you to join in and to share your own discoveries, if you like.

—*With love, Premadas*



## THE SWEET WAY

Sometimes, with honest introspection, we may become aware of an attachment we hold. We may deem this attachment to be too distracting, incapable of fulfillment, improper, perhaps beyond the point of yogic discrimination. We may become distressed and determine to remedy the matter. The mind may decide that the path of remedy will be one of denial (denying the true feeling), suppression (refusing to let the feeling come to conscious awareness), guilt and self-judgment, or energetically repressing the feeling by an effort of will.

All of these methods of attempting to destroy attachment fall in the negative approach, and the method itself may create a new problem. Denial leads to self-delusion; guilt and self-judgment drag us down and deny our divinity; and suppression and repression leave the feeling to operate at the hidden level of awareness.

The positive approach says, deepen the attachment! Accept the feeling, and then offer it to God. Make the attachment so deep that it becomes love for God. See through the object, person, condition, to the recognition that it is a manifestation of God, and then love the God of it. A man who loved his drink once came to Ramakrishna. The sage did not condemn the man for his drinking nor did he ask the man to give up his drink. Ramakrishna told the man to drink, by all means, but before every sip, offer the sip to God. In a short time, the man lost all interest in drink, so intoxicated was he with the love of God. Thus can we deal with all our attachments with love and sweetness.

—*Srimati Shanti Mataji*

## A GARDEN APART

I want no fortune or power from Heaven,  
only briefly a garden apart where we can live near what is divine,  
in love of friends of my heart.

In rapture, nightingale sings to the rose,  
in centre of new-born garden:

only Gardener creates beauty; in heat working into feet thorns dart.

Beauty is immortal, like the sun's might lighting all the worlds  
and creations made with joy of its light...

we thank You for all Art!

And thanks for the great Masters  
that are given to guide and lead us in our need,  
their presence safe shelter and shade does impart.

Mercy! See us, weak, sick, sad:  
so when we seek oblivion and You know time's defeated us,  
save us from again being of it a part.

The Master who knows that good and evil are one is happy...  
that one's centered, shaken by none:

the rose of spring and the counterpart autumn  
plays are one to that one...

he is beyond being taught, or, ignorant one, being preached to...  
to him you've no help to impart!

If you are led by dangerous love and enter the Masters path,  
in desert like Majnun you'll stay always, never to look back:

start to know this, you'll not even care  
if you lose your life or not, pain ignore,  
not to seek shore of love's limitless ocean you'll depart.

O Makhfi, like baby birds fall from nest,  
fluttering, helpless, caught in nets...  
see like others are you, too boldly you flew apart  
you thought you were...

and yet those feeble wings of yours failed, now you wail your fate,  
caught in net of your cares... upstart!

—*Makhfi* (1638-1702)



## OUR GODLY ATTRIBUTES

I have discovered the secret of happiness amidst all untowardness and I offer this unto you. The source of happiness is in the realization of godly virtues within one's own heart and in the manifestation of these virtues to the fullest measure possible.

There are few among us who have not stumbled over the rough stones of negative qualities and have fallen by the wayside on life's journey. They have been bruised and hurt. They have undergone the agony of sorrow. To these especially I offer the assistance of the power of truth and wisdom. Within the depth of your hearts are hidden all virtues and righteousness.

Know this for certain, that the love, mercy, and kindness of God are ever-abidingly within you. Reach for these with spiritual zeal. You will find them and they will inspire, uplift, and guide you. The supreme Creator, in his infinite beneficence, has provided us with all that we need for our physical existence. There is no dearth of the basic necessities of life such as light, air, water, and other vital requirements of bodily existence.

The omniscient Spirit has endowed our minds with illimitable intelligence and reason so that we may grow more and more in the understanding of his laws in nature and make our lives increasingly fruitful and joyous.

But above and beyond these, the loving God has enshrined all his attributes in our hearts so that we may realize his presence and perfection within us and reveal his divine qualities in our thoughts, words, and deeds until the whole world becomes an abode of harmonious existence and enduring peace.

