

# REFLECTIONS ON WATER

How Thoreau's Walden Pond

Mixed with the Ganges

and

Yoga Came to America with Swami Vivekananda

by Peter Malakoff

Reflections on Water: How Thoreau's Walden Pond Mixed with the Ganges  
and  
Yoga Came to America with Swami Vivekananda

Peter Malakoff



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# Reflections on Water

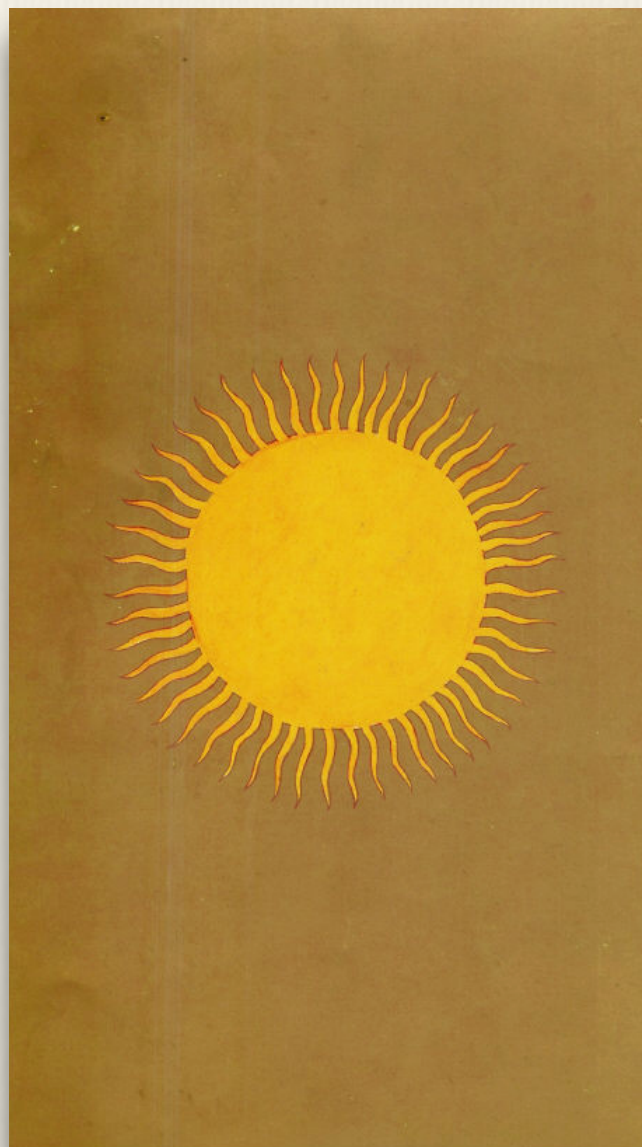
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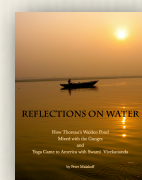


Picture above: Tantric Sun – Classical Indian Painting

Book Cover: Early morning – Benaras

A single boat floats on the Ganges river near Assi ghat

Photograph by Peter Malakoff



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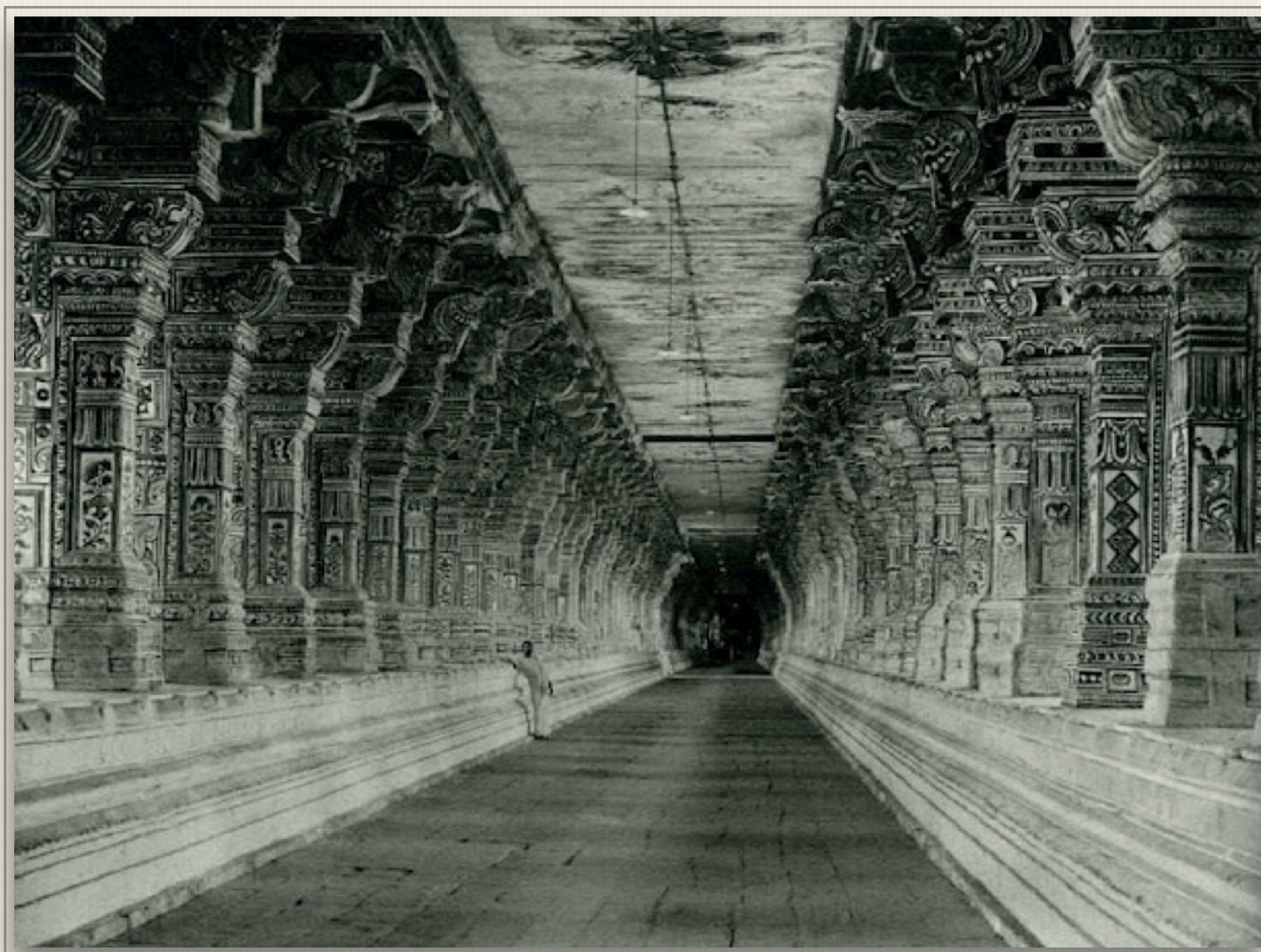
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## Acknowledgements

No man is an island. No individual exists all by himself and no book was ever written without support and help. This is the place where words are devoted to this understanding; people are remembered, acts are cherished and all the help we were given is acknowledged, our gratitude hung like small prayer flags on a mountain of appreciation.

To Christine, who has been my support and helper, it is a joy to live in your company. Thank you to my dear friends, Mitch and Cathy, who helped me live in America and venture forth to India, making a home for my heart. My deep appreciation goes out to Matteo, who holds down the fort, making ghee for Ancient Organics. I have always been engaged in writing, but it was Ed and Liisa who first encouraged me to publish; thank you for guiding me towards my dharma. Upahar and Chris my **cyberni**, thank you for your help with editing and correcting my plentiful errors. Buckminster Fuller once said that “a drunk makes less mistakes than a sober man” and I was very sober when I wrote this story. My old friend David Hanks gave me my first living picture of a Yogi and my first copy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Certainly we knew each other in another lifetime. My parents, Norman and Marjorie, gave me all the love I could wish for and formed the way I see the world. I cannot help but love you and all that you loved. My brother Michael and his wife Louise have been a source of much needed help for decades. Without you the road would have been much more difficult. Thank you so very much. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi encouraged me to go to school in Vedic Studies and his interpretation of the first six chapters of the *Gita* changed my life by putting the horse of God-Realization in front of the cart of renunciation, instead of the other way around. You were a voice of wisdom to me and I am grateful. My Teacher Adi Da Samraj gave me the Teaching, the map, the legend, a picture of what I am looking for and the Understanding why. Finally, I am grateful to all who have gone before and have gifted me a world of ideas, tools and their loving hearts.

## How to Use this book

In the *Mahabharata*, the great epic of India, a smaller tale is often told to clarify a person or an event in the main story, always elaborating or providing the history of one or another aspect within it. Employing pop-ups and the Glossary, I have done something similar here.

There is a tremendous amount of information beneath the surface of this book and it is all available to your touch. Many words or ideas may be new or vague or I might be using them in a different way than you are used to. By using both the **Glossary** you will obtain a much more informative story.

**1)** If something appears in bold letters like this: **Joseph Campbell**

Tap that bolded word or words and it will take you to the **Glossary** for a further definition. The Glossary will give you extra information and usually a picture or portrait for that word.

If you see that same word again in the text, it may not be in bold type (usually only the first instance of the word is bold), but still, if you Tap it, it will again take you to the Glossary for that same word or words. At the bottom left of the Glossary pop up, you will see a box called “Glossary Index.” Tap that and you will be taken to the full Glossary page for that word, which will usually include pictures.

**2)** If you find something underlined like this: “Vivekananda set sail from India on May 31, 1893.”

Tap anywhere on the underlined word or words and you will be shown a pop-up that defines and gives greater context to the idea or word that is underlined. Tap most pictures and you will get an enlarged or full-screen view.

## Introduction

*“All perception of truth is the detection of an analogy”*

– Henry David Thoreau

One early morning, a little more than a hundred and fifty years ago, during the coldest days of a New England winter, Henry David Thoreau looked out the window of his small cabin on Walden Pond and saw men cutting the ice into blocks. That ice was hauled by horse to a railroad that ran across the western edge of Walden Pond, packed into a boxcar and then taken to Boston, where it was loaded onto a clipper ship that sailed to Calcutta, India, arriving about four months later.

Thoreau knew that ice, once in India, would eventually melt and run down into the Ganges. He imagined those two bodies of water mingling together and discovered an analogy: the mingled waters of Walden Pond and the Ganges, corresponded to his American-Christian-**Unitarian** religious culture mixing with the ancient worldview of the Vedas. He experienced this confluence of waters every day when he bathed his intellect in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, one of the two books he brought with him on his retreat in the woods.

What he did not know was that nearly fifty years later, in 1893, Swami Vivekananda would arrive at the Chicago World’s Fair and the World Parliament of Religions, bringing with him (symbolically), the waters of the Ganges: the ancient sacred culture of the Vedas, and the Yoga of God-Realization . . . Thoreau’s Walden waters had mixed with the Ganges and returned, bringing Yoga to America, although what Vivekananda carried with him has little resemblance with what we call Yoga today.

After receiving an extraordinarily positive reception at the World Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda went on to travel all over America like a **Johnny Appleseed** of the Vedas, giving talks and lectures in many cities, sowing the seeds of the ancient philosophy of Vedanta in one of the youngest countries



in the world. For nearly every American who heard him, and there were thousands, it was their first exposure to the culture, philosophy and worldview of ancient India.

We find in a seed clear signs of what tree will grow or what fruit is expected. But that takes into account only the seed; the soil, the season and the moisture in which that seed falls must also be taken into consideration. So, what was transpiring in America? What forces were moving in India? What great persons were alive and how did they influence the different aspects of this story? The ground in both America and India had been prepared far ahead of Vivekananda and some of that tale is told here.

In America, the first English translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* was read by Thoreau and Emerson and this and other texts from the **Vedic literatures of India** influenced the small circle of **Transcendentalists** in the Boston area and through them begin to change the thinking of America. Emerson and other **Unitarians** had carried on a correspondence for many years with the leaders of the **Brahmo Samaj** in India, and in 1883 Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, was the first Indian religious teacher to come to our country and the first place he visited was the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson in Concord, Massachusetts, where he spoke from Emerson's front porch to local Unitarians at the invitation of Emerson's wife, Lydia. (Emerson had died one year earlier.)

Ten years later the Chicago World's Fair celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of the Americas by Columbus. The fair, called the "Columbian Exposition," recognized "the transfer of the torch of civilization to the new world." But mostly it is remembered for the grand public display of a phenomenon that would change the whole world: the generation of electricity and the widespread use of electrically operated machines.

The Parliament of Religions was only a small part of the World's Fair but it represented a tremendous milestone; for the first time in history,

representatives of nearly every major religion in the world appeared in the same room together and on the same stage. It was here that Swami Vivekananda gave his famous talks that brought Vedanta and the Yoga of God-Realization to the attention of the western world.

Like America, India too had ripened with change. Throughout the nineteenth century the English established a western-style educational system, exposing the ancient, tradition-bound mind of the Indian people to the scientific, rational, critical and iconoclastic thinking of the West. Technological achievements such as trains, bridges, roads, and communication systems were built throughout the sub-continent, demonstrating a different relationship to the world: life need not just be suffered, but could be vastly improved through scientific thinking, technology and machines. The age-old system of Indian caste, culture and belief was challenged through the work of Christian missionaries and the **evangelicals** who followed them, questioning the bedrock of the ancient tradition of the Vedas; it was to be many years before the west returned the favor.

In the midst of these social and cultural upheavals, one of the greatest God-men of India, **Sri Ramakrishna**, attained the highest Realization of the different sects of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, dramatically resolving the dilemma of religious diversity in his own person. He declared that all religious paths lead to the same God; and it was his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who carried the Universal values of the Vedic tradition to the West in a form he called “**Practical Vedanta**” . . . the essence of Vedanta, no longer exclusively tied to the religious traditions of India or the Hindu cultural values in which it had evolved; a message perfectly suited to the quickly growing cross-cultural, multi-religious world of the 20th century.

