



A Path to Hindu Heritage

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IN ROBINSVILLE, NJ**



2024 Festivals Calendar on Page 14

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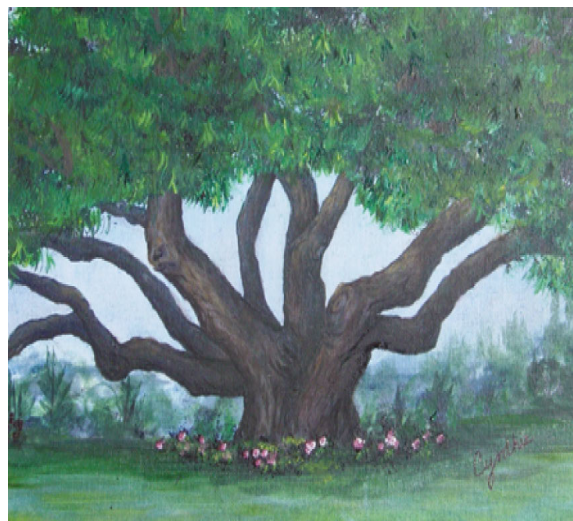
Marg welcomes original articles for possible publication in the following areas: Dharma, Philosophy, Scriptures, and Culture; Hindu way of life; growing up as Hindu in America; Holistic living; problems and needs of multicultural Hindu families; and materials, including stories for the young readers.

We also invite our readers to send their comments regarding the **Marg** articles, or about other issues falling within the scope of **Marg**. We reserve the right to select, abbreviate, and edit for clarity submitted materials to conform to the editorial policy of **Marg** and the available space.



Contents

Advertise in Marg	2
Austerity	3
by Swami Jyotirmayananda	
Cosmic Love	8
by Swami Lalitananda	
Ahimsa (Non-Violence)	9
By HH Mahant Swami Maharaj	
Meditate on the Sea of Eternity	11
The Wisdom of a Parrot	12
Hindu Panchāṅg	13
2024 Festivals Calendar	14
Subscription & Donation Form	16
Shri Ganesh	17
by Dr. Dileep & Dr. Kokila Vyas	
Spirituality is Connected to Life	20
by Swami Bhoomananda	
Is Hinduism a religion or a way of Life?	25
by Maria Wirth	
Hindu Calendar (3 – Month)	27



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AUSTERITY

THE MYSTIC PATH OF INCREASING JOY

Swami Jyotirmayananda

What is austerity? Most people think of austerity as adopting some discipline that is uncomfortable for the body for a spiritual purpose. In the name of religion and devotion, people all over the world practice austerities. You have heard of nuns and monks beating themselves with whips. In the Himalayas, you will see some people seated in the Ganges River at three o'clock in the morning trying to endure the icy cold water. Then there are people who gaze without winking for hours and hours and people who fast for a long time. Some people take up the vow of not speaking (mauna) when they are teenagers and do not speak a word until they are advanced in years!

Many observers are amazed by these practices and consider them something quite extraordinary. People say, "How great a Saint this person is; he has been practicing austerity for such a long time." But from an advanced point of view, these external things should not delude you.

Real austerity has a Divine purpose. Austerity is a mystical process that enables you to purify your mind and brings you closer to God—that is real austerity. Austerity must make your body and mind fit for a higher purpose. If, instead, austerity makes your body crippled and your mind

stunted, that austerity has no meaning—although it may be quite dazzling to the masses.

AUSTERITY TAKES YOU THE MASTER OF YOURSELF

Practicing austerity implies adopting a life of healthy discipline. Learn to wake up at a certain time, perform your duties without being sluggish, and develop promptness and punctuality. All these are austerities. In the beginning, austerity may seem bitter. Your ego may complain terribly. But gradually as you persist, you begin to enjoy it.

For example, when you first begin rising in the morning at four o'clock for, meditation and Yoga exercises, you may have difficulty adjusting to your new pattern for a while because you are not accustomed to it. If anyone awakens you to help you keep your vow, you may get angry with that person. But as you begin to pursue this new discipline, you begin to enjoy it. Now you expect people to wake you up, and if they do not wake you up, you become angry with them!

