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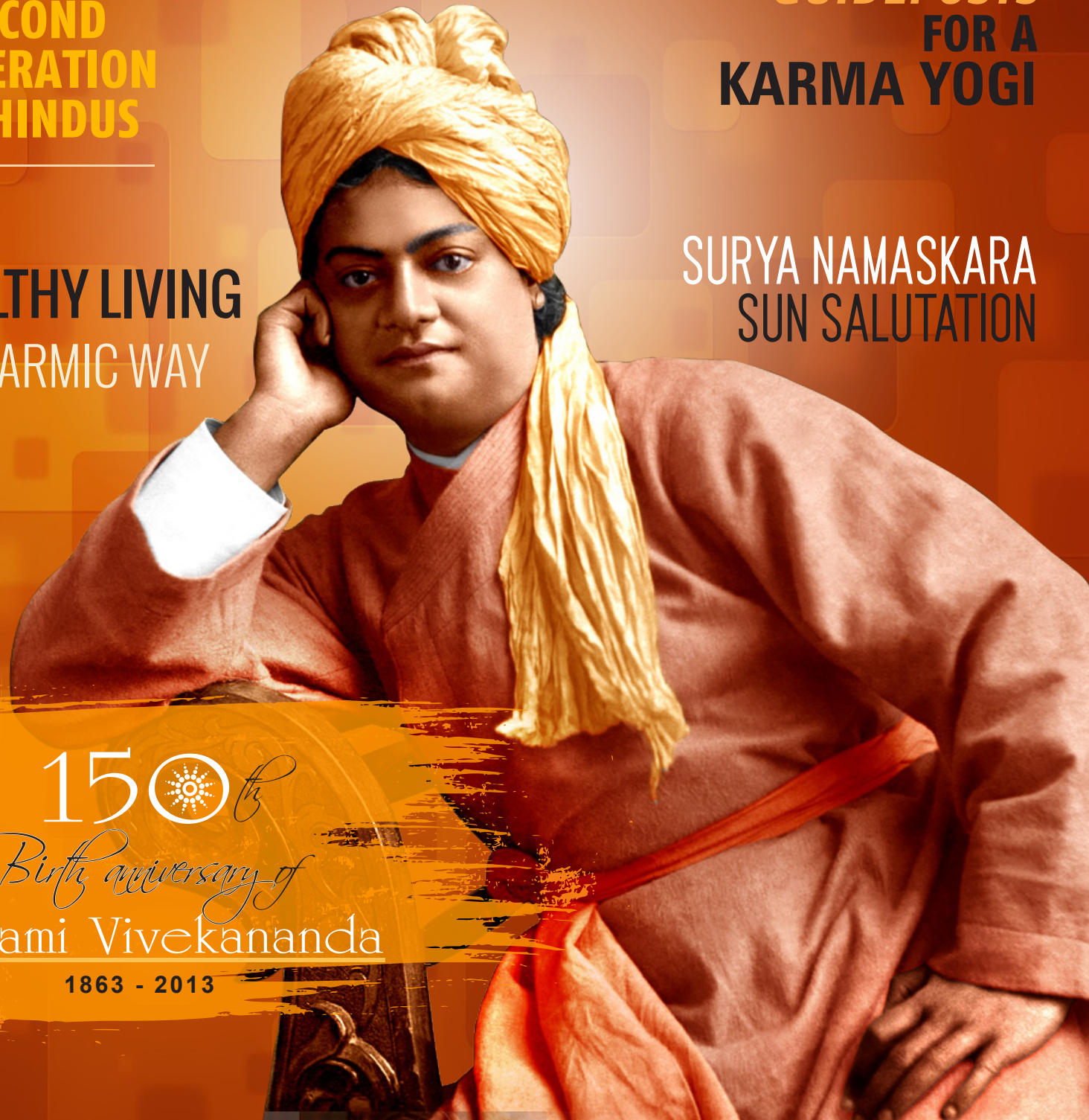
UNIVERSAL PEACE THROUGH DHARMA AND YOGA

AMERICA'S
SECOND
GENERATION
OF HINDUS

GUIDEPOSTS
FOR A
KARMA YOGI

HEALTHY LIVING
INDHARMIC WAY

SURYA NAMASKARA
SUN SALUTATION



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Birth anniversary of
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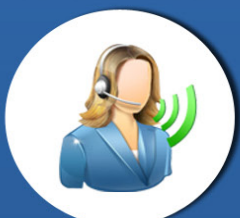
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EJ.Kiran

-KIRAN E, EDITOR IN CHIEF

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contents



24

9 Swami's Message

13 Universal peace through dharma and yoga

18 Surya Namaskara

24 Guide posts for a Karma Yogi

28 Healthy living in Dharmic way with Bhakti, Yoga and Ayurveda

32 Swamiji's 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY



32



18

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40



40 Vedic nectar found its way into American homes

46 HSS Dharma Bee Projects By Participants

50 America's Second Generation of Hindus

56 Hinduism and Modern Life

64 Swami Vivekananda on Women Empowerment

68 Sahaja Yoga—A Unique Discovery



64



50



68



Swami Vivekananda's Message on September 11, 1893:



“Sisters and Brothers of America. [At this moment came the three minute standing ovation from the audience of 7,000] It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

“My thanks also to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration.

“I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites who came to Southern India and took refuge

with us in very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation.

“**Sisters and Brothers of America.**

[At this moment came the three minute standing ovation from the audience of 7,000] It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us.

SWAMIJI'S MESSAGE

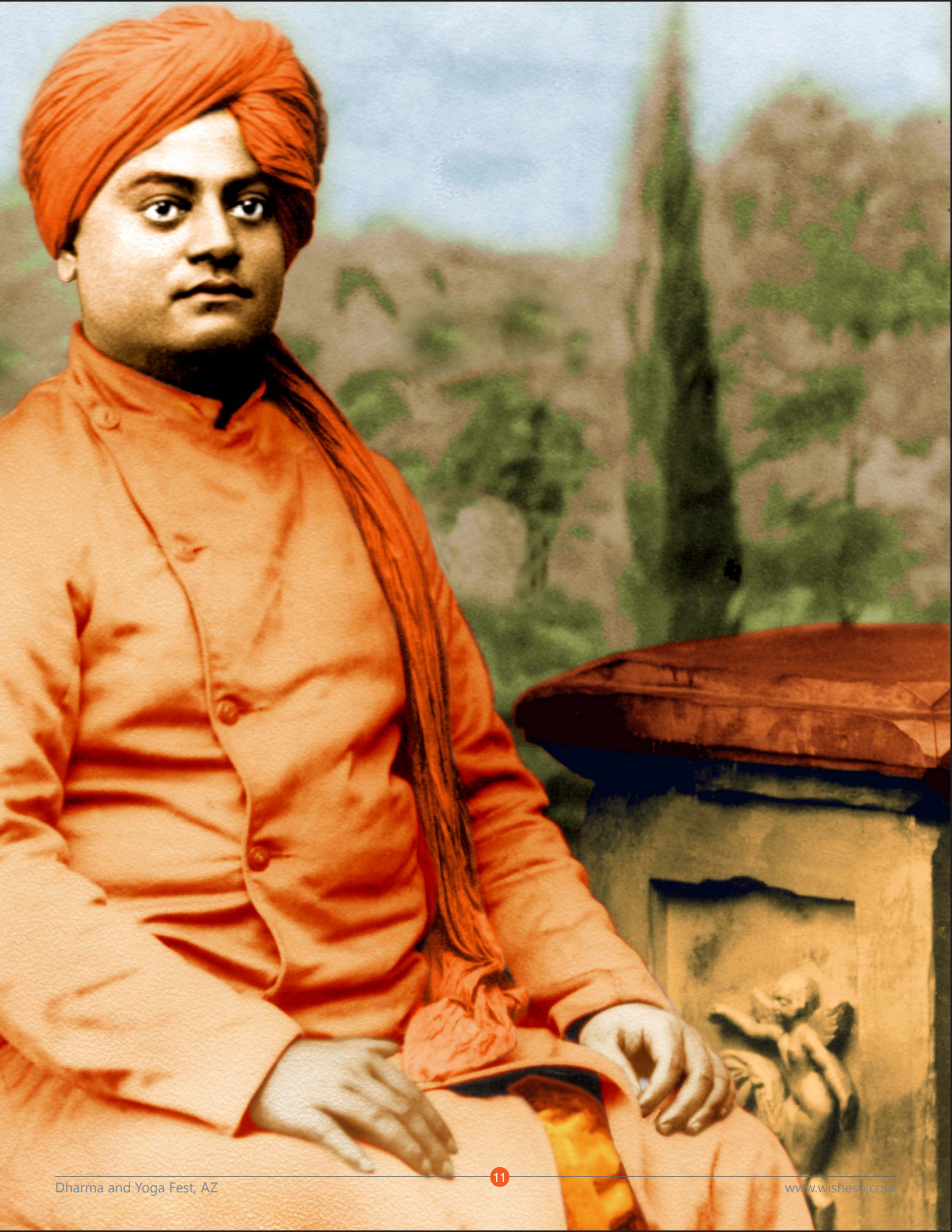
“I will quote to you brethren a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest childhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: ‘As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.’

“The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: ‘Whosoever comes to me, though whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.’

“Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful Earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now.

“But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.”





UNIVERSAL PEACE DHARMA

There are numerous individuals and organizations sincerely promoting and working for the ideal of world peace. Every year several concerts, walks, and seminars are organized to further the cause of peace. Symbols and monuments for peace are everywhere. But today we see so much strife and turmoil in families, communities, and nations. The question then arises is that in spite of so many earnest efforts, why is peace so elusive? Are these efforts insufficient or incomplete? How can we create the right spirit and order that would lead the world towards a more peaceful existence? The eternal wisdom traditions from India can provide insights and solutions to our modern day predicament. These Dharma traditions are based on principles that are universal and hence can be applied globally.

Peace-breakers

According to Vedanta, this phenomenal world is a result of the loss of the state of equilibrium and hence afflictions are bound to be there. All the afflictions can be categorized into three types.

PEACE THROUGH AND YOGA

Adhidaivik

Disturbance of peace due to natural causes such as earthquakes, hurricanes etc. Human beings have very little or no control over preventing these situations.

Adhibhautik

Afflictions essentially caused by social surroundings. They could be as a result of political disturbances, economic situations, extremism, environmental degradation etc.

Adhyatmika

Afflictions due to internal causes. This could be due to an unstable mind, depression, passion etc.

Hindu prayers end with Om Śāntih Śāntih Śāntih so as to ask for peace in all the three categories. Broadly speaking, there are external and internal reasons for the breach of peace. If human beings are peaceful within and in harmony with all the entities they interact with, then peace can be achieved. The principles and practices that will help individuals to attain peace within by realizing their true nature is called Yoga. The values and order that will build and sustain a harmonious and peaceful society is called Dharma.

