



Awake Yoga
Meditation

Darshan

Spring Equinox
2021



The Divine Song

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 April 2021. Connect by phone, Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube.

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

Additional Resources

Join our free eYogi Community at AwakeYogaMeditation.org/eYogi

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



Lahiri advises all of us, do not perform any act without Brahman, not even once. Brahman is the adorable being in all beings, so do not perform any act without the love of your being, not even once. Do not perform any act without kindness, without wisdom, without generosity and caring and joy, not even once. When we act in Self-remembrance, there is no room in any of us for anything other than the divine song. We can directly touch and feel this reality which is spoken of so beautifully by the seers in the Upanishads who sing to everyone.

Allow yourself to experience the fullness of this present moment. Connect with the dynamic energy that is your own life force. Give yourself permission to trust your own harmony in creativity and love, and trust *I am the pure energy of healing*. We then allow ourselves to be free of any knots tied in our energy and can speak truly from the heart. All words of healing, forgiveness, of caring and apology, can be received immediately on the level of the body. Allow every cell to drink in and receive love where there was misunderstanding, healing balm where there was

pain, acceptance where there was rejection, wholeness where there was separation. From the cells of the body in their own harmonious singing, allow the heart to be filled with warm, bright, dynamic singing, the song of life, the song of the Divine, the song of purity and perfection, the song of possibility. Be held by the support of your own heart, your own life, your own inner eternal strength. Allow that to overflow into the mind, into any patterns of thinking that have held onto the pain, to the past, to anxiety about the future.

I am the song that sings throughout all of time and space. Tuning into your own frequency amplifies your own heart song, making it more full and strong and steady and gorgeous and buoyant. Give it permission to flow through your body, bringing healing and

Self-remembrance, bringing the breath of the Divine, bringing freshness and freedom. Let your frequency flow out into the room in which you currently find yourself. Notice the whole room filled with your pure, sweet, kind frequency. Expanding even more, invite your frequency to consciously include and enfold everyone who is cur-

When we act in Self-remembrance, there is no room in any of us for anything other than the divine song.



Photo by Manuel Nägele on Unsplash

rently connecting with their own heart song. Feel the amplitude of the way we all contribute vitally, and together form one gigantic

Every human on the planet is so important that we would not be here unless the Divine wanted to sing through us.

chorus, an endless ongoing symphony, an ocean of beauty that sings around the whole planet.

Notice how your frequency connects with everything you love

in the natural world. If you love trees, your heart song is singing right now with the trees. If you love the ocean, your own frequency right now is absolutely singing with the ocean. If you love the mountains, your song is ringing through the mountaintops

and is present in the stability at the base of the mountain. Your song sings with everything you love and admire. Every human on the planet is so important that

had hoped for or expected, in the midst of all of it, only this frequency—this song of divine light, divine life, divine love, divine music, divine harmony—is real. If we are in contact with this truth, we are in the presence of God always. We are present in the fullness of this moment now, enjoying inner tranquility always. We live in Nirvana. We live in the New Jerusalem. We tuck ourselves in at night and sleep in the City of Brahman. We recognize that always, no matter what happens in time and space, everything is simply Brahman, Supreme Bliss, poured into that form, that shape, that encounter, that experience.

Let go of grudges, vengeance, rage, and fear. Give yourself permission to be the true song of the Self, the true song of your unfettered, pure life energy which cannot sing freely if you weigh it down by holding onto vengeance, rage, and fear. Chant three Aums, inviting them to sweep through your energy field and help you let go consciously of any way in which you have been limiting yourself. Let go of concepts you have internalized about the past and the future. Allow yourself to be in the fullness of the present moment, encountering nothing other than pure love, the kindest, most powerful, healing energy in the universe. Encounter the stillness, the quiet that washes away all pain, all illusion, and all suffering. Encounter the Source of all song.

Thank God and God bless us all.

we would not be here unless the Divine wanted to sing through us. We all are equally participating. We all are equally cherished and precious and included in the divine song. Give yourself permission to feel this directly, right now, and in every ensuing moment.

Feel your feet on the earth. Feel what it is to have human hands and a human heart and a human mind, to be in a human body. In the midst of our daily tasks, in the midst of what is most challenging, in the midst of sometimes experiencing the reversal of what we

Purity of Heart

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

When temptations or untruths come, let us be beholders. If we bear witness to the truth, we will not give power to untruth. Let come what may. Let all the feelings and impressions stored in the heart well up into awareness. They come for but one reason: to pass. “And it *came* to pass.” The impressions will come until they have all passed away.

