

Self-Realization Fellowship

ALL-DAY CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

I am giving this special blessing to you all, that if you will meditate deeply during the Christmas period, you will feel the presence of Christ.

Paramahansa Yogananda

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEVOTEES

Many years ago Paramahansa Yogananda established the custom of setting aside one day of the Christmas season for an all-day meditation, so that devotees might spend an entire day united in spiritual effort and in deepening communion with God and Christ.

Many Self-Realization Fellowship devotees have come to regard the All-Day Christmas Meditation as the most important event of the year. They find that the blessings from even one day fully dedicated to God are permanent in their effect, especially when that day has been preceded by faithful daily meditation throughout the Christmas season.

Beginners sometimes feel that a meditation of several hours would be impossible for them. But often new members attending a Self-Realization Fellowship all-day meditation later testify that the hours passed like minutes. The power of the group's sincerity and devotional effort, and the blessings of God, create an inner calm that helps each one to overcome restlessness and to feel the presence of God and Christ. In fact, many devotees who have participated in one of these meditations later realize that a great spiritual change has taken place in their lives as a result of that one day of continuous divine communion. So we hope you will plan to attend the Christmas meditation held by your Self-Realization Fellowship Temple, Center, or Meditation Group if you possibly can. Join us in the custom of setting aside this one day each year solely to commune with God.

Most all-day meditations last approximately six to eight hours. There is an intermission after the first four hours, at which time anyone who wishes to leave may do so. However, as a general rule *no one should come in for the second half who has not already attended the first period of meditation*, in order not to disturb the peace of those who have already passed several hours in deep meditation. If you cannot be present for the whole day, please plan to attend the first period of meditation only.

Devotees who are only free during the second half of the day should try to meditate *at home* and tune in mentally with the group. (Please check with your local temple, center, or group concerning any exceptions to this guideline.) Your earnest efforts will not fail to attract the blessings and divine aid of God, Christ, and Gurus.

The following information will be helpful to devotees planning to attend the meditation.

Schedule:

- The meditation will be six to eight hours long; the intermission usually comes about halfway through the meditation.
- Please be sure to come early, and be prepared to stay at least until the intermission. No one will be permitted to enter the chapel once the meditation has begun.

How to prepare:

- Eat lightly (or not at all, if you prefer) before coming to the meditation. Do not bring food of any kind to the meditation (except the fruit offering—see “What to bring” below).
- Keep silence before the meditation.
- Practice the Energization Exercises before the meditation.
- It is good to arrive a little early if you can, so that you will have time to become comfortably settled and calm before the meditation begins.
- Come in a devotional mood. Make a special effort to put aside all thoughts of the outside world for this one day, and strive to keep your whole heart and mind occupied with God alone.
- If you have a cough or a cold, you should meditate *at home*, rather than attend the all-day service. Paramahansa Yogananda insisted on scrupulous observance of this practice when he conducted the Christmas meditation. In fairness to others, you would not want to disturb them by coughing, sneezing, etc.

What to bring:

- *Bring fruit and pranami (donation) as a devotional offering.*
- Dress comfortably, so you will be able to forget about the body. You may wish to bring a shawl, or a small cushion to sit on.
- You may bring a meditation armrest, if you wish to practice the *Aum* Meditation Technique during the meditation.

May this day be a very special one for you, bringing you a new awareness of the presence of Christ.

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