



Awake Yoga
Meditation

Darshan

Winter Solstice
2021



Let There Be Light

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

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

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

Schedules and Information

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

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

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

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

Additional Resources

Join our free eYogi Community at AwakeYogaMeditation.org/eYogi

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



And God said, "Let there be Light," and there was Light. Swami Shankarananda loved to say, "Let there be Love," and there was Love. See if you can feel underneath all the striving, struggling, and strain, the simple, pure, whole light of Awareness that each of us carries. This light is liquid laughter. It pours itself forth effortlessly into the buildings that we build, the stories that we tell, the dreams that we dream. Each of us is able to greet that pure light, that simple, sweet, beautiful, graceful light that illumines every soul on the planet. When we are able to love and accept ourselves, holding ourselves in pure Love, there is nothing in the realm of time and space that can shake us. When we abide in love, nothing can make us waver from our constant contact with light and nothing can make us question or doubt our ability to choose love always.

Humanly, if we ever do question, doubt, or waver, that is a moment to call on the Divine. We saw Jesus show the way when he said, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." Jesus was diagnosing what the yogis say is a basic human affliction: ignorance. Sometimes, humanly, we don't recognize reality. We don't recognize what is true, creating pain for ourselves and others. The nature of reality is love. We forget that we are the nature of acceptance, unity, kindness, and harmony. We are the nature of generosity, justice, respect, and dignity. When we know what we are eternally, we are able to radiate light into the world in a way that creates shining realities based on love, respect, and recognition of goodness and gladness within every human sister and brother.

Jesus was asking the Divine Forgiver of All to shine through him, to heal any aspect of his human heart that was unwilling or unable to forgive those who were tormenting and inflicting pain and death on him. He knew the Divine could do it through him if his human self ever found it not possible. That is one way forward for each of us.

When we step forth in service, through us the Divine shares pure, spiritual light in the realm of time and space. Be willing to cultivate that light within yourself. One of the delightful joys of living a rich and wonderful inner life is asking, "Divine Grace, how would you love to share light through me? How can you effortlessly transform me from within so that, spontaneously, peace, helpfulness, kindness, caring, and generosity are present in the way I think, in the words I say, in the actions I take?"

This light cannot be held in our hands, but is present in everything we touch. This light cannot be seen with human eyes, but is the very substance of everything our eyes have ever looked upon. When we transform our awareness in this way, it is not that a new world comes into view. It is

that this world, right here and right now, becomes visible as having been divine all along. We begin to see the vastness, clarity, and generosity of the sky. We begin to admire the way trees spire between earth and heavens, showing us how we are all invited to connect with stability and rootedness. We're inviting ourselves to open to the Infinite always so that we're constantly seeing and thinking in fresh ways. We allow infinite light to flow into our human bodies and minds, sharing spontaneously through us. Then everywhere we step, according to the yogic texts, flowers bloom, even in winter. All pains are soothed. All wounds are bound up. All vision is cleared. Let us love ourselves forward compassionately. God said, "Let there be light," and thank God there was light!

Knowing the Truth

(An excerpt from *Divine Protection: The Yoga of Psalm 91*)

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

Knowing the truth is not a task; it's a way of living, of perceiving, of looking at everything. The criteria for knowing the truth is that you don't judge what you experience, and you don't judge what you don't experience, either. You don't judge what you observe. You come to it with an open heart. You come with one desire, *Let me understand what the purpose is of my experience*. When we call an experience good or bad, we're not interested in knowing the truth. We're so opinionated that we've already decided it's something other than the truth.

Let go of all judgments from every observation you have, and you're left with experience and the golden opportunity to gain truth and insight from the experience. What's the truth about this experience? We always have to look at the greater picture. That's what truth is about. Whatever anybody says to you, ask, "What is the other side?" If someone gives negative news, days of doom and gloom ahead, say, "Well, what about the days of sunshine and flowers?" If someone says, "Look at all the people who are suffering in this world," why would you want to do that?