— *Sri Swami Premananda Giri*

## REVELATIONS OF A COSMIC TRAVELER

Let us rejoice! My hands are not my own—they are gifts of the Spirit, here to share help and healing. My heart is not my own—it is a gift of pure Love, here to share light and kindness. My mind is not my own—it is a divine instrument, here to share inspiration and encouragement. My life is not my own—it is a gift of the Infinite, here to share blessings and grace. Let us rejoice that we are ever more clearly Oneness in action!

When we come into contact with our true nature, our true name, we find oceans of inspiration, energy, delight, unity. When we come into contact with our eternal being, we find ourselves naturally able to be helpful, to share thoughtfulness and kindness, consideration and encouragement. When we come into contact with our oneness, we reach out to help another as effortlessly as we breathe. Let every breath be divine Love in action.

Lord of light and life and pure love and healing laughter, I offer you myself. Having crossed oceans and climbed mountains to find you, I turn within and discover you right here, and offer you myself. Having raged and stormed and wept and longed, I realize myself. In all the world, there is only God and me, merging in unity.

*—In joy, Swami Nityananda Giri*



## REALLY DUDE?

Some time ago, I attended the funeral of someone I'd never met. The person facilitating the service made some opening remarks about those of us in attendance rather than the person we came to honor. He spoke about our individual and collective unworthiness and was not shy about providing details to prove his point.

I did not grow up in a tradition that focused on unworthiness and especially not at a funeral. I was shocked and I looked around expecting to find someone else looking back at me with shock. To my shock, there was no shock anywhere.

I wondered what it was like for those deeply grieving to hear this unworthiness message. Then I thought about the man delivering the message. I thought, "Wow—that is your very best funeral opener to comfort a grieving family?" I began daydreaming of signs I could hold up over my head to communicate with this man. One version of my imagined sign said, "Really dude? Unworthiness? That is your opener? Please try something about love or pretty much any other message but unworthiness."

If we talk about conditioning or conditioned mind in abstract ways, it is easy to move past the topic to get to more glamorous spiritual subjects. If we are willing to explore how specifically our own identity has been totally conditioned through subtle and not so subtle messages, the exploration takes on a powerful urgency. This exploration can provide a list of core beliefs about ourselves that impact everything we pursue in life and everything we resist.

With that list of beliefs in hand, we can ask ourselves, "Who or what would I be without that belief and that belief and that belief? What remains of me when the falsity of every learned belief is seen? What do I find when I stop looking to the conditioned mind to tell me what is true about my own identity and nature?"

In self-inquiry, we stop seeking answers outside ourselves and learn to trust our own direct experience and perception. That is true divine empowerment!

## TEACHINGS OF THE GURUS

“If anyone is saying anything to you other than ‘You are pure, awake, bright life energy. You are pure divine love, you are eternally free,’ it’s projection. It’s mind stuff, it’s part of this human magic show we all participate in. Most things humans perceive, either positive or negative, are projections. Look at your life and see if there is anywhere you are treating yourself differently from others. And the reverse, is there anywhere you are treating others differently from yourself? Yogis ask us to practice equality of vision. Non-equality of vision is part of the illusion, so we’re inviting ourselves just to have this awareness. It doesn’t usually happen all at once, so have a sense of humor and be kind with yourself. If you become aware of a place where you are holding on to illusion, either positive or negative, where you’re thinking you’re better or worse than anyone else, offer it to the light, offer it to the divine fire. The yogis tell us if we are willing to stand in the fire of divine love, projections will burn away and what will remain is what is real. Keep choosing reality beyond projections, keep choosing pure devotion, keep choosing full surrender to the light that is infinite, the light that melts away darkness and leads us into our true nature.”

—*Sri Swami Nityananda Giri*

“The light of God shines in perpetual effulgence at the inner door of the spiritual eye, which leads to the presence of the indwelling God. Soul alone knows the way to the cosmic Soul. One who has seen the light of God within never again walks in spiritual darkness, but remains constantly aware of the sacredness of the body, the righteousness of the mind, the purity of heart and the divinity of soul. An illumined soul lives in the holiness of spiritual consciousness. By the illumination and divinity of soul the entire being is spiritualized and all expressions of life become the adoration of the all-pervading and ever-abiding God. That is the most blessed fruit of meditation and the supreme grace of yoga.”

