

[Quotes and Quips](#)

Category : [October/November/December 2009](#)

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Quotes and Quips

Find the One everywhere and in everything and there will be an end to all pain and suffering.

Sri Anandamayi Ma (1896-1982), Bengali mystic and saint

When visiting Chicago, Swami Vivekananda stayed in the house of a businessman who was an associate of John D. Rockefeller. Many times had Mr. Rockefeller heard his friends talking about an extraordinary and wonderful Hindu monk, and many times he had been invited to meet Swamiji but always refused. At that time Rockefeller was not yet at the peak of his fortune, but was already powerful and strong-willed, a hard man to advise. One day, on a whim, the millionaire briskly walked through the door and said he wanted to see the Hindu monk. Swami Vivekananda, who was behind his writing table, did not even lift his eyes when the magnate entered the study room. In their ensuing conversation, Swami told Rockefeller secrets about his past that Rockefeller alone knew. Then, Swami boldly explained that God had given him all his wealth in order that he might have an opportunity to help people and do good. Annoyed that someone dared to tell him what to do, Rockefeller stormed out. Coming back a week later, he brought plans to donate an enormous sum of money to charity. This was Rockefeller's first large donation to the public welfare. "Well, there you are," he said to Vivekananda, "You can thank me for it." Swamiji then said softly, "No sir, it is for you to thank me." *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, vol. 9*

Life is meant for God-realization. If you die without attaining God-realization, your life is in vain. Even having one hundred gurus will not help, unless the disciple has a great desire for liberation and tries to get rid of all that stands in the way. Swami Chidananda (1916-2008), President of the Divine Life Society

Most people, most of the time, are under the influence of the ego. Now, when someone is driving under the influence of alcohol, a policeman can pull that drunk driver over and measure the level of inebriation. But what policeman has the

authority to pull you over and give you an egoizer test? You are driving, living, acting and speaking under the influence of the ego. Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, successor to Swami Muktananda

Can you weep for Him with intense longing of heart? Men shed a jugful of tears for the sake of their children, for their wives, or for money. But who weeps for God? Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)

Remain calm, serene, always in command of yourself. You will then find out how easy it is to get along. Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952), Founder of Self-Realization Fellowship

We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing. R.D. Laing (1927-1989), Scottish psychiatrist

Killing time murders opportunities. Anonymous

Time is more precious than money; it is the most valuable thing in the world. Time is life. Use it profitably in spiritual pursuits. Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh (1887-1963), founder of the Divine Life Society

As righteousness resides in the hearts of the virtuous, so does deceit dwell in the hearts of thieves. Tirukural 288

The biggest sorrow is poverty. The greatest happiness is that of meeting with a saint, which is beyond compare. Tulsidas in the Ramacharitamanasa, 16th century

There are vegetarians and vegans, but there are also vagueans--those who are not sure about what they eat. Anonymous

People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy. It is sanity--and to be sane is more dramatic than to be mad. G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936), English writer

If you want to be happy, be. Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Russian writer

You can gain an intricate control of the various things that change in and about you. Lean your thoughts and feelings in the right direction, and discover how quickly your circumstances will change their direction. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

Did You Know?

Trees for Temple Building By S.P. Sabharathnam

The sacred agamas, hinduism's scripture on temple worship, are very comprehensive. They include all there is to know on the subject, from the loftiest metaphysics of the high planes of existence, where the Gods reside, to instructions about how to get the right lumber to build a new temple.

The Kamika Agama says, "You must select only trees growing outside the village or the city. From the place where the temple will be built, the tree should be east, north, west or any direction in between these three, but other directions are to be avoided. The tree should not be poisonous."

Ahimsa, the dharmic law of not harming any living being, is followed carefully. "Even to build the most beautiful chariot for God, you must not select trees where birds make nests. Once the tree is selected, you have to propagate 3, 4 or 5 saplings from it and make sure they grow well. Only then you may proceed to cut it down, performing the essential rituals."

A puja is then performed to sanctify the process and tell the tree spirits to move to

another residence.

Basics of Hinduism Monism and Dualism

Hindus believe in one supreme Being, an all-pervasive Divinity that sustains all there is. But how to reconcile an imperfect world with the atemporal perfection of God?

Philosophers and saints have long debated the exact relationship of God, the soul and world, in exchanges that shaped our religion and set the path for millions of followers. Out of their speculations have blossomed hundreds of schools of thought.

At one end of Hinduism's rich spectrum is monism, or advaita, which perceives a unity of God, soul and world. Generally, monists believe God is immanent. If creation were a pot, God Himself would be the clay from which creation is made of. There is nothing that is not Him--any differences are but illusions that need to be removed, veils over the discernment of the soul. This is the view proposed by Adi Shankara and others.

At the other end, there are the schools that teach dualism, dvaita--exemplified by Madhva and the early Pashupatas--which speak about a real and eternal differentiation. Dualists believe in God as Lord and Creator, but He remains ever separate from man, regardless of the evolution of an individual soul. In the same analogy, dualists see God as the potter, intimately involved but eternally different from the clay pot He makes.

In between, there are views describing reality as one and yet not one, dvaita-advaita, advocated by sages such as Ramanuja, Srikantha and Nimbarka. Though the specifics of dvaita-advaita differ from tradition to tradition, its main creed describes a perfect, beginningless oneness of God and creation. In this view, the world and God are one in many, but not all, aspects. In time, the difference resolves itself in perfect identity--and that is the path of all souls.