Which feels better: looking at all the people who are miserable, or looking at those who are joyful, self-giving, and actively involved in joyful, loving service to others? That which makes you feel better lets you know what your truth is. Your truth is always about your well-being. Please hear it. The truth is always about your well-being. The truth is never about lack. The truth is about infinite opportunity, creativity, possibilities, lovingness—an infinity of gratitude, sharing, growth, unfoldment, blissfulness. Realize that truth. Meditate on that which you want to realize. It is the law that it will be yours. It has to be, because you can never be separated from That Which Is. That Which Is is your divine inheritance and has nothing to do with making yourself ready or worthy for it, because every thought you have about worthiness or unworthiness is based on human judgment. It's not based on God's love or on the truth. Truth has no favorites. Love has no favorites. Love is universal and impersonal. For anything to be true it must be universal, impersonal, and possible for everyone to experience, to realize.

That's the truth. When you realize the truth, it brings a tremendous rush of freedom and well-being, expansiveness, and relief from fear, tension, bitterness, resentment, judgment, blame, and sense of lack and meanness of heart. Truth is one.

Inner Peace

Sri Swami Premananda Giri

Peace is the supreme desire of the human heart. All our aspirations and efforts seek their completion in peace. In peace we gain the inner assurance that we have reached the ultimate success of our endeavors and the fulfillment of our hopes. In subjective quest or in objective pursuit peace is the substantiation of absolute realization and the evidence of final achievement.

Peace is not a psychological abstraction. It is a spiritual reality. It is a reality which is more tangible than the objects of sense perception. It is discerned by the mind, felt in the heart, and realized in the soul. It is creative in its potency and dynamic in its effect. It is not conditioned by objectivity. Peace is inexhaustible in its source and illimitable in its immanence.

Peace is spiritual because it has its origins in the soul. It is a constituent quality of the soul. It is a divine attribute enshrined within the soul of every individual. Peace emerges from within the soul. Like the cool water of the mountain, peace comes forth from the hidden depths of the soul and fills the entire being with a serene contentment of all pervasive joy.

Peace is a spiritual force. It is uplifting and transforming. It is a great healing power. The effect of peace upon our body, mind, and heart is profound and enduring. Our nervous system is the intricate channel through which we give objective expression to our thought, volition, and feeling. In order that we may be able to think with clear vision and wise comprehension, act progressively with constructive results, and bring forth the tender and beneficent qualities of our emotion, our nervous system must function in serenity, harmony, and vitality.

Our nervous system also furnishes us with the means whereby we may receive subjective enlightenment. The region between the coccygeal center at the base of the spine and the pineal gland in the brain is the mystic path which leads to the attainment of the supreme spiritual realization. The scientific technique of inner revelation is known to the initiate. Truly our body is the temple of the mind, the shrine of the heart, and the sanctuary of the soul.

A body that is nourished by inner peace is not afflicted by the negative consequences of the blighting experience of life. It retains its equipoise, vigor, and steadiness amidst all adversities.

The Greatest of These

Srimati Shanti Mataji

We call an avatar an incarnation of love, because in such a one is divine love manifested to its fullest perfection on earth. But we also are manifestations of love, although we may not have unfolded our love-nature to its fullest yet. Our nature has to be love, else how could we love anything or anyone in this world? It is a universal law that like produces like. A radish seed produces a radish, not a pumpkin. Fire could not give off warmth if its very nature were not heat. Therefore, we can only love if the nature of our being is love itself. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?

If we work with this one statement of truth, "I am love," we will identify with love in our thoughts and actions. Christ directed us to express our supreme love-nature when he said, "Love God with all thy heart, mind, and soul." This is not only the first and greatest commandment; it is really the first, last, and everything in-between, because when we love God with our total being, all other spiritual requirements are automatically fulfilled. And now abideth all the expressions of God in this universe of time, space, and love—but the greatest of these is love.

Finding the Missing Puzzle Piece

Karuna

Surely I am not the only person whose journey towards wholeness has been plagued by an insistent voice of self-criticism.