When you begin to enjoy a disciplined life, it is no longer discipline. Austerity should not fill you with a sense of pathos. You should not feel that you are renouncing something or practicing something painfully

difficult. Rather, austerity should be considered a Divine luxury for an aspirant because it allows you to be a master of yourself, not a slave.

When you lack austerity, you become a slave. A slave may be given all types of rewards, and have wonderful robes and ornaments, yet he still lives a life of dependence. Similarly, though you may have a lot of things, if you lack austerity and discipline in your personality, you remain dependent on the circumstances in the world around you for your happiness. This process of austerity enables you to become a master of yourself.

In the Gita, Lord Krishna speaks of three types of austerity: satvic, rajasic, and tamasic. Tamasic austerity is a gross form of austerity that is characterized by inflicting pain on oneself or on others.

Suppose, for example, a person feels intense hatred towards another. Somewhere he reads that a particular mantra will destroy the enemy, and that if he were to repeat that mantra while standing in the cold Ganges for hours at a stretch the mantra will be quickly effective. So, early in the morning he enters the Ganges and stands there repeating the mantra. People observing him think he is a wonderful ascetic, but all the while his mind is

MANAH PRASADAH

In order for you to control your speech, your mind must first be controlled. Therefore, a set of practices has been enjoined to bring this about. The first aspect of austerity of the mind is manah prasadah—allowing the mind to be joyous. People who have been accustomed to thinking of austerity as something crude will be surprised. “How can austerity be joyous?” they might ask. In Yoga philosophy, austerity is not supposed to give you pain, but discipline you so that the spirit flows in a healthy, unobstructed way through your personality. Thus, the effort to maintain cheerfulness of the mind is a dynamic aspect of austerity.

Many people have developed the habit of allowing their minds to become negative. You can often tell such people by the way they droop their heads. You must watch your own mind very carefully. Try to develop the philosophy that the world is an expression of the Divine creation. There is intelligence and a guiding purpose behind the world; you have nothing to worry about. There should be no room for grief, dejection, and sorrow in your life.

Always think of the positive things that you have acquired and accomplished. By thinking of the blessings God has given you, you will have so many reasons for being cheerful. More than anything else, understand that the Divine Hand is sustaining your personality at every moment. The awareness that Divinity is with you can fill your mind with joy.

By always adopting this philosophy of loving God, you allow your mind to be serene and joyous. Do not develop negative thoughts. When they do arise, simply be a witness to them.

When you keep your mind in a negative state, you will be steadily generating negative impressions, and your mind will be forced to stay negative by the weight of the impressions. Due to the weight of the impressions of sadness and sorrow, you will not be happy even when you find yourself in a wonderful situation—a situation you have been craving for a long time.

This is so because your experiences of joy and sorrow are intimately related to the impressions of your unconscious. Therefore, an important part of austerity is not to let your mind be negative. Hold your head high, and let your mind be joyful.

GENTLENESS

The next aspect of austerity is saumyatvam (gentleness). When you confront a situation that provokes your mind into becoming agitated or inactive, simply look at it without building up ill will towards anyone. Let your mind stay gentle, composed, and detached. You will discover a spiritual strength within yourself.

Otherwise, by reacting to external situations, you allow your mind to become agitated. An agitated mind creates negative impressions in your unconscious. Gradually a habit builds up. Your mind constantly reacts to things no matter how they are. If you are looking for absolute perfection

according to the concepts of your ego, you will never find it; there will always be something to irritate your mind.

If you are vulnerable to negative influences, or if you are already predisposed to react to something negative, then all you need is just a pretext. A leaf might fall on your head, and it would be enough to put you into a state of agitation, figuratively speaking.

Saumyatvam implies that the mind becomes serene, calm, and unaffected—just like the face of Buddha. When you watch a movie, you are always aware of the fact that all the happenings on the screen are mere appearances. Therefore, though you feel sorrow at the tragic developments, you are not deeply affected in your heart. Similarly, be a spectator to your mind and its changes, and know that faith in God will ultimately make you truly gentle.

SILENCE

The next practice relating to the mind is mauna (silence). If you watch your mind, you will notice that a great many thoughts enter it constantly. After a while, it is as if a lively discussion is going on deep in your mind. The world may be quiet around you, yet your mind might be as noisy as a marketplace. This should not be.

