Publisher's Desk
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In this month's center section the staff has prepared a special tool for our readers, a Hindu Timeline giving four pages of religious history, starting with 400,000 BCE! Each of us has a personal timeline too, more finite perhaps than the ageless dharma, but no less significant. I was thinking about this after receiving notice of the upcoming 75th birthday of one of Hinduism's great modern saints, Swami Chinmayananda. He's forging ahead with his mission, teaching, sharing his venerable wisdom with seekers. A good example for all of us.

For those who identify themselves as their physical bodies, the slow process of aging can become scary. Yet, aging is an invigorating process for those who know that they are not their physical body. They know that they only live in it, that it is their earth suit enabling them to function on this planet during waking hours. While sleeping, they know that they live in their astral body - and that it is their deva suit enabling them to function on the astral plane, but mostly used during sleeping hours. There are those who also know they are much more than these two bodies, they are the immortal and deathless Self.

When the physical body begins to age, an external change of pace naturally begins to occur, like the desire to sit rather than walk. And, yes it becomes more difficult to make long-term plans. It is at this juncture, about forty, that the fact of aging should be boldly confronted. Take on the big question first: "What am I going to do with the rest of my life?" Tell yourself that there is still a long life ahead, and it should be planned out as carefully as the lifespan that has already been lived. All the new plans should now be based on the experiences gained from the years gone

by. The next exercise is to analyze desires, motivations and educational skills, physical, mental and emotional abilities. Once this is done and the change of the life of the physical body has been subconsciously accepted, it is time to make plans for the next forty years. Do so with as much enthusiasm and dynamism as can be mustered.

The next juncture is at eighty. This is again the time to revamp motivations and make positive plans again for the next forty years. This last four decades finishes off the natural life span of 120 years, when it is time to take it easy, sit back and prepare for the hereafter.

After 60 or so seasons have gone by, all that accumulated wisdom should be given to the younger generation. It is to them that interest should be dedicated. It is their welfare that should be considered more than one's own. There are so many things to do: manage spiritual institutions and orphanages, set up endowments for education of the young, encourage promising people toward greater heights, publish the knowledge the world gave you, to name but a few. Seventy-two is the time to intensify personal meditation, sadhana and tapas. With the fading of the physical forces, spiritual forces gain in strength. Yoga practices are natural and bear fruit. Great spiritual progress can be made.

In conclusion: Anyone who gives in to old age simply does not understand the process. He looks at his physical body in the mirror and it looks different. He does not consider that the twenty-year-old looks very different than he did when he was ten, and that was only ten years ago for him-and he is happy to look different. So be happy to look like an older person.

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