—*Shyamacharan Lahiri*

## IN THE PRESENCE OF LOVING ACTS

Acts of selfless love are Divine Grace expressing itself through us. Every day, if we take time to notice, we can observe sweet acts of kindness. Whether it is helping a stranger with directions or waking your spouse with a cup of coffee in bed, the vibration of loving acts creates a ripple effect of love throughout the world.

I was reminded of the power of being present to loving acts at my nephew's recent wedding. My nephew is a talented tap dancer who moved to New York in his twenties in hopes of making it as a full-time, professional dancer. Although that didn't happen, dance continues to be a big part of his life. When it came time for parental toasts at the reception, Steve (his father, a stalwart non-dancer) shared that when his kids were little, the sure-fire way to make them behave in public was to threaten to start dancing. "Tonight," he said, "I have a surprise—I'm going to dance for my son." My nephew looked perplexed, but smiled.

Steve then donned tap shoes, a black top hat, and white gloves. The music started, *When you're smiling, when you're smiling, the whole world smiles with you. . .*, and Steve tapped a solid routine, facing the head table where the bride and groom were seated. He then invited his son to join him on the dance floor while the song played a second time, my nephew following the choreography of his dad's routine. As the song played one more time, Steve stepped away and my nephew improvised a lively dance. *When you're smiling, when you're smiling . . .* The whole room, if not the whole world, smiled with both my nephew and his dad.

There were few dry eyes. Everyone knew that within the past nine months, Steve had lost his second wife and been diagnosed with a serious blood cancer, for which he had just finished treatment. For the past four months, Steve had secretly been taking dance lessons. He said he'd wanted to create a special memory for his son. In doing so, he created a special memory for all of us, uplifting our hearts, reminding us that the light of Divine Grace wants to shine through each of us, and encouraging us to invite it to do so.

—*Karuna*

## JOY OF THE INFINITE

We're all invited to tune into the question, "How does the Divine want to share through me? How can I give without holding back?"

The Buddha said, "If you do not tend to one another, who will tend to you?" That is a question across the ages for all of us. The next thing he said was, "If you would tend to me, take care of one another." That is the exact same message Jesus had to say to his students the last time he had dinner with them. He said, "I know you know this. If you know this, blessed are you if you do this."

The only reason we are here is to be helpful, to be kind, to be caring. If you find yourself squabbling with any, don't waste your breath. Instead, do what Anandamayi Ma says, "Evolve fully beyond names and forms where there is no conflict." We're invited to do whatever it takes to harmonize ourselves from within.

If you are experiencing conflict, that means you're staying in the realm of duality rather than going into the realm of oneness. Come back to this mantra: Awaken me to spiritual oneness and transcendental peace. If you seem to be having conflict with another human, say to yourself, "You are my own self. There's nothing here to fight with." Ask yourself, "What is it that I can heal within myself so that all conflict melts away?" That's another way of going directly to spiritual oneness.

Everybody gets to practice. That's why we're here. That's the work. That's the practice of a lifetime. Say to the Divine, "Divine Grace, this is how things appear to me. If this is not the case, clear my vision. If it is the case, help me see more clearly. Either way, help me be here to be of service. Divine Grace, I'm pretty sure I'm not seeing this clearly because this person is making me want to shriek and I know that this person is my own self. Show me whatever it is that there is in me to be healed right now."

*—In joy, Swami Nityananda Giri*

## SWAMI SHANKARANANDA'S PEARLS

When you understand that God is love, then you will understand that it is impossible for God to judge anyone, because God is the Absolute; and the Absolute is beyond duality. All judgments are born of the belief in separation.

Forgiveness is only necessary so long as there's judgment of others or self. Judgment occurs in the mind, not in the heart and not in the soul. The Father has no need to forgive us for anything because the Father doesn't judge us. The Absolute I Am has nothing to forgive because the Absolute I Am, which is love, sees only love.

All forgiveness begins in the heart, not in the mind. Forgiveness is a feeling. Love! Love is at the heart of forgiveness.

