



Awake Yoga  
Meditation

# Darshan

Winter Solstice  
2020



# Christmas Gifts

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 will be live streamed through February 2021. Connect by phone, Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube.*

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

## Additional Resources

Join our free eYogi Community at [AwakeYogaMeditation.org/eYogi](http://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](mailto:Swami@AwakeYogaMeditation.org) to schedule a conference.



I want to welcome you all into the gift of God's presence, which is what Christmas is all about. Everything else is additional! Divine love was born not only two thousand years ago but is born every time we take a breath. Our very breath is possible only because of divine love. In each moment we can feel the breath of grace breathing through us. Step forth consciously on that path right now. The very next breath and step you take is your path to divine love. Truly give yourselves to God in sincerity and humility, with devotion and purity of heart. The Divine accepts us instantly and we begin to expand to embrace the infinite.

Since we are meditating today in honor of Jesus, we are asking ourselves to become the heart of Jesus. We are asking that the heart of Jesus come to life through us, that our eyes become the eyes of Jesus looking at our family and our friends, even those that deeply challenge and shake us. We are asked to look at them only ever with the eyes of kindness, clarity, and discernment, knowing that in the final analysis they too are simply ourselves, simply a facet of divine love, a blink of the divine eye, a shimmer of the divine smile as we all are.

We gain in courage as we walk this path. We gain in self-awareness. We become much more aware of our own faults and, thanks to divine grace, more skillfully able to transform our faults so that even they become a means of being able to be of service to the Divine.

Yogis give us many transformational techniques to work with energy. An example is the Gayatri mantra, a mantra of great spiritual power. If you ever find yourself in need of comfort, hope, succor, courage, or steadiness, you can say the Gayatri mantra again and again and again until it sinks into you. It will shift and transform the patterns of anguish that have temporarily, for a moment, afflicted

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ed you. It is an accessible, balancing technique that is incredibly helpful during the holidays as well as other stressful times. "Let us meditate on the glory of that effulgent Reality from whom the whole universe is projected. May that Radiance enlighten our hearts, minds and lives."

Transformation cannot be given to another. It can only be supported and made available.



Photo by Kira auf der Heide on Unsplash

One of the best gifts we can give is living our own lives as examples of humility, inclusiveness, and awareness—living love. Let us

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come from that energy always and demonstrate with every fiber of our being in all ways, large and small, that this is possible. These eternal laws are beautiful. When we focus

on what we want to create, when we focus on compassion, which blends love and wisdom, we will always find ways forward. Absolutely nothing will stop the forward momentum, which of course includes joy. And so our forward motion becomes irresistible

and magnetizes to us others who also love, honor, and respect the kindness and the highest and the best in absolutely everyone.

# Peace

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

Peace gives us the recognition that so long as peace prevails in our heart and mind, no matter what happens outwardly, we remain firmly centered in the feeling of well-being. If we do not experience peace, we need but remind ourselves of the light of peace that is ever available to us.

Sometimes it's difficult for us to feel peace for the simple reason that we have been too absorbed in focusing on the absence of peace. Whenever we focus on the absence of peace, peace is absent. All we need to do is decide that peace is more important than anything else in terms of the turbulence and agitations and the political shenanigans. None of those generate peace, so if we want to have peace, let's seek inner guidance.

The light of peace will bring that to us.

In scripture we are promised peace on earth. Many think that promise was in vain. But I am self-persuaded that that promise will become reality because an enlightened being is one with the Source. What such a being brings forth from that light of being is truth, and no human, no politics,

no country has the power to prevent peace from coming on earth. Peace is our divine inheritance.

If you are not experiencing peace, instead of complaining about it, see it as a messenger, a catalyst. See it as your soul giving you a signal, saying to you, "I know what you want. Why don't you ask me for it? But you have to come unto me if you want to find peace." Then wherever you go, you are the center of peace unto the world. You don't have to

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establish peace centers. You only have to discover the center of peace within yourself. Then it has to radiate.

The first evidence that you have found peace within is that you no longer feel the desire to react, you no longer feel the need to justify being who you are, doing what

you do, or loving what you love.

Step back every time you want to react. Ask yourself, "Will reaction bring me peace?" You know very well it won't. When your desire for peace becomes greater than your desire to practice resistance or harbor ill will or hateful thoughts toward anyone, then you are ready to experience peace.