Dharma for social harmony

Dharma is a comprehensive term meaning the natural order or that which upholds. It carries the meaning according to context. Dharma, in relation with others in the society, is duty or responsibility. An individual may have many responsibilities such as a responsibility towards parents, family, neighbors, a nation etc. Being duty-conscious about others' rights ensures peace, prosperity, and social justice in the society. A social order based on Dharma essentially means that it is based on the idea of duty. This can develop through laws, customs and traditions conducive to Dharma. In this regard it is important to see

“Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels that it runs smoothly...”

what Swami Vivekananda says, So a Dharma based social order is not only based on the idea of duty but enshrines the spirit of family in all relationships. For example a school is seen as a family consisting of the teachers, students, parents

and other staff. A shop-owner sees his customers, suppliers, and employees all as part of a family and he feels duty-bound towards them. With a sense of responsibility towards them, he seeks the welfare of all. The same family spirit can be applied in different scenarios and ultimately expanded to seeing the whole world as one family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam).

Dharma also means righteousness and is considered the source of all prosperity. The ten characteristics of Dharma according to the scriptures are virtues such as forbearance, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purity, non-sensuality, wisdom, knowledge, truth, and non-anger. Educating every upcoming generation in virtuous behavior should happen in every family, school, and community. Not only laws and customs, but individuals instilled by Dharma in life are absolutely necessary for creating a vibrant and peaceful society. As a natural progression, a person on the path of Dharma also learns to go beyond the call of duty. He offers himself in the service of those who may be in distress. Being environmentally conscious and proactive also becomes his expression of Dharma. He is motivated to do selfless actions for the welfare of all. A Dharmic person is thus self-actualized not only for material progress but for spiritual upliftment as well.

5 Things

Everyone Should Know About Identity Theft

1. Anyone can be a target.

In 2011, 11.6 million Americans were victims of identity theft. The total take? \$18 billion.¹ In 2009, even the Chairman of the Federal Reserve was a victim.² Now add major security breaches from trusted companies and you get the point. Still think it can't happen to you?

2. You're only as safe as your weakest link.

You shred documents, use secure websites and strong passwords. But your personal information is everywhere. Your doctor could have your Social Security number. Or your employer, your bank, and maybe even the kid handling your credit application for that new TV. You may be doing a whole lot right, but what about everyone else?

3. Once your Social Security number is out there, it's staying out.

If your credit or debit card is stolen, you can replace it. But what happens when shady characters get your Social Security number? Identity thieves use black market websites to buy, sell and trade stolen information around the world. Is your Social Security number really protected?

4. Just a few pieces of information can mean big trouble.

With just a few pieces of your personal information, identity thieves can get a loan, mortgage or an equity line of credit—on your home. They could even buy a weapon and commit a crime. Profitable for them, but what about you?

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1) Javelin Strategy & Research, "2012 Identity Fraud Survey Report," 2/12. 2) Newsweek, "Bernanke Victimized by Identity Fraud Ring," 25 August 2009.

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Yoga for inner peace

Yoga means uniting ourselves with our true nature. It is being centered in the innermost core of our being. In Swami Vivekananda's words,

“Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work (Karma-Yoga) or worship (Bhakti-yoga) or psychic control (Raja-Yoga) or philosophy (Jnana-Yoga), by one or more or all of these, and be free.”

This freedom and the spiritual happiness is the source of peace within. Swami Vivekananda says,

“The ideal man is he who, in the midst of the greatest silence and solitude, finds the intensest activity, and in the midst of the intensest activity finds silence and solitude.”

Shri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita that by seeking the knowledge of the Self, practicing meditation, and by giving up the fruit of all actions, we can attain inner peace. Once we have attained this tranquility through Yoga all suffering ceases.

Universal peace

Understanding the Divinity of man and the Spiritual oneness of existence is an assurance for peace. Peace can be achieved through Dharma and not dogma. Peace can be attained through spirituality and not fanaticism. At the final session of the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 Swami Vivekananda stated with confidence

“If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: “Help and not Fight,” “Assimilation and not Destruction,” “Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.”

May we all be inspired to pray and work towards universal peace through Dharma and Yoga. Om Śāntih Śāntih Śāntih.

- Saumitra Gokhale
HSS International Coordinator





Surya Namaskara

Sun Salutation

In Hindu mythology, the sun god is worshipped as a symbol of health and immortal life. The Rig Veda declares that "Surya is the Soul, both of the moving and unmoving beings". The Sun Salutation originated as a series of prostrations to the sun. Traditionally, it is performed at dawn, facing the rising sun. In time, each of the twelve positions came to have its own mantra, celebrating aspects of the sun's divinity.

The Sun Salutation is a graceful sequence of twelve positions performed as one continuous exercise. Each position counteracts the one before, stretching the body in a different way and alternately expanding and contracting the chest to regulate the breathing. Practiced daily it will bring great flexibility to your spine and joints and trim your waist. It limbers up the whole body.

One round of Sun Salutation consists of two sequences, the first leading with the right foot in positions 4 and 9, the second leading with the left. Keep your hands in one place from positions 3 to 10 and try to co-ordinate your movements with your breathing. Start by practicing four rounds and gradually build up to twelve rounds.



03



04



05



06



02



01 Pranamasana

Stand with the feet together at the front of your space.

Bend the elbows and join the palms in front of the sternum.

02 Hasta Utthanasana

Raise the arms, separate the palms and position the hands forward, shoulder width apart.

Arch the arms, head and torso upwards and back.

03 Padahastanana

Stand upright.

Keep the back, head and arms straight and bend forward from the hips.

Bring the abdomen in contact with the thighs, draw the head towards the shins and simultaneously place the hands on the floor either sides of the feet.

04 Ashwa Sanchalanasana

Extend the right leg back and lower the knee to the floor.

Keep the left foot between the hands, ensure the left shin is at a 90 degree angle with the floor.

Press the pelvis down and lengthen the spine.

Draw the shoulder blades together slightly to open the chest.

Keep the head in line with the spine and direct the gaze ahead.

05 Parvatasana

Lower the palms to the floor.

Keep the right foot still and step the left foot back to beside the right.

Simultaneously, raise the buttocks and lower the head between the arms so that the body forms a triangle.

Lift the tail bone upwards, lengthen and straighten the arms and spine.

Keep the knees soft and relax the heels towards the floor.



06 Ashtanga Namaskara

Keep the hands and feet in the same position.

Lower the knees chest and chin simultaneously to the floor, allow the heels to rise, the balls of the toes remain in contact with the floor.

Keeping the chest between the hands tuck the elbows into the sides of the body.

07 Bhujangasana

Keep the hands and feet in the same position.

Slide the chest forward and raise the head.

Simultaneously lower the hips and pelvis to the floor.

Keep the pubic bone on the floor and straighten the arms to a comfortable position.

Lengthen and stretch the spine into a backwards curve, directing the gaze upward.

08 Parvatasana

Lower the palms to the floor.

Keep the right foot still and step the left foot back to beside the right.

Simultaneously, raise the buttocks and lower the head between the arms so that the body forms a triangle.

Lift the tail bone upwards, lengthen and straighten the arms and spine.

Keep the knees soft and relax the heels towards the floor.

09 Ashwa Sanchalanasana

Step forward with the left foot, bend the knee and position the foot between the hands. Simultaneously lower the right knee to the floor. Keep the left foot between the hands and lunge forward. Press the pelvis down and extend the body up and back as far as is comfortable. Lift the palms from the floor and come up onto the fingertips. Draw the shoulder blades together slightly to open in the chest. Engage the neck muscles and lift the chin and gaze up.



10



10 Padahastanana

Bring the right foot forward, next to the left foot. Straighten both legs. Bring the abdomen in contact with the thighs and draw the head toward the shins.

11 Hasta Utthanasana

Align the spine and neck. Keep the arms and back straight, engage the core muscles, rotate from the hips and raise the head and torso upright. Stretch all the way up then arch the arms, head and torso back.

11



12 Pranamasana

Join the palms together above the head. Bend the elbows and bring the hands down to rest in front of the sternum.



12



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GUIDE POSTS FOR A KARMA YOGI

Extracts from 'Karma Yoga' by Swami Vivekananda

By *Sandeep Dedge*



What is Karma:

The word 'Karma' is derived from Sanskrit 'Kri' which means 'to do'. Put simply, Karma means work. Everything we do, physical or mental is Karma, it leaves its marks on us.

Why Karma Yoga:

The purpose of Karma Yoga is simply to bring out the power of mind, to wake up the soul. The knowledge that enlightens the soul is the center theme of Karma Yoga. No knowledge comes from outside; it is inherent within a human being. Like a fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists within; suggestion is the friction that brings it out. Pleasure and happiness will come along the path of attaining the knowledge, but the goal is knowledge itself.

How to do a Karma:

Work for the sake of work. Help others with unselfishness. It is a privilege to help others. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world and thus become pure and perfect.

Even in helping, helping the man spiritually is the highest help that can be given to him. He who gives the spiritual knowledge is the greatest benefactor of mankind. Next comes intellectual help. It is higher than the clothes and food, even higher than giving life to a man, because the real life of Man consists of knowledge. Ignorance is death, knowledge is life. Life is of little value if it is the life in the dark, groping through ignorance and misery. Next comes, of course, physical help. Hence helping others, we must not always strive not to commit the mistake of thinking that the physical help is the only help that can be given. In whatever we do, our duty is to encourage everyone in their struggle to live up to their highest ideal, and to strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to



Work for the sake of work. Help others with unselfishness. It is a privilege to help others

the truth. through ignorance and misery. Next comes, of course, physical help. Hence helping others, we must not always strive not to commit the mistake of thinking that the physical help is the only help that can be given. In whatever we do, our duty is to encourage everyone in their struggle to live up to their highest ideal, and to strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth.

Work with Detachment:

The world has been going on and it will go on beautifully without us. Let's come out of foolish thought (it brings misery) of doing good to the world. It is not waiting for our help, yet we must constantly do good, because this action is a blessing for us. That is the only way we can become perfect. Yet we need not become sleepless about the world; it will go on without us.

Know that one is entirely separated from the world like a lotus in the water, though one is in it. Work incessantly with the sense of detachment. Perform any work as the highest worship. Yet, know that whatever we may be doing, we are not doing it for our own sake. Any action that we do for us will bring its effect to bear upon us. But the action that is not done for our own sake, whatever it be, will have no effect on us. Detachment is the key to free one-self from the effects of Karma.

Love only comes with strength:

One must have power to stand for the righteousness. The one who from the weakness resists not commits a sin, and cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance. Give up the coward-liness; stand up and fight. Real love comes with internal strength.

Where does internal strength come from?

Internal strength comes from self-control. Self-control produces a mighty will and power to raise up to understand and get towards higher and higher motives.

This self-control gives the power to stand and rise. Strength brings love. The unselfish, incessant work with such love leads us to be a Karma Yogi. An ideal Karma Yogi who works on this path without motives will have the power to transform the world around.