When you are engaged in various actions, watch your mind. Do not entertain conflicting thoughts and do not allow the mind to be agitated. Rather try to relax your mind. You should be like a swan as it enters the lake

COSMIC LOVE

Swami Lalitananda

Nothing is permanent here. Although the mind rejects this fact and repeatedly attaches itself to objects that seem to promise enduring happiness, it is unable to escape the blazing truth of the transitory nature of phenomena. Therefore, the mind moves from frustration to frustration.

Man is prompted by the desires of his subconscious, so Nature in her cunning cleverness weaves for him a web of secret authenticity around ephemeral objects. She compels his senses to reach out and embrace the objects as if they were the very Self.

Desires for objects scorch the heart, feed the cravings of the subconscious, and ultimately throw the mind into chaos. Frustrated by failure, the mind seeks compensation by admiring the seeming glitter of other objects. A desire-ridden nature cannot be trusted and is the vilest of enemies for an aspirant. Overcome by weak will, constantly under the sway of infatuation, and dying of “consumption,” reason seldom exercises her staff of viveka (discriminative understanding).

Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi states (Samadhi Pad, Sutra 37), “Vita Raja Vishayam Va Chittam” - One attains steadiness of the mind by meditating upon the minds of desireless Sages.”

The mind of a Sage is calm and still, like a placid lake without waves, in which the transparent waters reflect the moon. Because that mind is devoid of impressions of attachment and hatred, the Moon of the Supreme Self reflects in it as Bliss unbounded. If one emulates the example of Sages and Saints and meditates upon their nature, one develops purity of heart. Mind becomes steady.

Within a short time, the impressions of serenity blossom into a state of delightful joy, and the mind, with its senses withdrawn, turns away from worldly objects. Such a mind loosens the grip of demanding desires and moves to a height beyond human imagination. The apparently solid reality of the world loosens its hold.

At sunset, from the balcony of a house by the seashore, one watches the expansion of the sea

at sunset, from the balcony of a house by the seashore, one watches the expansion of the sea with its long extending beach. . . . sees moving figures gradually lose their features, and as the sun continues to decline in the west, mere silhouettes walk....and soon all is sunk in darkness. And after the termination of night, dawn wakes up to deck the world with a new reality.

Similarly, what seems so real today gradually vanishes when dispassion develops towards the objects of the world. The apparent reality of objects sustained by the illusion of desires gradually disappears. Desires in their subtle forms remain in the subconscious in the form of *vasanas* (subtle desires), and even these are engulfed in the widening expansion of the Self. Then, with the dawn of knowledge, one experiences the supreme state of Liberation.

From that glorious state, there is no return. There is no pain or pleasure, no struggle or strife, no grief or sorrow! One swims on.... unto the shining sea of Oneness and Cosmic Love!



AUSTERITY

CONT. from Page 7

becomes a blessing for himself and for humanity. All that is good, beautiful, and divine is possible through austerity alone.

"May you shine with the radiant power of austerity!"



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AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

HH Mahant Swami Maharaj (BASP)

Talk given by Swamiji on "Value" and "Ahimsa" - Non-Violence
in Robbinsville, New Jersey on October 2, 2023.

AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

A core principle within Hinduism is living a non-violent (Ahimsa) life. This principle extends beyond physical violence. Ahimsa is the Hindu belief that symbolizes love, genuine care, and compassion towards all, strengthening the spiritual foundation. Ahimsa is Divinity within all of us realizing equality by seeing all as the children of God. The mindset of spreading non-violence and equality for all humankind was far superior to our life. The salient request to "Impart these principles to each and every human, then we will have a place that is filled with love and non-violence. Non-violence is the universal path to peace, from individuals to families to all of society. Bhagawan Swaminarayan established non-violence as the highest form of our duty. It is a new measure to live in a non-violent manner. It was urged to see God in all and hold the belief that every person has a right to live. The path of Ahimsa calls for everyone - created equally - to live a pure life through thought, mind and action.