From the earliest age I can remember, I harbored the feeling that something was wrong with me, that there was some defect that needed fixing. It seemed like there was a missing piece of the puzzle that formed who I was. I spent years, decades really, trying to find that missing piece—looking between the couch cushions and under the rug, all to no avail. Although I doubt anyone else noticed the missing piece, now I recognize I was constantly in search of something more. I just didn't know its shape or where to find it. Over the years I experimented with different ways of being in the world. It was like trying on clothes at the mall all day, but never finding the outfit that fit just right.

Even as a “successful” student, professional, mother, or in any aspect of my life, the nagging voice of self-criticism never went away. It would tell me I wasn't good enough, that I should do better, that I was fundamentally flawed. Intellectually, I knew the answers were within, but simply knowing that wasn't a sufficient clue to find what was necessary to complete the puzzle.

I first believed that wholeness was possible when I came to what is now Awake Yoga Meditation and met Swami Shankarananda. In his radiant presence, the love of his being filled my heart to overflowing. We are so fortunate when we find a teacher who can help us reconnect with who we are—an individual expression of the One. This is the same great gift Swami Nityananda offers us that other illumined teachers have offered their students. By their own Self-realization, they see us as the divine beings that we are, and reflect the perfection that we are back to us so we can begin to see ourselves through the eyes of unconditional love. I came to understand I would only find what I was seeking by softening my heart enough to love myself.

If we perceive the light as existing outside ourselves, we will cast a shadow wherever we go and walk in our own darkness. But if we can recognize that the light we are seeking is already present within us, there is no shadow. We can realize that the light without is inseparable from the light within. Our lives transform when we begin to accept this as the truth. If we can accept we are the light, we can open our hearts to ourselves and to the light within everyone else. With meditation and practice, we can heal those wounded parts of ourselves so that we can extend love to all we encounter. We do this not just for ourselves, but to uplift our world through kindness and love.

Revelations of a Cosmic Traveler

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

Let our constant focus be, “I love, I trust, I align with the Divine.” As we embrace All That Is, we stabilize and elevate our energy. We give ourselves a strong foundation for pure Light to fill us. Divine Grace comes to each person and says, “Let me share a secret with you: all the love in the world is asking to be born through you.” This truth shares itself during Advent, and always. We open to transformation, so that we may shine with reverence, clarity, helpfulness, and hopefulness.

We invite ourselves to harmonize from deep within, to claim all the aspects of ourselves, recognizing that all is already woven into Oneness. When we let go of fighting and struggling against ourselves and against what is, we are able to dance with the Divine every step of every way. We stand in humility, in purity of heart, inviting the shining Grace that visited Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds, to share itself with us. We open to the brightness of that star that shines right now. And we ask to be clear, calm, and of service.

We fill ourselves with joy, and shadows vanish. We open to God, and darkness melts away. We let go of pettiness, and rise into our simplicity, our grandeur, which is one with the whole planet, with every human sister and brother, the trees, skies, rivers, mountains, plains, and valleys. There is nothing we need fear. We stand in the Light, bowing our heads before the magnificent vastness of Grace itself. Again and again, we give thanks, we rejoice, we open to the Divine living through us, with us, as us, right in the midst of our daily lives. That, too, is Grace! Nothing we have ever seen, known, or been, is anything other than Grace!

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Murali

“All you need is to get rid of the tendency to define yourself. All definitions apply to your body only and its expressions. Once this obsession with the body goes, you will revert to your natural state, spontaneously and effortlessly.”

—Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

I recently encountered the above quote reminding me of how the Divine can and will express through anyone willing to listen and cooperate with total trust and sincerity. Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj lived in India from 1897 to 1981. He had little formal education and operated a little cigarette store most of his life. He had just an average interest in spirituality until he met his guru in 1933.

Nisargadatta was instructed to explore his immediate experience of being (his natural state of being) rather than trying to achieve or gain any state or experience. Regardless of his mental or feeling state, he was asked to give his total attention to the pure effortless awareness or consciousness that is present and functioning in each moment. He was taught to rest in the sense or feeling of “I am” before the mind says I am a man, woman, good, bad, smart, not so smart. He referred to this as the “I amness” that is prior to his mind’s opinions about himself or his experiences.