When I worry, I have forgotten that I live by the grace of God, that God's grace is my sufficiency in all things. I have forgotten that God within me is supporting, guiding, and loving me with all the support I need to overcome worry. *Thank you Father-Mother God, for providing me with all experiences I need to overcome worry, anxiety, fear, insecurity, resentment, hostility, and sickness.* That's how the glory of God is manifested.

You must take full advantage of the time when you are aware of the light of God within you, the presence of God within you, the activity of God within you. You need to identify with that light, work with it, and allow it to manifest through you and do the works that only God—the God within you—can do.

If your intention—your powerful, focused, clear, consistent, persistent, diurnal intention—is to live and move and act out of the consciousness of love before you do anything, then you have empowered yourself to be free of judgment. Make this your clear, focused intention: *I intend to see the best in everyone and in everything and to see everything with the eyes of love.* If you are true to that intention, you will manifest love by the law of attraction.

—In love, Swami Shankarananda Giri

## GARLAND OF TRUTHS

“The source of a true smile is an awakened mind. Smiling helps you approach the day with gentleness and understanding.”

—*Thich Nhat Hanh*

“Anything that we can do to help foster the intellect and spirit and emotional growth of our fellow human beings, that is our job. Those of us who have this particular vision must continue against all odds. Life is for service.”

—*Fred Rogers*

“Believe, when you are most unhappy, that there is something for you to do in the world. So long as you can sweeten another’s pain, life is not in vain.”

—*Helen Keller*

“Grace is the wonderful spirit that imbues every fiber of our being when we practice the fruits of the spirit: kindness, patience, understanding, forgiveness, love, gentleness, fellowship and endurance.”

—*Edgar Cayce*

“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate.”

—*Albert Schweitzer*

“All creatures have the same source as we have. Like us, they derive the life of thought, love, and will from the Creator. Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them; but to stop there is a complete misunderstanding of the intentions of Providence. We have a higher mission. God wishes that we should succor them whenever they require it.”

—*Francis of Assisi*



## QUOTES FROM MEISTER ECKHART

“A human being has so many skins inside, covering the depths of the heart. We know so many things, but we don’t know ourselves! Why, thirty or forty skins or hides, as thick and hard as an ox’s or bear’s, cover the soul. Go into your own ground and learn to know yourself there.”

“The outward man is the swinging door; the inner man is the still hinge.”

“God expects but one thing of you, and that is that you should come out of yourself in so far as you are a created being made and let God be God in you.”

“The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me.”

“Do exactly what you would do if you felt most secure.”

“God is at home, it’s we who have gone out for a walk.”

“There exists only the present instant, a Now which always and without end is itself new. There is no yesterday nor any tomorrow, but only Now, as it was a thousand years ago and as it will be a thousand years hence.”

“All God wants of man is a peaceful heart.”

“Only the hand that erases can write the true thing.”

## SPIRITUAL READINGS

The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change  
Everything We See, Hope For and Believe  
by Richard Rohr

“The essential function of religion is to radically connect us with everything. (Re-ligio = to re-ligament or reconnect.) It is to help us see the world and ourselves in wholeness, and not just in parts. Truly enlightened people see Oneness because they look out from Oneness, instead of labeling everything as superior and inferior, in or out. If you think you are privately “saved” or enlightened, then you are neither saved nor enlightened, it seems to me!”

The *Universal Christ*, published in 2019, is the most recent of more than 30 books written by Richard Rohr, a Franciscan friar based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who is considered one of the most influential spiritual thinkers in the world.

Rohr explores the true meaning of Christ (hint: it’s not a last name), and how by focusing on Jesus as a person, we have lost a universal understanding of Christ as “the unifying love by which the entire material world is governed.” Rohr thoughtfully challenges traditional religious orthodoxy in every way—from the concept of original sin and the meaning of the Christian Eucharist to the problem with believing in both Christ and Hell. He also explores the important role of the feminine, seeing Jesus and Mary as symbols of “matter and spirit, feminine mother and masculine child, earth and heaven.”