# This Moment In Time

Acharya Premadas

Let us consciously stand together in this moment in time at the threshold of a new moment in the ongoing, eternal flowing of life. Recognizing together that absolutely everything that has ever transpired has made THIS glorious, precious, sacred moment possible. All of the sorrows, all of the sufferings, all of the joys, all of the victories, all of the losses, all of the happinesses, all of the sadnesses—ALL of it has brought us to THIS moment. How would we like to move forth?

If we like, let us join together in immersing ourselves in a consciousness of being in an eternal stream of life—consciously, joyfully, trustingly allowing ourselves to be carried along, to be transformed continually. We lovingly, compassionately, humbly, courageously set down any and all urges to grasp at anything at all, or control the outcome, or predict the future. Quietly and boldly we dedicate ourselves to and trust in the Truth of Life, vowing to remember and recognize the perfection of its expression in each and every pouring forth. Let us meet Life as Life has always met us.

In its most beautiful, purest



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***We have within our reach countless keys to unlock our jail cell, to melt away the bars of our imprisonment.***

flowering, this way of being blossoms forth from within each and every one of us. As long as a knowing of Oneness exists only as a belief overlaid on top of a consciousness of twoness, it is limited and in a sense, false. Still, even a limited sense of Oneness that remains coupled with the ignorance that is “twoness” is more helpful in as much as it better affords us a way forward to full realization of what is really real.

However, a limited experience of Oneness is still limited; nothing less than unlimited realization will ever fulfill us. We want to keep going! Diving wholeheartedly into a consciousness of the perfection of the unfolding of the law and the truth of life catapults us into an entirely new realm of possibility.

We have within our reach countless keys to unlock our jail cell, to melt away the bars of our imprisonment. The Truth of life is right here and right now, oh so patiently awaiting our return home. As each of us steps through the

doorways of liberation, let us also hold the door for all our friends, our sisters, our brothers, for they indeed are our very selves. Let each of us individually, and all of us together in our human lives, meet all with the very same understanding, patience, compassion, and love that Life, the Law, Sat, What Is, has always offered to us, until all have discovered Absolute Oneness for themselves and the promise that Life has made to us is fulfilled.

# Reality of Love

Sri Swami Premananda Giri

Love of God is not an objective necessity but an inner quality of soul. It is the eternal bond between the soul and God and the divine essence of both. It is beyond intellect and above the confines of reason. Reason is circumscribed by form; only love can realize the formless. Transcending the categories of duality, love is absolute oneness.

Love is a self-revealing power; creation is the radiation of God's love. Love of God is the path of righteousness, the supreme virtue, because it alone inspires the

All things are made perfect in thy presence because thou art the light of truth, the power of purity and the reality of love. I know thou art my God because my soul reveals within my heart the beauty of thy love and the power of thy divinity. Thou art the perfection of love. In the devotion of my love I surrender my soul to thee. When soul is lost in love how can it be apart from God? God is love and in love it attains to its highest divinity. Love becomes bliss when soul is united with God. The supreme longing of soul is for realization of oneness with God.

When heart is inspired by the beauty and purity of love, the entire being becomes a sacred instrument of soul. Love is not only the power but the grace of soul. Beauty is the expression of the fullness of life. Love is oneness of consciousness wherein the inspiration of life is fulfilled in the perfection of devotion. Love is soul, the everlasting source of peace and happiness. Love is God.

***The mind may gather sorrow but the soul has only love to offer.***

manifestation of all godly qualities. The mind may gather sorrow but the soul has only love to offer. The leaves come out of the tree to protect it from the burning sun. Even so, virtues emanating from the soul save it from the finiteness of mind.

# Peace Is

Srimati Shanti Mataji

We came out dancing on the stage of life, dancing for the joy of being and the delight of exploration in our embodiments. And the stage is the substratum of our existence in this world. That substratum goes by many names, and one of them is peace. Since God is supreme peace, and the substratum of our existence is God, then one aspect of the substratum of our existence is peace.

But, people say, there is no peace in the world. Look at this country and that one. Think of a blank chalkboard in the classroom. A boy comes up to the blackboard and draws images of war—tanks, dashed lines for bullets, bursting stars for explosions, and airplanes dropping bombs. We know that

at the end of the class, the teacher will erase the chalkboard and it will be clear and clean once more. That clean slate represents the reality of peace, and all the images of sound and fury that appear on that board are but temporary overlays on the unchanging substratum.

In life, when we watch the outer pictures, we may observe images of war, animosity, small

private cruelties, and so on. But the substratum is not affected by any of this. Living in this world, we have a choice: We can focus on the outer pictures and become discouraged by wars, unkind words, crimes, global warming, and defensive behavior. Or, we can see all these events as drawings on the chalkboard of peace. That does not mean that we become indifferent to upheavals or to the pain of others. Rather, it means that we switch from focusing

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***We help create the beautiful picture as a reality for the other, for the world, and certainly in ourselves.***

and lamenting on the outer picture if it is anything less than peace and wholeness, and we create the image in our minds of perfect peace, light, wholeness.