These are but a few of the many rivers that pour into this story and this tale is not the only one that could be told. Certainly, I have not fully accounted for how Yoga came to America, but I hope I have enriched the questions that could be asked and deepened the mystery.

This book is based on events that really did happen and I have tried to use as often as I could, original reports, photographs and firsthand accounts. Even so, there are many ways to tell this story and widely different understandings of important ideas, scriptures, philosophies, people and events. I am very much aware what I have written is one such interpretation, representing a particular world-view of the subject. How could it not be so?

So, let me tell you a story of the mingling waters of New England and India and how Swami Vivekananda brought Yoga to America.



Swami Vivekananda

*“What good is history if no one tells it?”*

# Reflections on Water



How Thoreau's Walden Pond Mixed with the Ganges and  
Yoga Came to America with Swami Vivekananda



*"The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges."*

– Henry David Thoreau, Walden

In 1845 **Henry David Thoreau** moved two miles away from the home of his parents in Concord, Massachusetts to live alone by a small pond in a cabin in the woods on land owned by his close friend, the poet **Ralph Waldo Emerson**. It was there he wrote the book that was to become the American classic, *Walden*.



## Henry David Thoreau

“Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.”

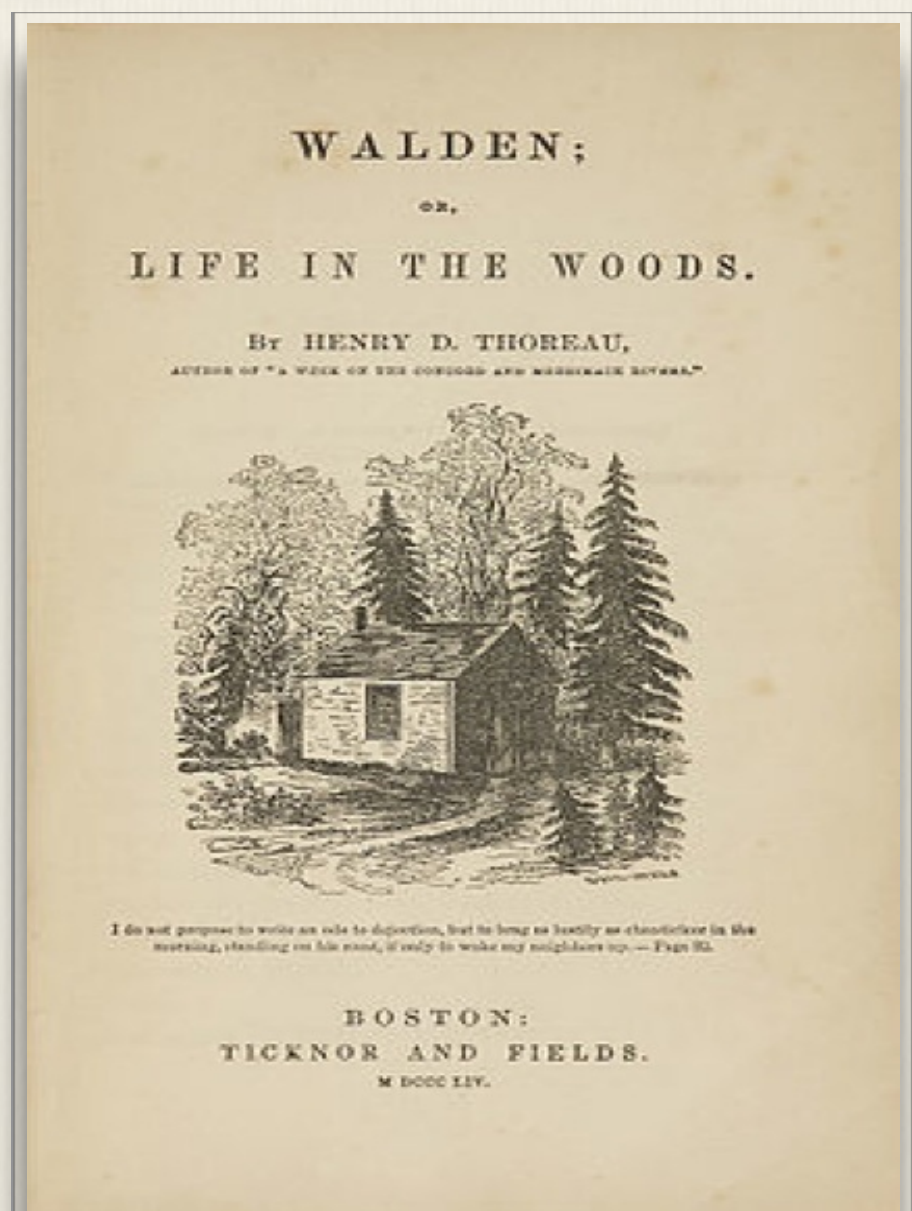
– Henry David Thoreau

## Walden

or Life in the Woods

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”

– Henry David Thoreau



Thoreau spent two years, two months and two days in his self-imposed retreat in the forest. During that time he wrote on the simplicity of life in the woods, the complex madness of New England society and the eternal truths of life. One early winter morning, sitting in his cabin, he looked out the window and saw about a hundred men working on the frozen pond, cutting the ice into blocks with horses and saws.

### The Cutting of Ice



“I saw from my window a hundred men at work like busy husbandmen, with teams and horses and apparently all the implements of farming, such a picture as we see on the first page of the almanac.” – Thoreau, *Walden*





Horse-drawn sled hauling ice from the pond

The ice was placed on horse-drawn sleds and carried to railroad cars, whose newly laid tracks ran across the western edge of Walden Pond. From there it was transported to the docks at Boston.

At that time Boston Harbor was the major commercial port of the United States, especially for trade with the Orient. Between 1840 and 1870 the harbor was larger than that of New York City. One of the largest buildings in the harbor was India Wharf. Built in 1804, India Wharf was the headquarters of American trade with the East. The ground floor was stocked full of fabrics such as cottons, cashmeres, muslins, calicoes, seersuckers, chintzes and highly embroidered silks. There were jewels, carnelian necklaces and rubies. There was salt, opium and saltpeter for gunpowder. Spices such as cloves, saffron, black cardamom, ginger, coriander, cumin and curry filled the air with exotic aromas; and of course, there was tea and coffee.



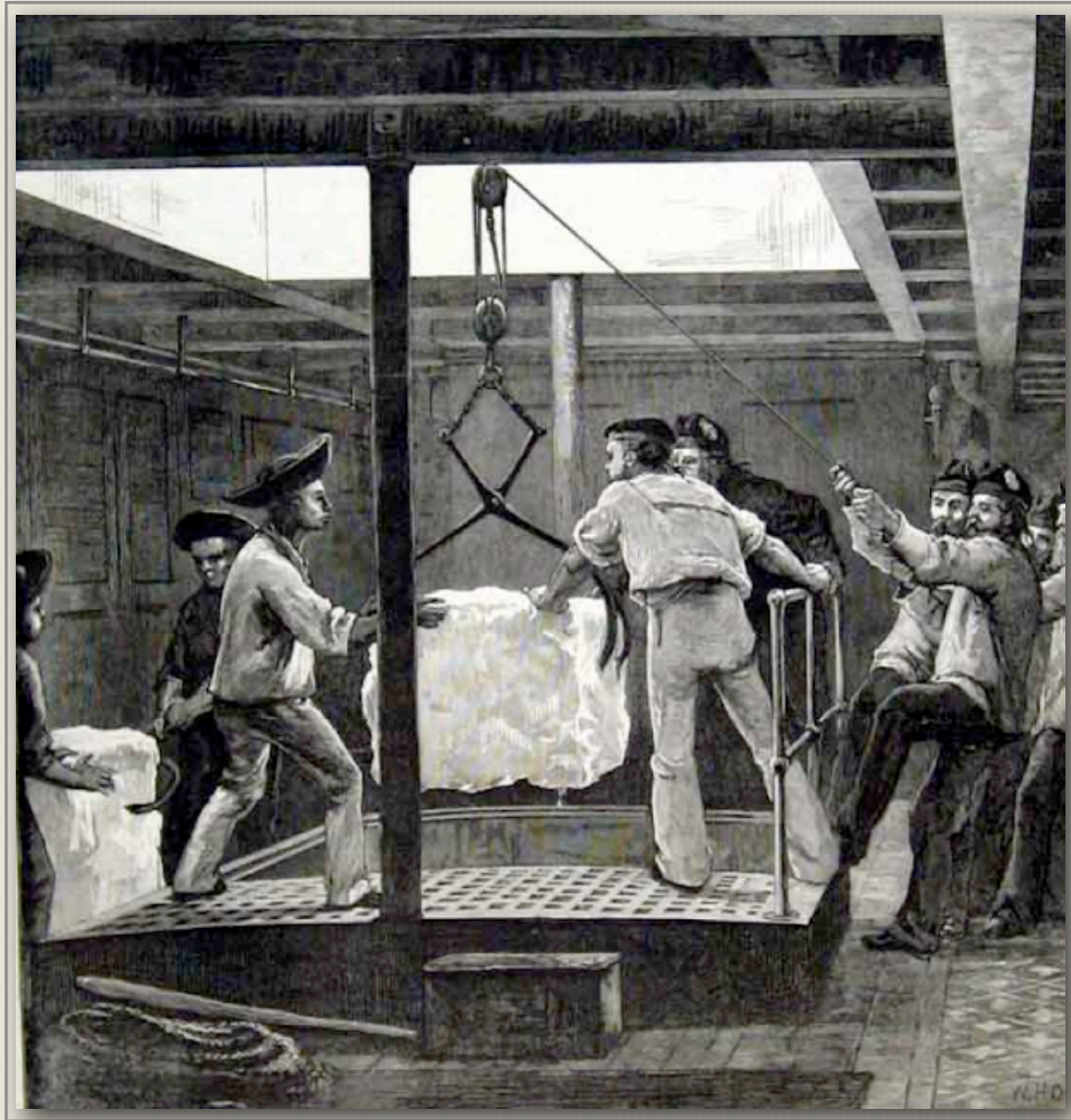
## India Wharf, Boston Harbor circa 1830



“It was named India Wharf because it's from there that ships left for India and all the seven seas. In those days, a master would sail his ship out to the China Coast and might not get back for two or three years. If he got there, he'd load up with spices and precious cargo and come back a rich man. He could retire at a very young age and live free and easy the rest of his days. But then, too, he might run into a typhoon and go down with all hands, or be shipwrecked on some faraway shore.” – Capt. Chester Jordan, Boston Maritime Society



At the Boston docks the ice was packed tightly into the insulated hold of a wooden ship and covered with sawdust, for an extended, four-month journey of over 16,000 miles. The boat would head southeast out of Boston into the Atlantic, crossing the equator as it approached Africa, go south round the Cape of Good Hope and then turn north, enter the Indian ocean, passing along the East coast of Africa and the island of Madagascar, cross the equator again, come round the southern tip of India, bear northeast up the coast and eventually arrive in Calcutta, India, at the mouth of the Ganges River and the Bay of Bengal. (See map on next page)



Packing Ice into a Ship

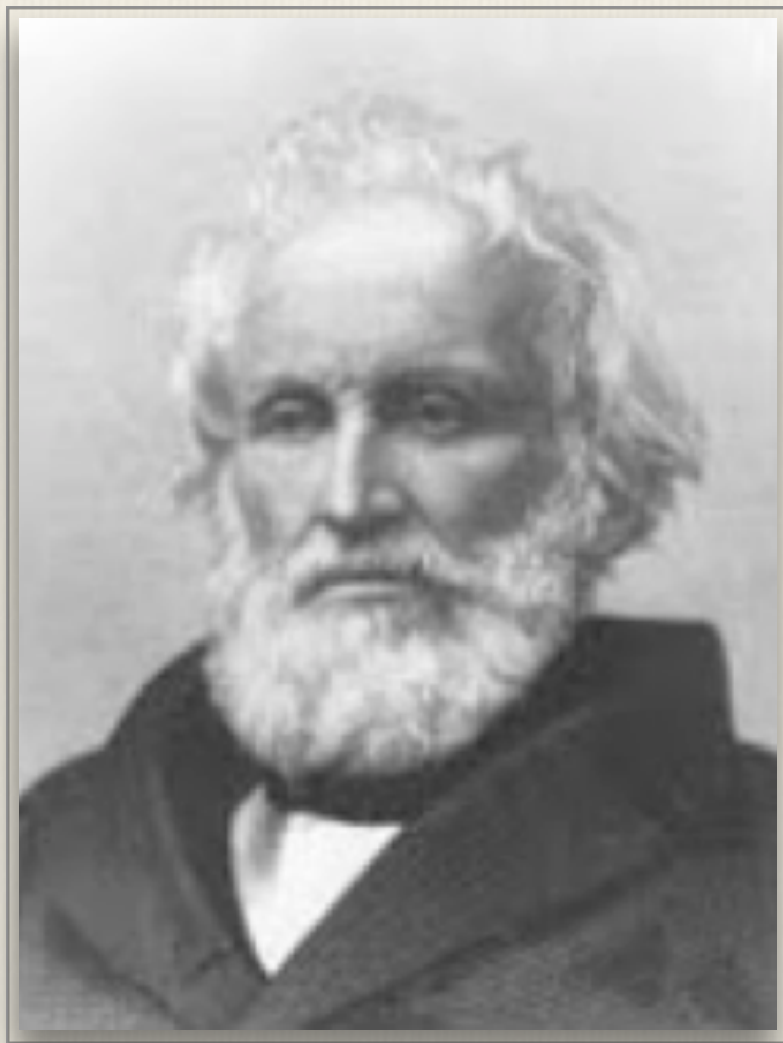


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## The Ice Trade with India

That cold wintry morning Thoreau witnessed a small part of the global ice trade. Unknown to most of us today, the shipping of ice from America to tropical climes was a large business during much of the nineteenth century.