While they are flashing on the screen of the conscious mind, we do not need to be dragged down by them. We can just watch them pass without giving them a label such as good or bad. When we can look through the untruth, it fades away. We can observe it disappear as we keep knowing the truth about it. Thus, we do not engage in fighting or resisting the temptation, although we still have a sense of struggle to remain aware of the truth. We finally become so totally established in the truth, in seeing the Divine,

that regardless of the apparition, appearance, or temptation, we immediately *choose* not to identify with it or to be influenced by it. We choose not to resist it, but to *let* it pass away. Each time we consciously make that choice, we purify the heart and empty the cup of our heart of false impressions.

Since the nature of the heart is to be full, when we let go of those false impressions, the grace of God will flow in and fill the heart to overflowing. We will dwell all the days of our life in the house of God; and our cup runneth over in divine bliss. Indeed, blessed are the pure in heart.

To begin realizing that purity, let us act from the standpoint, “I am pure,” not, “I will be pure.” Our soul, the presence of God within us, is always pure, for God is purity. Abide in the consciousness of purity. Feel the purity of God within. Purity is healing; purity is holy.

When we can look through the untruth, it fades away. We can observe it disappear as we keep knowing the truth about it.

Friends

Acharya Premadas

From time to time we may experience the exquisite joy of having a human friendship in which each loves and is loved completely and freely—without bondage, without expectation, without requirement, without holding onto, without measurement, without limitation, but with endless sharing and listening, wisdom, understanding, kindness, caring, and fun. In such a friendship there is no better than or less than, no hierarchy, no positioning, no competition, but rather absolute selflessness and supportiveness. There is so much pure love and acceptance that one feels absolutely seen and known and safe and accepted, no matter what. In such a space as this, one feels inspired to take extraordinary risks, without fear of failure or judgment; one experiences courage to let go of anything and everything that one might ordinarily try to cling to out of some sort of protection or self-preservation. From this, one discovers unparalleled freedom to be.

To have such a friend as this, which one can rely on, count on, and trust in, provides a stable, dependable, mountain-like foundation on which one can meet and weather any storm. On this mountain, together we raise one another to heights where all-encompassing clarity is present. There is tremendous power and

beauty and wholeness in having and being such a friend.

Once when I was struggling with something, I reached out to one such friend and shared that I was having a hard time and feeling impinged upon and stuck. The friend’s response was not to give advice but simply to offer to make themselves available to listen, if that would be helpful. No words of wisdom, but simply beautiful, sweet spaciousness, listening, and presence—another kind of wisdom, another kind of power.

Such friendship with another person can feel ancient, eternal, and mysteriously familiar. It is not a possession; it is not even a thing; it does not belong to any of us; it withers when it is tried to be controlled; it cannot be manufactured. It is possible anywhere and everywhere. It is perfectly ordinary. It lives naturally in the space between each of us and among all of us. It is the spirit of connectedness and oneness that is available to all of us in this extraordinarily precious human life together, made all the more accessible by countless beings of goodness and kindness and generosity. It grows as it is given away freely and as it is received in the hearts of each of us and all of us. Love begets love. Friendship begets friendship.

The Art of Happiness

Sri Swami Premananda Giri

Art is the revelation of sublimity in the beauty of simplicity. Happiness is a sublime reality. It is attained in the utmost simplicity of our inner self. Happiness is not an ever-eluding hope. It is a tangible reality which can be attained by each of us. How are we to determine that happiness is a tangible reality? The effect of happiness within us is the self-evident proof of its substantiality. Happiness brings harmony within our nervous system and joyous serenity overfills our being. The power of happiness stimulates us in the inner strength that is at once rhythmic and beautiful. Happiness transforms our countenance with a divine glow of loveliness. Inspired by happiness, our mind

Happiness is not an ever-eluding hope. It is a tangible reality which can be attained by each of us.

gains the vision of fulfillment of hopes and aspirations. Courage, determination, and wise and constructive will, kindle our mind with fervency, self-confidence, and zeal. Our heart is instantly lifted with joyousness and buoyancy when happiness encompasses our inner being. Happiness enlivens

us with spiritual exhilaration. But the reality, power, and beauty of happiness are manifested in their fullest glory in our soul. It is in our soul that we realize the full depth of the purity, holiness, and divinity of happiness. Happiness is a reality, the shores of whose infinity we all have touched with the qualities of our inner perception.

The term happiness is expressed by other synonymous words such as joy, contentment, peace, and bliss. They all signify the same inner realization of blissfulness wherein the completion of joy is attained in the fullness of peace.

Happiness is realized by our total being comprising body, mind, heart, and soul. Each of these four aspects of our individual self plays a significant part in bringing joy to our life. The holiness of our sense faculties contributes no less than the divinity of our soul to bless our life with the grace of peace. Our mind offers us the contentment of self-enlightenment just as our heart infuses our being with happiness in the inspiration of love and devotion.