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Healthy living in Dharmic way with **BHAKTI, YOGA** and **AYURVEDA** By Vamadeva Shastri



T rue health is not just a matter of mere freedom from disease or absence of pain. It means total wellness or the full harmonious functioning of all of our faculties, manifesting our highest potential in life. This is not just a matter of taking the right medications or receiving the best medical therapies. It requires following a life style that allows our higher energy and vitality to develop, and one rooted in a deeper awareness that brings the healing power of consciousness into all that we do.

Right living is not just about the quantity of one's wealth or possessions. It is about the quality of one's life. This quality of life is best measured by how we feel inside ourselves, particularly the degree of peace, inspiration, and higher awareness that we have. If we possess that inner

wealth, then outer health and abundance will not likely be far away.

Right living implies Dharma or understanding the natural and spiritual laws that govern both our souls and the universe as a whole. We cannot be happy with a life out of harmony with nature, or a life in which our own deeper Self is not expressed.

Vedic knowledge provides us with a number of knowledge systems that aid us in right or dharmic living, true health, and optimal wellbeing. In fact the purpose of the Vedas, as is the whole of Hinduism, is to teach Dharma for the benefit of all beings and for the removal of all suffering. Hinduism has many Dharma Shastras that teach the importance of Dharma, as well as books on Karma Yoga that teach us the right actions to follow in life. Dharmic action

leads us by degree to the supreme goal of Moksha, liberation, Self-realization, and the release from all sorrow. Bhakti or devotion implies that we respect the sacred nature of all life and recognize

Ayurveda means health that is rooted in the wisdom of life itself, which is the wisdom of eternity. It requires that we open ourselves to the universal Prana or the greater life force



the Divine presence in all creatures and in the entire universe. We must learn to see our chosen form of divinity, or whatever we most revere in life, as dwelling in all creatures. True wellbeing arises from our contact with the sacred powers of life. Bhakti is our means of partaking of that. Bhakti employs mantra, chanting, ritual, and meditation to add more meaning and beauty to our life activities.

Yoga, which means unity, implies that we take an integral approach to life, bringing unity and harmony into all aspects of our own nature and our outer relationships as well. Yoga is not just a matter of performing asanas but of breathing with the universal life, speaking with the Divine Word, and meditating with the Divine Mind. Yoga in this sense is the highest action that we as human beings can do.

of nature that is the source of all true and lasting healing. We can discover that higher prana in natural foods and special healing herbs and preparations that Ayurveda has in great abundance. Ayurveda provides us with important clinical detoxification measures of Pancha Karma to help us remove any disease causing factors within us. Then it brings us special methods of rejuvenation or Rasayana to help us bring in higher positive energies and a deeper vitality.

Ayurveda is the medicine of Yoga that brings us back into harmony with the whole of life. Yoga naturally leads us to devotion, not as a mere outer emotion, but as a living connection with the love and bliss that pervades the greater universe of consciousness.

Dharma Bee Level 2 Northwest Vibhag Report

HSS Northwest Vibhag (Washington and Oregon states) successfully organized Dharma Bee - Level 2 contest on Sunday, April 28th, 2013 from 1:00 PM thru 4:30 PM at Highland Community Center, Bellevue, WA. Children from 7 Centers across North-west vibhag participated in the contest. 50 Qualified contestants from Level 1 exam conducted across 7 centers in March; 49 children from Kindergarten to Grade 8 participated in Level 2

4 Winners from Level 2 contest (Toppers from each of 4 age groups) advanced to the next level of National contest which was held in Chicago on June 15th and 16th.

Judges from various organizations and community leaders supported the contest as Judges across various age groups. (HSS, Samskrita Bharati, Ekal, VT Sewa, SKY Society, Tamil Sangam, Bhutanese Resource Center)

Dr. Sunil ji Ummat and Dr. Samira ji Ummat were the chief Guests for the event. Chief Guests distributed Medals to all L2 Participants (L1 winners), Trophies to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of L2 contest in each group and tokens of appreciation to all Judges.

Swami Vivekananda Poster Exhibition was at display through the event. L1 Children's Projects from all centers were also at display.

North West Region Dharma Bee Level 2 Contest Winners

Group 1 (Kindergarten, 1st Grade)

1st - Aditya Narayan

2nd - Sankeerth Achalla

3rd - Nivedita Giani

Group 3 (4th, 5th Grades)

1st - Jahnavi Handral

2nd - Naveena Gopinath

3rd - Akash Mungra

Group 2 (2nd, 3rd Grades)

1st - Nischal Allena

2nd - Nidhi Mukkamala

3rd - Neha Joglekar

Group 4 (6th, 7th, 8th Grades)

1st - Grishma Shindhe

2nd - Yukta Aphale

3rd - Vivek Srirama

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

- 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY - (January 12, 1863 – July 04, 1902)

This year (2013), we celebrate 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. He was born in 1863 as Narendranath Datta. His father, Vishwa Nath Datta, was an attorney-at-law of the High Court of Calcutta.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest Indians the world has seen in the last two centuries. He was born six years after India's first war of independence from the British rule, the same year the US fought the civil war. India was hopeless after the failure of the war of independence in 1857. The British suzerainty was at its peak. Indians defeated, humiliated, inadequate and unprepared to fight back were jeered all over. In the West, the sanyasis (Indian monks and holy men) were often equated to beggars surviving on alms.

In this environment of doom and despair, Swami Vivekananda appeared like a colossus, a prophet of hope. As an icon of resurgent India, Swami Vivekananda propounded more energetic and practical form of Hinduism based on the teachings of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā.

He brought the Hindu thought and yoga to the West in a form that the westerners could understand, relate to, and hardly resist; exerted an immense influence on the national resurgence and struggle for freedom from the British rule in India; and established the monastic order of Ramakrishna Mission -- one of the highly successful monastic order, and planted the seeds for a vast service organization in India.

Hindu Awakening

Swami-ji reinvigorated the Hindu tradition of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” -- whole world is one family -- and restored the dignity of poor and down trodden masses by marshaling the notion of “Nara seva, Narayana seva” (serving humanity is service to God). For him the poor and afflicted were manifestations of the living God. He dedicated his life in their service and implored others to serve the masses as a privilege like serving the Narayana, the God.

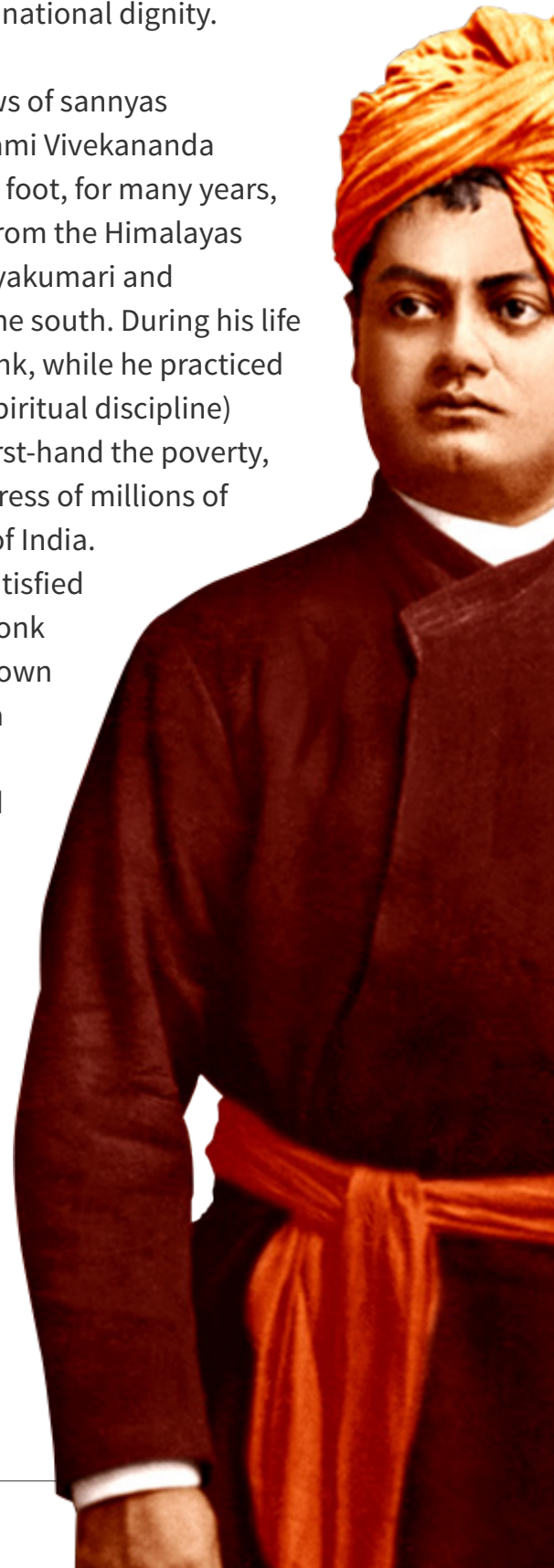
He was opposed to the oppression and discrimination based on caste by birth. He accused the priesthood for interpreting the holy scriptures to serve their interests. To him the religion had to be practical and not just a blind allegiance to dogmas.

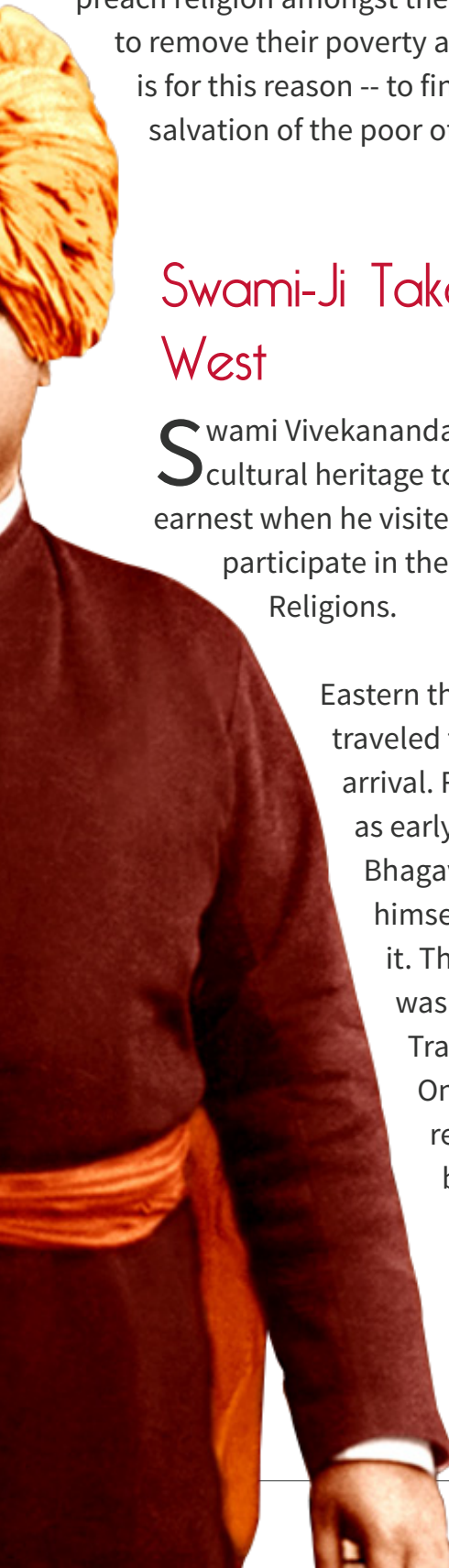
Vivekananda was clear that what distinguished India from the rest of the world was its Hindu ethos grounded in spirituality. Yet, he did not reject the materialistic West. He saw the West as an admirable manifestation of rajas (action) as a necessary step for success in all endeavors. Indians, sunk in tamas (inertia) and all that is brutish in man, had to emulate that quality (rajas) first.