Following this simple instruction, Nisargadatta disregarded his own thoughts about truth, spiritual progress and obstacles. He lost his fascination with spiritual experiences that appeared and disappeared. He was only interested in what is present before, during, and after all thinking and all experience.

Nisargadatta did not follow any other technique, teaching, or scripture except this one instruction. His guru told him there was nothing blocking him from realizing his true nature except the beliefs he held as important. Commitment and earnestness were all that he felt were needed—commitment to disregard our own thinking by recognizing that most thoughts are insignificant, conditioned beliefs and ideas; earnestness being the genuine spiritual impulse to discover what is true and real regardless of whether it pays off with the spiritual treats the mind hopes for.

Nisargadatta said, “Truth is not a reward for good behavior, nor a prize for passing some tests. It cannot be brought about. It is the primary, the unborn, the ancient source of all that is. You are eligible because you are. You need not merit truth. It is your own. Stand still, be quiet.”

Light of the Upanishads

Svetasvatara Upanishad
(translated by Swami Premananda)

O thou indwelling Self, thou giver of life to this body, within thy almighty power rests the good of thy creation. Guide us by thy wisdom. May we always remember thy presence within and around us. May thy protection and peace be upon all humanity and upon thy entire creation.

Transcending all creations, beyond the limitations of duality, is Brahman, the absolute Self. Yet he resides in the body of every being; he is hidden in all forms. He is the only all-pervading reality in the entire manifested universe. He is the one God. Attaining their identity with him, the devotees of subjective meditation regain the realization of immortality.

I have realized my identity with Brahman, the supreme self-revealing reality of absolute perfection. Only by realizing his identity with Brahman, man transcends death. There is no path other than this to attain immortality and bliss.

There is none else that can transcend his perfection, nor is there anything that can dissociate itself from his impermeating divinity. Nothing exists beyond his immensity, nor is there anything so infinitesimal that it can be lost from his universality. The one God, the divine source of consciousness and life, out of his very essence consciously manifests the objective universe, like a tree nourished from above. He pervades and encompasses all that has come into being.

Aum Shanti Shanti Shanti

Teachings of the Gurus

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

“We are all living through wonderful times of transformation right now. Fresh energy, light, and divine love are embracing us, revealing any old remaining patterns within ourselves we are invited to harmonize. These old energy patterns are anything that makes you feel unsettled. They’re anywhere within yourself where you feel instability, anxiety, fear, old achiness, or old sadness. They’re anywhere within yourself where you feel not the light of Soul, not the light of wisdom, not the joy of love in embodiment.

Call into your awareness briefly one of those energy patterns which you have encountered within yourself over the last week, and inwardly connect with the truth: *I am stability. I am security. I am serenity. I am courage. I am strength. I am divine trust.* Having first connected with the energy of stability, serenity, courage, strength, and divine trust within yourself, offer the following in relation to whatever has been destabilizing you: *I fill myself with the energy of divine love, unconditional devotion. I send the energy of unconditional love to that energy pattern, to that person, to that situation. I send them blessings. Lovingly, I offer them to the Divine and I let go. I let go of looking for any particular outcome. I trust that in the immortal words of Ecclesiastes, ‘God makes everything beautiful in its time.’* Pause and just notice how that feels, how freeing and healing that is. Please come back to this particular practice as often as you like.”

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

“If you want to help the world, we need to get in touch with the heart, and then let the heart speak. If our desire is peace, the means must be peaceful, and to accomplish that peace, each of us must dwell in the heart. You know when you’re in the heart because you’ve discovered the center of the universe. All creation takes place in the center of the universe, and all manifestations flow forth from that center, first as ideas, as desires seeking self-expression, and then they are energized into manifestation. So each of us can make that much of a difference. The Master of Galilee taught, ‘Let your light shine.’ That’s how important your light is to the world—your light of love, of wisdom, of peace, of justice, of mercy, of compassion, of forgiveness, of understanding, of patience—let it shine! And your light will benefit the whole world.”