Let Me Give Thanks

Srimati Shanti Mataji

Let me give thanks to Thee while I can.
Let my praise rush out to greet Thee
like a waterfall thundering
free from the forest dark.
Let the overwhelming surges of joy
carry me liltily to Thee
like roses bring their fragrance
merely by existing.
Let my love for Thee rest softly
in Thy presence like a thousand
offerings of jasmine blossoms
sprinkled at Thy feet.

Let me sing and laugh and dance for Thee,
because one day, when I know myself as Thee,
who will be left to anymore give thanks?

Generosity Begets Generosity

Karuna

Beautiful acts of kindness happen every day, acts that express the wellspring of love within our hearts. If we find ourselves tuned in to divisiveness, fear, and anger, perhaps we need to change where we are pointing the camera of our attention. We can choose to focus our awareness on the joy of being connected with all beings.

A recent story captured my attention. Several months ago, the Baltimore Ravens were playing the Buffalo Bills in the NFL playoffs. At the end of the third quarter, the Ravens' star quarterback, Lamar Jackson, suffered a concussion that took him out for the rest of the game. One Buffalo fan, although happy for his team's win, felt badly that such an excellent player's year ended that way. He and a friend decided to post a suggestion on social media that Buffalo fans consider contributing \$8 (Jackson's jersey number) to Jackson's favorite charity, which provides meals for Louisville school kids who would otherwise go hungry. The fans thought their idea might raise a couple hundred dollars for a good cause. That was Saturday night.

By noon on Wednesday, over

\$450,000 had been contributed to the charity. The organization was so overwhelmed with money and gratitude that they expanded their program to help needy children in Buffalo, Baltimore, and beyond. Buffalo fans have enjoyed earning a reputation for being generous.

I enjoy perusing my online neighborhood app where residents from nearby communities post messages and comments on a variety of issues. I delighted in a recent post where a man expressed his astonishment and gratitude for the person in line behind him who paid for his groceries after he realized he did not have his wallet. It prompted many comments and reminders to "pay it forward."

I been moved the last few weeks as many people who offered prayers, financial support and furniture of all

sorts to a young expectant mother in response to her post that she had just moved into a nearby apartment and needed things for her new home. It turns out the woman's story was probably a scam. We have a choice regarding how we look at this situation. We can see it as an example of how people are not to be trusted, or we

Everything we do, every act of kindness, every spark of joy we share reverberates throughout the universe, often in unexpected ways.

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can instead focus on the inherent goodness and generosity of so many who are willing to reach out to a complete stranger. This is the energy of love that longs to express itself through each of us. Even if the woman misrepresented herself, I have to believe that the generosity she was shown will eventually help her return to the recognition of her own true nature.

These stories remind us that everything we do, every act of kindness, every spark of joy we share, reverberates throughout the universe, often in unexpected ways.

Generosity begets generosity. It is the law. If we perceive the world as a cold, hostile place, we can change the composition of our picture so that the energy of love is centered in the frame.

Revelations of a Cosmic Traveler

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

The Buddha proclaims that when we clear our vision of dust, the most victorious body emerges: Awakeness itself, the matrix of divine energy, aliveness, universal wisdom, and heart. Our inner Buddha reveals itself. Our Christ light shines. Our Krishna consciousness beams forth. Our Quan Yin energy radiates healing and support to us and to all beings. The Buddha invites us to let go of the filthy rags

We are all invited to wake up instantly, and then to enjoy a lifetime in which we allow sacred transformation to unfold through us.

we have been wrapping around our inner gold. That is quite some invitation! We are invited to glow with divine grace, to love, forgive, and be glad beyond limits.

The Buddha advises his students, tells all of us, that when we give ourselves to sacred Truth, we instantly bring forth a subtle Awakeness, an inner aliveness, an ability to be in constant contact with our own divinity, grace, light, and to be in contact with the same divinity, grace, and light in all beings. In other words, we are all

invited to wake up instantly, and then to enjoy a lifetime in which we allow sacred transformation to unfold through us, allow divine virtues and qualities to unfurl our hearts and minds, our vision, our ability to be of service to all whom we meet.

When everything we thought we knew falls away, we are invited to unmind our mind, expand our wisdom heart, let what Zen calls

our heart-mind become calm, clear, still, pure, unified. We invite ourselves not to scatter our energy outward in so many directions. We bring our attention inward, focusing and clearing ourselves. We rest in eternal, pure, inner light of Awareness, heart's kindness, soul's deep forever gladness. We fill with stillness beyond all that can be shaken in the outer world, in our opinions, plans, and ideas. We invite ourselves to be the Wholeness that we are eternally, and to honor and support that same divine Wholeness in all.