Vivekananda proposed a fair exchange of ideas, a synthesis based on national dignity.

After taking the vows of sannyas (renunciation), Swami Vivekananda travelled mostly on foot, for many years, throughout India, from the Himalayas in the north to Kanyakumari and Rameshwaram in the south. During his life as a wandering monk, while he practiced intense sadhana (spiritual discipline) he also observed first-hand the poverty, ignorance, and distress of millions of people in all parts of India. Swami ji was not satisfied with just being a monk and striving for his own liberation. He had a much larger vision which he expressed thus:

I have traveled all over India. But alas, it was agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and misery of the masses, and I could not restrain





my tears! It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them without first trying to remove their poverty and their suffering. It is for this reason -- to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India -- that I am now

Swami-Ji Takes On the West

Swami Vivekananda brought India's cultural heritage to the West in real earnest when he visited America in 1893 to participate in the Parliament of World Religions.

Eastern thought had already traveled to the West before his arrival. Ralph Waldo Emerson, as early as 1820, had read the Bhagavad Gītā and found himself enchanted with it. The Gītā's influence was reflected in his Transcendentalist Essays. One of Emerson's relatives, Ellen Waldo, became a devotee of Vivekananda and faithfully transcribed the dictated text of his first book, "Raja Yoga," in 1895.

Vivekananda's genius was to simplify Vedantic thoughts to essential teachings that the Westerners could easily understand. God was not the capricious tyrant in the heavens avowed by Bible-thumpers, but rather a power that resided in the human heart. "Each soul is potentially divine", he declared. "The goal is to manifest that divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal." And to close the deal for the fencesitters, he punched up Vedanta's embrace of other faiths and their prophets. Christ and Buddha were incarnations of the divine, he said, no less than Krishna and his own teacher, Ramakrishna.

At the Parliament of World Religions, he began his speech by addressing the assembly as "Sisters and Brothers of America". The idea of calling an auditorium full of strangers as family was unprecedented. The previously sedate crowd of 4,000 plus rose to their feet and wildly cheered the visiting monk, who was as shocked as his audience. "I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world," he responded, flushed with emotion. "I thank you in the name of the mother of religions, and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

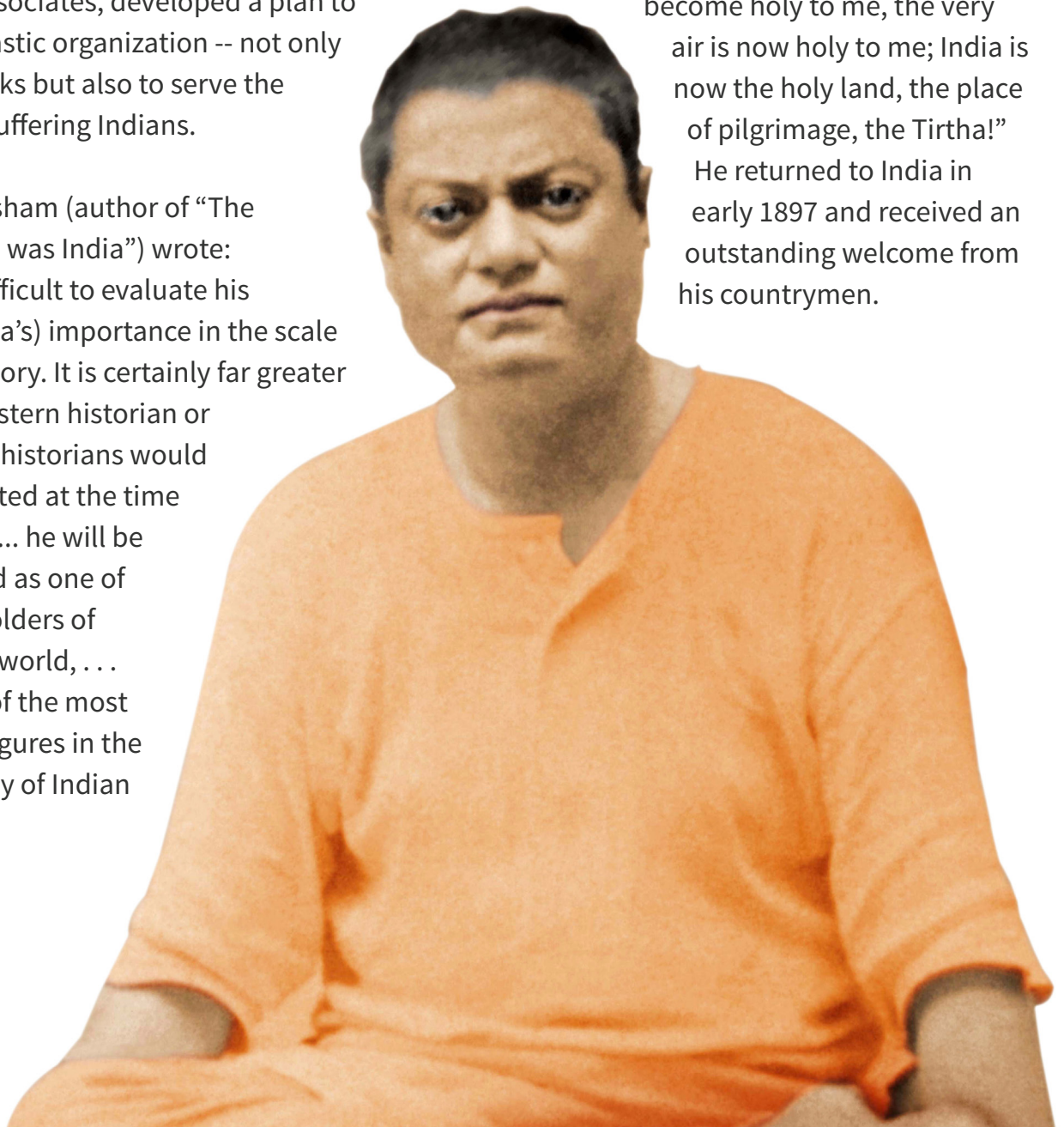
His performance at the Chicago Parliament so powerfully impressed and captivated the American people that he was persuaded to stay for over three years and lecture on Vedanta and Hinduism. While lecturing extensively in the U.S., he wrote his famous treatise on Raja Yoga, and laid the foundation for starting several Vedanta Societies in the West. He also gathered financial resources and, with the help of his monastic associates, developed a plan to start a monastic organization -- not only to train monks but also to serve the millions of suffering Indians.

Prof. A L Basham (author of "The Wonder that was India") wrote: "It is very difficult to evaluate his (Vivekananda's) importance in the scale of world history. It is certainly far greater than any western historian or most Indian historians would have suggested at the time of his death ... he will be remembered as one of the main molders of the modern world, . . . and as one of the most significant figures in the whole history of Indian religion."

The uppermost concern in Vivekananda's mind was the welfare of the people of India, his motherland. A story is told that, as he was getting ready to depart from London for India, one of his British friends asked him, "Swami-ji how do you like your motherland now after four years' experience of the luxurious, glorious, and powerful West?" Swami-ji replied: "India I loved before I came away. Now the very dust of India has

become holy to me, the very air is now holy to me; India is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha!"

He returned to India in early 1897 and received an outstanding welcome from his countrymen.





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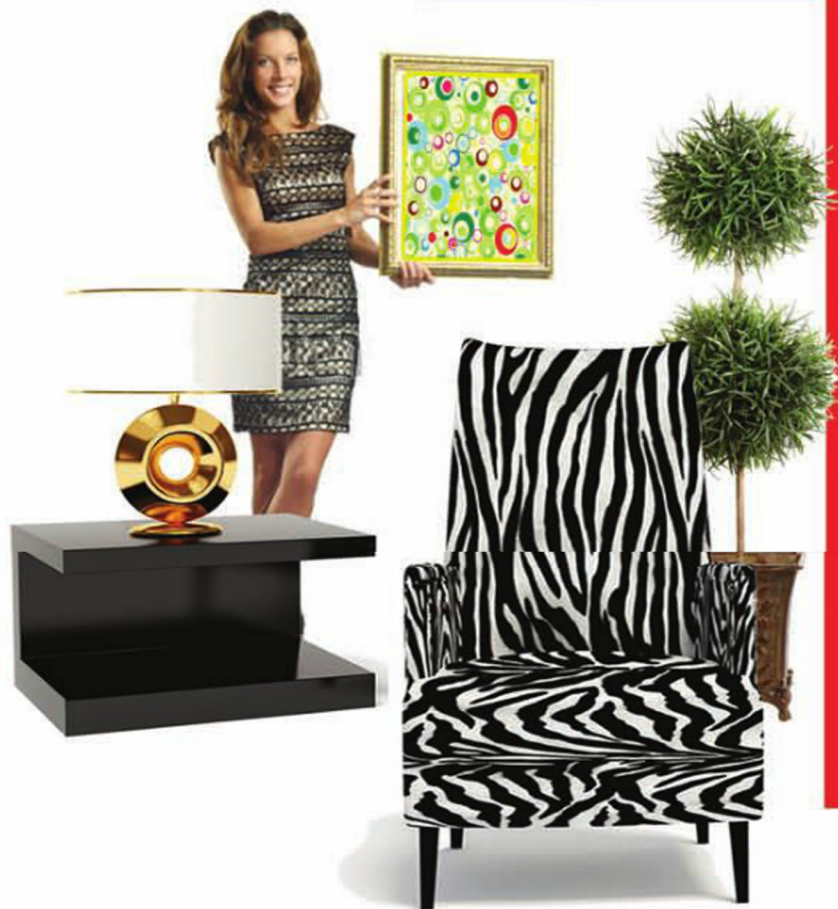


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Swami-Ji and the Freedom Movement of India

Swami-ji inspired the freedom fighters and was often referred to as the warrior prophet. Mahatma Gandhi said that reading Vivekananda had made him love the country 'hundred fold'. Jawaharlal Nehru saw the Swami ji as one of the great founders of the national movement. Subhash Chandra Bose saw in Vivekananda "the spiritual father of modern nationalist movement".