**Frederic Tudor**, known as the "Ice King of New England," started the business in 1806. For many years he harvested ice from the ponds and lakes of New England and shipped it south to New Orleans, Charleston, Cuba, the Caribbean and South America. Until 1833, however, his ice had never traveled to India. But that was about to change.



Frederic Tudor – The Ice King

Samuel Austin, a Boston businessman, owned several ships that traveled between Calcutta and Boston. But Austin had a problem: India was self-sufficient at the time and there were very few goods that India purchased from the West. When Austin's ships arrived in America from Calcutta, their holds

were full of goods from the Orient; however, on the return voyage to India they were empty and loaded only with rocks for ballast.

In early 1833 Austin asked Tudor if he would be interested in a partnership working together to ship ice to India. Austin would gain paying freight to India and Tudor would gain an investor as well as access to a large, exotic, and very hot country full of Englishmen who knew the pleasures of ice. Tudor liked the idea, and by May of that year he had a boat packed full of "crystal blocks of Yankee coldness" on its way to India.



Charlestown Wharves – The Tudor Wharves are seen in the background.

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## New England Ice Comes to India

During the first half of the nineteenth century, India was not yet the **Jewel in the Crown** of the British Empire. The country was still a “business” directed by the **East India Company**, and although the Company made fantastic fortunes by its exploitation of the riches of India, a major problem confronted the British: oppressive tropical heat and diseases, which often involved fever. A joke going around those days was that Calcutta’s deadly heat was more dangerous to British life than any uprising by the natives. In 1774 an English surgeon wrote of his experience: "When not a breath of air was there for many hours; man and every fowl of the air so sensibly felt it, that some species fell down dead."

Tudor, ever the businessman, saw great potential in this. From experience, he knew that the extreme heat of India would make ice a precious commodity. He also believed that anyone, English or Indian, once they had experienced the pleasure of iced drinks, iced cream or any chilled food, would become hooked on ice; and he planned to be the one to supply it.

On September 5, 1833, Tudor's ship, the *Tuscany*, after sailing over a hundred miles up the **Hooghly** (Ganges) river from the Bay of Bengal, dropped anchor at Diamond Harbor in the port of Calcutta.



Calcutta Harbor 1881

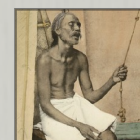
Not surprisingly, the English thought the reports of this ship carrying ice from America were a hoax. After all, the temperature was near 90 degrees in the shade and had been for months in spite of the rains. The ship must have been at sea for over 120 days to sail from America to Asia. It had taken several days in the present stifling heat just to come up the Hooghly. Surely no ice could survive such a journey.

But once it became known that the ship really did carry ice – one hundred crystal-clear tons of it (about 80 tons had melted) – the British members of the East India community, knowing the pleasures of frozen water, purchased all of it. For months there was iced claret wine, chilled beer, ale, melons, fruits and other cold foods.

### **Ice Comes to Calcutta and the English in the heat of India**

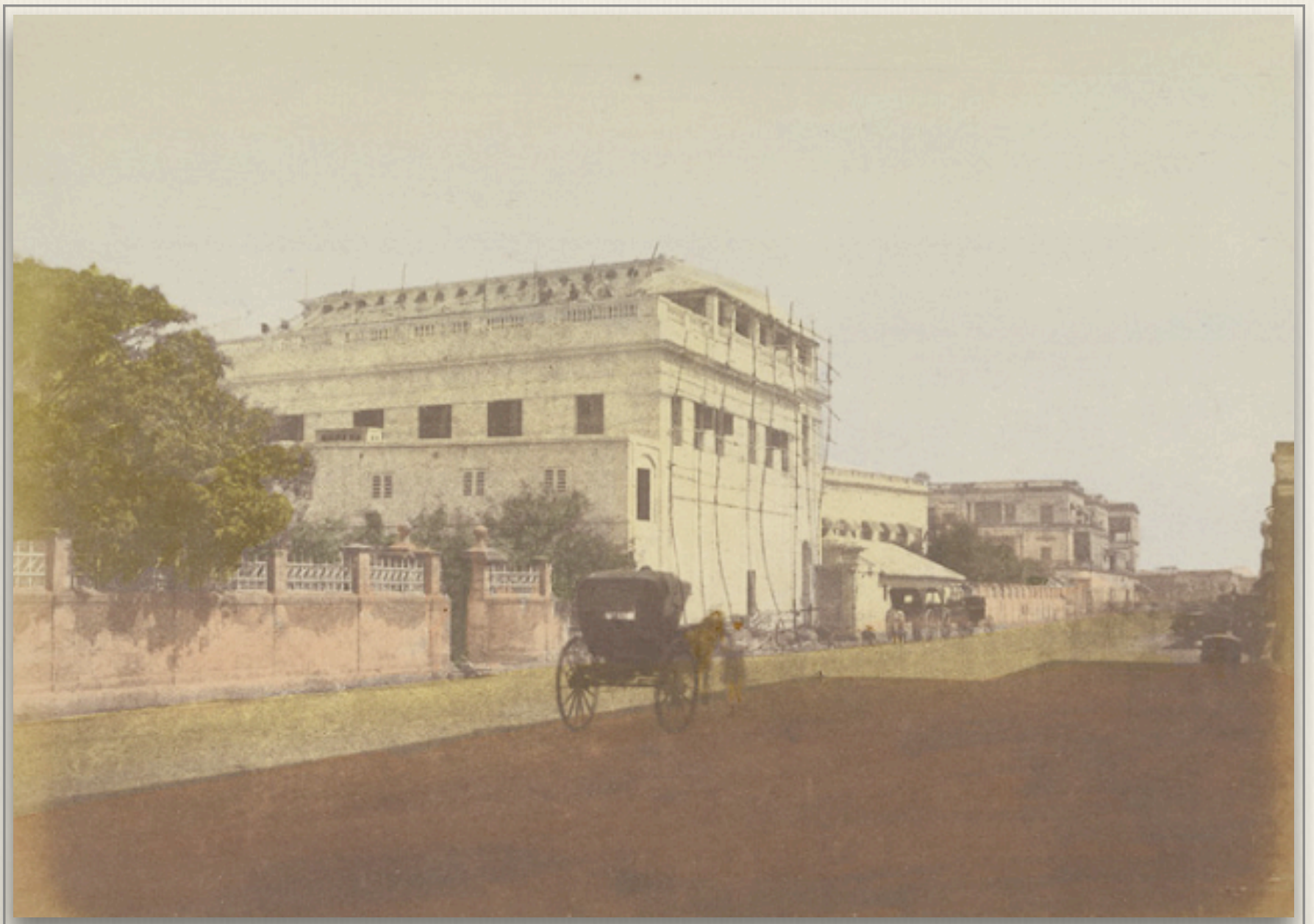


“How many Calcutta tables glittered with ice that day. The butter dishes were filled, the goblets of water were converted to miniature arctic seas with icebergs floating on the surface.” – J. Stocqueier, editor of *The Englishman*, a Calcutta Paper, writing on the delivery of New England ice to Calcutta



Well-to-do English and Hindus also used the ice to calm fevers. The Calcutta Courier wrote: "The names of those who planned and have successfully carried through the adventure at their own cost deserve to be handed down to posterity with the names of other benefactors of mankind."

Because of the success of this venture, members of the English community built a stone ice-house in **Calcutta** to store Tudor's future shipments. Tudor was granted a monopoly on the delivery of ice to the city, and the shipping of ice from America to India became the most lucrative part of a global trade. This was the beginning of a massive transfer of the waters of New England to India.



Ice House on Hare Street in Calcutta 1886

## Thoreau, the Global Ice Trade and the Mingling Waters of Walden Pond and the Ganges

When Thoreau considered the ice trade, his vision sailed on metaphors far beyond the scope of business. The waters he spoke of flowed both east and west and were composed of not just natural elements, but culture, religion and philosophy as well. He envisioned that after arriving in Calcutta, the New England ice of his **Walden Pond** would eventually melt and run downhill where it would join with the sacred water of the Ganges. He wrote:

"It appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my well. In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the **Bhagvat-Geeta**, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions.

I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Bramin, priest of **Brahma** and **Vishnu** and **Indra**, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges."

For Thoreau the "water of the Ganges" represented the religious philosophy of ancient India, preserved for thousands of years and epitomized in the teachings of the **Bhagavad-Gita**. He saw both Walden Pond and the Ganges mingled in the same well of water. These waters symbolized the eternal Law of life, what the Vedic civilization called the **Sanatana Dharma** – the great theme of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and a subject of Thoreau's consideration throughout his stay at Walden.



## The *Bhagavad-Gita* in Translation

Although he read only a few books during his stay at Walden Pond, his favorite, which he tells us he read every day, was the *Bhagavad-Gita*, or Song of the Lord. The edition he read was unique: at that time it was the only English translation in existence. The translation was by Charles Wilkins, the first Englishman to learn Sanskrit proficiently. He had studied that most ancient of languages under a **Brahmin pundit** called Kalinatha while living in **Varanasi**, the legendary holy city and academic center of India.



Charles Wilkins

– first translator of the *Bhagavad-Gita* into English

Wilkins came to India in 1770 to work for the East India Company as a printer and writer. He quickly developed proficiency in Bengali and Persian and came to the notice of Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India. Hastings was an Oriental scholar and he encouraged Wilkins to learn Sanskrit.

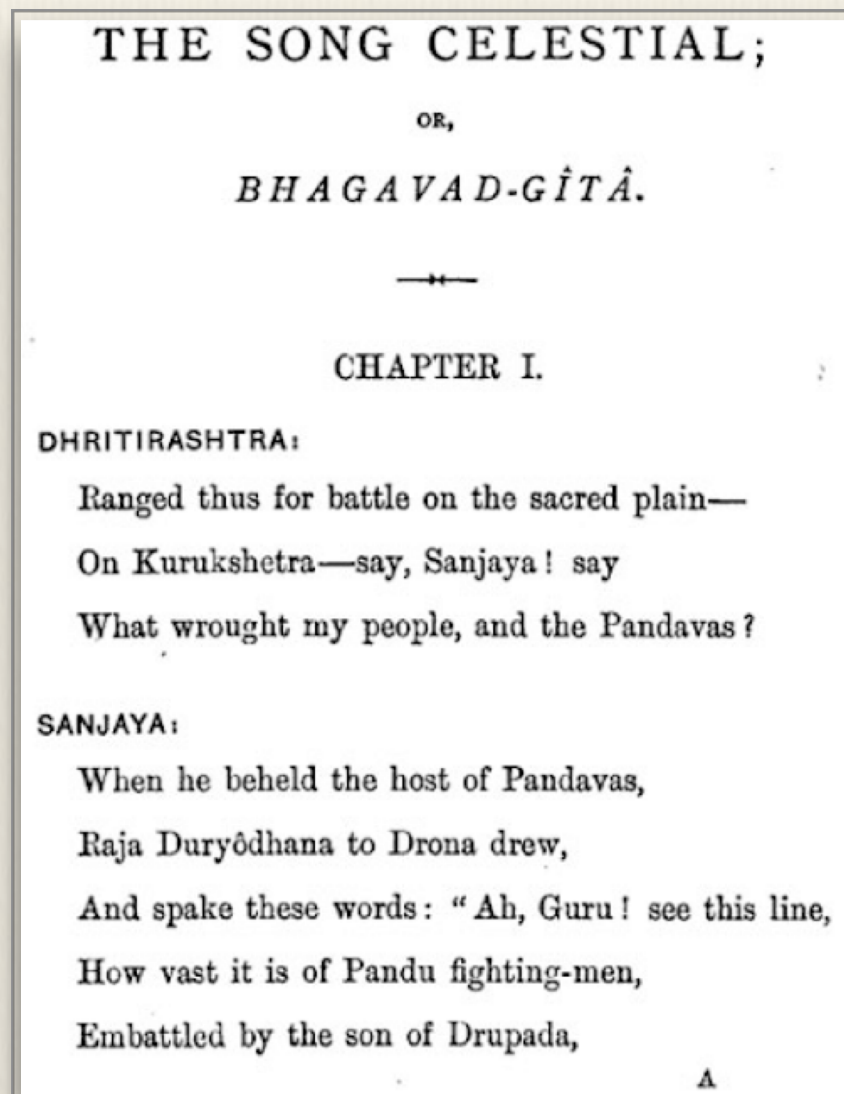
Over time Hastings became Wilkins's patron, providing money for his living expenses while he worked.



Warren Hastings, First Governor General of India 1773-1784

Hastings asked Wilkins to make a translation of the *Gita*, declaring the text to be “of a sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction almost unequalled.” After the translation was completed, Hastings wrote the preface, prophesying that these writings of the Indian philosophers “will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.”

Wilkins also worked on the first English translation of the *Mahabharata*. Although he never completed the whole text, he did finish the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which was published in England in 1785. His English version eventually came into the possession of Thoreau and Emerson who were among the first Americans to read the *Gita*.