Sri Swami Premananda Giri

“We must help ourselves, instead of seeking help from others. We possess all the strength that we require in life. We have within us the fountainhead of infinite peace. We have only to let it flow by quietness of body and calmness of mind. If you have learned, through practice, to command the mind to go within yourself, you will acquire self-control and the power that comes from Self-realization. Then you will be able to find peace even in the midst of the most unpleasant circumstances. Though it is difficult to realize the Self, by determined practice it can be accomplished. We must not be discouraged if we have failed once. We must try again and again, until the goal is reached. The Self is never realized by the weak, but by the strong. We must be strong, remembering the all-conquering power of the Soul within, as we walk fearlessly on the path to Self-realization, knowing that it will finally be attained.”

Shyamacharan Lahiri

“We cannot realize the absolute and total perfection of God in and through the objective world or the phenomenal universe. The fullness of God’s perfection is realized only within the kingdom of our subjective consciousness. Samadhi is God-realization; it is another term for the realization of soul’s absolute oneness with God. Samadhi is becoming God. In more precise terms, it is the realization of our own absolute Godliness. There is no other state of perfection beyond the perfection of God. There neither is, nor can there ever be, anything beyond God. God is the ultimate Truth, the transcendent Reality, the absolute Perfection.”

Babaji

“Let the world scorn and scoff at you. Let showers of insults be poured on you. Let people call you a scoundrel and rogue. Fear not! Thou art none but Brahman Supreme. Learn to discriminate. Learn to give what you have. Learn to look within. Subdue your little self. Keep the heart pure. Build the bridge of love, and enter the Kingdom of Peace.”

Joy of the Infinite

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

The perception of separateness is an illusion. We're inviting ourselves to heal the illusion and remember that our humanness is birthed out of the spirit of God. It is the energy of affection, connection, strength, courage, and stability.



You are being invited to learn to fly in new ways, remembering that the spirit of God is flying through you, lifting you up, and carrying you.



With every word you speak, the power of divine creative energy becomes visible. The words you speak carry tremendous creative energy. Become aware of the way you speak—not only the words but the energy and the intention behind the words you speak, asking yourself, *Am I contributing in my thoughts and speech to a reality that I would love to give the ones I love? If not, how may I transform?*



Give yourself permission to connect with the energy of divine creativity that is the life of your life. It beats in your heart. It breathes through you. It courses through your veins. It is one with the energy that wonders, dreams, and imagines.

Anywhere you have been focused on fear, cast away fear and let your heart rejoice; cast away illusion, limitation, separateness, and overwhelm. As soon as fear is gone, what remains is joy, love, and pure life energy. Let yourself be the energy of invigoration, courage, strength, and love.



The yogis teach us that the breath carries pure life energy—not just oxygen but pure life energy that connects with the spirit of God. With calm awareness, loving clarity, and spiritual honesty ask yourself, *Is there anywhere I have been holding onto fear, limitation, or a feeling of overwhelm?*



Anywhere you become aware that you've been carrying fear in your body, invite the breath as liquid light to that place. Breathe into your heart and extend the breath of liquid light to your nervous system, brain, digestive system, spine, core, eyes, ears, nose, mouth and voice, arms and hands, legs and feet. Every time you return to this meditation, you activate this energy of soothing, healing transformation at deeper levels.

Swami Shankarananda's Pearls

Sri Swami Shankarananda Giri

How do you bring spirituality into all your relationships? If you have a healthy self-image about relationship, you will have healthy relationships. Your self-concept determines what your relationship is to everyone in this world.



When two unite, a power is released for the good of both. When two hearts unite, we have the power to overcome, surmount, and transcend all the obstacles that appear to us like mountains. When difficulties come to you, it becomes a tremendous source of strength to have a companion, a partner, a spouse, a friend to share with you his or her strength, understanding, wisdom, and love.



The spiritual dimension of love in marriage is that it is a way to help each other walk the path together and to grow on the path of ever greater light, understanding, and playfulness.