Rajgopalachari said that, but for Vivekananda, we would have lost our religion, not have gained our freedom; we owed everything to him". Rabindranath Tagore said: "If you want to know India, study Vivekananda". Mystic nationalists, like Maharishi Aurobindo and Subrahmanya Bharathi, too, were greatly inspired by him.



The Poor and Afflicted: God of Vivekananda

Swami-ji was an ideal universal humanist. "The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted", he wrote, "let these be your God, know that service to these alone is the highest religion". It was an invocation that, in the context of the times, was unmistakably revolutionary.

Swami Vivekananda was, in fact, probably the first modern egalitarian India has seen. He was India's renaissance guru. He focused as much on reforming the Hindu society as he stressed on the details of building a new India. As much as he emphasized on the spiritual and religious aspects of this renewal he insisted on physical prowess and scientific temper. He said, "Religion is not for an empty stomach". The primary reason for his travel to the west was to marshal material resources to help the poor.

The message of Swami Vivekananda remains as relevant today as it was when first enunciated in 1893 and there cannot be a better time to spread his message far and wide than this 150th anniversary year of his birth.

VEDIC NECTAR FOUND ITS WAY INTO AMERICAN HOMES By Philip Goldberg



I was a student in the mid-1960s when I first heard about something called The Bhagavad Gita. I had taken my first tentative steps on the spiritual path that would come to define my life, and I had come across several references to the Gita, but Henry David Thoreau’s reverence for it made me sit up and take notice. In his classic essay, *Walden*, about his year of solitude at Walden Pond, Thoreau wrote: “In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial.” Elsewhere in the book, he praises the Gita’s “sanity and sublimity,” and says “the reader is nowhere raised into and sustained in a bigger, purer, or rarer region of thought.” If the great Thoreau had such high praise

for an ancient text from India, I had to read it. Believe it or not, it wasn’t easy to find a copy in New York City then. But I finally tracked down the translation by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, and devoured it in one sitting. My life was never the same. Four decades later, when I was researching my book, *American Veda*, I interviewed many people who also credit the Gita with kickstarting their passion for Vedanta, Yoga, and other aspects of the Hindu dharma.

I’m sure that one day historians will recognize the transmission of Sanatana Dharma to the West as one of the most significant developments in history—as important, if not more important, than the flow of technology and industry from the West to India. It has transformed American spirituality. The process began more than 200 years ago, when the first translation of the Gita, along with other Vedic texts and respectful commentaries by European scholars, arrived in the libraries



of leading thinkers. The most important was Ralph Waldo Emerson. As the country's leading homegrown philosopher, Emerson has been called America's Plato. I think of him as America's Shankaracharya. Inspired and informed by Hindu and Buddhist texts, he composed essays and poetry that captured the non-dual essence of Vedanta in lucid American prose. It was his copy of the Gita that his protégée, Thoreau, read each morning on Walden Pond.

Toward the end of the 19th century and into the 20th, the founders of the New Thought movement drew directly from Vedic texts (and from Emerson). Ever since, anyone involved with Theosophy, Christian Science, the Unity Church, or Religious Science has been impacted by Sanatana Dharma whether they know it or not. I often surprise Unity audiences by quoting their founder, Charles Fillmore, who wrote, in 1889, that "the evolution of the spirit has created a demand for a religion of broader

scope, and we turn to the lore of India, for lack of a better system nearer home."

Most of those early adopters got their inspiration from books, but some were present when the transmission accelerated thanks to the triumphant appearance of Swami Vivekananda at the World's Parliament of Religions, in 1893. The enthusiastic reception Vivekananda received in Chicago, and at his subsequent lectures, marked the beginning of a new era. It gathered steam in the early years of the 20th century, as swamis of the Ramakrishna lineage educated American seekers in the Vedanta Societies founded by Vivekananda.

Other gurus, swamis and yoga masters came and went as the century progressed, attracting a small number of followers. One, Paramahansa Yogananda, arrived in 1920 and stayed for the next 32 years of his life. His Self-Realization Fellowship became a major force, and his seminal memoir, *Autobiography*

of a Yogi, turned millions of seekers toward India—and continues to do so today.

The next major breakthrough came in 1967 and 1968, when the Beatles met Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, took up his Transcendental Meditation, and spent time at his ashram in Rishikesh, all under the relentless gaze of the world's media. This tidal wave triggered scientific interest, leading to hundreds of subsequent studies and the mainstreaming of meditation as a medical intervention, a mental health therapy, and a spiritual practice.

It also opened the floodgates to a parade of gurus who attracted sizeable followings in the 1970s and onward. Swamis Vishnudevananda (Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers), Satchidananda (Integral Yoga Institute), A. C. Bhaktivedanta (Hare Krishna), Muktananda (Siddha Yoga), Rama (Himalayan Institute); hatha yoga innovators like K. Patthabhi Jois and B. K. S. Iyengar; and iconoclastic teachers such as Sri Chinmoy, Rajneesh (aka Osho), Amrit Desai, and Jiddu Krishnamurti brought out different aspects of the dharmic repertoire. That march of masters continues today with gurus such as Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma), Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev.

But it wasn't just the teachers from India who disseminated dharmic wisdom; a vital role was also played by Westerners. Some

were trained as meditation or hatha yoga teachers by their gurus, or were trained to perform bhajan and kirtan. Many absorbed the teachings and assimilated them into their own areas of expertise, and some of them were prominent enough to introduce Sanatana Dharma to millions of people—sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly, sometimes granting proper respect



to the source and sometimes appropriating teachings as if they had thought them up themselves.

Their ranks include prominent intellectuals like Aldous Huxley, Huston Smith, Joseph Campbell, Ken Wilber, and Alan Watts; psychologists like Abraham Maslow, Richard

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Alpert (aka Ram Dass), and Stanislav Grof; physicians and medical researchers like Dean Ornish, Mehmet Oz, and of course Deepak Chopra, who crossed over from doctor to public philosopher. The transmitters also included poets (Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot, Alan Ginsberg); novelists (Herman Hesse, Somerset Maugham, J. D. Salinger); and musicians, the most important of whom was George Harrison, who studied sitar with the great Ravi Shankar and introduced his fellow Beatles and millions of Baby Boomers to the Hindu Dharma.

Through all these streams and tributaries, the Vedic nectar found its way into American homes. The result is a new paradigm in the way Americans view themselves, understand religion, and practice spirituality. The inner experience of one's own divine nature through methods of one's own choosing has replaced belief and identification with a religious tradition as the main driver of spirituality. Pluralism has overtaken exclusivism: most people now realize there are many pathways to the divine, and no religious tradition is the "one true way." These trends point to an evolutionary shift in consciousness toward the fundamental principles of Sanatana Dharma (even among people who never heard the term). It suggests that the great historian Arnold Toynbee was correct when he wrote, in 1969, that "a chapter which had a Western

beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race." novelists (Herman Hesse, Somerset Maugham, J. D. Salinger); and musicians, the most important of whom was George Harrison, who studied sitar with the great Ravi Shankar and introduced his fellow Beatles and millions of Baby Boomers to the Hindu Dharma.

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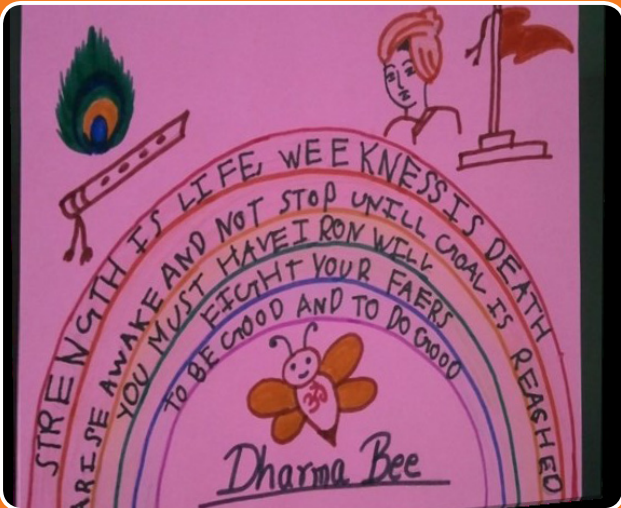
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AMERICA'S SECOND GENERATION OF HINDUS

How young Hindu Americans are finding their faith while confronting the pressures of life

by **Trishul Siddharthan**

My earliest memories were packing up our car on Sunday mornings and driving for fortyfive minutes to a small temple in north Miami. The swirl of brightly colored saris, the strong aromas of incense and prasadam and the children of the other Hindu families were essential parts of my upbringing, vastly different from my parents'. Returning to the new temple fifteen years later, I wondered what had pushed some of those children away from our ancient religion and culture, and what had inspired others to incorporate it into their American life. I sat down with two fellow students, each a senior and a member of the Hindu Students Council (HSC) at the University of Miami, to learn why they promote Hinduism and its values.

Janki Amin described Hinduism as "Seeing Bhagavan, or God, in every person, in every living thing and in the world, and appreciating what God has given you and using it to leave an impact in the world." Describing how this practice has fit into her life, she shared,

"Hinduism is open to interpretation, and it has an ability to mold into each person's life the way they want it to; it is not so clearcut."

Pravin Patel shared a similar understanding: "Hinduism is a way of life, but it is what you want to make of it. The scriptures teach us a lot of things, but they are open to interpretation. You can extract whatever you want and integrate it into your life in your own way. Hinduism as a religion is very open and accepting. It teaches you to take the good out of everything and see the good in all other people." It was not until his junior and senior years of college that Pravin became actively involved with the Hindu Students Council, and that was due to the sense of family HSC instilled. "I attended maybe two HSC meetings my freshman year and a couple last year, but it wasn't until this year that I started coming regularly. Attending meetings brings you into the group and makes you feel at home, even though it is a small number of people. The meetings brought me into



the HSC family, and I wanted to get more involved.”

Janki, who became involved with the Hindu Students Council early in college, echoed Pravin’s feeling about the sense of family: “When I first came to the University of Miami, everyone was scoping out clubs to join, and one of the first things I was interested in was the Hindu Students Council. Back home, my family is very Hindu. We practice arati and puja, and my parents taught me all the shlokas. Coming here, it was nice to know there was an organization that continues these practices for youth. What got me really involved was the tight-knit community. It was more than just a club or an organization. It made me feel like I belong; there is something here that reminds me of home. In addition, we discuss relevant topics, such as the role of

women in Hinduism, and how to incorporate Hinduism into our daily lives, such as through meditation and breathing techniques. These are things that give you a chance to get out of your daily routine, to reflect and keep Hinduism active in your life during your college years. I think that is one of the hardest things when you are so far away from home, living in a world where it seems like you don’t ever sleep and people don’t eat properly and are stressed out all the time. For that one hour when everyone is together, we all share in the same mentality and reflect on Hinduism and its importance in our lives. Just the fact that we are here and taking that time out of the day, we are keeping Hinduism alive.”