The author delves into how changes in thinking and misinterpretations have come about and weaves in psychology, science, history, anthropology, and popular culture to support his theological ideas. There are lovely meditations for contemplation in every chapter and two brief appendices that present four worldviews (spiritual, material, priestly, incarnational) and the pattern of spiritual transformation. In Rohr’s words, “To grow toward love, union, salvation, or enlightenment . . . we must be moved from Order to Disorder and then ultimately to Reorder.”

—Ananda

## SWEEPING THE TEMPLE COURTYARD

When I first encountered the saying, “When sweeping the temple courtyard, don’t stop to read the old newspapers,” I loved it even as I interpreted it literally. I still have plenty of experience with getting sidetracked in the midst of a task, and especially while cleaning. It’s easy to come across an unanswered letter or a reminder of something else that needs attention and poof! all thought of my original intent has vanished. It was quite a while before a deeper understanding began to dawn.

Distraction has been described as one of the greatest obstacles to Self-realization. Until our consciousness becomes completely awakened to the Eternal Truth that “Everything is the manifestation of God, the Divine Reality,” we can become seduced by the bedazzling sights, sounds, and dramas of this world, sometimes forgetting entirely about the One that appears as it all.

Even when our spiritual path becomes our highest priority, we can temporarily lose our footing by focusing on what we perceive is wrong with us or the world rather than appreciating how our divine qualities are actually shining forth in ever greater measure. Once we view “sweeping the temple courtyard” as tending to our spiritual practice, we can see that endlessly replaying our self-judgments and negative experiences is really no less distracting than reading old newspapers. Realizing this, we can forgive, heal, and release whatever comes up to be forgiven, healed, and released, and take the advice of a friend’s grandmother to “just git on about your business” or, as Buddha expressed it, “Good people keep on walking.”

We’re all sweeping, cleaning, purifying, beautifying the temple courtyard of our consciousness every day with our intention to remember the Divine with every breath, to be kinder, more compassionate, of greater service. And with the loving support of our community, we remind each other to bypass the old newspapers along the way and keep moving forward.

—*Padma*

## GUIDED MEDITATION

### Our Body of Consciousness-Existence-Bliss

With closed eyes, a straight spine, and a firm base, whether your feet are firmly on the ground or you're sitting cross-legged, invite yourself to come into contact with the dynamic, bright, vital aliveness that we are forever.

Become aware of your body and its form all the way from the tips of your toes up to the top of your head. Become aware of your legs and your arms, your core, your face, the back of your head, the front body, the back body, the side body. See if you can feel the way this body is a shimmering container of divine energy. It is awakens, aliveness, brightness, taking this particular form for right now. It's a spiraling, humming, shimmering container of Consciousness-Existence-Bliss Absolute.

Become aware of your heart as vastness, limitlessness, infinite love, with the ability to relax and play and be filled with wonder. Become aware of the spaciousness and openness within your heart, and then become aware of the vastness of space all around you, limitless spaciousness in all directions. The spaciousness inside you merges with the spaciousness outside of you and there's only Oneness, one bright vitality expanding and extending everywhere.

Yogis say there is a flame, roughly the size and shape of an almond, in the heart. This light within us melts away illusions and limitations. This is our true nature, always present and available, and the more we focus on this indivisible Oneness that is real, alive, and eternally with us, the more anything that has been blocking our awareness of it automatically melts away.

Begin to consciously offer into that bright heart flame any negative projections about the body that we have been creating for ourselves that may be causing us difficulty. Offer into the heart flame any negative stories we have ever told ourselves in relation to the body, or the body's limitations, pain, or shame, any hurt, shock, or bewilderment that we have been carrying around in ourselves. Take a few moments in stillness to do this.

## GUIDED MEDITATION (Continued)

Move forward by focusing on any projections created around our human feelings. There's nothing wrong with having human feelings; the only question is, are we using and directing them in ways that liberate us, and help us and others, or in ways that harm and bind us and others? In just the same way you would gather up an armful of old dried leaves and offer them into a bonfire, gather up an armful of old, dried feelings that aren't helping, that aren't serving, and offer them into the heart flame.

Now begin to explore thought patterns, the thoughts we return to again and again, whether positive or negative. We're taking full responsibility for our thinking and for the way our thoughts help create our experiences and have very visible effects on others. What thoughts would we like to offer into that heart flame? What would be good to let go of in order to welcome the new?