Sanskrit has well defined Himsa as doing harm or causing injury; But Putting "A" before "Himsa" (Violence), It becomes "Ahimsa

(Non-Violence)," the latter "A" just negates it. In a very simple sense, Ahimsa is abstaining from causing hurt, injury or harm to any living being. Common sense ethics dictates that one does not do to others what one does not want done to oneself. Our Vedic shastra says that "Ahimsa param_dharmah (Noninjury is the foremost value). Patanjali describes that a human being must follow for physical wellbeing and emotional growth. Patanjali mentioned in his "Yama" (Self- Control) discipline that Ahimsa is the first value. Patanjali defined Ahimsa as not hurting or bearing malice to any being by means of speech, thoughts, or actions. Thus, non-injury is a universal value. It should be noted here that "Non-violence" in English literature talks about a true only the most extreme forms of wrongdoing, whereas "Ahimsa" goes much deeper to prohibit even the subtle abuse and simple hurt. This thought or approach not only condemned killing, but extended to harm caused by one's thoughts, words, and deeds of all kinds.

HIMSA

All harsh and rude speech is Himsa. Violence committed even in a dream is also "Himsa", which goes against the principle of "Ahimsa". Use of servants, or inferiors are

considered as "Himsa". Wounding the feeling of others by gesture, expression, tone of voice and unkind words is also Himsa.

To fail to relieve another's pain, or even to neglect to help is considered as a sort of Himsa.

Ahimsa, practiced in its purest form, is Divine in Nature. To me, Ahimsa and Divinity are one. You cannot have one without another one too. I believe that Ahimsa is positive, cosmic love. I think that it is the development of a mental attitude in which hatred for others is replaced by love. Ahimsa, being a true sacrifice, forgiveness; it is a Shakti (Power); and it is a true strength. To begin with, Ahimsa is a discipline and disciple.

DISCIPLINE OF AHIMSA

The Jain Community practiced daily the tenets of Ahimsa such that Jain Monks avoid eating after sunset to prevent ingesting tiny creatures present in the evening. The Monks even covered their mouths with pieces of cloth and swept the ground as they walked etc to avoid harming any living being. Similarly, the Hindu Monks take a vow of Ahimsa. Hindu Monks live a Saintly life sensitive to hurting another by thought, word, or deed. Thus, Ahimsa is for strong people who desire

MEDITATE ON THE SEA OF ETERNITY

Meditation is the direct road leading to Self- realization. But, it is important that an aspirant has a clear understanding of what meditation is , and how it must be practiced.

Simply sitting in one pose does not constitute meditation. Meditation is not an escape into a dream world of fantasy. It is not a magical feat to bring aspirants out of pain and give them all the delights that they have always dreamed about. The simple truth is that meditation must change the very structure of the mind. Then, how can it be possible to linger on the old desires, concepts, fancies, and ideals of life?

Meditation is a direct way to change the patterns of the mind from the very depths of the unconscious. Unless a deeper reorientation is worked out in the planes of the unconscious, human life will continue to remain in its old rut: the same old talks, the same old friends, the same old concepts that increase the complexity of conditions and circumstances.

There are three stages in meditation. The first stage is that of one-pointed concentration. This is called dharana (concentration) in Sanskrit. The next stage is the continuity of the one-pointed flow of the mind. This is called dhyana (meditation)

in a technical sense. The third stage is samadhi (super consciousness), when the mind begins to expand beyond the limits of the ego- center. It then begins to reflect the grandeur of universal harmony and beauty.

By the practice of concentration, meditation and samadhi, a Yogi ascends the ladder of Yoga and attains Self-realization. In the beginning a sustained effort is needed to promote a concentrated mind. An aspirant must adopt a definite pose and practice meditation every day at a definite time, preferably early in the morning. He must follow a technique according to the instructions of his Guru. But, as meditation is perfected, a concentrated state of mind continues to always operate. It does not depend upon a particular time and pose. Meditation becomes spontaneous.

A mind purified by meditation continues to gather higher impressions based on wisdom. These impressions continue to destroy impressions based upon egoism and illusion. The meditative process removes all the extraneous obstacles that hide your identity — the Self. When the mind is freed from egoistic complexes, it reveals that you are the immortal Self, you are the Non-dual Brahman or the Absolute.