The spiritual dimension of relationships is realizing that we're in this together to help each other fulfill our divine destiny, and whatever differences we have are contributing to the enrichment of all that we have. There has to be a willingness to respect the other's viewpoint, even if you don't share the same viewpoint.



I tell you, my friends, when you look for the worst in another, you're going to find it. When we recognize all life is sacred, then we recognize the sacredness of each being. The sacredness will then naturally express itself in the relationship.



The spiritual understanding about relationships is that the partner is not dear for the sake of the partner, but for the sake of the divinity that dwells in him or her. All things are dear to us spiritually when we recognize that they are dear for the sake of the Beloved who dwells within. Recognizing the Beloved in everyone and everything is how you renounce your conditional love and replace it with unconditional love.

Garland of Truths

“A person experiences life as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. Our task must be to free ourselves from this self-imposed prison, and through compassion, to find the reality of Oneness.”

—Albert Einstein



“Our perceiving self is nowhere to be found in the world-picture, because it itself is the world-picture.”

—Erwin Schrodinger



“All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything.”

—Swami Vivekananda

“The heart of the matter is always our oneness with divine spirit, our union with all life.”

—Thich Nhat Hanh



“Oneness is the only relationship that can forever last, because all human beings are either conscious or unconscious sharers of one divine and supreme Reality.”

—Sri Chinmoy



“Love is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality.”

—Eckhart Tolle



“The consciousness in you and the consciousness in me, apparently two, really one, seek unity and that is love.”

—Nisargadatta Maharaj

Already Loved, Already Perfect

Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

The Divine is inviting each of us to know how much we are loved. We are loved before we come into this birth, and we are loved every moment of this birth, and we are loved beyond this birth. Don't be in any hurry to leave this lifetime.

Know that you are loved, cherished, blessed. You are so precious that the universe is not complete without your presence. You are unique. There is a divine energy, a divine song, a divine harmony, a vibration, a frequency, a color, a light, a shining, a shimmering that is particular to you, that is as unique as a fingerprint.

Give yourself permission to be what the Divine invites you to be, just as you are right now in this body, in this heart, in this mind, in this life, exactly as it is. You are already loved. You are already perfect. You are already whole and complete. All of it is worthwhile. All of it is beautiful. All of it is meaningful. All of it is already redeemed. All of it is already healed. All of it is already whole. All of it is already absolutely blessed and loved.

If you can, turn to yourself right now and allow yourself to see your true face. Allow yourself to see how beautiful you are, how amazing you are, how precious you are. Allow yourself to see how it is so courageous, so incredibly brave to be here in this human embodiment and to experience the sweetness of life even as human tears sometimes stream down the human face. Allow yourself to feel everything it is possible to feel. Allow your heart to break open with love, knowing that if you love in the realm of time and space, your heart will break. Love anyway. If you choose what is right in the realm of time and space, sometimes you will get the results you want, sometimes you will not. Do what is right anyway. If you choose to be kind in the realm of time and space, sometimes you will meet with the energy of kindness, sometimes you will not. Be kind anyway.

Each time you choose to be the light of wisdom and the joy of love and gratitude, you make it possible for others to do the same. It can't be imposed on another. It can't be required of another. But know that each time you choose to be brave, each time you choose to be bright, each time you choose to be kind, each time you choose to be understanding, you increase hope. You increase the total sum of understanding and kindness and courage and bravery and righteousness and fineness and magnificence that is present and available in the entire universe. Every contribution you make matters, not just to yourself, and not just to the hundreds of people you affect on a daily basis in your life. Even if you are meditating by yourself in your little apartment, it affects everyone. It affects the whole. It affects all.

Quotes from Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

“Love is not selective, desire is selective. In love there are no strangers. When the center of selfishness is no longer, all desires for pleasure and fear of pain cease; one is no longer interested in being happy. Beyond happiness there is pure intensity, inexhaustible energy, the ecstasy of giving from a perennial source.”