Squealing and Howling

Murali

Spiritual seekers quickly learn there is no shortage of teachings on surrender and God's will. We form images of what surrender looks like based on those paths and practices and then we add our own assumptions and interpretations. Those images may feel very positive or may invoke all kinds of anxiety and confusion.

I recently encountered a father trailed by two very young boys on bicycles. I had never seen children

that young without training wheels. The boys were wildly crisscrossing the wide gravel trail weaving and narrowly missing each other and the back of their Dad's bike. They squealed, howled, and giggled in delight while other bikers swerved out of their way. I was instantly caught up and completely uplifted by this scene.

For me, these boys were demonstrating perfectly and profoundly what surrender looks and feels like. The boys were in total cooperation, total alignment, total agreement with the will of God or life. In that moment, the will of life was to experience the joy of being, moving, and flying in those bodies it created.

I don't need the mind to tell me the truth about that scene.

Mind says that the boys' delight was in the activity and experience itself. It is deeper than that. That kind of delight and energy happens when life is in harmony with its form, its mind, and heart. Life is being, doing, and expressing exactly what it came to do in that moment. It is what life wanted right there and then. The boys didn't need a manual, a plan, and a practice to know and do life's will. Conditioned mind always wants a strategy. Mind always asks, how do I do it?

Conditioned mind always wants a strategy. Mind always asks, how do I do it?

The best guidance I ever received was to stop pursuing any image, concept, or teaching of surrender and reflect on what I really value.

Why am I interested in surrender? In other words, stop making it a goal and approach it from my own sincere question and contemplation. This inquiry opens the way for a clear, authentic, and passionate expression of surrender. It allows us to connect and engage with life in a unique way that makes sense to us. This engagement is complete cooperation with the pure love and wisdom of life. And that total availability to life is the source of all divine squealing, howling, and giggling.

Teachings of the Gurus

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

“Let nothing disrupt or delay your going straight to perfect peace always. We have the ability to choose that nothing is more important, nothing is a higher priority, than going directly to perfect peace. How do we do that? It is thought by thought, the choice that we make in daily life. It is word by word, the choice that we make in daily life. It is deed by deed, the choice that we make in daily life. Every time we choose optimism, every time we choose to focus on wholeness, we are not only lifting our own vision and awareness and energy field, but we also make it possible for those who walk

through the same hallways we do, who walk down the same streets we walk down, to make the same choice. This is a truth that is lived in the lives of ordinary, everyday humans and in the lives of great teachers. Krishna tells us to dedicate every action to the highest and the best without looking for results. When you do that, you are free and you’ll always know what thought, what word, what deed to choose to help you embody perfect peace. Again and again and again, we give permission to the energy of perfect peace, which is already available in consciousness, to share itself through us.”

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

“Why do you weep for the loss of the body, but not for the loss of Self-remembrance that your source is God, infinite Consciousness-Existence-Bliss Absolute, the creative power in all of us? Why do you weep for what is perishable, when the imperishable is always looking out through your eyes? Why do you focus on

a world of limitation when the I of limitlessness within you reveals its inexhaustible and boundless riches? Rise in meditation, and stop not till you have risen above the thought of rising and there is only the bliss of union and the outpouring of bliss to all sentient beings and worlds.”

Sri Swami Premananda Giri

“Love makes the mind calm and fills it with joy. It keeps the divinity of God always present in our consciousness. It directs our minds towards the innate divinity of all. Everything is spiritualized in love. In short, to describe the power of love, I may say that love

destroys all consciousness of limitation from within us and unites us with God. And in such unity we realize our universal oneness in the perfection of unending bliss. Such is the magnetic power of love.”

Swami Yogananda Paramhansa

“My kingdom of love shall expand. I have loved my body more than anything else. That is why I am identified with and limited by it. With the love I have given to the body, I will love all those who love me. With the expanded love of those who love me, I will love those who are mine. With the love for myself and the love for my own, I will love those who

are strangers. I will use all my love to love all those who do not love me, as well as those who love me. I will bathe all souls in my unselfish love. In the sea of my love, my family members, my countrymen, all nations, all beings will swim. All creation, all the myriads of tiny living things, will dance on the waves of my love.”

Swami Sri Yukteswar

“Ordinary love is selfish, darkly rooted in desires and satisfactions. Divine love is without condition, without boundary,

without change. The flux of the human heart is gone forever at the transfixing touch of divine love.”

Shyamacharan Lahiri

“Divine perceptions within one’s own consciousness are gained by the spiritualized sense faculties. The power of sight reveals the star of God at Kutastha, the spiritual eye. The voice of God

is heard by the power of hearing. Joy, sweetness, and exultation fill the entire being when the sense faculties are purified and inspired by the righteousness of soul.”