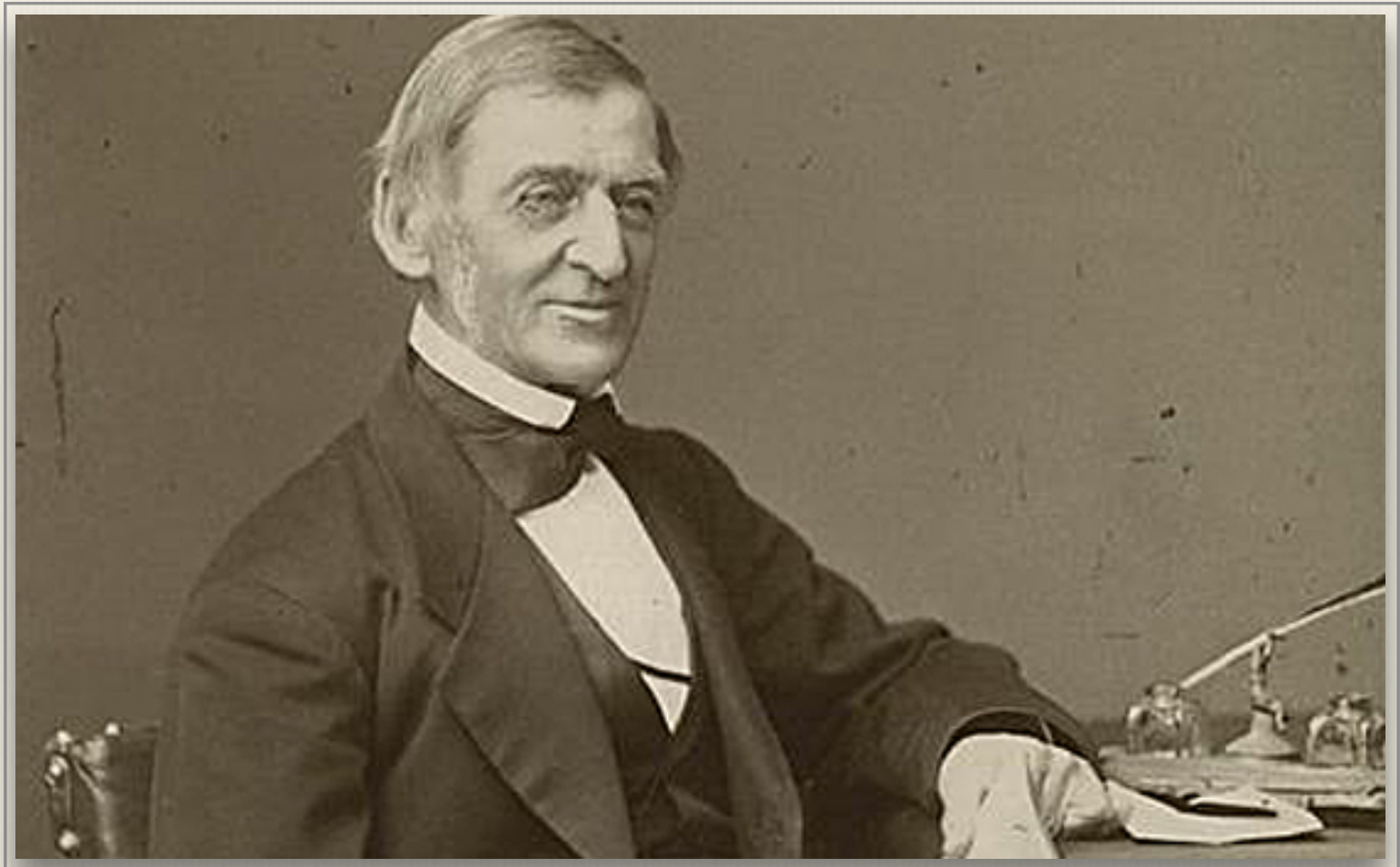


The Bhagvat-geeta, or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon  
(London: Nourse, 1785)

Translated by Charles Wilkins

This was the first text of the Vedic culture  
to be translated directly from Sanskrit to English.

It opened them up to another world and moved them profoundly. Emerson wrote: "I owed a magnificent day to the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."



Ralph Waldo Emerson 1803-1882

The *Bhagavad-Gita*, Upanishads and other Vedic texts were to change the way Americans thought about their own lives and religious beliefs.

“For nearly three decades, from 1836 to 1866 or the end of the Civil War in America, the United States witnessed the flowering of an intellectual movement the like of which had not been seen before. The movement flourished in Concord, Massachusetts and was known – though it had no formal organization – as the Transcendental Club or Circle. Its members were Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, the Unitarian Minister James Freeman Clark, the teacher and philosopher Amos Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and some clergymen. Their collective achievement in quality of style and in depth of philosophical insight has yet to be surpassed in American literature. And their major influence without exception were the **Vedic literatures of India.**”

– **Swami B.G. Narasingha**, *Oriental Seeds in Occidental Soil*

## The Mahabharata

The *Gita* forms a small part of the *Mahabharata*, the great epic story of India. So sweeping is its scope, it is said of the *Mahabharata*: "Whatever is found here is found elsewhere. But, whatever is not here is nowhere else." It was considered necessary reading for all persons of the East India Company.

"Young (English) officers or civil servants arriving for the first time in their new home among the palm fronds and rice fields, or in the heat and dust of a desert cantonment, would commonly be told by some well-meaning old India hand that if they wished to grasp the essence of the place and its people they should read one book: the *Mahabharata*, the world's oldest epic by far, and, with 90,000 verses exceeding the Bible and all of Shakespeare's plays bundled together, by far the world's longest and greatest epic poem."

– *Myths of Mankind, The Mahabharata* by Paul Roberts

The *Mahabharata* contains stories of **Lord Krishna**, who for many Hindus is the greatest **Avatar** or incarnation of God. It considers karma, actions and their fruits in the realms of men, Gods, demons and animals. The book is filled with tales and teachings of Vedic culture, especially those pertaining to Dharma, the principle that upholds every aspect of life. The epic shows how subtle and difficult it can be to understand or practice Dharma. The *Mahabharata* reaches its pinnacle in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which takes place on a battlefield. There **Arjuna**, the greatest warrior of his time, is faced with a profound **dilemma**: a great battle is about to begin, and he either has to fight and kill his teachers and relatives or lay down his arms and let the forces of evil overrun the earth. Arjuna's primary concern is to follow Dharma, but in this situation Dharma is unclear and there is no 'right' way to proceed; whatever he does, whether he fights and kills or puts down his arms, he will commit sin. Lord Krishna proceeds to consider many different aspects of Dharma with Arjuna. Finally, he reveals a Teaching that passes beyond Dharma, elevating the *Gita* to a transcendental level.

If we speak in terms of water, the ‘bowl’ of the *Gita* holds the essence of the **Sanatana Dharma**, the eternal principle of life, pouring through India from the Himalayas, carrying the essence of thousands of years of philosophical traditions and religious experiences. In Thoreau and Emerson, these waters combined with the more recent streams of Western Christian, Unitarian traditions, Greek and European philosophies, and the ‘modern’ rational intellectualism taught in the high colleges of Harvard.



Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra

Krishna has drawn up their war-chariot between the two vast armies just before the battle is about to begin. Arjuna, looking at the opposing forces, sees the necessity of killing many of his teachers, relatives and friends in battle. He knows that would be a sin. Yet, he also sees that if he does not fight he would allow evildoers to prevail in the world . . . that would be sinful as well. Falling into despair, he puts down his bow and arrows and sits down in the chariot saying, “I will not fight.” This is the dilemma which occasions the *Bhagavad-Gita* or “Song of the Lord.”

# Swami Vivekananda



Map of India during the time of the British Empire – 1909

The shipping of ice to India did not outlast the nineteenth century. In 1874 the British Royal Navy set up artificial ice-making operations in **Madras** and Calcutta, which quickly eliminated the need to ship natural ice from America. Within four years Walden water no longer melted into the Ganges.

Beginning with Emerson and Thoreau, the culture of America had been affected by Indian scriptures such as the *Gita* and the **Upanishads**. In turn, the culture of India was changed by the thinking and culture of the West, especially by the English, who had been in India for several hundred years seeking to exploit her vast natural wealth.

There had not just been commerce in spices, tea and frozen waters. Over time, new ways of considering their whole religious tradition began to arise among the Hindus. Eventually these newly mixed ‘waters’ would pour back into the West when for the first time in history, a living representative of India’s Vedic culture would come to the shores of America in the person of Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda was the first man who both understood and embodied the Vedic culture to the English world. Although Charles Wilkins had translated the *Bhagavad-Gita*, it takes more than a translator to understand that text. Its subject is God-Realization. One must possess the living experience to which the words and story are pointing. There is a world of difference between a translator-scholar and a man who has **Realized** the Truth of what he studied. Swami Vivekananda was that man and Sri Ramakrishna was his teacher.



Swami Vivekananda



## Ramakrishna Paramahansa

“God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, times and countries. All doctrines are so many paths; but a path is by no means God Himself. Indeed, one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with whole-hearted devotion.” – Ramakrishna



Ramakrishna Paramahansa 1836-1886

Vivekananda was the foremost disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a **God-Realizer** of nineteenth century India, who spent most of his life as a priest in the **Dakshineswar Kali Temple**, located on the banks of the Ganges in Calcutta about twelve kilometers up the river from where Tudor's boats had unloaded their ice.



Dakshineswar Kali Temple

Ramakrishna sprang from simple roots; his father was a pious **Brahmin** farmer. Although he had minimal education, he could read and write Bengali and was well-versed in the folklore and religious stories of West Bengal. As a boy, he listened to the *Mahabharata*, the **Ramayana**, as well as the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad-Gita*.

Remarkably permeable to the religious culture and natural phenomena that surrounded him, throughout his youth he spontaneously experienced visions and trances that filled him with ecstasy. Possessed with an overwhelming thirst for God, he was never satisfied with merely hearing about or studying spiritual phenomena; he had to have the experience himself. Arriving at Dakshineswar Kali Temple for the first time to take up his job as priest, he saw the image of God in the form of **Kali**. A rare form of devotional love called **Mahabhava** overwhelmed him with sublime happiness and he fell to the ground, losing all consciousness of the external world.

Over time, he became more and more focused on the **Divine Mother**, one of the archetypal forms of God in Hinduism and looked upon the image of the goddess Kali in the Dakshineswar Temple as his mother and the Mother of the universe.



The Goddess Kali in the Dakshineswar Temple

Beset with doubts of whether he was worshipping a stone idol or God, he begged her to show Herself to him in Her actual form:

“Show me thy face of compassion which has been hidden by the dust of illusion. O Goddess, thou face of immortality, reach me through and through with thy deathless compassion.”

– From a well known prayer of the devotees of Kali.

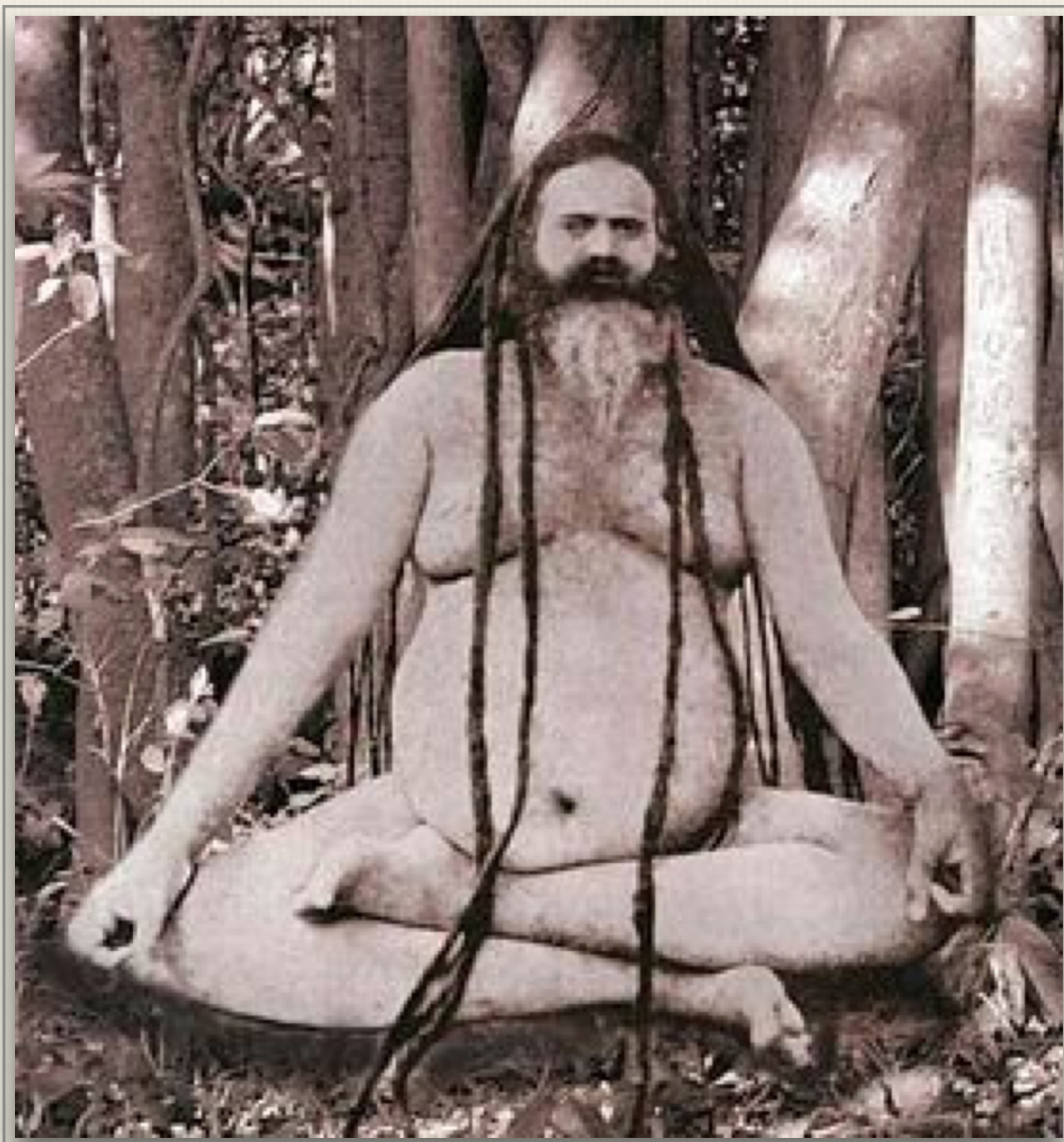
His longing to see Her became an unceasing fever that drove him to the brink of madness – he was at the point of ending his life when the Goddess Herself finally appeared. Ramakrishna described the experience:

"I felt as if my heart were being squeezed like a wet towel. I was overpowered with a great restlessness and a fear that it might not be my lot to Realize Her in this life. I could not bear the separation from Her any longer. Life seemed to be not worth living. Suddenly my

glance fell on the sword that was kept in the Mother's temple. I determined to put an end to my life. When I jumped up like a madman and seized it, suddenly the blessed Mother revealed Herself. The buildings with their different parts, the temple, and everything else vanished from my sight, leaving no trace whatsoever, and in their stead I saw a limitless, infinite, effulgent Ocean of Consciousness. As far as the eye could see, the shining billows were madly rushing at me from all sides with a terrific noise, to swallow me up! I was panting for breath. I was caught in the rush and collapsed, unconscious. What was happening in the outside world I did not know; but within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss, altogether new, and I felt the presence of the Divine Mother."