To do this requires nothing less than living in two different worlds at the same time: the one that we observe outwardly which may show chaos and suffering, while at the same time holding firmly to the inner image, thought, projection of this pure expanse of peace and harmony, wholeness and joy. By the law of resonance, we help create the beautiful picture as a reality for the other, for the world, and certainly in ourselves.



# Ever New Joy

Karuna

**“No power or miracles can compare with the joy that is God. That perennial happiness is what everyone is seeking. God is ever new joy unto eternity.”**

—SWAMI SRI YUKTESWAR

As one year comes to a close, and another begins, many of us desire to wipe the slate clean and focus on a fresh start. Especially this year, which has brought challenges to many. We make New Year’s resolutions and set intentions for projects we want to accomplish, for habits we want to develop and those we wish to extinguish.

While there is nothing wrong with adopting resolutions and intentions for the New Year, Sri Yukteswar reminds us we don’t have to wait to hit the reset button. When we are immersed in the Christ consciousness, every day, every moment invites us to experience ever new joy unto eternity.

Part of the divine adventure of Advent is to open our hearts to that ever new joy that Sri Yukteswar speaks of. Imagine if we practiced concentrating our awareness and infusing each and every moment with the breath of the Divine! When our attention is focused on God, we are constantly unfolding into greater awareness and understanding. We get to consciously choose in every

moment how we relate to other beings, to the world, and perhaps most importantly, to ourselves. Every moment offers a fresh opportunity to discover the joy that is inherent in being saturated with God-consciousness—knowing that whatever the world serves up, the Divine has our backs.

As long as we are in human embodiment, there will be no shortage of opportunities to practice this awareness in difficult circumstances. We can see problems or we can focus on solutions. We can see abundance, or we can see lack. We can see compassion, or we can see indifference. As just one example, as our bodies age, we can greet physical challenges with curiosity about what these changes might teach us. We can approach our aches, pains and perceived limitations with the attitude, *Behold, all things are indeed new!* Or we can grouse and rail against how our body has failed us. Which feels better? Which opens the door to ever new joy? Living in the present moment with curiosity frees us from anxiety about the future. Our hearts

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soften and struggle dissipates. Looking at every day through the clear lenses of divine eyeglasses immerses us in the present moment, where only love dwells.

It takes faith in God’s grace to stand courageously in the awareness that every moment is new, and to acknowledge that we don’t know what the next moment will bring. Can we open our

hearts and our minds to welcome in wonder and awe whatever comes next? Can we practice choosing love over fear in the face of whatever the new day brings? The more we choose love, the more we delight in the ever new, and the more joy is ours.

God is ever new joy unto eternity. That realization is the perennial happiness we are seeking.

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# Revelations of a Cosmic Traveler

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

We fill ourselves with the light of peace, inviting peace to pour through us, to wash away all distress, agony, doubt, pain, fear. We fill ourselves with adoration of the one Light that shines within all, and that shines with such beauty, clarity, directness, through the one we call Jesus, Yeshua. We honor, bless, and adore that Light with infinite reverence, and we invite ourselves to become a living expression of the sacred teachings he came to impart.

Let us rejoice! Let us sing the praises of the Lord! Let us shout Alleluia with all our being! Let us stand on the rooftops and proclaim, "Divine Grace, giver of all gifts, we honor you, we adore

***You are seen, you are recognized, you are appreciated. I honor the Light in you.***

you, we thank you for all that you shower down upon us, the breath we breathe, the ground we walk upon, the responsiveness within ourselves that recognizes infinite love and pure oneness, as it shares itself everywhere, as it shines through the tiny baby Jesus so totally, as we ask to share Light ourselves in words, thoughts, and

deeds of humility, purity of heart, forgiveness, kindness, helpfulness, caring, compassion."

We gather around the Light to fill ourselves to overflowing, allowing Light to pour through us, to melt away all limitation, separation, anxiety, fear. We stand in Light, we kneel in Light, we bow to Light, we walk in Light. When we do so, with absolute reverence and thanksgiving, there is only love. There is only oneness. There is only adoration of the sacred life energy, the purity, beauty, blessing, and grace that expresses through beautiful Jesus. And we invite that sacred life energy to teach us, to be strong within us, that we might be true in the Light,

that we might be pure of heart. Again and again, let us declare, and let us live, "I choose the Light.