Joy of the Infinite

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

Divine Light is the warmth, brightness, and radiance by which the sun illumines the whole earth. We are inviting our hearts to be so open that we are able to feel directly the energy of that Divine Light, the brightness, warmth, and sweetness, beyond form. Let go of your ideas or expectations of what you think that Light will look like and say to the Divine, *I'm open. Show me what that One Light looks like in my daily life, conversations, tasks and relationships.*



In yogic teachings the moon represents coolness, freshness, purity, and sweetness. Ask yourself, *How may I open to that coolness so that it can share through me in a way that quenches the flames of raging tempers and fear? How can I so open to the Divine that my very presence contributes calm, harmony, and peace?*



When you let go of expectations, you come directly into contact with pure, simple Light and realize, I Am that pure, simple Light.

We are offspring of the Light that brings the whole universe into visible expression. Your thoughts, words, and deeds have incredible creative power, not just for yourself but for other humans, as well. The things you think and where you place your attention, energy, and focus have profound effects on the environment you live in, on the reality you experience, and on what you make possible for others in your life to experience.



You make it possible! Every time you choose perfect peace, every time you choose to keep walking forward, you make it possible for others to move through feelings of pain, devastation, loss, and isolation. They realize that on the other side of that, there is expansiveness, incredible new adventures, and beneficial connections that bless, support, and honor us, that bring us great happiness and great abundance. That's why we're meditating: for ourselves, everyone else in our lives, and everyone else on the planet.

Swami Shankarananda's Pearls

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

If you are unhappy about something, did you know you can stop being unhappy forever? If you can be happy for a moment, you can be happy for eternity because happiness is an element of your nature.



If you can be successful in one moment, you can be successful for eternity. All success is contingent on remembering who you are and being consciously connected with that beingness, engaged in a loving relationship with Self, with the Christ, with Krishna-consciousness, with the Buddha nature, with the Tao, with your own God nature.



Moses, too, went up into a mountain many times. He meditated, raised his consciousness, and communed with Source. He wanted to know the Reality that is responsible for everything that has come into manifestation and is the source of all wisdom. He wanted to know That which he could turn to for spiritual guidance.

All of us have come from the same source. There is only one source, which is existence itself. Then we lose sight of our identity in the shadow of matter-consciousness, body-consciousness.



In the uplifted state, Moses experienced that Reality, or cosmic consciousness. When you experience God-consciousness for yourself, then you remember who you are. Until then, we are told by others and society who we are. In consciousness, Moses discovered the name of the Source was not the name that any human being could give to it. Moses received the revelation that the name of God is I Am. That is what only you can say about yourself: I Am.



If you want to feel greater freedom, joy, and expansiveness, meditate! Meditation is what puts you consciously back in alignment with the source of your being. You are not going to realize peace any other way except by meditating, meditating, meditating!

Garland of Truths

“If we had no winter the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”

—Anne Bradstreet



“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”

—Albert Einstein



“Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.”

—John Muir



“Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely, or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature, and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature. I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.”

—Anne Frank



“The forest makes your heart gentle. You become one with it. No place for greed or anger there.”

—Pha Pachak



“Never cut a tree down in the wintertime. Never make a negative decision in the low time. Never make your most important decisions when you are in your worst moods. Wait. Be patient. The storm will pass. The spring will come.”

—Robert H. Schuller

Light of the Upanishads

Svetasvatara Upanishad
(translated by Swami Premananda)

Brahman, God, the Absolute Self, is the subject matter of the Upanishads. Brahman is Consciousness-Existence-Bliss Absolute. Brahman is one, the source and support of all creation. The devotees of Brahman, realizing Brahman, become one with Brahman and thus transcend birth and death.

In Brahman are the appearance and the disappearance of all creations. Changing conditions of duality exist in the eternal reality of the One. Man, forgetful of his spiritual oneness with Brahman, falls into the delusion of ignorance and swings between pleasure and pain. But realizing his identity with Brahman, he regains his freedom from all limitations.

Brahman is eternal. The Self of man is eternal. In Brahman is hidden his own cosmic manifesting will, which is also eternal. This

cosmic manifesting will is the divine creative power. The whole creation is the universal form of the omnipotent Brahman, yet he is the Absolute. The man of wisdom recognizes the harmonious relationship in Brahman of the Self, the creative cosmic will, and the universal form; and, realizing

his oneness with Brahman, he regains his freedom from all limitations.

The manifested universe is ever changing. Brahman is one. He is immortality and bliss. He is the law of creation and of man. By meditation upon him and by living in the consciousness of constant union with him, man finally

realizes his oneness with Brahman and thus completely overcomes all delusion and false knowledge.