Ramakrishna lived as a God-intoxicated devotee of the Mother for the rest of his life, yet he was also moved to experience the goals and Gods of other traditions. Accepting various teachers of the different mystical traditions of Hinduism, he practiced **Tantra**, where he experienced the full ascent of **Kundalini Shakti**, the highest goal of the **yogis**. He became a **Vaishnaiva Bhakti**, or lover of Krishna. Recognizing Krishna to be the only male in the Universe, Ramakrishna became his female devotee, acting like a woman, dressing and gesturing as Krishna's lover. His speech changed and he became feminine, moving freely with women, who accepted him as one of their own. Finally, he attained the vision of Krishna and merged into Him, losing himself utterly. Following the path of the **Ram-Bhaktis**, he tended an image of **Lord Rama** as a baby. Ramakrishna filled with motherly tenderness, until he was blessed with the vision of Rama himself.

Consumed with an overwhelming love of God, he quickly mastered spiritual practices that usually demand a lifetime. There were even periods when he adopted the devotional paths of Christianity and Islam, losing all interest in the Divine Mother and became a **Christian mystic** and a **Sufi** until he attained the ultimate goal or vision of that faith. He later said, "I went by different roads but found myself at the end before the same king."



Totapuri

One of Ramakrishna's greatest teachers was Totapuri, a naked itinerant monk. Totapuri was a giant of a man who had trained in **Advaita Vedanta** since he was a youth. **Advaita**, or Non-dualism, is the ultimate consideration of the nature of everything; gross, subtle and causal. The teachings of Advaita state that everything is consciousness and the appearance of the world is illusory. What is meant by "illusory?" When a person sees a snake in a dream he is afraid. But upon awakening the fear disappears and there is no need to do anything about the snake; it was an illusion. Similarly, according to Advaita, the appearance of the world as separate from God is illusory. Upon awakening from the sleep of ignorance, the duality of self and world disappears, just like a snake vanishes when you "wake up" from the dream.

Totapuri was a particularly strict and uncompromising **Advaitin**. He looked upon the world disdainfully; even the Gods and Goddesses worshipped throughout India were mere fantasies to him and devotion to them was the occupation of a child. Nonetheless, when he spotted Ramakrishna on the grounds of the Dakshineswar temple, he immediately recognized him as a great spiritual practitioner, one ready for the highest Realization. He approached him and asked if he would undertake the practice of non-dualism. Ramakrishna agreed.

Totapuri offered to initiate Ramakrishna into the **Advaitic** path and told him that to do so he needed to become a **Sannyasi**, or formal renunciate. He made it clear that Ramakrishna must renounce not only the world, but even his identity as a child of the Mother. This, Totapuri pointed out, was but another form of clinging to duality and an obstacle to the Realization of non-difference of self and God. Ramakrishna responded that in order to accept such an initiation he needed to ask permission of the Mother. With amusement, Totapuri assented and watched as Ramakrishna went to the temple and returned, saying the Mother had agreed. Totapuri then performed the ritual ceremony of renunciation for Ramakrishna and they meditated together for three whole days and nights. However, even after this continuous one-pointed effort, Ramakrishna was powerless to penetrate a fundamental obstacle. Later, he told his devotees:

"I failed to bring my mind to **Brahman** – the Absolute. I had no difficulty in withdrawing the mind from all earthly objects, but I could not obliterate from my consciousness the all too familiar form of the Blissful Mother who appeared before me as a living reality and would not allow me to pass beyond. She was all name and form! Again and again I tried to concentrate my mind upon the Brahman, but every time the Mother's form stood in my way. In despair I said again to the guru, 'It is hopeless. I cannot raise my mind to the unconditioned state and come face to face with my Self – the Absolute.'

"Totapuri said sharply, 'What! You cannot do it? But you must.' He cast his eyes about the dimly lighted room and finding in a corner a piece of broken glass, he took it up and pressing its point between my eyebrows said, 'Concentrate thy mind on this point!' Then with a stern determination I again sat to meditate.

"I felt an appalling pain between my eyes, and in the heart of that agony the gracious form of the Mother danced like a flame! I used my discrimination now. As a sword cuts to pieces a body, so with my discrimination I severed her in two. Nothing obstructed me now. I at once soared beyond name and form, above pain and pleasure, and I found myself at one with the Absolute. Before that supreme ecstasy the senses and the mind stopped their functions. The body became motionless like a corpse. The universe rolled away from my vision – even space itself melted away. Everything was reduced to ideas that floated like shadows on the dim silence of the mind. Only the faint consciousness of “I, I” repeated itself in dull monotony. My soul became the Self of Reality, and all idea of dualism of subject and object was gone. My Self knew no bounds. All life was one infinite bliss! Beyond speech, beyond articulate experience, and beyond."

For days Ramakrishna remained completely absorbed in **samadhi**, a state without differences. Totapuri was amazed: "Is it possible that he has attained in a single day what it took me forty years of strenuous practice to achieve? It is nothing short of a miracle!" Before he left, Totapuri gave him the name 'Ramakrishna Paramahansa,' the name by which he is known today. **Paramahansa** is a special class of Yogi. It refers to a supreme (*Para*) swan (*hansa*), which when presented with a mixture of milk and water, has the ability to take only the milk and leave the water. How does it do this? The swan secretes the bitter bile of discrimination (**Viveka**), which causes the milk to curdle. Then, it eats only the curds of Truth and leaves the water of ignorance behind. Ramakrishna had this ability. His vision was not obscured

by ignorance and the multiplicity of forms, he experienced God in everyone and everything.

The experience of God both with and without form in several religious traditions, gave rise to Ramakrishna's unique and remarkable claim: the practices, paths, Gods and goals of all religions are true and ultimately the same in their goal.

By the time Vivekananda met him, Ramakrishna embodied a range of spiritual experiences and understanding incomprehensible to a western mind. However, even these things do not fully communicate his character. All his life he remained innocent of his own attainments, yielding all praise and immersed in God. He had the ability to transmit his experience to others and transform the lives of all around him. He spoke to simple people in their own language; yet he could debate and defeat great scholars on the most difficult and subtle points of scripture. When asked by a disciple about the source of his seemingly inexhaustible knowledge, he replied; "I have not read, but I have heard the learned. I have made a garland of their knowledge, wearing it round my neck, and I have given it as an offering at the feet of the Mother."



Sri Ramakrishna

“There is only one God, it is men who have given him many names.”

– The Upanishads



## The Brahma Samaj and the Bengali Renaissance

The life of Ramakrishna coincided with what is called today the **Bengali Renaissance**. This revival was born of the English-Christian influence in India over several hundred years. Centered in Calcutta, the capital of culture and western influence in late nineteenth century India, the Renaissance affected every part of society, including literature, art and religion. The **Brahmo Samaj**, or Society of God, was the most well-known religious movement to develop during this time. It was founded by **Ram Mohun Roy**, who is often referred to as the "maker of modern India." Over six feet tall, built like an athlete, possessed of a fiery temperament, classically trained and brilliant, Roy developed a new interpretation of the Sanatana Dharma, one critical of traditional Hinduism. He wrote: "The Realization of One Supreme Being can be attained by individuals without the assistance of any Avatar, saint, religious authority or revelation."



Ram Mohun Roy 1774-1833

Influenced by the iconoclastic thinking of western culture, his intent was to reform Hinduism. Members of the Brahma Samaj had no faith in Vedic scriptures and did not believe in God-men or Avatars. Their movement called for the education of women, inheritance rights for women, the abolition of the dowry system and the improvement of education. They believed that "service of man is the service of God," and they stood against all caste distinctions and the worship of idols. Amongst the many changes Roy helped bring to Hindu society was the outlawing of **Sati**, the burning of widows. He had seen a young widow, a relative of his, burned to death on her husband's funeral pyre. Outraged, he vowed never to rest until the custom was abolished.



Keshab Chandra Sen 1838-1884

After the death of Ram Mohun Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen became the leader of a break-away version of the Brahma Samaj. Keshab was a brilliant, western-educated man who spoke eloquent English. Like Roy, he also had no faith in God-men or idol worship and was passionate about reforming Hinduism.

Keshab lived in Calcutta and heard a great deal about Sri Ramakrishna. Finally, he decided to pay him a visit. Expecting to find a small-minded, fundamentalist Hindu believer, he encountered instead an illuminated, God-conscious man, sensitive to the subtlest details of the life around him. Ramakrishna was a living example of what Keshab had been striving to express through the teachings of the Brahma Samaj. Keshab wrote: "Before I met Ramakrishna I had a poor conception of religion – I spent my time rampaging about reforms. But now that I have known him, I know what a true life of religion consists of." Keshab, too, was amazed that Ramakrishna, although unlettered, penetrated to the essence of every question asked of him and had no problem debating learned scholars.

Ramakrishna loved Keshab and would attend meetings of the Brahma Samaj at his house. Once, after observing a Brahma meeting, Ramakrishna remarked:

"I went to Keshab's religious service. After a sermon on the glory of God, the leader said, 'Let us commune with him.' I thought, 'They will now go into the inner world and stay a long time.' Hardly had a few minutes passed when they all opened their eyes. I was astonished. Can anyone find him after so slight a meditation? After it was all over, when we were alone, I spoke to Keshab about it. 'I watched all of your congregation communing with their eyes shut. You know what it reminded me of? Sometimes in **Dakshineswar** I have seen under the trees a flock of monkeys sitting stiff and looking the very picture of innocence. But their thoughts belied the picture they made: they were thinking and planning their campaign of robbing certain gardens of fruits, roots, and other edibles. Oh yes! They were thinking of swooping down on those unprotected gardens in a few moments. The communing that your followers did with God today is no more serious than were those monkeys trying to look innocent of mischief!'"

It was Keshab Sen who first introduced Ramakrishna to the wider world of India. Vivekananda, then known as Narendra, became a member of Keshab's Brahmo Samaj and later the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, during which time he met Ramakrishna.



Keshab Sen with other members of the Brahmo Samaj



Ramakrishna going into samadhi at the house of Keshab Sen.  
He is surrounded by members of the Brahmo Samaj.

## Scottish Church College

Narendra shared many of the criticisms of Hinduism made by the Brahmo Samaj regarding Hindu religious beliefs and customs, but he could not do away with what he thought to be the essence of Vedic culture. His main objection was that the Brahmo Samaj had thrown out the fundamental thing: the experience of God. Though its members were critical of idolatry, in their religious services they offered long, elaborate praises of the glory of God. Narendra wanted to find someone who did not just praise or worship God, but actually knew or Realized Him. When he asked the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj if they had seen God or spoken to Him, every one of them replied that he had not. Not satisfied with their response, he continued to look for someone who had.

Narendra attended school at Scottish Church College in Calcutta, a Christian Liberal Arts school. The curriculum was taught in English, a language originally discouraged by the East India Company as unsuitable for native Indian instruction. However, under the guiding influence of Ram Mohun Roy, the school carried out all its teaching in English. Roy helped lay out the curriculum and bring in the first students. He wrote: "The English language is the lever which, as the instrument of conveying the entire range of knowledge, is destined to move all Hindustan."

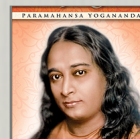
The far-reaching influence of this institution changed not only Hindustan, but was to touch America as well. Scottish Church College is the same college that **Paramahansa Yogananda** later attended as well as **Bhaktivedanta Swami**.

Both these men, at the instruction of their Gurus, would eventually come to the United States. Yogananda became the first Indian spiritual teacher to spend most of his life in America (from 1920 to 1952). While there, he started the **Self-Realization Fellowship** (SRF). Bhaktivedanta Swami spent nearly twelve-years in America (from 1965 to 1977), where he founded the International Society of Krishna Consciousness or **ISKCON**, better known as the **Hare Krishna movement**.

## Paramahansa Yogananda 1893-1952



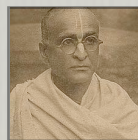
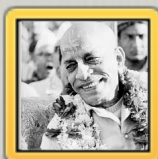
“I am going forth to discover America, like Columbus. He thought he had discovered India – surely there must be a karmic link between our two lands.”



## Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada 1896-1977



Bhaktivedanta Swami came to America in 1965 and established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), known as the Hare Krishna Movement in the United States. His teaching was an orthodox, fundamentalist interpretation of the Indian Gaudiya Vaishnavite Tradition.





## Narendra meets Ramakrishna

Narendra excelled in his classes. He studied the great western philosophers including **Darwin** and **Spencer** along with Indian culture, philosophy and music. In one lecture, the Principal of the school, Dr. William Hastie, sought to explain the word "entranced" to the class. It was from William Wordsworth's, *The Excursion*:

" . . . then, my spirit was entranced  
With joy exalted to beatitude;  
The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,  
And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,  
With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!"

When the students asked what was meant by "entranced," Hastie suggested that if anyone wanted to know the meaning, they should visit Sri Ramakrishna. Several students followed up on his suggestion.

Soon after, Narendra met Ramakrishna and asked the same question he put to all the prominent men he met: "Sir, have you seen God?"