I choose compassion. I choose forgiveness. I choose unity. I choose harmony. I honor and adore the Light that shines with such love. I ask Light to share through me right where I am, letting me be hands that are helpful, a smile that brings ease, love that lets another know, "You are seen, you are recognized, you are appreciated. I honor the Light in you."

## Po

Murai

I love the movie scene from Kung Fu Panda in which Po the panda finally receives the mysterious Dragon Scroll for which he has struggled and waited so long. He was promised that the scroll's ancient secrets would save him and transform him into the ultimate warrior. When the scroll is opened, it is totally blank and Po is left confused and more afraid. Later, Po sees his reflection in the scroll and realizes intuitively that the wholeness he sought has always been here. He was never missing some secret ingredient, achievement or experience to complete him.

When we hear enlightened teachings, we hear many different descriptions of our true nature and many descriptions of why we don't experience or know our true nature. Our conditioned mind tries to interpret and make sense of all these descriptions and often concludes that some essential quality, attainment, state, or experience is missing. Our response is to seek out all sorts of preparation and purification practices and begin a journey to become ready and worthy of true nature or enlightenment. We become a self-improvement project that never seems to end.

The term Self-realization is intentionally used to point the way out of this confusion. What is truly needed is to realize, notice, recognize, and acknowledge the Self or reality that is already here. Realizing has nothing to do with attaining, earning, or becoming our true Self. How could true nature attain or become that which it already and always is?

When all our learned ideas about ourselves and enlightenment are put down, there is a natural relaxing, an opening where our true being can be recognized without struggle. This being is the unconditioned timeless conscious Self that makes all experience

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***How could true nature attain or become that which it already and always is?***

and all perception possible! Noticing this aware being or presence is an immediate and direct experience, not a concept or philosophy. It only remains unnoticed because we are conditioned to give all our attention to the loud thoughts, feelings, and experiences that forever come and go. It is noticing and acknowledging this presence that can spark the spontaneous and intuitive realization: THIS awareness, THIS presence THIS conscious mystery behind my eyes—it is not something I possess—THIS is what I am!

# Teachings of the Gurus

## Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

“Activate this intention and put it into practice in daily life: *On this day and always I give permission for the field of peace to increase through me, in me, as me. I give permission for peace to come to life in my body, in the manner, in the energy, in the consciousness, in the intention with which I offer a helping hand, guided by stillness to know when and how help may be most welcome. I give permission for peace to speak through me and to help me choose silence until I resolve within myself any inner conflict that might prevent me from articulating the fullness and the joy and the healing and the wonder and the awe and the magnificence and the delight and the lightheartedness that is peace. I give peace permission to help me lay down once and for all my old thought patterns that inspire me to feel and to carry anything other than peace in my energy field. I give permission for these old thought patterns to melt into the light and to become divine energy, the energy of insight and compassion, the energy of expansion, the*

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**Give yourself the gift of being the peace that you are.**

*energy of awareness, the energy of generosity of spirit that leaves space for me and for others to change our minds, to open our hearts, to transform our lives, to step forward into the light in new ways that increase the field of peace. Not just in consciousness, not just in energy, not just in intention, but in manifestation, in expression, in embodiment, in the daily relationships, the daily tasks, the work, the human lives, the human structures that we choose to create and to recreate so that they sing with the fullness of the field of peace.*

“Please, please, please, give yourself the gift of putting this into practice. Give yourself the gift of being the peace that you are. Thank God you are that peace, thank God you are yourself, thank God you are here. You are absolutely beautiful and magnificent, and blessed, and showers of light and peace are unfolding and embracing and guiding you and me and all of us.”

## Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

“None who follows that inner light will fail to find a way out of the darkness of ignorance and experience peace, joy, love, security, and harmony. Therefore, let us not walk down the dark alleys of

negativity, fear, and misery, but turn within, face the light, allow it to lead us mightily on the path of liberation and bliss. It is your own eternal I Am presence of light.”

## Sri Swami Premananda Giri

“Let us understand the secret whereby success is attained in meditation. The secret of success is twofold. One aspect is the true knowledge of God and his attributes, and the other is practice, unfailing daily practice. Even a little meditation each day produces a considerable result after a while. The result may not be immediately

perceptible and it seldom is. However, when meditation is practiced every day, however little, an appreciable beneficent effect will be attained and felt. When we expose our mind to the light of God long enough, we are sure to derive therefrom illumination of soul and happiness of heart.”

