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Renaissance is a word that describes well the modern Hindu experience. As with any birth, this one has both pain and joy in abundance, as Hindus move toward a more global understanding. More than ever we need great leaders to come forward, and to encourage and support those who already have committed themselves to dharma. Encouragement and discouragement give psychological release or hamper energies. Praise and blame do the same, and both come from other people. Decades ago in the US film and theater industry awards were established to encourage artists to excel past their own abilities - the Oscar, the Emmy and the Tony. This was immensely successful. The public began to notice the work of film makers, cameramen, directors, editors, clothing and set designers and all those who participate silently behind the scenes. They were brought forward, and their best work honored.

There are other awards, too, that philanthropists set up with endowments from their abundance - the Pulitzer Prize for journalism, the Nobel Prize for science and literature, the Templeton Prize for religious achievement - which was earned this year by a Hindu and is the largest money prize of this kind today, US \$270,000. This month as we reviewed major events for 1990, an idea flashed into my mind, to initiate a Renaissance Award for the Hindu of the Year.

The Hindu Renaissance Award will be given at the end of each year to the Hindu woman or man who manifests the strongest impact on all Hindus worldwide, encouraging them to stand strong for their religion, and causing others to praise the great Sanatana Dharma, for its vastness, its tolerance, its compassion and

spiritual depth.

This year the \$1,001 award is being given to the very reverend Swami Paramanand Bharati of the Sringeri Math, whose achievements are described on page 27.

The money for achievement awards is somehow accumulated, placed in trust, and the yearly interest given to the nominee. It is improper for me to go on a fund-raising campaign, having neither the time nor the inclination. So, I meditated and saw that it is proper for me to beg for this good cause. A beggar begs for food for his family, a mother begs for cloth for her newborn child. Children beg for school lunch money. Begging for a good cause is noble. We want the Hindus of the world who can make a difference to be recognized. That is a good cause. We want to let the world know their achievements, even though they may be too humble to put themselves forward. This is encouraging and uplifting to all Hindus. We want to have the award of significant value, and here is how you can help me. Perhaps you have given little or nothing to Hindu institutions this year and feel the need to give to a good cause. Perhaps you have given generously to Hindu institutions and have generous amounts more to give. In any case, I am begging to make the Hindu Renaissance a greater amount than one thousand dollars. Help me establish a rock-solid endowment in 30-year US treasury bonds. Help make the Hindu Renaissance Award a significant living reality. Though we don't expect it, wouldn't it be extraordinary if together we could create an award that was greater than the Templeton Prize? Such an award would put the best of Hindu leadership and accomplishment in the media and the mass mind. We are begging you to help, generously.

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