Ramakrishna immediately replied, "Yes, I have seen God, I see Him as I see you here only more clearly. God can be seen. One can talk to him. But, who cares for God? People shed torrents of tears for their wives, children, wealth and property, but who weeps for the vision of God? If one cries sincerely for God, one can surely see Him." Ramakrishna asked him to come again.

The second time Narendra visited, Ramakrishna asked him to sit next to him on the bed. Then, looking into the eyes of a living God-man, Narendra became transfixed. Although part of him immediately thought that Ramakrishna was "raving mad," another part told him he had just met a man who really did see God and actually talked to Him.

Narendra eventually came to experience that Ramakrishna had spoken the truth, but that would not be until he had tested his Guru again and again. He

had been strongly influenced by the learned doubt of his western education and needed to experience everything himself before he would accept it. Once, hearing that Ramakrishna could not touch money as it made him sick, Narendra secretly put some rupees under the Master's mattress. As soon as Ramakrishna sat on the bed, he became ill and cried out in pain. Other devotees protested Narendra's aggressive inquiries, but Ramakrishna overruled them with instructions not to interfere.

Like the greatest of Masters, Ramakrishna gave Narendra the living experience of what he taught. One day Narendra was discussing with a friend Ramakrishna's insistence that everything is God:

"Can it be," he said, "that the water pot is God, that the drinking vessel is God, that everything we see and all of us are God?" Narendra laughed scornfully at the idea and [his friend] joined in . . . While they were laughing, Ramakrishna came upon them, "What are you talking about?" He asked Narendra affectionately; then without waiting for an answer, he touched Narendra . . .

"And then," Narendra would relate, "at the marvelous touch of the Master, my mind underwent a complete revolution. I was aghast to realize that there really was nothing whatever in the entire universe but God. I remained silent, wondering how long this state of mind would continue. It didn't pass off all day. I got back home, and I felt just the same there; everything I saw was God. I sat down to eat, and I saw that everything – the plate, the food, my mother who was serving it and myself – everything was God and nothing but God. I swallowed a couple of handfuls and then sat still without speaking. My mother asked me lovingly, 'Why are you so quiet? Why don't you eat?' That brought me back to everyday consciousness, and I began eating again. But, from then on, I kept having the same experience, no matter what I was doing – eating, drinking, sitting, lying down, going to college, strolling along the street. It was a kind of intoxication . . ."

“When I did at last return to normal consciousness I felt convinced that the state I had been in was a revelation of non-dualistic experience. So then I knew that what is written in the Scriptures about the experience is all true.” Even when Ramakrishna was dying from throat cancer, Narendra silently thought to himself, "If Ramakrishna is really an Avatar or incarnation of God, let him tell me so now." Slowly opening his eyes and looking up from his bed, Ramakrishna gazed directly at Narendra. Then, speaking with great difficulty, he said, "That One who was Rama and Krishna is Ramakrishna."

– Ramakrishna and his Disciples by Christopher Isherwood.

Before his death in 1886, Ramakrishna called Narendra to his bedside. He looked at his disciple and entered into samadhi. Narendra felt a force enter into him and he lost consciousness. When he awoke, Ramakrishna said, "I have given you everything I possess, now I am no more than a **Fakir**, a penniless beggar. By the powers that I have given you, you will shake the world with your intellect and spiritual power. Not until then will you return to the source from which you came." Although rare, this complete transmission of spiritual force from guru to disciple has occurred before in Indian spiritual history. It is the total gift of the accumulated fruits of a teacher's life and spiritual Realization. Ramakrishna had poured all his spiritual power into Narendra and chose him to be his spiritual successor.



Vivekananda (in center seated) with brother monks

Calcutta – 1899

## Vivekananda after the Death of Ramakrishna

Before he died, Ramakrishna gave the orange robes of renunciation to his young devotees and they became renunciate sannyasins. Narendranath, who later took the name, Vivekananda, was given the responsibility for his fellow disciples as well as the obligation to share his Master's teaching with the world. Not knowing how to proceed or in what exact direction to guide his brother devotees, for several years, Vivekananda wandered as a **sadhu** throughout India from the Himalayas in the North to the southern tip of Rameswaram. As he travelled, he was overwhelmed by the terribly poor condition of India's masses who existed in the midst of the exquisite spiritual wisdom of the Vedic tradition. He saw for himself that people who have an empty stomach have little desire or ability to consider the high teachings of Indian religious philosophy. Eventually he came to **Kanyakumari**, the southern tip of the Indian continent. There, he swam out to a small rock off-shore and, meditated for three days and nights over the Christmas of 1892, on the past, present and future of India.

Today that rock is known as the Vivekananda Rock Memorial and a temple has been built there.



Vivekananda Rock Memorial about 500 yards off the coast

Vivekananda later wrote:

"At Cape Comorin (the southern tip of India) sitting in **Mother Kumari's** temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock – I hit upon a plan: We are so many sannyasis wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics – it is all madness. Did not our **Gurudeva** use to say, 'An empty stomach is no good for religion?' Suppose some disinterested **sannyasins**, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all, down to the **Chandala** – can't that bring forth good in time?

"We, as a nation, have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and raise the masses."

From that time on, Vivekananda aimed to uplift the Indian people through secular knowledge, education and social aid. He wrote: "To the hungry, religion comes in the form of bread." Several of his brother monks did not agree that they should sacrifice their efforts to gain spiritual liberation and instead devote their lives to helping others. But Ramakrishna had left Vivekananda in charge, and he now instructed them to do both.

Still, Vivekananda was like a fruit tree, heavy with Vedic and western knowledge. Even during the time of his college days, Dr. William Hastie, president of Scottish Church College and the man who first suggested he meet Sri Ramakrishna had said of him, "Narendra is really a genius. I have travelled far and wide but I have never come across a lad of his talents and possibilities, even in German universities, among philosophical students." He had been gifted with a brilliant memory; many called him a **shrutidhara**: one who can memorize anything immediately; and he had the ability to impart what he had learned to others. Blessed with both experience and understanding of the Vedic tradition and a deep knowledge of western

culture, literature, philosophy and religion, he was most of all a Realizer, born to teach in an increasingly westernizing world.

One day, during a casual discussion, one of Vivekananda's admirers and friends, the Dewan of Porbandar, said, "Swamiji, I am afraid you cannot do much in this country. Few will appreciate you here. You ought to go to the West where people will understand you and your worth. Surely you can throw a great light upon western culture by preaching the Sanatana Dharma. The poverty ridden illiterate people of our country are not yet ready to receive the message of Vedanta. Why don't you attend the Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago a few months hence? There you will represent and elaborate the true Hinduism of which your Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, was the living embodiment."

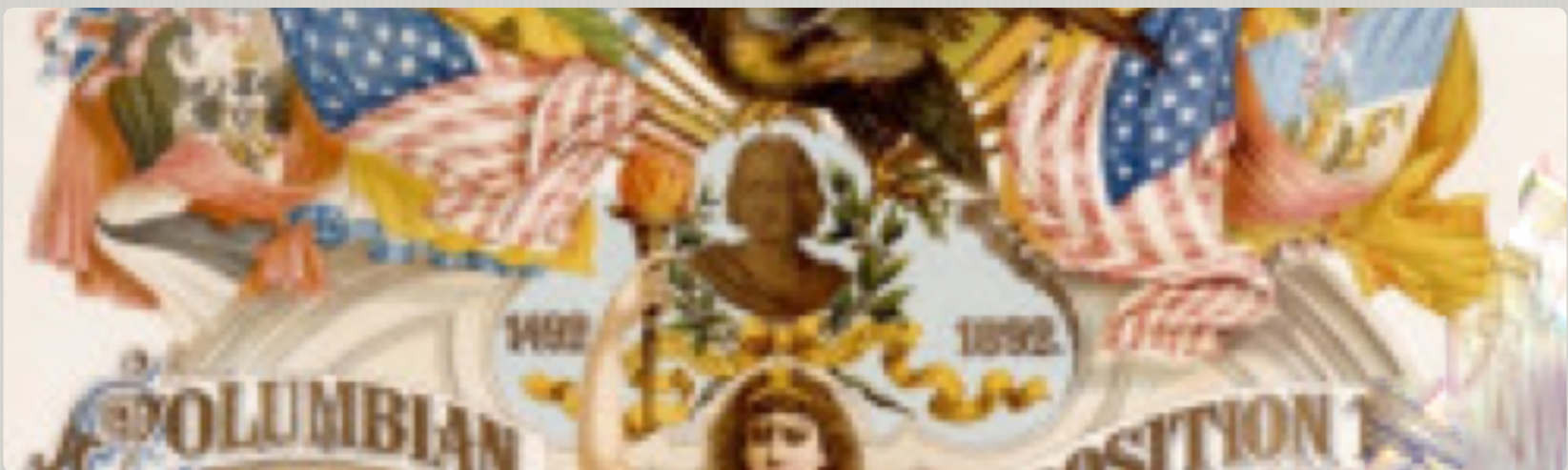
Vivekananda would never abandon the social upliftment of the masses of India. However, he thought that much good might come of commerce with the ideas and technology of the West. If he could bring the religious wisdom of India to America, perhaps the West could help with its genius of scientific knowledge, modern agriculture and industry to help lift India out of its oppressive poverty.



## The Chicago World's Fair and the Colombian Exposition

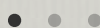
Vivekananda set sail from India on May 31, 1893 to attend the World Parliament of Religions to be held as part of The Colombian Exposition, or World's Fair, beginning in Chicago, Illinois in the fall of 1893. The Fair was to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the New World. Over forty-five countries were invited to exhibit in fields such as architecture, manufacturing, horticulture, anthropology, machinery, transportation, art, education, literature, medicine and technology. Over a six month period, 27 million people attended the fair and it set the record for the largest attendance of any event held in America.

### Chicago World's Fair and the Colombian Exposition 1893



Poster for the Colombian Exposition and World's Fair.

It was called: "The Columbian Exposition" in recognition of the 400 years since Columbus discovered the Americas. The Fair "Celebrated the transfer of the torch of civilization to the New World." It is said that 1 in 4 Americans (27 million) attended the fair which lasted just over six months. During his first twelve-day stay in Chicago, Vivekananda visited the fair nearly every day.

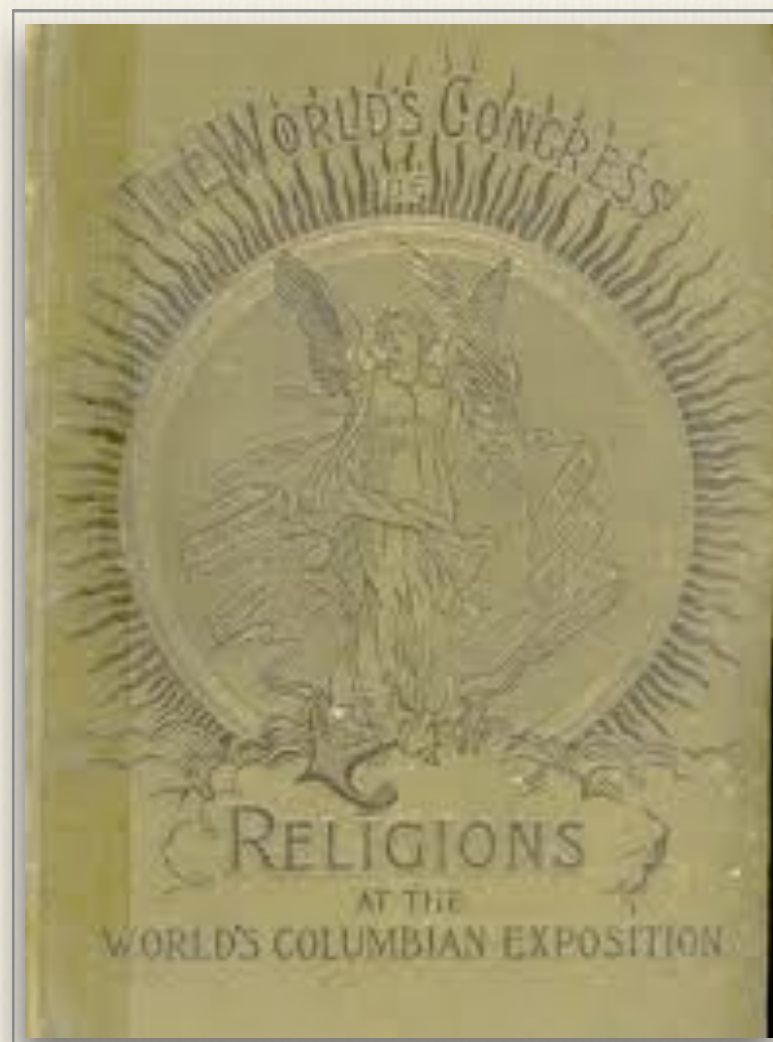


## The World Parliament of Religions

The 17-day Parliament of Religions was a part of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The Parliament was meant to show the "Substantial Unity of Religions." The nature of the event and the gathering of so many different religious traditions on a single stage, presented a picture of the dramatic changes taking place at the end of the nineteenth century.

**Max Muller**, the great German **Indologist**, who had moved to London to gain better access to the collection of **Sanskrit** texts held by the East India Company, was aware of what a unique moment this was. He wrote: "The Parliament stands unique, unprecedented in the whole history of the world."

Invitations were sent to religions throughout the world: "We affectionately invite the representatives of all faiths, to aid us in presenting to the world, at the Exposition of 1893, the religious harmonies and unities of humanity, and also in showing forth the moral and spiritual agencies which are at the root of human progress." Vivekananda came to speak as the representative of Hinduism, unaffiliated with any particular sect.





September 11, 1893, was the opening day of the Parliament and a crowd of over seven thousand people had gathered in the Memorial Art Palace to hear the representatives of the different religions.

