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Quotes and Quips

Yoga is the restraint of the modifications of the mind.

Patanjali (2nd century bce), Indian author of the Yoga Sutras

It's important to go into solitude from time to time and think about God, especially for those who busy themselves day and night with worldly duties and responsibilities. When the plant is young, it should be fenced on all sides, otherwise goats and cattle may eat it up. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)

There is no place more powerful for practice, more blessed or more marvelous than Mount Kailash. Milarepa (c.1052-1135), Tibet's most revered yogi

A happy man is he who desires nothing, claims nothing, expects nothing and is free from hatred and fear. Dada Vaswani, leader of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission

The heart does not talk, it is the intellect that does all the talking. We have become like machines. Life has lost its naturalness, like a garland of plastic flowers. Only when hearts come together does true life blossom. Mata Amritanandamayi, mystic and hugging saint, Hindu of the Year 1993

The ocean of life contains all, not only humans. To reach it, abandon all self-identification, stop thinking of yourself as such-and-such, as this or that. Abandon all self-concern, every desire; stop thinking of achievements of any kind. You are complete here and now; you need absolutely nothing. Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897-1981), Hindu sage

Don't open your diamonds in a vegetable market. Tie them in a bundle, keep them in your heart and go your own way. Kabir (1440-1518), Indian Saint

It is impossible not to be astonished by India. Nowhere on Earth does humanity present itself in such a dizzying, creative burst of cultures and religions, races and tongues. It is this variety which provides a breathtaking ensemble for experiences that is uniquely Indian. Perhaps the only thing more difficult than to be indifferent to India would be to describe or understand India completely. From the travel book, A Rough Guide to India

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children. Nelson Mandela, president of South Africa and Nobel laureate

With a smile I faced all hardships. Swami Sivananda (1887-1963), founder of the Divine Life Society

Belief in rebirth is self-evident to many in India. It is not a thesis to be proved, but a fact to be elaborated. Arvind Sharma, Professor, McGill University

No matter how much you push the envelope, it will still be stationery.

People think that what they don't know gets them into trouble. Actually, it is what they think they know that causes problems.

For creative breakthroughs, the relaxation phase is crucial. That's why so many insights happen during warm showers... One of the surprising lessons of the latest neuroscience research is that trying to force an insight can actually prevent it from happening. Jonah Lehrer, Science Journalist

The difference between science and art is that if I had never lived, someone else

would eventually have made my discoveries. But if Beethoven had never lived, no one would have written Opus 111. Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976), German theoretical physicist

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

Hinduism is ultimately about experiencing things yourself. Understanding another person's wisdom does not make one wise. Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, publisher of Hinduism Today

No one can describe the Truth adequately. Even the great Shankara failed to do it. Satguru Siva Yogaswami (1872-1964), Sri Lankan mystic

It is only through sadhana that you will be able to prudently delineate between true intuition and the feelings of need and greed from the externalities of your instinctive nerve system. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001)

Did You Know? Gandhi's Actual Words

The father of modern India, Mohandas K. Gandhi, was a giant in both spirit and intellect. He distilled many of Hinduism's principles into speeches, sayings and actions that were plain for anyone to understand. A master craftsman of words with a solid education, Gandhi spoke carefully, and well. Then again, there are those famous things he never said.

In the fast-paced age of the Internet, where catchy phrases can go viral and attention span is shorter than ever, a mis-attributed quote travels faster than wildfire, making it almost impossible to correct. Some misquotations are benign, faithful summaries of a longer thought; others can be clumsy, flat-out wrong or anachronistic. Einstein and Gandhi are perhaps the two names most often undersigned to things they never said.

In an article that appeared in Harijan in 1940, the Mahatma wrote, "Often my articles suffer from condensation; they are made to yield a meaning I had never intended."

A well-known quote of Gandhi in our time, "Be the change you want to see in the world," may be true to his spirit, but not to his writings. The closest recorded excerpt is fittingly more thoughtful and Gandhian: "If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. We need not wait to see what others do."

Still, this is by no means a new phenomenon, though the advent of the Web has given it unprecedented reach and speed. The immortal inscription on the portico of Greece's Delphic Oracle, "Know Thyself," was even in those times attributed alternatively to Pythagoras, Socrates or Thales--but it may well have come first from India.

In Hinduism, truth is far more important than the bearers of truth, and attribution may seem like a trifle. It might, however, be good to follow that recommendation Gandhiji made in 1946, "Google the quotes you plan to go on repeating, just in case." Or did he say that?

Basics of Hinduism

Relation to Other Faiths

The vedas clearly state, "truth is one, but sages call it by many names." Hindus know this profound truth from which stems compassion, understanding, respect--and strength. For Hindus, the right attitude toward other faiths is genuine respect, not condescending tolerance.

Acceptance of the existence of many paths leading to God does not weaken a Hindu, for if other methods are true, so is his timeless Hindu faith. That shields the devotee from conversion attempts by religions with a narrow view, those claiming exclusive rights to God.

Hindus properly respect and address virtuous persons of all spiritual traditions. They do not disparage other faiths, their beliefs, Gods, sacred sites, scriptures or holy men and women. They even refuse to listen to such talk.

"Solidarity in diversity" is a better term than unity in diversity, and the mosaic is a more accurate metaphor than the "melting pot." There is no reason, other than narrowmindedness, that the major religions, and the major Hindu sects, cannot live in harmony in India, America and the other countries of the world.

The diversity of Earth's religious landscape is healthy and natural. Sameness would not bring about peace, but respect and acceptance could. Sameness would only reduce that which is vital with variation, rich in philosophical perspective and sublime culture, to a one common denominator. Hindus take pride in the broadness in their faith and honor the panorama of religious thought in today's world.

The same generous attitude that Hindus have toward other religions is also characteristic among Hinduism's many denominations and sects. Devout practitioners Hindus love and accept those of all sects, be they Saiva, Smarta, Shakta or Vaishnava Hindus. They wisely uphold harmony by not dwelling on differences.