It is important to remember that hallucinogenic drugs and drinks have nothing to do with meditation. The idea that mind is led to expansion through these drugs is based upon gross ignorance. Under the influence of drugs, the mental process becomes so disfigured and contracted that even the most insignificant objects seem to have a strange expansion. Further, these experiences lead to a personality that cannot face the realities of life. Individuals using drugs are generous in words and verbal idealism, but they are unable to bring their ideals into their practical life.

An aspirant must adopt a positive path under the guidance of a Guru. He must learn to integrate his personality in the light of Yoga philosophy. Meditation leads to the cessation of all sorrows, sufferings, and cycles of birth and death. It is through a process of positive integration that he can enter the stream of meditation that leads to the Sea of Eternity, which bestows endless bliss. May the Lord grant your patience and endurance to move forward on the path of Yoga, which culminates in union with the Divine Self.



HINDU PANCHĀNG

A **panchāng** is a Hindu calendar and almanac, which follows traditional units of Hindu timekeeping, and presents important dates and their calculations in a tabulated form. Panchangas are used in Jyotisha or Jyotiṣa (Hindu astrology).

The basic purpose of Hindu Panchāng is to check various Hindu festivals and auspicious time (Muhurta). In the Hindu system of muhurat, various element of Panchang constitute auspicious and inauspicious moments (Yogas) by combination of weekday-Tithi, weekday-constellation. In addition, individual weekdays, Tithis, constellations, Yoga and Karanas have been prescribed for specific activities which fructify during their currency.

Panchāngas are published in India by many authors, societies, academies, and universities. Different publications differ only minutely. At least for a casual or not yet trained reader, this does not matter much. They forecast celestial phenomena such as solar eclipses, forecasting weather (rain, dry spells) as well as more mundane occurrences.

The study of Panchāng involves understanding *Rasi phala* (also pronounced 'Rashi phala') - the impact of the signs of the zodiac on the individual. Astrologers consult the Panchāng to set auspicious dates for weddings, for any family special activities, and other activities as per their religion.

The casting of a Panchāng involves elaborate mathematical work involving high level of spherical geometry and sound understanding of astronomical phenomena, such as sidereal movements of heavenly bodies. However, in practice the tabulation is done on the basis of short-cut formulations as propounded by ancient Vedic sages and scholars.

A typical Panchāng may state tabulations of positions of Sun, Moon, and other planets for every day of the year on a fixed place (longitude, latitude) and time of day (in 24-hour format - Indian Standard Time). The users calculate the remaining data using their relative difference from this fixed place and time.

There are several panchāngas that contain information for more than one year. There is one, "*Vishvavijaya Panchāngam*" that covers 100 years.

In all Panchāng, two traditions have been followed with respect to lunar months: the Amanta tradition, which ends the lunar month on a new moon day and the Purnimanta tradition, which ends the month on a full moon day. As a result, a Shukla paksha (from the new moon day to the full moon day) will always belong to the same month of Hindu Calendar in both traditions, whereas a Krishna paksha (from the full moon day to the new moon day) will always be associated with two succeeding months.

2024 FESTIVALS CALENDAR

VIKRAM SAMVAT 2080 - 2081

January (Pausa – Magha 2080)

01	MON	NEW YEAR DAY
07	SUN	Saphala Ekadashi
08	MON	Pradosh
10	WED	Amavasya
12	FRI	Swami Vivekananda Jayanti
13	SAT	Lohri
14	SUN	Makar Sankranti
21	SUN	Putrada Ekadashi
22	MON	Pradosh
25	THU	Purnima
26	FRI	Indian Republic Day
30	TUE	Mahatma Gandhi Punyatithi

February (Magha – Falgun 2080)

05	MON	Shatila Ekadashi
07	WED	Pradosh
09	FRI	Amavasya
13	TUE	Vasant Panchami
13	TUE	Kumbha Sankranti
15	THU	Swami Dayanand Saraswati Jayanti
19	MON	Jaya Ekadashi
21	WED	Pradosh
23	FRI	Purnima
26	MON	Savarkar Punyatithi

March (Falgun – Chaitra 2080)

06	WED	Vijaya Ekadashi
07	THU	Pradosh
08	FRI	Maha Shivaratri
09	SAT	Amavasya
14	THU	Meena Sankranti
20	WED	Amalaki Ekadashi
22	FRI	Pradosh
24	SUN	Purnima - Holika Dahan
25	MON	HOLI