When you're ready, come back into the heart flame and into that shimmering energy of the body, and feel what it's like to be this amazing container of Consciousness-Existence-Bliss Absolute.

Come back to all of these meditations in turn and in time. They are very simple, healing, direct, and powerful. They work at a very deep level and allow us to shine forth the awakeness, the aliveness, the truth, the reality that we are forever.

Thank God and God bless us all.

— *Sri Swami Nityananda Giri*

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

**Question:** What of heartbreak?

**Answer:** It's important to feel directly the power of AUM. If we allow ourselves to truly open and receive, that's where the Divine is. We're all in an amazing game and we're not the only ones playing. The only question for any of us is, "How much can I open my heart?" We don't know how long we have. Give thanks for every single aspect of your physicality. Be thankful for your human heart. Be thankful the flowers are extra precious because they are temporary. Be thankful the human heart is extra precious because it can open and because it can also break. What you learn when the heart breaks is how much more open it can become.

If we feel that we cannot trust again, we can learn to trust ourselves first. Then we can learn to trust the way the Divine is consciously, constantly supporting us, guiding us. This can be in the simplest ways. We can learn to trust ourselves by asking, "What foods are nourishing and supporting for me to eat? What thoughts are nourishing and supporting for me to think? How much sleep is nourishing and supporting for me to receive? What is it the Divine would like to share through me?" Through this practice, we allow ourselves to come home, to rest in the fire within our own hearts. It's only when we fill ourselves up with the fire of our own hearts that we can truly share love with another human being.

If we're chasing after love, that means we believe it is outside of us. If we believe love is outside of us, it will stay outside of us, and there's no amount of chasing we can do that will draw it to us. There's no amount of reassurance we can receive that will make us feel steady, comfortable, and confident. Let us fill ourselves up from the fire of our own hearts. We can give ourselves the blessing of self-appreciation, self-respect, seeing our own beauty. God does not send anyone here who is not gorgeous. Find the radiance that we are forever. Then we magnetize to ourselves with light and purity everything that harmonizes with that radiance. We are no longer chasing. There is allowing, opening, receiving. AUM is an incredible bridge for this.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER (Continued)

**Question:** Can you review how to prepare for meditation?

**Answer:** A beautiful realization that the yogis over millennia have shared with us is that when we can tap into the energy of devotion, we propel ourselves into the presence of grace. We allow ourselves to sit at the feet of the guru, the energy that leads from darkness to light. We allow twoness to melt into oneness.

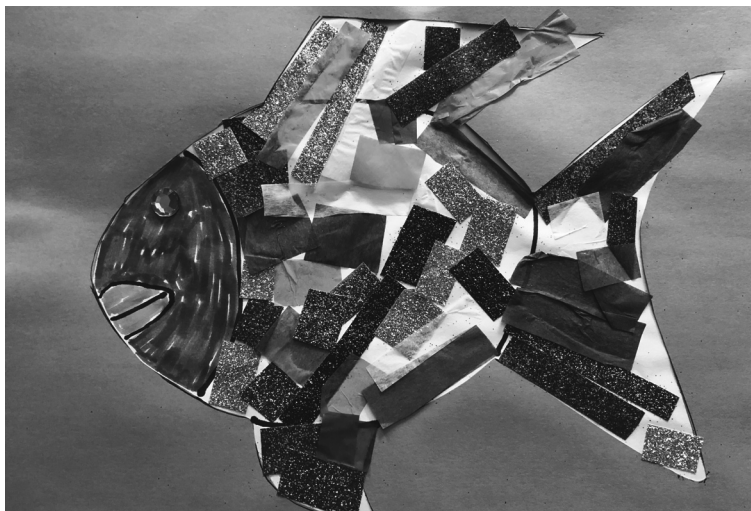
Think of something that you love in purity. Sunlight dancing on water, trees rustling in the wind, steam rising on a cup of tea, the sound of a gong calling us to meditate. Take that energy of devotion and offer it to the highest and best within yourself. Offer it to the Divine. Allow yourselves to melt from seeming separateness into pure harmony. As you work with the mantras, or any meditation technique, know it is a sacred, powerful tool. After using the tool, set it down and allow the tool to take you directly to silence, to stillness. That is where illumination comes. As we consciously open to receive, we allow ourselves to be filled up from within, to be whole, to integrate.