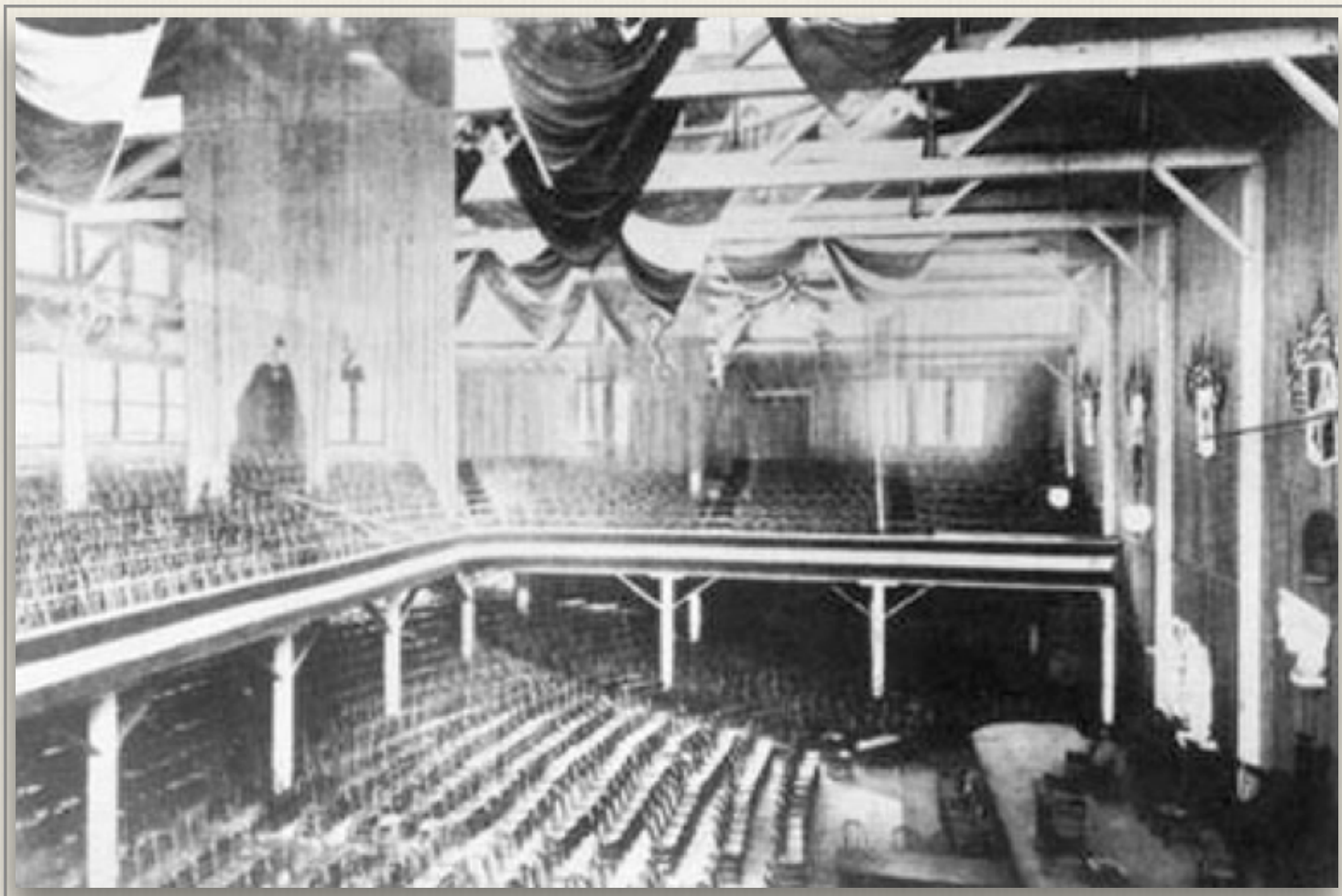


Memorial Art Palace – where Vivekananda spoke

Vivekananda was scheduled to speak several times that morning, but, “Swamiji remained seated, meditative and prayerful, letting his turn to speak go by time and again. It was not until the afternoon session, after four other delegates had read their prepared papers, that, urged by the kindly and scholarly French pastor, G. Bonet Maury, who was seated next to him, Swamiji, inwardly bowing down to **Devi Sarasvati** (the Goddess of Knowledge), arose to address the Congress and, through it, the world.”



Parliament Representatives first day: From left to right: Virchand Gandhi (Jain), Hewivitarne Dharmapala (Buddhist), Swami Vivekananda, and G. Bonet Maury (Protestant).



The Hall of Columbus, where Vivekananda spoke

Dressed in the saffron robes and turban of a Hindu monk, in a hall filled to overflowing, he rose. Then, instead of "Ladies and Gentleman," the introductory words of the previous speakers, Vivekananda greeted the people with, "Sisters and Brothers of America." What followed was an unprecedented two minutes of thunderous applause as the audience rose to its feet. It was an amazing response, as if pent-up waters had been released from a long-standing dam. In his very first words, Vivekananda had gone directly to the heart of what the Parliament was about. For several minutes he tried to speak but was drowned out by the noise in the hall.

Then, he continued, "It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects."

Vivekananda was not speaking religious philosophy to an interfaith council; he was communicating his living recognition of the common source and goal

of all religions. He had seen a unity of religions embodied in his country over thousands of years. As an ideal he had seen it in the teachings of the Brahmo Samaj and as a reality he had seen it embodied in his Teacher, Ramakrishna. But most of all, he had experienced it for himself. He continued:

"I will quote to you brethren a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest childhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O' Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee' . . . The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the *Gita*: 'Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.' "



Vivekananda in Chicago 1893

His speech was powerful and full of the spontaneous authority of one who has Realized what he speaks about. The people loved him and he became an overnight sensation. The news of his appearance spread quickly across America and the world. Life-sized posters of him went up all over Chicago.



Poster of Vivekananda

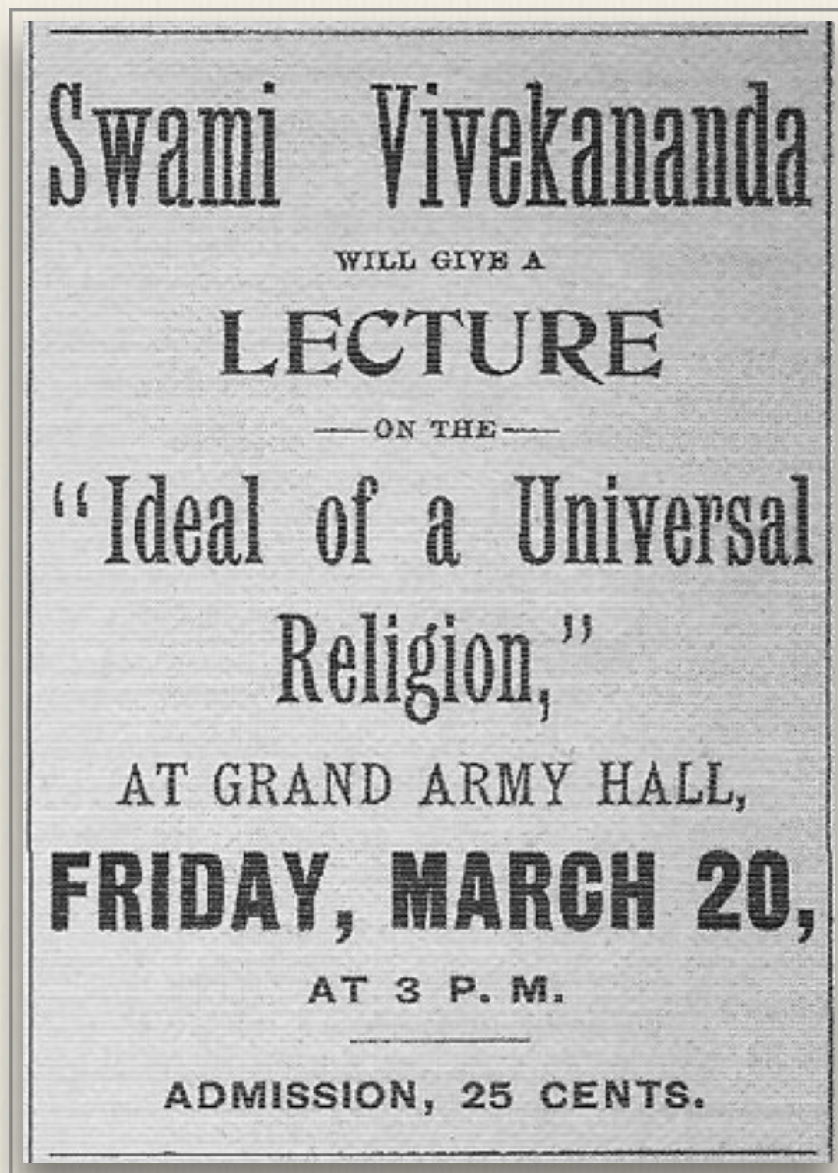
Dr. Barrows, the president of the Parliament later said, “India, the Mother of religions was represented by Swami Vivekananda, the Orange-robed monk who exercised the most wonderful influence over his auditors.” The New York Critique wrote, “He is an orator by divine right, and his strong, intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than those earnest words, and the rich, rhythmical utterance in which he gave them.” The New York Herald wrote, “Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation.”

**William James**, the great Harvard Professor, religious philosopher and psychologist, who believed that the proper study of religions should focus on the genius or experience in a religious person and not the institutions themselves, called Vivekananda the "paragon of Vedantists."

**Rabindranath Tagore**, the great Indian poet, remarking on Vivekananda's speech wrote: "This was no sermon relating to a particular ritual, nor was it a narrow injunction to be imposed upon one's external life. Vivekananda's gospel marked the awakening of man in his fullness . . . If you want to know India, study Vivekananda."

He was handsome to look at, spoke eloquent English with a slight Irish brogue and had sat at the feet of one of the greatest saints of India. He was familiar with the great western philosophers from the time of the Greeks, yet he was not merely a philosopher or a simple believer, but a practitioner and renunciate monk, devoting his whole life to what he had Realized. When he stood before the Parliament, he embodied the knowledge of East and West, combining two great rivers of culture within himself. Full of the wisdom and Realization of **Vedanta**, the highest development of Indian religion, he came from the most ancient civilization in the world, a country that had given birth to many of the world's major religions.

For the next three years Vivekananda traveled throughout America and England, visiting cities and towns, great and small, teaching Vedanta, Yoga, the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the Upanishads. In America he was nicknamed the "Cyclonic Hindu" for his brilliant delivery and wide-ranging presentations. In a class in London on **Maya** and Illusion, the audience was so overwhelmed by his talk that many shed tears.



Newspaper Advertisement for a talk given by Vivekananda in Medford, Massachusetts 1896



Vivekananda at a picnic – South Pasadena 1900

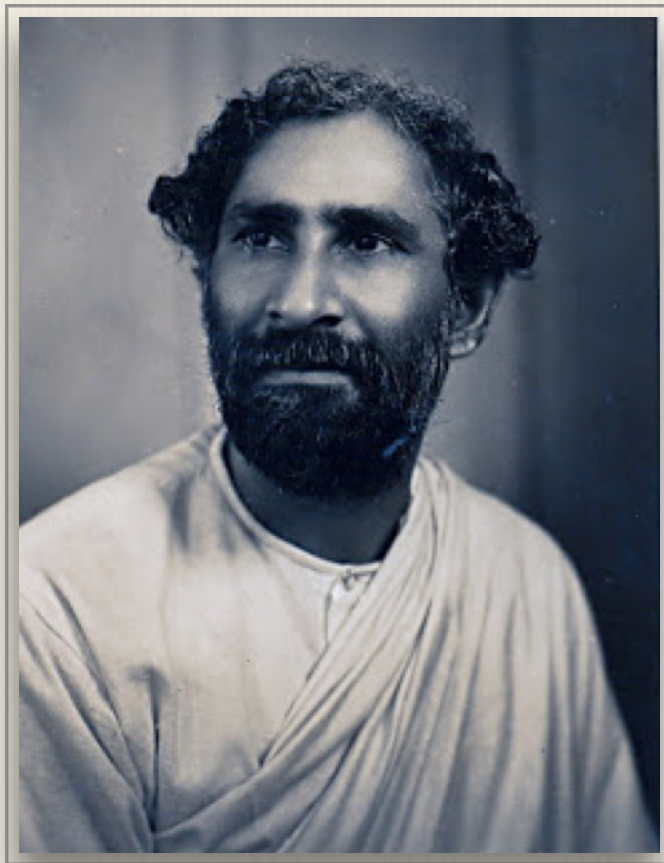


Vivekananda in San Francisco 1900

Thus it was that Vivekananda first brought the Yoga of God-Realization to the West. With his appearance, the **Vedas**, *Gita* and *Upanishads* gained their first living representation in America.

The "**Yoga**" brought by Vivekananda was about God-Realization, not bodily well-being. The **Hatha Yoga** asanas called "Yoga" by most westerners today played almost no role in his teachings. He was, like his guru Ramakrishna, concerned with the knowledge and experience of God, not with health or exercise. Yoga exercises or **asanas** for improved health and fitness were brought to America in 1919, over twenty-five years after Vivekananda's appearance at the World Parliament in Chicago, by **Yogendra**

**Mastamani**, a Hindu, who left the celibate life of a monk in India and came to America, where he taught Hatha Yoga asanas in Long Island and New York City for three years.



Yogendra Mastamani 1897-1989

During his time in America, Mastamani worked with several medical doctors, well-known for their “alternative” ways of thinking and practice. Among them were **Benedict Lust**, the founder of **Naturopathy**, **Benard McFadden**, known for promoting exercise, bodybuilding, right diet and fasting as a means to overcoming disease, and **John Kellogg**, the Seventh-Day Adventist who opened a well-known **Sanitarium** using natural cures in Battle Creek, Michigan. These medical doctors used Yoga asanas for their healing benefits, not as an integral part of a spiritual practice. Asanas have now become so popular they are what most people call “Yoga” in America today.

Even though Vivekananda was the first to embody the teachings of Yoga Philosophy and Vedanta in the West, he was not the first teacher to bring the worldview of Hinduism to America. That role was played by Pratap Chandra Mazumdar.