April (Chaitra - Vaishakh -2081)

04	THU	PapMochani Ekadashi
06	SAT	Pradosh
08	MON	Amavasya
09	TUE	SAMVAT 2081 BEGINS
09	TUE	Gudi Padwa, Navratri Begins
13	THU	Baisakhi, Mesha Sankranti
16	TUE	Ram Navami, Navratri Ends
19	FRI	Kamada Ekadashi
20	SAT	Pradosh
21	SUN	Mahavir Jayanti
23	TUE	Purnima, Hanuman Jayanti

May (Vaishakh – Jyeshth 2081)

04	SAT	Varuthini Ekadashi
05	SUN	Pradosh
07	TUE	Amavasya
14	TUE	Vrishabha Sankranti
18	SAT	Mohini Ekadashi
20	MON	Pradosh
23	THU	Purnima - Buddha Jayanti

June (Jyeshth - Ashadh 2081)

02	SUN	Apara Ekadashi
03	MON	Pradosh
05	WED	Amavasya
17	MON	Nirjala Ekadashi
19	WED	Pradosh
21	FRI	Purnima



2024 FESTIVALS CALENDAR

VIKRAM SAMVAT - 2081

July (Ashadh – Shravan 2081)

01	MON	Yogini Ekadashi
02	TUE	Pradosh
05	FRI	Amavasya
15	MON	Karka Ekadashi
17	WED	Devshayani Ekadashi
18	THU	Pradosh
21	SUN	Guru Vyasa Purnima
31	WED	Kamika Ekadashi

August (Shravan – Bhadrapad 2081)

01`	THU	Pradosh
03	SAT	Amavasya
07	WED	Hariyali Teej
15	THU	Putrada Ekadashi
15	THU	Indian Independence Day
17	SAT	Pradosh
19	MON	Purnima - Raksha Bandhan`
26	MON	Shri Krishna Janmashtami
29	THU	Aja Ekadashi
30	FRI	Prudish

September (Bhadrapad - Ashwin 2081)

02	MON	Amavasya
07	SAT	Shri Ganesh Chaturthi
14	SAT	Parsva Ekadashi
15	SUN	Pradosh
16	MON	Kanya Sankranti
17	TUE	Purnima
18	WED	Sharadh Begins
27	FRI	Indira Ekadashi
29	SUN	Pradosh



October (Ashwin - Kartik 2081)

01	TUE	Amavasya, Sharadh Ends
02	WED	Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti
03	THU	Navartri Begins
10	THU	Durga Ashtami
11	FRI	Navratri Ends
12	SAT	Dussehra
13	SUN	Papankusha Ekadashi
14	MON	Pradesh
16	WED	Purnima
20	SUN	Karva Chauth
27	SUN	Rama Ekadashi
29	TUE	Pradosh, Dhanteras
31	THU	Diwali, Lakshmi Pooja

November (Kartik - Margashirsha 2081)

02	SAT	Bhaiya Dooj
12	TUE	Devutthana Ekadashi
13	WED	Pradosh:
15	FRI	Purnima
26	TUE	Utpanna Ekadashi
28	THU	Pradosh
30	SAT	Amavasya

December (Margashirsha – Paus 2081)

11	WED	Mokshada Ekadashi
12	THU	Pradosh
14	SAT	Purnima
15	SUN	Dhanu Sankranti
25	MON	Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya Jayanti
26	THU	Saphala Ekadashi
27	FRI	Pradosh
30	MON	Amavasya
31	TUE	NEW YEAR EVE





THE MARG FOUNDATION



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The Marg Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt nonprofit educational corporation, promotes the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Hindu heritage and values. To accomplish its mission, the Foundation publishes a bimonthly magazine, *MARG*, and provides a wide range of services, including:

- Organizes seminars, workshops, and presentation on Hindu Awareness and related topics in support of its mission.
- Maintains a Panel of Speakers on Hindu Dharma related topics.
- Participates in appropriate cultural and dharmic exhibits and shows.
- Provides support to other like-minded organizations.
- In the spirit of “Vasudaiva kutumbkum”, the Foundation runs a sewa (service) program, often in collaboration with other sister organizations.
- Publishes a variety of Hand-outs on Dharma related topics.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Suresh Chander, PH: 301-963-9450; email: suresh.margfoundation@gmail.com

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SRIRITUALITY IS CONNECTED TO LIFE

Swami Bhoomananda

The insight Krishna instilled and the instruction he gave on the basis of the immortal Self and its direct knowledge, are both sufficiently in line with secular and social considerations as well. There is no disharmony between the two. Rather, the episode reveals how comprehensive and inclusive is Krishna's Universal message!