## Swami Sri Yukteswar

“Wisdom is not assimilated with the eyes but with the atoms. When your conviction of a truth is not merely in your brain but in your being, you may diffidently vouch for its meaning. The rishis wrote in one sentence profundities that

commentating scholars busy themselves over for generations. Endless literary controversy is for sluggish minds. What more quickly liberating thought, ‘God is’—nay, ‘God’?”

## Shyamacharan Lahiri

“Solve all your problems through meditation. Exchange unprofitable religious speculations for actual God-contact. Clear your mind of dogmatic theological debris; let in the fresh healing waters of direct perception. Attune yourself to the

active inner guidance; the Divine Voice has the answer to every dilemma of life. Though man’s ingenuity for getting himself into trouble appears to be endless, the Infinite Succor is no less resourceful.”



# Joy of the Infinite

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

We are here to remind ourselves, I am divine sweetness eternally. Everyone on the planet is divine sweetness, always. We're inviting ourselves to be in touch with that reality, and to wake up to the truth, to allow ourselves to be awake to our light, our wisdom, our heart.



We are invited to let go of any human index by which we usually measure or understand success. Allow the Divine to show you what success is. Allow the Divine to reveal to you what it is for you to be awake, to be in contact with wisdom, to be in contact with heart, to be fully alive, to be freely your best self.



When we come face-to-face with who we are, we are able to set aside all our ideas about everyone else as well. We become able to see past whatever screen of aggression, hostility, fear, shame, or hatred that they are projecting out at us and see their tender heart.

The Tao says that the kind, silently and through their presence, energy, and actions, teach kindness. The kind teach the unkind by being kind. For each of us, through our energy, our beingness, our very presence, wordlessly, we are invited to teach kindness.



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 the highest in absolutely everyone and everything.



The more we practice kindness, the more we ask the divine breath of love to breathe through us, the more we feel what we feel when we walk into a forest, when you can feel the sacred sweetness of the trees and the aliveness, the field of caring, and interconnect- edness.

# Swami Shankarananda's Pearls

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

The spiritual principle underlying modesty is really the quality of humility. True humility does not mean belittling oneself. I cannot enjoy that kind of thinking that promotes focusing on one's weaknesses. It is false humility to believe that we're not good enough.



I was reminded of a prayer by Chaitannya, the great bhakti yogi. In this prayer he expresses the thought, "O my mind, be humbler than a blade of grass." Chaitannya uses images in nature as a wonderful way to illustrate humility. The reason the blade of grass is able to bend to the ground when it is stepped on is that it practices nonresistance. The blade of grass is able to bend without being crushed.



Krishna recommends a way to free us from any kind of resistance to what happens when someone crushes us with misunderstanding, judgment, blame, thought- lessness, or insensitivity of any kind. Krishna tells Arjuna, "Fix thy mind on me alone." Another way to say that is that we are to put our attention on that alone which

keeps us in the state of well-being and harmony. When we are non- reacting, we are not giving power to anything or anyone outside of us.



If I were there I would say to you, "Isn't it wonderful you are finally discovering that you cannot do it yourself? But remember there is One who will do it through you, if you acknowledge with all good grace and openness of mind and heart: 'There is One within me that is all-wise and all-knowing and all-nurturing and that is the one on whom I will keep my attention focused and fixed and invite that one to speak through me, to act through me, to express through me.'"



Fixing our mind on that alone which is the source of our well-be- ing, strength, peace, equanimity, and freedom is not something we do with the intention of cultivating humility. We do it because it feels so much better to be established on that which is the source of our joy and freedom, harmony and concord.

# Garland of Truths

“Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning, and under every deep a lower deep opens.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



“No matter how dark things seem to be or actually are, raise your sights and see possibilities — always see them for they’re always there.”

—Norman Vincent Peale



“Don’t hope that events will turn out the way you want, welcome events in whichever way they happen: this is the path to peace.”

—Epictetus



“We must be willing to get rid of the life we’ve planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. The old skin has to be shed before the new one can come.”

—Joseph Campbell

“The secret to change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

—Socrates



“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language and next year’s words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning.”

—T.S. Eliot



“May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others. May you use the gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.”

—St. Theresa’s Prayer

# Light of the Upanishads

Svetasvatara Upanishad  
(translated by Swami Premananda)

The one God, the source of all that exists, in whom are the origin and the perfection of all, the divine guide, the giver of the highest good, the adorable; realizing that source everywhere, the devotee lives in blessed peace.

The source and origin of all gods, the one law that governs the universe, the omniscient and omnipotent, in whom is hidden the power of cosmic creation; realize your identity with that, O humanity.

