Quotes & Quips
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Dharma

Satguru Siva Yogaswami (1872-1964), Sri Lanka's most renowned contemporary spiritual master

Do you realize now the sacred significance and the supreme importance of the guru's role in the evolution of man? It was not without reason that the India of the past carefully tended and kept alive the lamp of guru-tattva. It is therefore not without reason that India, year after year, age after age, commemorates anew this ancient concept of the guru, adores it and pays homage to it again and again, and thereby reaffirms its belief and allegiance to it. For the true Indian knows that the guru is the only guarantee for the individual to transcend the bondage of sorrow and death, and experience the Consciousness of the Reality. Swami Sivananda (1887-1963), founder of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh

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Acquire the transcendental knowledge from a Self-realized master by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry and by service. The wise ones who have realized the Truth will impart the Knowledge to you. Bhagavad Gita

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Rely on the teachings to evaluate a guru: Do not have blind faith, but also no blind criticism. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetan spiritual-political leader in exile

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Knowing others is wisdom; knowing the Self is enlightenment. Mastering others requires force; mastering the Self needs strength. Lao-Tsu (ca 600 bce), Chinese philosopher who inspired Taoism

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Dear is Plato, but dearer still is the truth. Aristotle (384-322 bce), Greek philosopher, Plato's disciple

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The sun can give heat and light to the whole world, but he cannot do so when the clouds shut out his rays. When egotism veils the heart, God cannot shine upon you. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), guru of Swami Vivekananda

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To associate with a sadhu is like sitting near a seller of perfumes. You may not be able to own any of the wonders he holds, but what emanates from them will envelop you. Saint Kabir (1440-1518), Indian saint revered by Hindus and Muslims

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The syllable gu means shadows. The syllable ru, he who disperses them. Because of the power to disperse darkness, the guru is thus named. Advayataraka Upanishad

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That which we call the Hindu religion is really the Eternal religion because it embraces all others. Sri Aurobindo (1879-1950), philosopher and mystic

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Men are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of things. Epictetus

(55-135 A.D.), Greek Stoic philosopher

Whenever I climb I am followed by a dog called 'Ego.' Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), German philosopher and iconoclast

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Hinduism is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the right time-scale. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that billions are numbers no one can understand. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years. Carl Sagan (1934-1996), American astrophysicist

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To the philosophers of India, relativity is no new discovery. The fact that the wise men of India have not been concerned with technological applications of this knowledge arises from the circumstance that technology is but one of innumerable ways of applying it. Alan Watts (1915-1973), American scholar of Comparative Religion and Harvard associate

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God used beautiful mathematics in creating the world. Paul Dirac (1902-1984), Nobel prize in physics

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I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason and intellect has intended us to forgo their use. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Italian astronomer

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Hinduism has made marvelous discoveries in things of religion, of the spirit, of the soul. We have no eye for these great and fine discoveries. We are dazzled by the material progress that Western science has made. Ancient India has survived because Hinduism was not developed along material but spiritual lines. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

I was an atheist until I found out I was God. Spotted on a T-shirt in Auroville

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Hinduism does not see sins, but only mistakes. Mother Sarada Devi, as quoted by Swami Gautamananda

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Everyone makes mistakes. It is natural and simply shows we do not understand something. Perceptive self-correction enables young ones to quickly learn from their mistakes, refine their still-developing behavior accordingly and thereby make rapid progress on the spiritual path. Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, publisher of Hinduism today

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Do not say that you do not have time for God. The busiest of men will have the most leisure, and the laziest will always be short of time, for the former utilizes time and the latter only wastes it. If you really want God, you will find time for Him. Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati (1912-1954), 34th pontiff of the Sarada Peetham

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Everything changes, everything passes; things appearing, things disappearing. But when all is over--being and extinction both transcended--still, the basic emptiness and silence abide, and that is blissful peace. Mystical song from a Hindu story

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Desire is a very dangerous thing. Sometimes we think we have killed all selfish desire, but somewhere in our mind there lingers some remnant; and as from a spark left in the corner of the hearth may come again a big fire, so out of that small remnant may spring a huge fire of desire. Swami Ramakrishnananda (1863-1911), disciple of Sri Ramakrishna

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One does not suddenly reach a point where desire goes away. Desire is life. Desire can be directed according to the personal will. Through sadhana you can gain mastery over all the forces of your mind and body. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

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BASICS OF HINDUISM

When God created the universe, He endowed it with order, with the laws to govern creation. Dharma is God's divine law prevailing on every level of existence, from the sustaining cosmic order to religious and moral laws which bind us in harmony with that order. Every form of life, every group of men, has its dharma, the law of its being. Related to the soul, dharma is the mode of conduct most conducive to spiritual advancement, the right and righteous path. It is piety and ethical practice, duty and obligation. When we follow dharma, we are in conformity with the Truth that inheres and instructs the universe, and we naturally abide in closeness to God. Adharma is opposition to divine law. Dharma is to the individual what its normal development is to a seed--the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature and destiny.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hinduism's understanding of time is as grandiose as time itself. While most cultures base their cosmologies on familiar units such as a few hundreds or thousands of years, the Hindu concept of time embraces billions and trillions of years. The Puranas describe time units from the infinitesimal truti, lasting 1/1,000,000 of a second, to a mahamantavara of 311 trillion years. Hindu sages describe time as cyclic, an endless procession of creation, preservation and dissolution. Scientists

such as Carl Sagan have expressed amazement at the accuracy of space and time descriptions given by the ancient rishis and saints, who fathomed the secrets of the universe through their mystically awakened senses.