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Quotes and Quips

It is my ambition to conquer the world by Hindu thought.
Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

If you accept Parabrahman, you must accept Shakti. They are like fire and its power to burn. If you see the fire, you must recognize its power. You cannot conceive of the Sun's rays without the Sun, nor can you conceive of the Sun without its rays. One cannot think of the Absolute without the relative, or of the relative without the Absolute. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)

Though my voice is feeble, Truth will be heard. Truth alone will endure; all else will be swept away before the tide of time. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

Give! Give! Give without any expectation of reward. Give the best in you! Dada Vaswani, leader of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission

All things are good when we master them, but no thing is good when it masters us.
Swami Panchadasi (1862-1932)

The unchangeable can only be realized in silence. Once realised, it will deeply affect the changeable, itself remaining unaffected. This attitude of silent observation is the very foundation of yoga. You see the picture, but you are not the picture. Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897-1981), Hindu sage

If all the land were turned to paper and all the seas turned to ink, and all the forests into pens to write with, they would still not suffice to describe the greatness of the guru. Kabir (1440--1518), Indian Saint

If Indians had remained unknown to the Tartars and to us (Europeans), they would have been the happiest people in the world. Voltaire (1694-1778) French Enlightenment writer, historian and philosopher

In the valley and on the mountain--only God I saw. In prayer and fasting, in praise and contemplation--only God I saw. Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance, qualities nor causes--only God I saw. Like a candle I was melting in His fire: amidst the flames incandescent--only God I saw. I saw myself with my own eyes most clearly, but when I looked with God's eyes--only God I saw. I passed away into nothingness, I vanished, and lo!, I was the All-living--only God I saw. Baba Kuhi, 11th-century Sufi mystic

Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

It's always wrong before it's right. Chuck Close, American painter

If eternity means not infinite temporal duration, but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), Austrian philosopher

The secret for having a successful team is to lead, rather than to manage.

You need to be a great theist before you can become a great monist. Theistic practices of humility, service and worship form the basis of yoga, which then leads to levels of samadhi and monistic realizations. It is a ladder with definite, clear steps. Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, publisher of Hinduism Today

Nothing is lost, nothing is gained. There is nothing. Satguru Siva Yogaswami, (1872-1964) Sri Lankan mystic

Our nerve system is just like a harp. It can be played by us or by other people. Others can cause many tones to be heard in our nerve system; that is why it is imperative for those on the path to be in good company. But we want it to be played from the inside out through the beautiful rhythm of superconsciousness--which is bliss. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

Did You Know? Sacred Sandalwood

Sandalwood is a revered tree in hindu tradition. The fragrant oil of the *Santalum album* has been used for medicinal and religious since Vedic times. Fragrant sandalwood paste is used for pujas and in sectarian marks. It makes one of the most popular types of incense. The oil extracted from sandalwood is a stimulant and an antiseptic, used through the centuries as a cure for gastric ailments and skin problems.

Indian sandalwood is named in the Saiva Agamas as the preferred sacred wood for building temples. Alas, though the scripture recommends the propagation of more sandalwood tree before felling a tree, making sure that at least five saplings are viable, this practice has not been followed by those who fell this precious tree only for its oil or other prized uses. As a result, it is now a threatened species. Indian laws protect the trees, granting ownership to the government.

Santalum album trees may live to be a hundred years. When young, they engage in a well-mannered parasitism. By intertwining their roots with nearby trees, a process called haustorium, they acquires various nutrients--with no detriment to other plants. Flowers (photo below) and fruit are produced after three years, and viable seeds after five.

Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote,

The sandal tree as if to prove,

How sweet to conquer hate, love,

Perfumes the axe that lays it low.

Basics of Hinduism

Festivals

Festivals are special times of communion with god and Gods, of family and community sharing. Hindus observe numerous festivals in the temple and the home, and special holy days each week and month.

These are also auspicious and sacred days of sadhana, fasting, meditation, worship and retreat from worldly concerns.

It is through festivals that most Hindus experience their religion. The devout Hindu knows these are times of profound mysticism, when God and the Gods touch our world, revitalize our souls, lighten karmas and bless our families. Yet festivals do even more than this: they are essential to the perpetuation of religion, periodically reigniting the spark of zeal and devotion in the community. They provide the spiritual public square where Hindus interrelate with one another.

Each state of India, indeed each village, lends a little of its unique culture to how festivals are celebrated, creating almost endless variations.

The major temple festivals are Mahasivaratri, Krishna Jayanti, Ramnavami and Navaratri. There are also home, community and national celebrations that are also important, most notably Diwali, Holi and Hindu New Year. The Kumbha Melas, perhaps the grandest of all, happen every few years based on astrological calculations.

The Rig Veda says, "Let us now invoke for our aid the the Designer of all things that are, the inspirer of wisdom! May He, the ever-kindly, be well disposed to our summons, and may He, whose work is goodness, grant us His blessing!"