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His Holiness, Gurudeva, Sivaya Subramuniaswami, founder of Hinduism Today, shares his thoughts on Hinduism in modern times.

Question: Looking back over the past 25 years of Eastern thought and practice in the Western world, please give us your summary and prediction for its development into the future.

Answer: Although Eastern thought and practice became popular in the West during the 60's, it was not new here. Swamis and yogis, one after the other, had toured America since the turn of the century., Their groups were small but their teachings were sincere and profound. They were traditionalists and came to give, not receive. The Vedanta swamis finally settled to live and teach a broad-based acceptable-to-all philosophy. Their institutions discouraged wandering sadhus from the North and South of India, and it was not until the 60's that they began to appear again.

The early 60's brought controlled experimentation with mind-expanding drugs inspiring the intellectual community on a spiritual quest. An interest in yoga and Vedanta developed. Drugs later became illegal and were used by those of the non-intellectual community in uncontrolled environments. Although many of these souls also studied yoga and Vedanta, some entered our mental institutions and penitentiaries.

The 70's heralded the realization that drugs had not worked - nor was yoga an

easy answer. And Vedanta failed to bring "the peace that surpassed all understanding." With the 70's came a new "fulfillment" in sexual promiscuity and tantric experimentation. Seekers concluded that drugs, yoga and Vedanta were undependable, but sex was always there. Yoga turned to Bhoga.

In the 80's a new interest in the Hindu religion with its yamas and niyamas (do's and don'ts) laid a foundation of stability, understanding and balance in the West. Meanwhile, Indian Hindus coming to America were finding that to be absorbed they had to absorb. A mutual blending of East and West found continuing stability. Western seekers who had begun a spiritual quest in the 60's and were now in their 30's with teenage children were finding a new satisfaction in activities offered in a growing number of western Hindu temples in the West.

In summary, the 60's laid the plans for spiritual revolution. The 70's detailed them out, eventually bringing maturity. The 80's brought continued spiritual unfoldment based upon sound Hindu principles. Now as we prepared to bring up a new generation in the proper way, we look to the 90's for the fulfillment of this pattern; religious practice, scriptural learning, the understanding of karma and reincarnation, yoga, balanced living and the development of mature Hindu institutions. Now with the 80's on the wane, Saiva Siddhanta, the path of worship and communication with inner worlds, is rounding out this understanding.

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