Begin by allowing your feet to touch the earth consciously, focusing on the steadiness, solidity, stability, foundation of the earth. Feel the same support at the root, the base of your spine. From the base of this support, allow yourself to rise up through the whole length of the spine, lifting the crown of the head slightly towards the heavens, slightly lengthening the back of the neck, tucking the chin a little bit. Focus the gaze with closed eyes at the space above the eyes in-between the eyebrows at the center of the forehead. From there, move back to the mid-brain. Let your attention rest there gently, calmly, with ease, with clarity.

Now, with the tips handed down by the yogis, at this place of our consciousness, with the love and joy of our being, with our devotion, allowing ourselves to be filled, allowing ourselves to be open, silently repeat, "Divine Grace, illumine us."

—*Sri Swami Nityananda Giri*

## FROM THE SUNDAY MEDITATION FOR CHILDREN



Our lesson explored how everything is the manifestation of God. We discussed how our individual human forms are a kind of dress-up that can disguise the “I” that is our true self—our divine self. The children were encouraged to see that God is expressing through each of us, like the rays of sunlight are individual expressions of the sun.

We read the book, *The Rainbow Fish*, about a self-absorbed beautiful fish with lots of shiny scales. After being asked many times to share his scales with other fish, and saying “no” each time, he finds himself alone, with no friends. The next time he is asked to share one of his scales, he reluctantly agrees. The Rainbow Fish discovers how much fun it is to share, and gives away all his scales until he only has one scale left, but is filled with joy. This led to a discussion of how the Rainbow Fish allowed his shiny scales to distract him from expressing his true loving nature.



## DIET AND NUTRITION

### Shrimp Curry

#### *Ingredients:*

- 1 lb. large tiger prawns, peeled and deveined\*
- 1 lb. organic sweet onions, diced
- 3 cloves organic garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon organic finely minced ginger root
- 1 tablespoon organic ghee
- 1 tablespoon cold pressed organic sesame oil
- Organic curry blend:
  - 1 teaspoon coriander powder
  - 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
  - 1 teaspoon fenugreek powder
  - 1 teaspoon cumin powder
  - 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
  - 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
  - 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup stock or water
- Chopped cilantro for garnish

#### *Directions:*

- Heat ghee and oil in pan over medium heat.
- Add minced garlic, ginger, and diced onions; stir constantly until onion turns lightly brown.
- Reduce heat to low and continue to stir until onion is very soft (add a little stock or water if needed to prevent burning).
- Add curry blend and mix well, then add the remaining stock or water.
- Bring to a boil, add shrimp, and stir well until shrimp is fully cooked.
- Turn off heat and let it set for 5-10 minutes before serving.
- Garnish with chopped cilantro, love, and blessings, and serve alone or over cooked rice.

Namaste with Pure Delight!

— Ruci

*\*May substitute alternate protein of equal weight*

## LIGHT OF THE UPANISHADS

Having taught the Vedas, the teacher says:  
"Speak the truth. Do your duty. Neglect not  
The scriptures. Give your best to your teacher.  
Maintain the line of progeny.  
Swerve not from the truth.  
Swerve not from the good.  
Protect your spiritual progress always.  
Give your best in learning and teaching.  
Never fail in respect to the sages.  
See the divine in your mother, father,  
Teacher, and guest. Never do what is wrong.  
Honor those who are worthy of honor.  
Give with faith. Give with love. Give with joy.  
If you are in doubt about right conduct,  
Follow the example of the sages,  
Who know what is best for spiritual growth.  
This is the instruction of the Vedas;  
This is the secret; this is the message."

—*Taittiriya Upanishad*

Translated by Eknath Easwaran

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Awake Yoga Meditation

Phone: 410-435-6121 — [www.awakeyogameditation.org](http://www.awakeyogameditation.org)

# 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 the 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 Paramhansa**

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 Paramhansa.

## **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.



Awake Yoga  
Meditation