Aum Shanti Shanti Shanti

Man, forgetful of his spiritual oneness with Brahman, falls into the delusion of ignorance and swings between pleasure and pain.

Connecting with the Heart's Energy

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

I invite you to place your hands in prayer at the heart, and to actually feel your own energy as you do. Allow your awareness to focus and gather itself in the warmth between the palms of your hands. Then, see if you can feel the energetic connection between your heart, your spiritual heart, your energetic heart, and your hands. No matter where your hands are, whether they are touching your breastbone or a few inches away in front of you, see if you can feel the actual connectedness between the warmth in your own heart and the warmth in the palms of your hands. Allow the warmth in your heart and the palms of your hands to collect and grow in your awareness, and to become more coherent and steady.

Now move your prayer hands a few inches away from your body and notice that the connectedness between your heart and your hands remains. Become aware of this incredible pool of warmth and light and brightness that is in front of you always and allow yourself to feel that energy consciously. Keeping your awareness there, see if you can also start to feel the area behind your

physical heart, the area between your shoulder blades. There is a similar warmth and support in that area as there is in the front of your heart. Give yourself permission to feel the warmth of divine support, the warmth of eternal sunshine, right behind your heart, always at your back.

See if you can give yourself permission not only to feel the warmth behind your heart but to feel the strength of it, the steadiness, and the way the warmth behind your heart and in front of your heart also extends to either side of you. If you can, imagine that to the left of you and the right of you there is an equal field of this warmth and brightness.

We're connecting with this magnificent field of love and wonder and peacefulness that we carry with us always. When we connect with this, we are able to be present, and completely responsive, respectful, joyful, and supportive in the midst of our daily tasks, in the midst of our lives and our relationships, and we live in freedom. We offer every action to the highest and the best without looking for a particular outcome, trusting that all results are in

Connecting with this heart energy connects us with what Lahiri calls “the ever stillness in the heart.” That stillness is the One that is the divine grace.



divine hands and are unfolding according to the highest good.

Stay with this connectedness to your own heart warmth and heart brightness. This is a wonderful meditation and awareness to come back to daily, at the start of your day, at the end of your day, in the middle of your day. It's a wonderful meditation to come back to anytime you know you're going to have a conversation that might be challenging, anytime you know you're walking with a friend, a loved one, who is facing something difficult, anytime you yourself are walking through something difficult.

Connecting with this heart energy connects us with what Lahiri calls “the ever stillness in the heart.” That stillness is the One that is the divine grace. That is perfect peace. That is energy of wholeness. That is energy of adoration. That is energy of healing and delight and blessing. The more we connect with that energy, the more it is able to silently transmit itself through us so that we walk through this field of warmth and brightness, light and gladness. And as we do, we invite others to walk in that same awareness, that same sweetness, steadiness, gladness, and kindness.

Photo by Diana Srimupande on Unsplash

Quotes from St. John of the Cross

“In the inner stillness where meditation leads, the Spirit secretly anoints the soul and heals our deepest wounds.”

“Silence is God’s first language.”

“To love is to be transformed into what we love. To love God is therefore to be transformed into God.”

“In the dark night of the soul, bright flows the river of God.”

“However softly we speak, God is so close to us that he can hear us; nor do we need wings to go in search of him, but merely to seek solitude and contemplate him within ourselves, without being surprised to find such a good Guest there.”

“Live in the world as if only God and your soul were in it; then your heart will never be made captive by any earthly thing.”

“Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful, and loving infusion of God, which, if admitted, will set the soul on fire with the Spirit of love.”

“It is great wisdom to know how to be silent and to look at neither the remarks, nor the deeds, nor the lives of others.”

“Have a great love for those who contradict and fail to love you, for in this way love is begotten in a heart that has no love.”

“My sole occupation is love.”

Spiritual Readings

Demystifying Patañjali: The Yoga Sutras (Aphorisms)
The Wisdom of Paramhansa Yogananda
Presented by his direct disciple, Swami Kriyananda

Ananda

Swami Kriyananda (born James Donald Walters 1926-2013) was a direct disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda from 1948 until his guru’s *mahasamadhi* in 1952. Though he was dismissed from the Self Realization Fellowship in 1962, he founded a worldwide movement of spiritual intentional communities called Ananda. Kriyananda’s legacy also includes nearly 150 publications, 400 pieces of music, and 15,000 photographs.

