

# The Uncanny Wisdom of Meditating Before Dawn



In the early morning hours,  
There's a magic in the air.  
Those who leave their consternation  
Find their resolution there.

When the wisdom of the angels  
Seeks the glory of the soul,  
Then the blessings of the heavens  
Leave us fresh and bright and whole.

Everyone loves light. There is nothing quite as invigorating as the vivid light of dawn or a dazzling ray of golden sun on an otherwise gray and dismal day.

If someone is talented or sharp-witted, we say they are “bright.” A great idea is “simply brilliant.” When someone smiles, we say they are “beaming.”

There is also the light of the heart, that soulful radiance tucked away in the innermost recesses of the self, always shining, yet not always seen.

When the great Guru Nanak toured the world, passing through the Middle East, Tibet, Samarkhand, Persia, Sri Lanka, Rishikesh, Benares, and a host of other locales, each with a lively spiritual tradition of its own, he was struck by a common practice among all the people of real spirit whom he met. It seemed no matter who they were – swamis, prophets, gurus, shamen, nuns, monks, lamas, sheiks, rabbis – they all made a habit of rising bright and early before each dawn.

They weren't all sun worshippers by any means, at least not in any formal sense. But they were all clued into a universal and timeless practice that gave them pleasure and focus and, well... light.

What did all these people do at what we have become accustomed to calling “that ungodly hour”? All of them absorbed themselves in some sort of prayer or meditation. Before beginning, they would cleanse their body in the refreshing, cool water of a well or stream.

They were practical people. They knew that if they only spent their first hours nurturing their spiritual selves, the rest of the day, no matter what it held in store, would be a breeze.

They also knew the adage that the darkest hour is before the dawn. To test their own enlightenment, their own pluck and inner resourcefulness, they rose up religiously in the dark of night, when it was hardest.

It wasn't convenient or easy, but these enlightened women and men knew it would help them cultivate their inner passion, their personal desire for *shakti* and *shanti* – the invincible spiritual power and deep inner peace of a truly enlightened being.

Their practice made them grow. It also put them online to a heavenly swath of time somewhere in a twilight zone, earlier than early and later than late, a soulful time just ideal for meditation.

Guru Nanak did not go around giving people commandments and he never put down anyone's religion. He was a great teacher who wanted only to empower the people he met. It didn't matter who they were.

The Guru gave his listeners three simple suggestions:

- 1) Rise early and meditate on the Infinite in you. Practice your yoga. Do your prayers, but watch what you pray for. Cultivate your vision and inspiration. Take time. Make time to be divine. Find your purpose. Dedicate yourself to it, then rededicate yourself again.
- 2) Share. You don't need a lot of anything to be able to share it. Share the abundance of your soul, your happiness and inspiration. Share whatever you have, then let the bountiful flow of the universe replenish you.
- 3) Do the right thing. It doesn't matter what it is, how outrageous it might at first sound. Practice wanton acts of kindness. Don't hedge on beauty. Nothing will eat away your health and peace of mind like a regret, an opportunity missed, a gift squandered. Take courage and just do it!

What will happen? You will become bright as day. Your actions will be effectively graceful. And – best of all – you and those you share your life with will be hopelessly and irrepressibly happy. *Sat Nam.*