Krishna now presents 7 verses, 2.31 to 2.37, setting forth an assortment of facts and compulsions, all of which equally point to the indispensable need for fighting the war. He makes it clear that spirituality and its compulsions are not in variance with secular needs, facts, and findings. Any seeming difference in the matter is only superficial, not substantial.

One's own duty should never be abandoned.

Krishna first points out that svadharma (One's own duty/responsibilities), dharma of the kshatriya (fighter) is to fight whenever it becomes necessary. All that the fighter must make sure is that he fights for the righteous cause, upholding the ethics and wellbeing of the society. There should be no slip or disregard in this. If this is ensured, then the war becomes noble and rewarding for the Kshatriya (2.31).

In the next verse (2.32), Krishna proclaims that only fortunate fighters get the opportunity, occasion, to fight a war

of this kind. War is always between two sets of fighters. Each set has its own views and goals. Both will never be right; both will never be wrong, either. If the stand and objective of one side are right, righteous, holy, and benevolent, those of the other will necessarily be just the opposite - wrong, unrighteous, unholy and maleficent. "Call it an unsolicited blessing or favors; your case, Arjuna, is righteous."

"That is why", says Krishna, "this war came to take place in Kurukshetra, which is a Dharmakshetra. This place, this field, is noted for Dharma, righteousness. Your ancestor, Kuru, had done long austerity here. From then on, this place came to be known as Dharma-kshetra, the abode of dharma. This will at every step, support, strengthen and enhance the dharmic spirit and fervor of the righteous fighters. At the same time, it will also thwart the unrighteous."

Mahabharata war was righteous for Arjuna and his brothers, but unrighteous for Duryodhana and his allies. This difference was evident right from the beginning. Sanjaya was describing to the blind king Dhritarashtra the events that took place in Kurukshetra in their due order. The king wanted him to describe what ensued right from the beginning. Impudence of the unrighteous

Sanjaya reported: "Both armies came to the battlefield. The first to arrive was Duryodhana and his larger team, more

to fulfill the purpose for which a Kshatriya woman delivers sons."

What a stern call, reminder, from one's own mother! In fulfilling the role of a warrior, nothing should deter. This is how a genuine mother thinks and feels. What an amazing dharmic adherence, compulsion! In all relationships, the underscoring factor is the undeniable place and purpose of dharma!

Kuntidevi used the words Dhananjaya for Arjuna and Vrikodara for Bheema. By this, she was reminding Arjuna about his fame as a fighter, noted for conquering kingdoms and gaining their wealth. That he should be true to his fame and valor is the import of Kunti's message!

Vrikodara is one who eats like a glutton. Bheema was given to gluttonous consumption. What was his mighty stout body? He should 'justify his salt', and fight when the time for it has arrived. He cannot think of relenting and escaping challenges.

Krishna was giving a timely reminder to his friend about what his mother Kunti had specifically said and wished for

heartily: the time had come to fulfil the very mission of a Kshatriya. Arjuna should not foster the least doubt or resistance in fighting the war.

Krishna pertinently hints: "What besides your mother's mandate, do you look forward to, in going ahead with the war, to take up the mission you have come to Kurukshetra driven by me for? Even the horses would be asking you to fight, if they had the power of speech!"

SPIRITUALITY IS CONNECTED TO LIFE

The point studious seekers and students of Bhagavad Gita should specially remember is that true spiritual wisdom as well as the instructions on its basis, is not detached from the facts and truths of our life and its purpose. The entire spirituality is so rational and logical that it is corroborated by all secular considerations and conclusions. In other words, spirituality as a science and direct experience is in full harmony with one's life and seeking to fulfil his ultimate needs and compulsions.



Courtesy: www.Bhoomananda.org.