May that source enlighten our minds with true knowledge which alone is the creative power of universal good and peace.

AUM Shanti Shanti Shanti

# Greeting the Light

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

I invite you to place your hands in prayer at the heart and to greet the light within yourself. Consciously turn and face the light within yourself and allow that light to remind you of who and what you truly are: an infinitely pure and precious expression of the One, of divine grace, of the Self of life, a beloved child of God, a divine expression here in form. As you consciously remember and greet the light in yourself, allow it to strengthen you, reminding you that all courage is with you and within you always. When we are in contact with that inner light, we gain access to infinite good humor and patience and willingness to allow all things to unfold in divine, perfect timing. As a result, human strain and struggle and frustration and impatience melt back into the assurance and the trust in the divine unfoldment which includes the light in you and the light in all equally. It is the one light.

Now, having greeted the light within yourself, consciously greet the light in everyone else who is part of this meditation community. It is the one light in each of us, the

one light that gives us respect and caring and appreciation and the ability to harmonize and optimize all of our thoughts, our words, our choices, our responses, our actions. See if you can visualize that we have greeted the light in one another and now we consciously, all together, take a further step forward into the light, in willingness to stand in the light and allow the light to reveal ourselves to ourselves and to one another in

full glory, in the truth of our being. Feel how strengthening that is and how it amplifies, magnifies, enlivens, quickens, and activates the light in all of us.

Then with that quickened, activated, enhanced, increased light, visualize that you are bowing to the light in every human on the planet. Include all of life, the planet itself, so filled with life energy. Include the waters of the earth, include the air, include the trees and all the plants, the mountains, the hills, the valleys, the plains, the deserts. Include all of the animal life. You can feel the same life current, the same divine song of the beautiful and perfect God that sings and rings and shines in all

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of these expressions, all of these embodiments. We consciously acknowledge our respect and caring for this one light that animates all life in the realm of time and space. And we honor and acknowledge our interconnectedness with all of it.

And now visualize, in frequency, in consciousness, in energy, in intention, that we are creating an opening, an invitation, for anyone who resonates with the quickened, activated, renewed, vitalized light

the one light that shines within all.”

*Consciously, silently, on this day, and on all days ongoingly, I am willing to see with fresh awareness. I am willing to let go of the old scripts, the old patterns, the old templates and to see with the freshness of creation day. Always new, always allowing the Divine to reveal the divine Self in, through, and as everyone and everything that I see, that I hear, that I touch, that I observe or encounter in the realm of time and space. Silently,*



to join us, to step forward into the light joyfully, willing to stand in the light, willing to allow the light to guide us, strengthen us, support us, and encourage us, willing to allow the light to teach us to see one another with new eyes, to let go of any of the ways that we have looked at another through the lens of fear, of judgment. We are consciously inviting our eyes to be clear so that we see, for every human sister and brother on the planet, “You are my own self, my own face reflecting back to me from that vantage point. You are my own self, equally beloved by

*I give permission for this transformation to continue when I am awake, when I am asleep, when I meditate, when I go about the business of my daily life. I give permission for light to share itself in me, through me, and as me, and to greet the light that shares in, through, and as all.*

When you are ready, raise your prayer hands to the spiritual eye, bowing in gratitude, in reverence, in respect and love, in adoration and glad thanksgiving for everyone that is walking with us, everyone that has walked this way before us, everyone who comes to join us.



# Quotes from Saint Catherine of Siena

“Love transforms one into what one loves.”

“Be who God meant you to be and  
you will set the world on fire.”

“You are rewarded not according to your work or your time but  
according to the measure of your love.”

“Preach the Truth as if you had a million voices.  
It is silence that kills the world.”

“It is only through shadows that one comes to know the light.”

“What is it you want to change? Your hair, your face, your  
body? Why? For God is in love with all those things and he  
might weep when they are gone.”

“A soul cannot live without loving. It must have something to  
love, for it was created to love.”

“To the servant of God, every place is the right place,  
and every time is the right time.”

“God is closer to us than water is to a fish.”

“You must believe in truth that whatever God gives or permits  
is for your salvation.”

“When it seems that God shows us the faults of others, keep  
on the safer side—it may be that your judgment is false. On  
your lips let silence abide. And any vice that you may ascribe to  
others, ascribe at once to them and yourself, in true humility. If  
that vice really exists in a person, he will correct himself better,  
seeing himself so gently understood, and will say of his own  
accord the thing that you would have said to him.”