I concluded our interview by asking both students what kept them close to Hinduism. For Janki, the key to remaining a strong Hindu

AMERICA'S SECOND GENERATION OF HINDUS

was an upbringing that included a conscious understanding of the modern relevance of this age old religious tradition: “Rather than forcefully saying, ‘You have to take arati, you have to do this, you have to do that,’ my mom would explain why it is important, and why it makes you a better person, and why you’ll be happier with this in your life. I think that is a better approach than ‘Go take arati, we’re fasting today, we’re doing this and we’re doing that.’ I think that is what makes people run away, because you start to think, ‘This is annoying. I don’t know why we are doing this.’ If someone explains a practice to you and you find the meaning in it, you will do it even if your mom is not present. For me personally, my faith has made so many miraculous things happen in my life, so I want to incorporate it into my life.”

Pravin said that in addition to the deep influence of his own up-bringing, his fellow students in HSC had reinforced his faith. “There is an open topic, and everyone can voice their opinion. This allows you to share your



voice and gain other perspectives. Sometimes when your parents and other authorities tell you things, it is a little harder to buy into, but when you hear it from your peers it is easier

to understand. When you think about it, you say, ‘Wow, my mom and dad told me that so many years ago, but when another student tells me it makes sense.’”

As we finished our talk in the dormitory hall, I, too, began to gain a better appreciation of how faith has influenced our paths. I thought back to my childhood, running through the temple grounds with my friends. I thought about the hectic exam schedule, during which this interview was conducted. Talking about our faith brought a sense of normalcy to our lives. For our generation, it was not until college that these lessons and experiences became concrete and formed the foundation of our Hindu faith. While we were exposed to an entirely new setting with its own culture and values, many of us reverted back to the stability of our upbringing, instilled with the firm understanding of our religion. In turn, we hope to impart these values and beliefs to the next generation.



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Swami Vivekananda at
Belgaum
October 1892



This photograph appeared for
the first time in Neely's History of
the Parliament of Religions and
Religious Congresses at the World's
Columbian Exposition published in
Chicago in 1893.



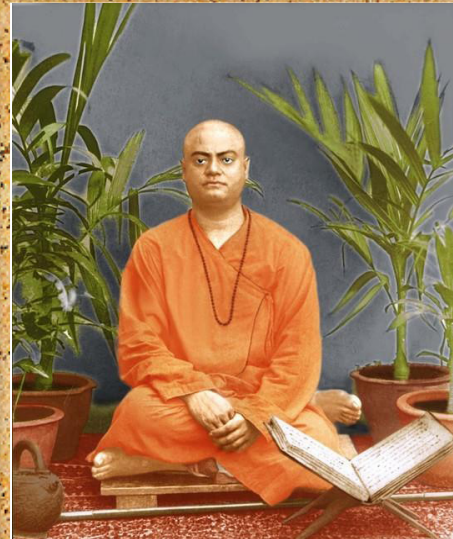
Swami Vivekananda in center; on his right a Mrs.
Bruce; behind him Carrie Wyckoff; on his left
Alice Hansbrough. The others are unknown.



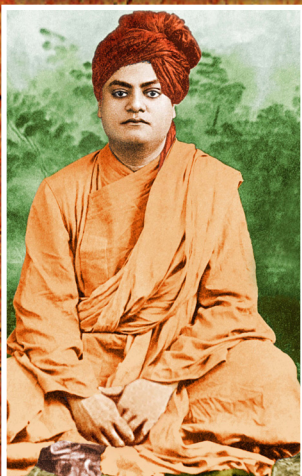
Swami Vivekananda at
Chicago Year 1893



Swami Vivekananda at
London Year 1895



We are sure many would be glad
to have the likeness of the swami in
his simple Indian sannyasi dress and
position. A photograph specially
taken here by Mr. T. G. Appavan
Mudaliar, April 1897, Madras.



Swami Vivekananda at
Colombo
January 1897



Swami Vivekananda
Popular Poster



Swami
Vivekananda
At Calcutta in
Year 1899



Miss Blanche Partington, a reporter from the San Francisco Chronicle, visited the Turk Street flat where Swamiji was staying to interview him. Her report of this interview, "[A Dusky Philosopher From India](#)" was published in the Chronicle of March 18, 1900.



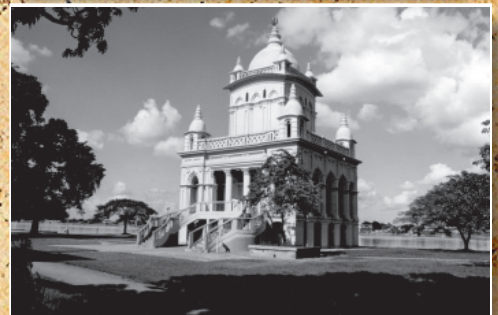
Swami Vivekananda at London
Month December Year 1896



Swamiji wrote to Swami Swarupananda on May 15, 1901: "[I have just returned from my tour through East Bengal and Assam. As usual, am quite tired and broken down.](#)" And in a letter to Josephine MacLeod he wrote from Belur Math on June 14, 1901, "As for me, I was thrown hors de combat [disabled] in Assam. The climate of the Math is just reviving me a bit."



In March 1901 Swamiji went on tour in East Bengal and Assam. Swamiji's health, which was by this time already declining, went from bad to worse. It was decided that a change of air would be beneficial to him and the party proceeded to Shillong, a beautiful hill station and the capital of Assam.



Three days before his passing away, as the swami [Swamiji] was walking up and down on the spacious lawn of the monastery in the afternoon with Swami Premananda, he pointed to a particular spot on the bank of the Ganga, and said to his brother monk gravely, "When I give up the body, cremate it there!". Swamiji entered mahasamadhi on July 4, 1902. This memorial was erected in his honor on the very spot where he was cremated.



Swami Vivekananda SF Cali Year
1900

HINDUISM AND MODERN LIFE

Does humanity's most enduring faith maintain its relevance amid the challenges of 21st-century life?

by **Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami**

Some months back in Australia, a group of Hindu teens asked me what relevance Hinduism and temples have to modern life. They said it as though the answer were obvious: None. But they were callow and yet to be schooled in the noble religion they had been born into. After our session, their question echoed in my mind for days. It is a question on many minds, deserving a complete answer. I would like to share with our readers the four major virtues that I singled out for those students, virtues which make Hinduism profoundly relevant in today's world: nonviolence, tolerance, worship and life's four noble goals.

The Virtue of Nonviolence: On November 13, 2006, we watched with interest a television report on the groundbreaking ceremony inaugurating a memorial to American civil rights hero Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Washington's front yard, the National Mall. President Bush said he was proud to dedicate the memorial in its "rightful place,"

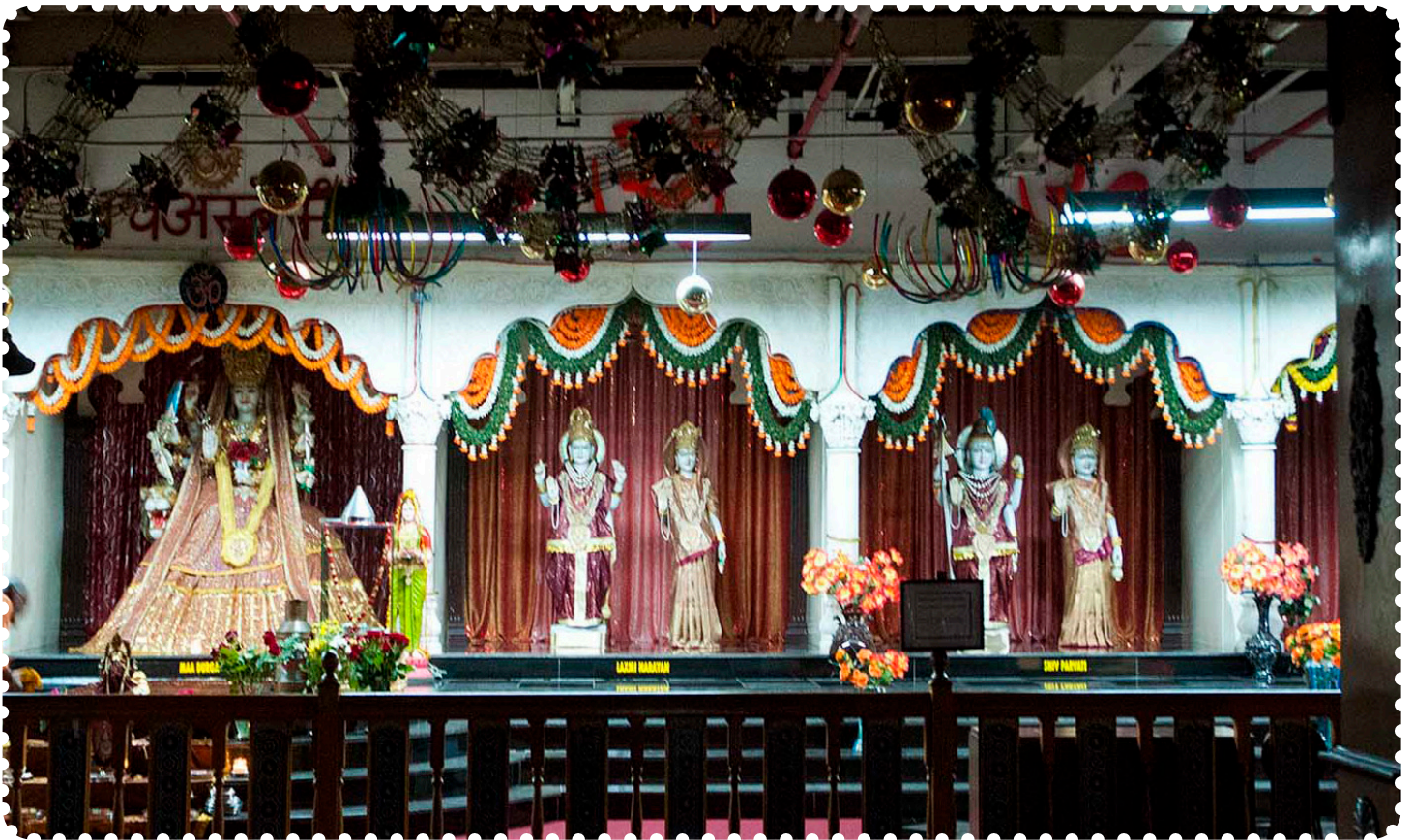
between monuments to Thomas Jefferson, who "declared the promise of America," and Abraham Lincoln, "who defended the promise of America." Dr. King, Bush offered, "redeemed the promise of America."