Patañjali’s *Yoga Sutras* is among the greatest texts on the theory and practice of yoga. The first *pada* or chapter, *Samadhi* (pure consciousness), outlines the core principles of yoga, the obstacles you need to overcome, the importance of constant practice, and the need to detach from material experiences. The second chapter, *Sadhana* (practice or discipline), introduces both *Kriya Yoga* and *Ashtanga Yoga* or the Eight Limbs of Yoga with a focus on the first six—*Yamas* (ethical standards), *Niyamas* (self-discipline), *Asana* (yoga postures), *Pranayama* (breath control), *Pratyahara* (withdrawal),

and *Dharana* (concentration). The *Vibhuti* (power or liberation) chapter establishes the last two limbs of yoga: *Dhyana* (meditation) and advanced *Samadhi* (ecstasy), when Self-realization is fully achieved. The last chapter, *Kaivalya Pada*, describes the process of liberation and the reality of the transcendental ego. *Kaivalya* translates as isolation, but in this context means ultimate liberation.

This excerpt from the first chapter is a good example of how Kriyananda makes the sutras accessible for modern readers: “By cultivating attitudes of friendliness toward those who are happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and disregard for the wicked, the *vrittis* (vortices of attachment and desire) are dissolved in undisturbed calmness.” (1:33) Kriyananda notes that the desire for happiness is because all beings are projecting the consciousness of God and our souls are longing to return to Bliss. “Divine grace is like sunlight on the side of a building. We’ve no need to invite it to come in. All we need to do is open the curtains into the rooms of our own consciousness!”

***Divine grace
is like sunlight
on the side of a
building. We’ve
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it to come in.***

Do-Be-Do-Be-Do

Padma

“The way to do is to be.”

—LAO TZU

In addition to Lao Tzu’s simple instruction, Krishna has a lot to say about doing and being in the *Bhagavad Gita*. First, he tells us that it’s impossible to avoid action. Even when we’re still and seemingly motionless, we’re breathing and our bodies are continuously engaged in multiple processes just to support our embodiment. Then he says we must perform righteous and obligatory actions without attachment to the outcome. He tells us we do this by using the mind to control the senses which otherwise scatter endlessly in pursuit of the objects of the senses. Freed from the bondage of attachment, Krishna then advises us to perform all our actions as worship of the Divine. Work as worship, without attachment, is the path to tranquility, wisdom, freedom, and perfection.

After all this, Krishna sneakily slips in that, in truth, the Divine is the only doer, and that’s where

things get a bit tricky. We’re earnestly working to keep our senses under control, to engage only in righteous actions, to offer all our efforts and their fruits to the Divine with love, and to realize the Divine is the only doer. My current way of resolving this seeming contradiction is to start the day

by offering myself to the Divine, asking what it would love to share through me. I’ve also borrowed a practice from the author Byron Katie, who describes the wonder and awe of experiencing her hands as divine Kindness in action, scrambling eggs and toasting bread for breakfast and offering them to the Beloved in the form

of her partner. Playing with the Divine, inviting favorite qualities to act through me, is fun and helps remind me we are all extensions of the Divine, the only doer.

Frank Sinatra may be better known for popularizing the phrase do-be-do-be-do in the coda to the

Playing with the Divine, inviting favorite qualities to act through me, is fun and helps remind me we are all extensions of the Divine, the only doer.

Photo by Fp Ruatfela on Unsplash



song *Strangers in the Night*, but the spiritual teacher Ram Dass playfully elevated it as a way to describe the natural human tension we encounter between doing and being. Even though we know that doing and being are not mutually exclusive, it can be challenging to balance them and ultimately see the two as one. This tension re-

minds me of a holographic image that, when tilted, shifts between two images. One image is of the world in action, the other is the peaceful, still, presence of the one perfect and beautiful Doer. Toggling back and forth, there’s an instant of overlap and we realize that doing and being are actually one. Happy do-be-do-be-do to all!



Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

QUESTION:

HOW DO I
TRANSFORM
THE ENERGY OF
RESISTANCE?

ANSWER:

Donkeys have a reputation for being stubborn. If they don't want to do something, they dig in their heels and they resist. That donkey energy is inside any one of us that is resisting forward movement. It's that less than gracious human aspect of ourselves. It's that aspect that resists change, that just wants to be stubborn, that says, "I don't want to wake up! I want to put a pillow over my head! I want to push snooze seven times on the alarm!"

Donkeys dig their feet in and don't budge because they're afraid. They don't understand that whatever they're experiencing is not a danger to them. A bird taking off in flight can startle a donkey and make it dig in its heels. A plastic grocery bag flapping in the wind can terrify a donkey. The good news is that donkeys are highly intelligent and respond to training, becoming willing to march forward steadily. The key to working with a donkey is to invite its intelligence to work with you, to work for you. In an analogous way, we may transform that in ourselves which is stubborn and resistant and obstructive to change. With compassion, turn to the aspect of yourself

that doesn't want to transform and say, *Fear is probably underlying this resistance to expansion. There's room in my heart for that fear. I'm not going to fight it, I'm going to invite it into my heart and include it. And then I'm going to expand beyond it.* Then you're working with what is rather than against what is.