# Spiritual Readings

*The Magnetic Power of Love  
(Bhakti Yoga)* by Swami Premananda

Ananda

Among Swami Premananda's many publications is a 77-page booklet that explores the philosophy and power of love and the ideal of devotion as expressed through Bhakti yoga, the religion of love.

Premananda begins by stating, “In every man are hidden three divine qualities, intelligence, will, and feeling. The ideal of this life is to unfold these qualities to their absolute perfection.

Intelligence attains its perfection in wisdom; will, in immortality; and feeling, in love.”

He connects the first two qualities to Jnana and Karma yoga and says the great blessing in Bhakti yoga is the immediate reali-

zation of God. The Bhakti devotee, or Bhakta, does not seek God but sees God everywhere. Everyone is born a devotee because all possess love, just as everyone is born divine.

Among the many aspects of love he describes are: “Love reveals God... Love completes life... Love is eternally within us... Love cannot be understood by intellect... Love is an eternal tie... Love unites in freedom... Love sweetens life... Love is a quality of soul... Love in itself is pure, infinite,

and perfect... Love permeates all.” Premananda also explains the differences between molecular attraction, animal passion, human affection, and divine love. The latter is the ultimate goal of a devotee of Bhakti yoga.

In order to unfold love from within, Premananda says two things are necessary. First is absolute trust in a God who is loving, merciful, just, eternal, and un-

derstanding. Second is consciously living in these qualities by realizing and manifesting them. He describes the Bhakta as one receiving God's love in the heart, perfecting it within oneself, and offering it to all as a benedic-

tion of joy. This corresponds with my favorite definition of love: “the joyous realization of oneness in soul.”

Devotion is a quality of soul, based on pure reason, perfect understanding, and vigilant consciousness. In his conclusion, Premananda says “To make life worthwhile, man must think, work, and love. True love is not without reason and action, or application. Pure love is protected by reason, and universalized by action.”

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***Pure love is  
protected by  
reason, and  
universalized by  
action.***

# Our Greatest Service

Padma

***“Your own Self-realization is the greatest service you can render the world.”***

—RAMANA MAHARSHI

We are all familiar with the emphasis yoga philosophy places on karma yoga, service to others. Major scriptures of the world also emphasize the importance, even the obligation, to serve others, often with the instruction that we offer our service with the consciousness that we are offering it to the Divine and beholding the divinity of the recipient.

Regardless of whether or not our action is motivated by a spiritual perspective, much focus on service is placed on outward acts that contribute to the welfare of others. Many traditions even view looking after others as a higher, more

altruistic act than looking out for oneself. As we know, self-serving with a lower-case “s” is not usually considered a compliment! However, through this quote, Ramana has helped expand my view of service by presenting the idea that focusing on our own Self-realization

builds the strongest foundation from which the greatest service flows.

People across the world celebrate the increasing light during this season of Advent and the winter solstice. Swami Premananda noted that an inter-planetary conjunction occurs at the solstice, bringing a divine radiation beyond

human consciousness that raises the awareness of holiness. We are blessed beyond measure by the Divine, by our teachers, present and past, by the countless unknown beings, in and out of embodiment, who devote themselves to sharing the light of their real-

ization that we may more quickly become established in our own realization and share that for the benefit of others as well.

Let us celebrate the light by committing ourselves even more deeply to our spiritual practice, opening to receive more and more

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***Focusing on our own Self-realization builds the strongest foundation from which the greatest service flows.***



Photo by Jared Rice on Unsplash

from our inner storehouse of divine treasure. And may our every act of outer service carry with it the greater gift of the silent, healing, transformative radiance of love, wisdom, compassion, peace, harmony, and joy from within. We

are also blessed beyond measure to know the Divine is at our back. Let us be instruments that all beings may come to know this, too.





Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

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**QUESTION:**

*I'M FEELING SAD NOW FROM THE RACISM AND THE RIOTS. IT FEELS LIKE THERE'S SO MUCH ANGER AND FEAR FROM THE PANDEMIC. IT'S HARD TO SPEND TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITHOUT GETTING ANGRY AND WANTING TO GRAB TORCHES AND PITCHFORKS. I'M INTERESTED IN WHAT THE TEACHINGS SAY ABOUT MOMENTS LIKE THIS IN THE WORLD WHERE IT FEELS OUR COUNTRY IS HEADED TOWARD SOME KIND OF CIVIL WAR AND THAT THE ONLY WAY TO FIX SOMETHING IS THROUGH VIOLENCE. I WANT TO BELIEVE THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO ADDRESS SOME OF THESE ISSUES THAT WE'RE FACING AND YET AT THE SAME TIME I DON'T REALLY SEE ANOTHER WAY.*

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**ANSWER:**

Each of us in our daily lives has someone or something to tend to lovingly and carefully, to be tucked into bed. And so it is wonderful to keep that energy of strength and caring and tenderness in mind always. Keep that same strength and tenderness and caring when you look out upon the world, when you are reading or watching the news, or if you look at social media. I suggest you stop looking

at social media if it makes you angry. Keep company with the Beloved always.