We cannot create compartments in life -- political, economic, social, environmental.

Whatever we do or don't do affects and touches wholeness, the homogeneity. We are forever organically related to wholeness

IS HINDUISM A RELIGION OR A WAY OF LIFE?

Maria Wirth

It is often said, Hinduism is not a religion but a way of life. Or is it a religion?

What is true?

It depends on how religion is defined. Most people probably would say that religion is:

- about believing in an invisible Supreme Being, which is the cause of our existence,
- about methods and rituals to worship it,
- about living according to its laws or will.

In this case, Hinduism is definitely a religion. In fact, it is the Mother of all religions, because the Indian Vedas had postulated already in very ancient times the existence of such a Supreme Being. They called it Brahman (from big) or Paramatma or Paramashiva or simply Tat (That) and declared that it cannot be imagined by the human mind. Nevertheless, a kind of description is given: "Sat-Chit-Ananda" (it means, it is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss). It is all-pervading and therefore the Essence (Latin: *esse* = to be) of everything, including us. So why does the question arise whether Hinduism is a religion?

To discover this, we need to look at those religions where nobody has a doubt

that these are religions. The term 'religion' was first used for the Catholic Church and later for Islam, too, and nobody has a doubt that these two are the main religions in today's world.

These two religions also are about the 3 points I mentioned above. Yet there are significant differences.

The Supreme Being (called God or Allah respectively) of these 2 religions is not the essence in all but is a separate entity which has certain personal traits. One most important trait is that it is jealous of other gods and wants the whole of humanity to worship only Him (yes, the Supreme is clearly imagined as male). Both religions give out a dire warning: those who do not accept this truth will burn eternally in hell.

How do these religions know that this is the truth? Because they claim that the Supreme Being himself has revealed this truth to one person (in the case of Christianity to Jesus Christ some 2000 years ago and in the case of Islam to Prophet Mohammed some 1400 years ago).

Here is where another definition of religion comes in. It is often said that religion is a "belief-system". It needs blind, unverifiable belief in what the 'founder' of the religion has said, and which is written down in a book.

If we look at history, the Church (for which the term religion was first used) was very adamant that those followers which it had gained through (often forced) baptism must never leave the Church. Christianity had strict blasphemy, even has today. So, it can be safely

This ideal way of life is not based on a dogmatic belief system, but on experiential wisdom.



HINDU CALENDAR 2024 (VIKRAM SAMVAT 2080)

January - 2024 (Pausha – Magh)			February - 2024 (Magh – Falgun)			March - 2024 (Falgun – Chaitra)		
01	MON	New Year Day	05	MON	Shattila Ekadashi	06	WED	Vijaya Ekadashi
07	SUN	Saphala Ekadashi	07	WED	Pradosh	07	THU	Pradosh
08	MON	Pradosh	09	FRI	Amavasya	08	FRI	Maha Shivaratri
10	WED	Amavasya	13	TUE	Vasant Panchami	09	SAT	Amavasya
12	FRI	Swami Vivekananda Jayanti	13	TUE	Kumbha Sankranti	14	THU	Meena Sankranti
13	SAT	Lohri	15	THU	Swami Dayanand Jayanti	20	WED	Amalaki Ekadashi
14	SUN	Makar Sankranti	19	MON	Jaya Ekadashi	22	FRI	Pradosh
21	SUN	Putrada Ekadashi	21	WED	Pradosh	24	SUN	Purnima - Holika Dahan
22	MON	Pradosh	23	FRI	Purnima	25	MON	HOLI
25	THU	Purnima	26	MON	Savarkar Punyatithi			
26	FRI	Indian Republic Day						
30	TUE	Mahatma Gandhi Punyatithi						



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- **Saturdays:** Guided Meditation : 8 to 8:45 AM;
- Tea Break - 8:45 to 9 AM ♦ Upanishads – 9 to 10 AM

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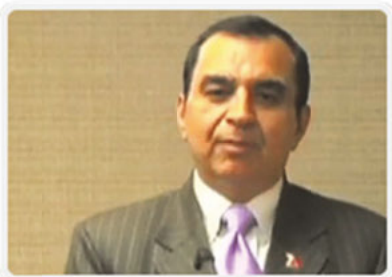
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