On a human level, underneath the fear is often sadness. Again, simply invite it into your heart, turn to it, bow to it with respect and say, *There is room for you in my heart.* You can even say to your body, *I am so sorry you have been carrying this sadness, this fear. That's why you're resisting transformation. We are not fighting one another; we're working together on this. I invite you into my heart, into the core of my being. You are safe. There is room for you here and we can work together in*

Anytime you see anyone or anything, bow to the light in them because they wouldn't be here without that light.

a grand and glorious way. Then the intelligence that is bound up in resistance is recruited to work with you. You're not splitting yourself off. You're not dissipating your energy.

To the yogis, this is an energetic, spiritual principle. If we focus and direct energy as blessing, that energy reveals truth. If we focus on the worst, we enhance illusion

and delusion. Clear your vision. Swami Shankarananda phrased it as, don't see with the eyes in the front of your face, but see with the heart. The eyes of the heart are compassionate, understanding, and forgiving. We are letting our energy be scattered when we give in to judgment and resentment. Focus on the best in others with the eyes of the heart, which has room for all.

Krishna, a great yogi, wisely said, "Anytime you see a donkey, inwardly bow to the donkey." By extension, anytime you see anyone or anything, bow to the light in them because they wouldn't be here without that light. Allow yourself to touch with reverence and respect the light that brings them here. You then might be able to do the same for others who seem to be stubborn, whether your spouse, your employee, your boss, your parent, your friend, your sibling, your neighbor, or a random person in traffic. It's always an invitation. Anytime we seem to be aware of the energy of stubbornness, turn within. We're not invited to train anyone else's donkey; we're invited to train our own. If you were training a physical donkey, it would take time, practice, and steadiness. It would take being willing to repeat the lessons. It would take willingness to put the

practice and the teaching and the training to the test. Then perhaps the next time the bird takes off, the donkey may not be startled. Work with transforming your energy of resistance continually,



persistently, kindly, with clarity, reverence, and respect.

Keep coming back to the willingness to show up and be present with good humor. Be willing to be responsive and respectful to anything and everything you encounter. You are precious and dear and when you connect with this willingness in yourself, nothing that comes to you in the world can shake you from the ability to radiate compassion and to choose kindness, caring, blessing, and forgiveness for all. Bring zest into your life. Bring bright, fresh, crisp energy into your life. This willingness opens doorways and helps you have more fun in this life than you have ever imagined. Move forward with zest!

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Now Is The Time

Hafiz

Translation by Daniel Ladinsky

Now is the time to know
that all you do is sacred.

Now, why not consider
A lasting truce with yourself and God.

Now is the time to understand
That all your ideas of right and wrong
Were just a child's training wheels
To be laid aside
when you can finally live
with veracity
and love.

Hafiz is a divine envoy
Whom the Beloved
Has written a holy message upon.

My dear, please tell me, why do you still
throw sticks at your heart
and God?

What is it in that sweet voice inside
that incites you to fear?

Now is the time for the world to know
that every thought and action is sacred.

This is the time
For you to deeply compute the impossibility
that there is anything
but Grace.

Now is the season to know
that everything you do is sacred.

Light of Vedanta

Sri Swami Premananda Giri

Let no man dictate thy virtue. Thou art already virtuous. Preposterous is the attempt of another to take thee to God. Thou art God. Know that thou art God. Nothing can defile the Self of man. No sin can ever touch the purity of Soul. That which is perfect can never become imperfect. Our imperfections begin and end with the body. Our sorrows and sufferings end with our finite forms. We are perfect. That which is perfect can never become imperfect. Our weakness is that we dare not touch our perfection, because we instinctively realize that one touch of our Soul's perfection will

Our sorrows and sufferings end with our finite forms. We are perfect. That which is perfect can never become imperfect.

immediately destroy all the dross of imperfection. We love to wallow in the quagmire of our finite nature. What a tragedy! Man, the omniscient Spirit, is ignorant of his own Self. We have become cowards in our imperfection. Our minds have been poisoned by the continuous repetition of the thought that we are sinful. We are not sinful. We are virtuous. We may be poisoned but we are not dead. We shall revive our spiritual glory by continuous meditation on, and affirmation of, the truth that "I am God. I am Spirit. I am perfect. I am holy. I am divine. I am the Self."

Our Line of Teachers

Swami Nityananda

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

Swami Shankarananda

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

Swami Premananda

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

Swami Yogananda 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.



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