

Dear Temple Members and Friends,

We would like to offer some suggestions for preparing for the All-Day Christmas Meditation, which is for so many of us, the spiritual highlight of our year.

1. Try to arrange your schedule so you can retire early the evening before the Christmas Meditation. It will be easier to concentrate and go deep into the Meditation if we are sufficiently rested beforehand.
2. Eat moderately the day before the meditation and avoid sweets and too many starches. By being a little extra careful with our diet the day before, we will keep impurities in the blood to a minimum, which will be more conducive to a calm breath and heartbeat. But avoid fasting the day before, unless you are used to it -- you don't want to spend the Meditation day hungry and thinking of food.
3. The morning of the Christmas Meditation, you might do some deep breathing in the outdoors to oxygenate the system. And try to do the Energization Exercises with deep attention – the Exercises are a wonderful way to balance the life force and relax the body, thus preparing it for hours of deep meditation.
4. Dress warmly for the Meditation in layers, as we tend to keep the chapel on the cool side. Wear loose clothing that is not restrictive and avoid any noisy clothing such as nylon.
5. Please leave your water bottles at home. Master's training was that when we sit for hours of long meditation we should rise above the demands of the body. If we are drinking lots of fluids before or during the Meditation, then we will be running to the restroom during the periods of chanting and never be able to go deep into the meditation. Greater depth will be achieved if we mentally rise above the body's needs and use the periods of chanting as Master intended – to deepen our communion with God by singing these songs to God that Master spiritualized through his own divine communion.

There are a few people who may need water because of medical needs. And some, as the body gets older, may need more frequent access to the restroom. Strive to the best of your ability to follow Master's ideal but use your common sense. If you anticipate needing access to the restroom before the halfway break, we suggest you arrive a little early and find a spot where you will not disturb others (e.g., an aisle seat). But do try to rise above the demands of the body to the best of your ability.

6. When using the armrest or Kriya beads, try to avoid making any noise out of consideration of those around you. If we are careful, we can pick up our Kriya beads or the armrest without making a sound. Also, please practice your Kriyas very softly, so others cannot hear you.
7. In group meditation it's important to follow the group. When there is chanting, chant with all your heart, concentrating on the words you are singing to God. And when there is still, silent meditation, try not to move a muscle. Those who wish may stand during the chanting, but don't feel you have to necessarily stand each time there is chanting.
8. And finally, if anyone sitting near you is not following any of the above suggestions, don't give it another thought. Pay no attention to anyone or anything around you. Practice the techniques and go so deep into your love for God and your yearning to commune with God, that you won't notice anything else.

Above all, come to the Christmas Meditation with a relaxed sense of surrendering your heart, body, and mind at the feet of the Divine Beloved. Do your best to practice the meditation techniques deeply, but without any sense of straining. If during the Meditation you encounter any obstacles of body or mind, do your best to rise above them and keep making a sincere, earnest effort to deeply commune with God. As Master said, "If you do your best, God will reach down His hand to help you."

We pray that the Christmas Meditation may be a blessed day of divine communion for each one of us, wherein we tangibly feel the tremendous love, wisdom, and joy of God, Christ and Guru.

In divine friendship,

Brother Bhumananda