“You may die a hundred deaths without a break in the mental turmoil. Or, you may keep your body and die only in the mind. The death of the mind is the birth of wisdom.”

“Truth is not a reward for good behavior, nor a prize for passing some tests. It cannot be brought about. It is the primary, the unborn, the ancient source of all that is. You are eligible because you are. You need not merit truth. It is your own. Stand still, be quiet.”

“Have your being outside this body of birth and death and all your problems will be solved. They exist because you believe yourself born to die. Undeceive yourself and be free. You are not a person.”

“When you know beyond all doubting that the same life flows through all that is and you are that life, you will love all naturally and spontaneously. When you realize the depth and fullness of your love of yourself, you know that every living being and the entire universe are included in your affection.”

“I cannot but see you as myself. It is in the very nature of love to see no difference.”

“There is nothing to practice. To know yourself, be yourself. To be yourself, stop imagining yourself to be this or that. Just be. Let your true nature emerge. Don't disturb your mind with seeking.”

“The unchangeable can only be realized in silence. Once realized, it will deeply affect the changeable, itself remaining unaffected.”

“When you demand nothing of the world, nor of God, when you want nothing, seek nothing, expect nothing, then the Supreme State will come to you uninvited and unexpected.”

Whatever We Love and Long To Be and Do

Padma

The Bible tells us that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was that Word. It also says God's Word goes out and does not return void, but accomplishes whatever God intends. We may not feel or realize our oneness with God or feel ourselves to be commanding the sun, moon, stars, and oceans, but we are creators nonetheless. The Mundaka Upanishad tells us that we are “sparks from the blazing fire bearing the quality of the flame,” so I think it's okay if we find our desires and intentions are sometimes, or even always, less lofty than those of the entire blazing fire of pure God-consciousness.

We know that the vibration of our thoughts, words, and actions radiate from us throughout the universe, affecting others and returning to us multiplied in the form of our experiences. Our every breath carries these “Words” of God that go out and don't return void. It's no wonder that so many meditation techniques focus on the breath. With our Aums, we clear away obstructions and restore awareness of our wholeness. We inhale, coming into contact with the Divine within, and exhale the sweetness of that connection as nectar for those open to receive it. We can use our breath to share whatever divine qualities may be of greatest service at any given moment, including for ourselves. Our breath becomes the conduit for all the heart's healing treasures. For years, our healing meditations have included raising the pink ray of love from our hearts and sending it out through the universe to bless and uplift all. A dear friend, a devout Catholic, walked to mass every day, uplifting the atmosphere along the way by silently repeating her mantra, “Purify, illumine, heal, and bless, redeem and sanctify.”

But our breath is not the only way we share our divine gifts. What we focus on grows in our experience and is reflected in our world. We are all here to be uplifters and each heart carries its own desires longing for expression. Whatever we love and long to be and do can be the vehicle for sharing the love and joy and beauty, the strength, courage, wisdom, kindness, and resilience of our true nature. Buddha said, “Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.” We live in the world; let's love our lives, our earth, our fellow beings, the universal presence of the Divine in all, and, slightly paraphrasing Walt Whitman, invite the Divine to joyfully sing through us the strongest and sweetest songs yet to be sung.



Sri Swami Nityananda Giri

QUESTION:

*WHAT IS THE TRUTH
ABOUT VIOLENCE?*

ANSWER:

A man from Baltimore named Dante Barksdale grew up learning the codes of violence and then realized, at age twenty, that there was another way. Dante realized it was possible to choose peace instead of violence. He turned his life around and dedicated the last ten years of his life to serving as a “violence interrupter.” As someone who walked the walk of peace, Dante was an amazing, imposing, physical presence with such incredible strength, energetic commitment, aliveness, and electricity that he filled up an entire room with his energy. He deliberately walked into the most dangerous, violent, usually avoided areas of Baltimore City. He said, “The most gangster thing is forgiveness.” He lived this example of creating resolution and pathways forward rather than resorting to violence. He made it possible for thousands of lives to be saved because he walked this walk of peace. Another thing Dante said was, “When you see a young man engaged in violence—that’s his trauma. See who he is outside that moment.” Because Dante was able to see the wholeness of a young person, he helped people across the city connect with that wholeness and choose peace and forgiveness.