Dr. King came from a staunch Christian family. His grandfather was a Baptist preacher. His father was pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church. King earned his own Bachelor of Divinity degree from Crozier Theological Seminary in 1951 and his Doctor of Philosophy from Boston University in 1955. While at the seminary, King became acquainted with Mohandas Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent social protest. On a trip to India in 1959, King met with followers of Gandhi. During these intimate discussions, he became more convinced than ever that nonviolent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.

Dr. King went on to effectively utilize the

Gandhian principles of nonviolent social protest to bring to the world's attention the unjustness of US racial discrimination laws, which were subsequently changed. Dr. King and all the millions he impacted would certainly affirm the relevance of the key Hindu principle of nonviolence in modern society.

retaliation - "An eye for an eye." "If they kill one of us, we must kill one of them." Contrarily, Hindus view retaliation as unwise. Gandhi made an insightful statement to counterpoint the call for revenge. He warned: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." He also declared, "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only



The world has changed significantly in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Everyone has become more aware, and increasingly appalled, by the rampant incidents of brutality occurring worldwide every month. A great deal of violence is based upon the concept of the strategic necessity of

temporary; the evil it does is permanent.”

In a world awash in wars and conflict of every kind, Hinduism's gentleness and noninjury by thought, word and deed is more than a relevance. It is a necessity for the future of humanity.

HINDUISM AND MODERN LIFE



The Wisdom of Tolerance: The Hindu value that compliments and underlies the principle of nonviolence is that of tolerance. The Hindu belief that gives rise to tolerance of differences in race, religion and nationality is that all of mankind is good; we are all divine beings, souls created by God. Hindus do not accept the concept that some individuals are evil and others are good. Hindus believe that each individual is a soul, a divine being, who is inherently good. The Upanishads tell us that each soul

is emanated from God, as a spark from a fire, and thence begins a spiritual journey which eventually leads back to God. All human beings are on this journey, whether they realize it or not. The Upanishadic mahavakyam, or great saying, that expresses this is Ayam atma brahma, “the soul is God.” The Hindu practice of greeting one another with namaskara, worshipping God within the other person, is a way this philosophical truth is practiced on a daily basis.



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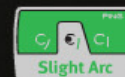
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This is taken one step further in the Vedic verse Vasudhaiva kutumbakam, “The whole world is one family.” Everyone is family oriented. All that we do is for the purpose of benefitting our family. We want them all to be happy, successful and religiously fulfilled. And when family is defined as the whole world, then it is clear that we wish everyone in the world to be happy, successful and religiously fulfilled. The Vedic verse that captures this sentiment is Sarve janah sukhino bhavantu, “May all people be happy.” Certainly the key principle of tolerance is a major demonstration of the relevance of Hindu teachings to our modern world in providing a more compassionate and universalistic worldview, one that embraces the growing pluralism in world societies.

Effective Forms of Worship: One question the teens in Australia asked was, “If God is omnipresent, what is the need to build big temples to worship Him. The cost of construction is quite large; plus after it is built you have the ongoing cost of monthly maintenance. Couldn’t all that money be spent in a better way?”

I asked them a question in response: “Since God is omnipresent, shouldn’t we be able to experience Him equally everywhere? For example, God permeates this room. By looking intently at the room shouldn’t you be able to experience God? In theory you should.” I then asked, “How many of you can see God permeating this room?” All present had to

admit that they could not.

Practically speaking, God’s omnipresence is a marvelously subtle form of consciousness, too subtle for most of us to experience unless we are skilled in meditation. I continued by giving the following series of analogies with other objects that are difficult to see. If we want to see a distant galaxy, we must go to an observatory and use a powerful telescope. To look into the nucleus of a cell, we go to a laboratory and use an electron microscope. Similarly, to see God, we go to the temple and experience God through the sanctified murti, or statue, of the Deity. Temples and particularly the murtis within them can connect us with the Divine because they are especially sacred. There are three reasons for this: construction, consecration and continuous daily worship.

A temple is designed and built according to strict rules laid down in the scriptures. This governs what shrines are included in the temple, the shrines’ location and the overall dimensions of the temple. Consecration occurs through the powerful ceremony called kumbhabhishekam, during which a large number of priests perform elaborate rites for days on end. Thereafter begins the routine of daily worship conducted by professional priests. In these three ways, the temple and the murtis within them are sanctified and endowed with potent energies.

Hindu temples in every corner of the world offer Hindus an achievable way to experience God's sacred presence. Divinity's presence uplifts those attending the temple, inspiring them to bring forth and perpetuate traditional Hindu culture in the form of sacred music, art and dance. As such, the temple becomes the hub of religious life in the surrounding Hindu community and thus is undeniably relevant to modern life.

Four Noble Pursuits: Hinduism's relevance to modern life is perhaps most personally important in the sphere of spiritual fulfillments and worldly attainments. Each Hindu seeks the highest and best for self and family, including closeness to God and blessings in every arena of experience. Hinduism has tools, maps and guidelines for reaching those very human goals. Consider the concept of the purusharthas, Hinduism's four traditional pursuits. The first two are wealth and love, known in Sanskrit as artha and kama. Common to all mankind, these embrace the pursuit of love, family, children, career and financial abundance. The third is dharma, which provides direction and balance to the first two. Dharma is piety, virtue and right living. It includes the ideals of seeking wealth and love in an ethical manner, being honest in business and loyal to one's spouse.

The fourth noble pursuit is Moksha, spiritual illumination and liberation from rebirth on Earth. Liberation comes when all our karmas

are resolved, dharma has been fulfilled and God has been realized. Hindus know that Dharma, Artha and Kama are not ends in themselves. They provide the necessary surroundings, relationships and experiences which help the embodied soul mature over many lives and attain an everdeepening God consciousness. This maturing process eventually culminates in moksha, at which point the soul has outgrown the need to continue its cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The goal of moksha, which sharply distinguishes Hinduism from Western religions, reminds us not to become so enthralled with the world that we neglect our foremost aim: God realization and liberation.

It is hard to imagine a mega message greater than Hinduism's call for human concord, noble aims for our worldly existence and spiritualizing of our daily life. In addressing these fundamental human needs, no system of thought and theology is more germane. Having visited communities around the world, I am convinced that Hinduism remains vitally relevant in this era of space travel and global communications, and of worldliness and conflict on every continent. This vitality derives from its yoga, its teaching of all pervasive Divinity, its health system of Ayurveda, its mystical architectural system of Vastu, its immense cultural gifts and so much more. It is relevant in providing the human race a profound self-understanding, illumined insights into life and consciousness, into human nature and our highest purposes.

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Swami Vivekananda on Women Empowerment

by **Chandramohanrao
Neelamraju**

Swami Vivekananda was born on the 12th January, 1863. The world is celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of the great monk and man who was instrumental in the revival of Hinduism in India, instrumental in the concept of nationalism in colonial rule and introduction of Indian ethos to the west. On this august occasion it is apt to remember him for his respect towards the fairer sex. It is more so at a time when India is finding itself at the crossroads, when more and more women are occupying pride of place in nation building but sadly, where her modesty is under constant attack.

Swami Vivekananda believed that the first manifestation of God is the hand that rocks the cradle. In fact in few civilizations we find a cow giving milk, the earth bearing grains, a tree bearing fruit and the mother tending babies being revered equally as manifestation of God, like in the Indian civilization. Swamiji very boldly said in those days in the West woman was treated as wife while in the East she was treated as the mother. Thus, he tried to draw a distinct line between materialism and spiritualism in the treatment of women. Though unfortunate it is a 'fait accompli' that the once revered mother in India is today wailing at the malnutrition of her babies and outrage to her modesty. Allegorically, it is true in case of the healthy Mother Cow that is slaughtered, the rich mother earth that is exploited selfishly and the mother tree that faces near extinction. It's right time to remember the 'immortal' soul and mend our ways.

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WOEMN EMPOWERMENT

Swamiji was a monk, who renounced material pleasures for spirituality. In early days, it is said, he saw women as an obstacle in his path. But once he realized the highest Truth, he saw in them Mother the Divine. It is a case of seeing objects not with eyes but with soul. **“The soul has neither sex, nor caste nor imperfection”**, he averred. A great lesson to be learned here and that which he told the West was that once one realizes soul through meditation, he would see a mother in a woman rather than a wife, but for the duty ordained by God to sustain human race through the Divine union. He further elucidated the point by stating, **“Soul has no sex, it is neither male nor female, it is only in the body that sex exists and the man who desires to reach the spirit cannot at the same hold sex distinctions.”** **“The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of women”**, he said. It shows the vision of Swami Vivekananda for a nation to progress. In fact, his words are equally important to the contemporary East as with the West. He refers to the Vedanta Philosophy and quotes from the Books how women were treated by Hinduism. He lamented why women were treated like that. Woman suffered for eons and that gave her infinite patience and perseverance. **“What great words to say! How many of us, men, that feel we are running the family, have a sense of the invisible income she is accruing through her sacrifice for children through physical toil?”** He laments that writing down Smritis

and binding them by hard rules, men have turned women into manufacturing machines. Great words from a saint who renounced all sensory pleasures nor exposed to vagaries of family life.

He lamented why women are treated as aliens when the same conscious Self is present in all, as per Vedanta. **“Unless you uplift women, men can never rise in the eyes of the Divine”** he stated. He aggrandizes women stating that irrespective of caste they were eulogized by the Vedas. He quotes the example of Gargi, who in the presence of a thousand Rishis boldly challenged Sage Yagnavalkya for a discussion on the Brahman. He laid stress on women education in days when women were deprived of the basic privilege. No family or nation who does not respect women ever rises, he averred.

In a veiled attack on the ‘masculinity’ of man being eulogized with reference to the ‘weakness of women’, he asks men whether man can deliver a baby. He says the Universe is one of perfect balance. “If women cannot fight nor can man suffer or endure the vagaries of life”, he said.

In recent times a trend developed in India where the teachings of the Swamiji, were sought to be misinterpreted in a way unbecoming of our culture, whereas the West started seeing in him a sage that defined womanhood as Divinity in human form.



Sahaja Yoga—A Unique Discovery

By Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi (1979)



Some Background on Sahaja Yoga

The word 'Sahaja' (Saha + ja) means born with you or inborn. Whatever is inborn manifests without any effort. Hence Sahaja Yoga is the name given to my system, which is effortless, easy, and spontaneous. It is a part of Nature, you may call it life's source—the vitality of the Divine.

When a fetus is between two and three months old, in the mother's womb, a column of rays of consciousness, emitted through the allpervading Divine Love, pass through the developing brain to enlighten it. The shape of the human brain is prism like. So, the column of rays falling on it gets refracted into four diverse channels corresponding to the four aspects of the nervous system.

These are:

- Parasympathetic nervous system
- Sympathetic nervous system (right)
- Sympathetic nervous system (left)
- Central nervous System (This need not be discussed as it is the link with objectivity).

