

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar honored as the inaugural Global Citizenship Ambassador for his contribution as peacemaker, humanitarian, spiritual teacher, and global interfaith leader

The Northeastern University Center for Spirituality, Dialogue, and Service (CSDS) is delighted to honor Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar as our inaugural [Global Citizenship Ambassador](#) in recognition of his pioneering work as peacemaker, humanitarian, spiritual teacher, and global interfaith leader.

Northeastern is a global leader in experiential education and research with campuses in Boston, Massachusetts, USA and around the world. Home to students from over 100 countries, the University is ranked among the Top 50 in the United States and has one of the largest international and interfaith student populations in North America.

Sri Sri's visit on February 5, 2021 launched the University's annual observance of the United Nations' World Interfaith Harmony Week. In a wide-ranging conversation with the Center's Executive Director, Alexander Levering Kern, broadcast on [YouTube LIVE](#) and available online at [Northeastern Spiritual Life](#), Sri Sri addressed questions from an international audience of students, faculty, and staff on the theme, "Healing Ourselves, Healing Others: Practices of Inward and Outward Peace."

The Global Citizenship Ambassador honor recognizes Sri Sri's lifetime efforts and comes at a critical time for the United States and global community. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has fostered peace by way of dialogue and strategic initiatives that engage multiple levels of government, business, and humanitarian organizations. He has led conflict resolution and trauma-relief programs in many countries, including Afghanistan, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the United States of America.

"The first thing in a conflict is a communication breakdown. Second, there is a trust deficit. If we can bridge these somehow, then the process begins," Gurudev explains. "Inside every culprit is a victim crying for help. If you heal the victim, the culprit disappears."

Dedicating himself to placing human values at the center of relations between individuals, Sri Sri has touched the lives of more than 450 million people around the world, resolving conflicts through dialogue and self-awareness, teaching positive approaches to living including techniques to alleviate stress, addressing mental health and wellbeing.

Northeastern University's interfaith community is home to over 40 religious, spiritual, and humanist student organizations, including SKY Campus Happiness, a comprehensive well-being program that is offered in 73 universities in the USA and has impacted over 150,000 students, staff, and faculty across these campus communities to date. The program uses four approaches to total well-being: evidence-based breath work and meditation practices (SKY Breath Meditation), social connection, emotional intelligence training, and service leadership. Recent research out of Yale University shows that SKY Campus Happiness creates significant increases in mental health, positive emotion, and social connection, and significantly reduces anxiety and depression. It showed higher impact than mindfulness across all these measures.

The faculty advisor for Northeastern's SKY group is Professor Latika Menon, who, along with CSDS' Senior Assistant Director Sagar Rajpal, was instrumental in arranging for Sri Sri's visit as Global Citizenship Ambassador.

The Northeastern University Center for Spirituality, Dialogue, and Service is grateful to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and to all the volunteers who made the keynote possible and available to viewers around the globe. We can think of no better way to launch our Global Citizenship Ambassador recognition than to dialogue with and learn from a joyful humanitarian who embodies the best of our shared human values. On behalf of the interfaith community at Northeastern, in Boston and beyond, we look forward to working together to nurture global citizens and to build a more just, peaceful, and healthy world for all people.

Alexander Levering Kern, MDiv. (he/him/his)
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