This is an invitation for all of us. When we see any person engaged in violence, when we see someone we love receiving a diagnosis we would not have chosen for them, when we see anyone, ourselves included, walking through a human challenge, with all my heart, I implore you, please see who they are outside that moment. See who you are outside of that moment. When you do that, you connect with wholeness. You connect with Krishna’s teaching, “Dedicate every action to the highest and the best, not looking for any particular thought or outcome.” Then you live in liberation. This is an urgent invitation: see people as they truly are. If we see people causing pain, violence, trauma, or crisis, we can realize they may also be experiencing pain, violence, trauma, or crisis. See who they are outside that moment.

This is the same realization that Jesus lived when he asked the man who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years, “Do you want to be

healed?” Jesus said, “Get up. Pick up your mat and walk.” Jesus sees the man outside his thirty-eight-year moment of paralysis. Jesus saw the man as not confined to his condition. It is important to also remember that even if you are a healthy human who has been fit for thirty-eight years, who has enjoyed a race car of a body, you are still not defined by that thirty-eight-year-long moment. Dante and Jesus walked around and identified with the wholeness in all, which is always present. No matter how fortunate or unfortunate our lives seem to have been, we are never defined by a difficult moment. No human is defined by what they are experiencing in any human moment, whatever that human experience might be. Remember that, and remember the eternal stillness of the heart, which connects us to the wholeness that is present even in the midst of violence, trauma, and challenge.

The transformation does not happen overnight for most humans. Dante had grown up learning the codes of violence. When he started the walk of peace and experienced violence, he sometimes responded with fists. Fists were what he had always understood; it was part of the language he had learned growing up. So it was a transformation that took place over time, becoming part of the solution rather than the problem. We are invited to be patient and peaceful as we bring this realization to life in our daily lives. Remind yourself of the coherence and strength of your own heart energy. This allows us to navigate with steadiness and kindness the human shocks, the calamities, the crises, the sadness, the challenges, the not-knowing that comes in any human life. Seek nothing else.

The Mirror of Eternity

Saint Clare of Assisi (1194-1253)

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity,
place your soul in the brightness of His glory,
place your heart in the image of the divine essence
and transform yourself by contemplation utterly
into the image of His divinity,

that you too may feel what His friends feel as
they taste the hidden sweetness that God himself
has set aside from the beginning for those who love Him.

Casting aside all things in this false and troubled
world that ensnare those who love them blindly,
give all your love to Him who gave Himself in all for you to love:
Whose beauty the sun and moon admire, and
whose gifts are abundant and precious and grand without end.

Light of Vedanta

Sri Anandamayi Ma

Devotee: We listen to so much that is beautiful...

Mataji: Beautiful? As long as you make a distinction between beautiful and ugly you have not listened.

Devotee: And some we understand...

Mataji: “We understand”—that is useless, for he who understands and what is understood have remained separate.

Devotee: And some we forget...

Mataji: Forget? Forget the forgetting, death must die.

Devotee: And some we remember...

Mataji: Remember? That means you keep it in your mind. Throw it away; lay it at His feet. What I say is: Keep satsang. Satsang in Reality means the realization of WHAT IS! Remain in the shade of “trees”—trees meaning Mahatmas, seekers after Truth, those who do not call anyone nor send anyone away. Listen to them! Who can tell when you will learn how to “listen” and then you will hear the Sabda Brahman [Aum], so that there will be no more listener and no listening. A similar thing holds good for what is called “darshan.” People come, have darshan and go away again. But real darshan means that one can never be apart from the vision anymore.

Our Line of Teachers

Swami Nityananda

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

Swami Shankarananda

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

Swami Premananda

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

Swami Yogananda Paramahansa

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

Swami Sri Yukteswar

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

Shyamacharan Lahiri

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

Aum Babaji

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



Awake Yoga
Meditation

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