The set of rays that fall on the fontanel bone (apex of the head known as Taloo) pierce in the center and pass straight into the medulla oblongata through a channel (Sushumna). This energy, after leaving a very thread like, thin line in the medulla oblongata, settles down in three and a half coils in the triangular bone at the base of the spinal cord (Mooladhar). This coiled energy is known as Kundalini.

The subtle energy enters through the center of the brain (Sahasrara Brahmarandhra) and precipitates six more centers on its way down. The gross manifestation of this subtle energy, in the Sushumna channel of the spinal cord, is termed the Parasympathetic nervous system. The centers of Chakras are expressed as plexuses outside the spinal cord. Surprisingly, we have the same number of plexuses and sub plexuses outside, as the number of Chakras and their petals inside, the spinal cord.

Vital Energy

The sympathetic nervous system uses the vital energy. There are two systems left and right. The two channels, which carry this energy, in subtle form (in the medulla oblongata), are known as Ida and Pingala respectively. The right-side system (in the right-handed person) caters to the emergencies

The Channels of Attention

Both sympathetic and parasympathetic act on the plexuses, but in opposition to each other. The parasympathetic relaxes the plexuses while the sympathetic squeezes the energy by constricting them. One fills in the vitality and the other consumes it.

There is a gap in the parasympathetic nervous system (Sushumna) but no gap in the sympathetic nervous system (at the navel). This is the hurdle that has rendered all our searching and entry into the parasympathetic fruitless so far. It is like three ladders, two of them touching the ground while the central one is hanging in the air. So whenever we try to rise in our consciousness, we move on to the sympathetic system.

If we pass toward the right side we enter onto the activity that goes on bloating in the balloon of ego. Thus we feel responsible and active. When this activity increases beyond limits, like a growing tree whose roots are not equally

of the active consciousness (extra efforts and emergencies). The left-side system (in medicine they say it remains dormant) caters to the subconscious mind of the psyche (libido). Both these sympathetic-nerve systems are called the Sun and Moon channels (i.e., Surya nadi and Chandra nadi).

grown, the being falls to the ground.

Over activity of the sympathetic nervous system causes tension, sleeplessness, and ultimately all deadly diseases like cancer. These diseases are caused by the constricted plexuses that have been drained of their energy. If you can make the parasympathetic dominate the right side, then we can antidote the effects of over activity. Then all the diseases and the effects caused by this right side get cured automatically.

The left side sympathetic nervous system (libido) has the power to store all that is dead in us. It connects you with store houses of the subconscious mind and with the collective subconscious (Bhootlok or Paralok).

At the backside of the brain, at the apex of this channel, the super ego exists like a balloon. It becomes heavy by storing, the conditioning of the mind through libido. So if the tension is heavy it breaks the super ego into many fragments. If you still overexert by conditioning, a partial vacuum forms and this sucks another

dead personality from the collective subconscious (Paralok) into your superego. So in your pursuit of truth, if you take to further efforts and indulge in concentration, training of the mind, forced abstinence, forced meditation, or complete slavery to the emotional attachment of the mind, the libido with the aid of the affected superego may connect you to the collective subconscious (Paralok) where all dead souls bad, good, or saintly exist. These souls start manifesting through you and you get siddhis or extra sensory perceptions. Actually these are the different subtle (dead) personalities dominating us through super ego.

The Promised Goal

All religions have promised inner silence when you reach the state of Self-realisation—the inner miracle of the subtle awareness and not gross jugglery. The Bhagavad Gita says that you become the witness (Sakshi Swarup) of the play of the Divine. Many modern thinkers are also talking about the new awareness. This has been described as ‘thoughtless awareness’ which results in collective consciousness. We hear of many prophecies made by ancient and modern writers about the evolution of a new race of super human beings of unique awareness. These beings of unique awareness. These are no longer empty words. Through the discovery of Sahaja Yoga it is possible to achieve the transformation of the human consciousness to the higher planes promised by various seers.

The subject of Kundalini is no longer a matter of book knowledge. Now you can see, with the naked eye, the breathing of the Kundalini at the Mooladhara. You can feel the different Chakras in the spinal cord with your fingers. Formerly, bridging the gap in the Sushumna was the insurmountable problem. But it is

being discovered that this gap can be filled with the vibrating power of Divine Love. The Kundalini rises like a majestic mother and breaks the apex of the brain (Brahmarandhra) without giving the slightest trouble to the child (Sadhaka). It happens in a split second, in the short spell between two successive thoughts. Of course, if the aspirant (Sadhaka) is diseased or his Chakras are constricted by over activity of the sympathetic nervous system, the Kundalini, being the Mother of every individual and the embodiment of love, knowledge, and beauty, knows how to reveal Her love beautifully and to give rebirth to Her child without causing any hurt.

The Kundalini cannot rise without Sahaja Yoga, i.e., if someone, who is not Self-realised, tries to awaken Her, the Kundalini does not leave Her seat and, without the proper invitation, the Kundalini becomes adamant and angry. Thus the sympathetic gets into activity. When She is accused of sex, She sends heat waves over the sympathetic nervous system which causes the constriction or blockage of the plexuses and the path of the Kundalini is completely broken



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down. The main 'condition' of Sahaja Yoga is that your will and freedom are always respected. In Sahaja Yoga the person is fully aware and alert and receives inner silence and experience without doing any unnatural movements. He sits in a completely easy pose throughout or he also may lie down (Sahajasana or Shavasana). The breathing is normal or less than normal.

The End of the Path

The mind, with a childlike innocence achieves very quick results. Whatever may be the loads of the mind, if the longing is honest and earnest, sooner or later, the aspirant can get Self-realization. After reaching this state the vibrations start emitting from the extremities. These are described by Adi Shankaracharya in his work 'Ananda Lahari.' These vibrations are the waves of Divine Love that can fill also other persons' inner being and give them the same experience of Self-realization. This is how the chain reaction starts. One light enlightens another.

The physical manifestations are as follows:

The pupils of the eyes become dilated (Parasympathetic action). The face becomes radiant, the body becomes light, and all tension is completely removed. The rising of the Kundalini can be seen by others and felt by the aspirant. First the throbbing is clearly felt at Sahasrara (apex of the brain) and when it stops, complete silence is felt within and in all awareness. The flow of grace is felt coming down, cooling the whole being. As the attention moves to the subtle, gross attachments drop out. A person gradually loses identification with falsehood and artificiality. In matter, he

sees beauty and not its possession value. In knowledge, he identifies himself with the Truth and is not afraid to profess, nor does he indulge in the double standards of life. His flow of love becomes spontaneous, generous, without any tinge of attachment, possession or any return. The person becomes ageless a hollow personality.

Now let us see what happens inside.

The attention of the consciousness moves to the inner being (Kundalini). As the thread (Sutra) of a necklace is passing through every bead of the necklace, the inner consciousness (Kundalini) is also passing through every human being.

As soon as our attention moves to our inner consciousness we can move on to everybody's Kundalini. One starts feeling the Kundalini, its nature, its position in other persons. Collective consciousness is thus established. Now you become a universal being. After some days you cannot say who the other person is. The power of love is so great and dynamic that with the movement of your fingers you can move the Kundalini of thousands. It becomes child's play. This is how the en masse evolution of human beings will take place. These are the signs of the advent of the Golden age of Truth (Satya Yuga).

Swamiji's Quotes

As different streams having different sources all mingle their waters in the sea, so different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to God.

If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished.

May He who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura-Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jews, the Father in Heaven of the Christians give strength to you to carry out your noble idea.

God is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than everything in this and next life.

Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers, and let them go their own way.

Your Atman is the support of the universe—whose support do you stand in need of? Wait with patience and love and strength. If helpers are not ready now, they will come in time. Why should we be in a hurry? The real working force of all great work is in its almost unperceived beginnings.

The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them.

Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success and, above all, love.

Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin; to say that you are weak, or others are weak.

When an idea exclusively occupies the mind, it is transformed into an actual physical or mental state.

All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is law of life, just as you breathe to live.

If you want to have life, you have to die every moment for it. Life and death are only different expressions of the same thing looked at from different standpoints; they are the falling and the rising of the same wave, and the two form one whole.

Swamiji's Quotes

If the mind is intensely eager, everything can be accomplished—mountains can be crumbled into atoms.

We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.

If money help a man to do good to others, it is of some value; but if not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got rid of, the better.

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control or philosophy – by one or more or all of these and be free.

All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.

You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.

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Vernaland buys 8,000 acres at La Osa Ranch
Vernaland LLC, a land banking and land development company based in Phoenix, has made its first significant investment in the southeast Valley land market - and its largest to date - with the purchase of 8,000 acres in La Osa Ranch, a master-plan community near Casa Grande.

Mahima 2013 - Huzuki Maestro Brings Bollywood to the Desert
Music transcends language, region and nationality and no one brings these together with the flair and virtuosity as Padmaresh Harbharan. While renowned for his melodious voice that can soothe like a cool breeze, Harbharan is equally well known for his foot-tapping Bollywood hits. Under the auspices of Maha Charitra's Temple of Arizona, Harbharan will be making a return visit to the valley this year to perform at Mahima 2013, presented by Kumon of Gilbert Southeast. The showcase event organized by the temple will take place at Trede Theater at the Mesa Arts Center on Sunday, September 29th at 5 PM.

Murti Shiksha Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony HTA
Asylum seekers at Southwest US border double
Kathak - The Story of the Dance for a Cause
Love Across Borders
Padma Lalohmi urges physicians to deal with patients holistically
US-born Jains make aseetic faith fit modern life
An Interview with Sharda Mangal, Chinnaya Mission in the Valley

Controversial Film about Sri Lankan Civil War causes International Str
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Controversial Film about Sri Lankan Civil War causes International Str
The film 'The Last Days in the Desert' has caused a stir in the Indian community. It depicts the story of a Sri Lankan soldier who is captured by the Indian army during the Sri Lankan civil war. The film is being shown in the Valley and has received mixed reviews. Some people feel that it is a sensitive topic and should not be shown, while others feel that it is an important story that should be told.

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The collage features a laptop displaying a news article about a school's performance, a corkboard with various notices and announcements, and a computer mouse. The text on the laptop screen includes 'I hope you find Southwest a useful addition...' and 'I'll be honest, I've always been a fan of the school...'. The corkboard has several notices, including one about a 'Bible Study' and another about a 'Community Meeting'.

Swamiji's Quotes

You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself.

Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true.

Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest idea, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth.

Understanding human nature is the highest knowledge, and only by knowing it can we know God? It is also a fact that the knowledge of God is the highest knowledge, and only by knowing God can we understand human nature

Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success and, above all, love.

Where can we go to find God if we cannot see Him in our own hearts and in every living being.

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Northern Lights Yoga

Near 91st and Bell
Sun City, AZ 85351
Ph: 623-261-8914
northernlightsyoga@yahoo.com
[http:// www.nlyoga.com](http://www.nlyoga.com)



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<http://www.yogaconnection.org>



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