The teachings are very clear. Never let yourself step outside of that energy of caring and strength and kindness and steadiness with which you tuck your child into bed. More than ever now, we are advised to be extremely mindful and aware of what we are nourishing with our attention. Our attention is one of the most precious gifts we have. In our true, eternal nature our attention is the energy of pure light. It is absolute calm. It is clarity. It is generosity. It is gracefulness. It is inspiration. It is gladness. It is beauty. It is gorgeous. This is the same for every single being on the planet.

We are invited to create from

our true nature, with our true nature. It is then that generosity and joy build bridges, and a hope-filled future will emerge naturally for us in our daily lives. How each of us does this in our daily lives is going to be different because we do this in our families, we do this in our workplaces, we do this where we live, we do this in relation to our own body.

I am asking each of you, "Do you treat your own body with love, with tenderness, with caring and respect?" We have to start there.

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***We are advised to be extremely mindful and aware of what we are nourishing with our attention. Our attention is one of the most precious gifts we have.***

If you are spending any amount of time on the news that is not helping you treat yourself and others with love and caring

and tenderness and respect and awareness, change the channel. All the channels out there are available to us and I am not just talking about online or on media. I am talking about consciousness, awareness. All the channels of consciousness have always been available to us. This has been the case as long as there have been humans. Go straight to Channel One. Go straight to the One and ask the One, "How do you see this?" Wait to speak. Wait to act. Allow your thoughts to be shaped



by the inspiration that comes from going straight to the One.

Giving way to anger is a gateway to the lower self. That doorway exists within every single one of us. The only question is, "Am I taking the low road or am I taking the high road?" Be incredibly honest and ask for a process of self-purification and self-transformation. I want to be clear about this. Our eternal Self doesn't need any transformation. It is ever perfect, clear, kind and free. Humanly, every person on the planet has a particular set of experiences or circumstances to navigate and that is where we are asking to transform ourselves so that we remain in contact with the One always.

Hatred does not cease by hatred. Hatred ceases by love. This is an unalterable law. Are we treating our hearts, minds and bodies with hatred or are we treating them with love? It begins within, with a willingness to practice a process of self-purification. Martin Luther King, Jr. echoed Jesus and Buddha as he taught us to love our enemies. Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. We are inviting ourselves to transform so that we live this teaching in our daily lives. Returning hate for hate multiplies hate. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that.

Carrying anger and bitterness in your heart is like holding onto

the blade of a knife that has no handle. You will only cut yourself. We can transform the energy of hate, sadness, and fear into an amazing compassion and then, in everything we create, we will directly feel its effects. That is the law of energy. Every one of us is constantly, continually, vitally urged to transform. Do we respond skillfully to those energies of pain? Do we invite those energies to help us build bridges to hope-filled futures?



If we stay always in the energy of love, justice follows as naturally as the out-breath flows from the in-breath. Love and justice are inseparable. Justice happens when we stay focused on love for every breath, for every moment, for every heartbeat. Choose love always. Strive to live the truth in our daily lives. Strive to choose words, thoughts and deeds that include the divinity, the radiance, the brightness, the potential goodness within everyone. When we live in harmony with these laws of energy, an incredible new future becomes available for us and for others as well. Every time we choose harmony and take the high road we make it possible for others to choose the same.

Photo by Glenn Carstens-Peters on Unsplash

# In Memoriam A.H.H. (Ring Out)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

# Light of Vedanta

## Tao te Ching

Empty your mind of all thoughts.  
Let your heart be at peace.  
Watch the turmoil of beings,  
but contemplate their return.

Each separate being in the universe  
returns to the common source.  
Returning to the source is serenity.

If you don't realize the source,  
you stumble in confusion and sorrow.  
When you realize where you come from,  
you naturally become tolerant,  
disinterested, amused,  
kind-hearted as a grandmother,  
dignified as a king.  
Immersed in the wonder of the Tao,  
you can deal with whatever life brings you,  
and when death comes, you are ready.

# 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

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DARSHAN is a nonsectarian magazine  
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