## Pratap Chandra Mazumdar

Mazumdar was a leading member of the Brahmo Samaj and a relative of Keshab Sen. He had met Ramakrishna and respected him as a great master. In 1879 he wrote the first English biography of Ramakrishna, *The Hindu Saint*. The book played a critical role in introducing Ramakrishna to Westerners like the German Indologist, Max Muller. Mazumdar was a delegate of the Brahmo Samaj to the 1893 World Parliament and sat beside Vivekananda on the stage.

Arriving in Boston at the end of August, 1883, 10 years before the World Parliament of Religions, Mazumdar came to America as an emissary of the Brahmo Samaj and gave his first talk from the porch of Emerson's home in Concord, Massachusetts. Emerson had died the year before Mazumdar arrived, but Emerson's wife, Lydia, invited the community of Concord to hear Mazumdar speak.

As the first religious teacher from the ancient land of the *Bhagavad-Gita* to come to America, it was fitting that Mazumdar began his pilgrimage at the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the first American to read those scriptures.

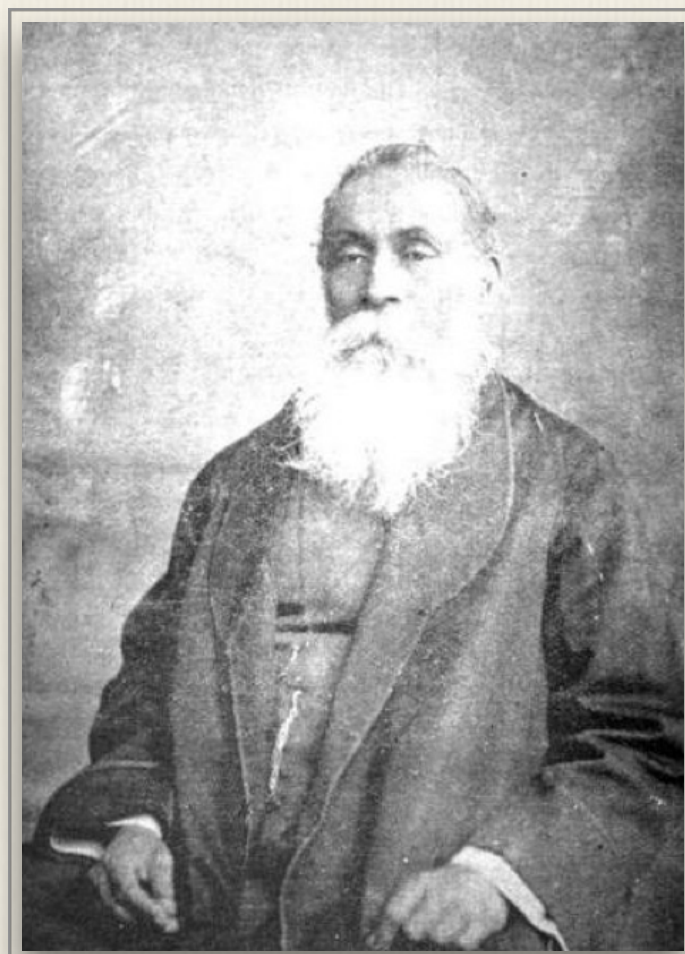
Mazumdar had not come as a representative of the Vedic tradition or Hinduism, but rather as a member of the Brahmo Samaj, and an Oriental Christian. His consideration of Christianity had been influenced by the Hindu-Vedic culture as well as the Brahmo Samaj.

In his book, The Oriental Christ, published in 1869, Mazumdar pointed out that Christ was an Oriental and he argued that the Oriental culture, arising from thousands of years of religious philosophy, had a uniquely sympathetic understanding of the life and teaching of Christ. That understanding was different from that of the "English Christ." – The English saw in Christ a divine being, a son of God, given by God the Father as his only begotten son who through his sacrifice has saved mankind. Furthermore, this story needed to be believed in order to achieve salvation. Mazumdar (and

the Brahma Samaj) saw things differently. They recognized in the figure of Christ, a man who had performed the supreme sacrifice, the sacrifice of self. It was because of this sacrifice, perfectly accomplished by Jesus, that he is called Divine and the “son of God.” This sacrifice could be and in fact, needed to be accomplished by everyone.

The principle of sacrifice is well known in the Vedas and the philosophy of India. Vedanta, the great summation of the Vedas, holds that the ultimate and only necessary sacrifice is that of self. What the English considered to be the single historical occurrence of Christ demanding faith to be efficacious, is recognized as the communication of a universal principle by the Brahma Samaj, needing to be duplicated in the life of every man and woman.

Mazumdar thought that English Christians should give up the idea of **atonement** and the forgiveness of sin through the death of Christ. Bearing his “Oriental” point of view towards Christianity, he traveled widely and gave many well-attended lectures in a country that knew very little about the East or its religious traditions and had never been exposed to such a different understanding of Christianity.



Pratap Chandra Mazumdar 1840-1905

Both Mazumdar and Vivekananda had a similar understanding of Christ and both called for acceptance of other religions. But while Mazumdar was a member of the Brahma Samaj which took a more eclectic point of view blending Eastern and Western Religions and teachers, Vivekananda championed the viewpoint of the Vedic Tradition and Vedanta. He had been a disciple of Ramakrishna, who had given him the transmission of God-Realization. Vivekananda taught the classical sciences of Yoga as a means to that goal. Though he certainly addressed moral and philosophical issues, Realization of God lay at the foundation of all moral and ethical prescriptions. In Vivekananda, a unique river of influence had come to America. To comprehend his message, it is necessary to understand him as a Realizer. Otherwise, we would just consider him just a very well educated Sunday school teacher of morality and this would miss the essence of who he is and much of the radical nature of what he shared.

Vivekananda brought with him the ancient wisdom of the Vedas, wisdom that was applicable to every aspect of life. But, his teaching was radical and its roots were in God-Realization.

Though he rarely talked about it publicly, Vivekananda personified the traditional relationship of a devotee with his Guru, the fundamental basis of the Vedic tradition and a necessity often overlooked in the do-it-yourself West; It is not philosophy or even self-effort, but the Spiritual Master that reveals God to the devotee (although self-effort is necessary to prepare the ground). Ramakrishna had given this gift to Vivekananda, a gift he was grateful for all his life.

Speaking in New York in 1900, Vivekananda said, “Today the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is known all over India by its millions of people. Nay, the power of that man has spread beyond India, and if there has been a word of truth, a word of spirituality, that I have spoken anywhere in the world, I owe it to my Master; only the mistakes are mine.”

## Turning Point

The 1893 World's Fair was a turning point for civilization. We moved from a world lit only by fire, to one of electricity, witnessing technologies and machines that would change every aspect of life in the coming century; lessening the distances between people, increasing communication and improving the living conditions of humanity in many ways.

The Parliament of Religions demonstrated that “other” religions and world-views were to be taken seriously and were not just expressions of idolatry and superstition. They too had their myths, great Truths and God-men. There was not just a common ocean into which all religions poured; the source they came from was the same as well. India, America and every religion in the world, were always joined together, and always will be.

Vivekananda communicated Vedanta through his talks at the fair and across America, speaking to a mainly Christian world that dismissed other religious beliefs and practices as less than civilized. But, there was more to his message: he had Realized the living awareness of the eternal Truth that underlay Hinduism, Christianity and every religion in the world. When Vedanta says, “There is only God,” it means there is no division (advaita, “not-two”), because **Reality** (God) extends out infinitely in all directions and always and already includes everyone and everything. It has no beginning or founder, because it is eternal and has always existed. It cares little for what is believed in, because it is based on Reality, and what greater connection to God could there be than “What Is” and who needs to believe in that?

When Thoreau wrote of Walden ice melting into the Ganges, he pointed to the ‘mingling’ of two bodies of water: Walden Pond, representing the land, culture and religions of America, and the Ganges River, representing those of India; The metaphysical aspect of these waters first touched America with the words of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, bearing the ancient worldview of the Vedas and it poured into the thinking of Thoreau, Emerson and the Transcendentalists as Walden ice had now melted into the Ganges.

India gained not only frozen water for chilled food, drinks and fevers, but the Hindu culture and religion had been changed as a result of Western influences. The Brahma Samaj, Ram Mohun Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Pratap Chandra Mazumdar and Swami Vivekananda were all strongly influenced by western culture and thinking.

Sister **Nivedita**, a westerner and one of the closest female disciples of Vivekananda described what he had accomplished at the Parliament this way:

“Of the Swami’s address before the Parliament of Religions, it may be said that when he began to speak it was of ‘the religious ideas of the Hindus’, but when he ended, Hinduism had been created. The moment was ripe with this potentiality . . . It is this which adds its crowning significance to our Master’s life, for here he becomes the meeting-point, not only of East and West, but also of past and future.”

Perhaps the most well-known symbol of this “future” occurred in 1972, when a picture of the whole earth was taken by a spacecraft 28,000 miles out in space. With that iconic photograph, for the first time in history, every person could see the “place” where they live: we are floating on a blue luminescent marble out in an infinity of black space. Since then, this image has become the most widely distributed photograph in the world.

All the religions of the earth are gathered together on Spaceship earth. This picture of the whole earth corresponds to the dawning awareness of a humanity no longer confined by the provincial worldview of any particular religion, country or continent. We find ourselves on a single planet, necessarily neighbors, traveling together through an infinity no one comprehends.

Vivekananda breached the western walls of assumed superiority and spoke to the West in the English language, standing on its soil and Realizing by his own experience the essence of religion. As he later wrote, “Never before did an Oriental make such an impression on American society.” He spoke of Truth that is always, already occurring and left behind ideas that would illuminate the future for all mankind.



### The Blue Marble

View of the Earth as seen by the Apollo 17 crew traveling toward the moon. Taken on December 7, 1972. The Blue Marble was not the first clear image taken of an illuminated face of the Earth, since similar shots from satellite had already been made as early as 1967. Counterculture activists had been among the first to cherish these images as icons of a new global consciousness. The Apollo 17 image, however, released during a surge in environmental activism during the 1970's, was acclaimed by the wide public as a depiction of Earth's frailty, vulnerability, and isolation amid the vast expanse of space. NASA archivist Mike Gentry has speculated that the Blue Marble is the most widely distributed image in human history.

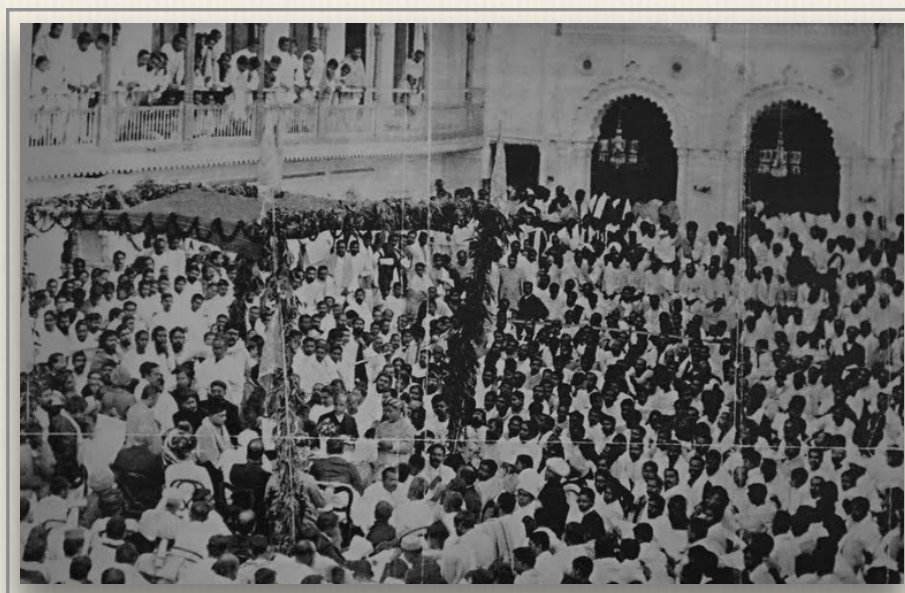
– Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia

## Return to India

After three years of speaking and touring the United States and England, in 1897 Vivekananda returned to India as her now world-famous son. Thrilling his countrymen, he had carried the waters of the Vedic tradition to the West and been very well received. The religious traditions of India had been dismissed for a long time as backwards and inferior; a common point of view held by the English about their colony. Over centuries of occupation, many Hindus had come to accept this criticism, and rejecting their own ancient religion, accepted the Western ideas of how life should be understood, which God to worship and what is his name.

Now, with the tremendous praise heaped on Vivekananda coming from the West, the great beauty, majesty and meaning of their ancient religion and philosophies were affirmed to the world and Vivekananda was the champion of that message. It was to an enthusiastic India that Vivekananda returned. **Romain Rolland**, writing in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, describes the scene when he embarked from the ship that carried him to Sri Lanka:

"A mighty shout arose from the human throng covering the quays of Colombo. A multitude flung itself upon him to touch his feet. Flowers were thrown before his path. Hundreds of visitors, rich and poor, brought him offerings. And Vivekananda once again re-crossed the land of India from the South to the North, as he had done formerly as a beggar along its roads."



Swami Vivekananda returns to Calcutta, February 28, 1897

In Madras, thousands turned out to welcome him home. He stayed nine days and gave many public talks. During this time he lodged at the building constructed by Frederic Tudor, the Ice King of New England.

Frederic Tudor built **three ice houses** in India and the **Chennai Ice house** is the only one left standing. It is now a museum dedicated to Vivekananda, run by the Chennai Branch of the **Ramakrishna Math**, the religious monastic order founded by Vivekananda. Vivekananda stayed at the **Madras-Chennai Ice House**, a huge, heavily insulated concrete building, on Marina Beach, directly on the ocean. It was the same building that had stored some of the New England ice shipped from America nearly fifty years before.



Ice House in Madras-Chennai 1833

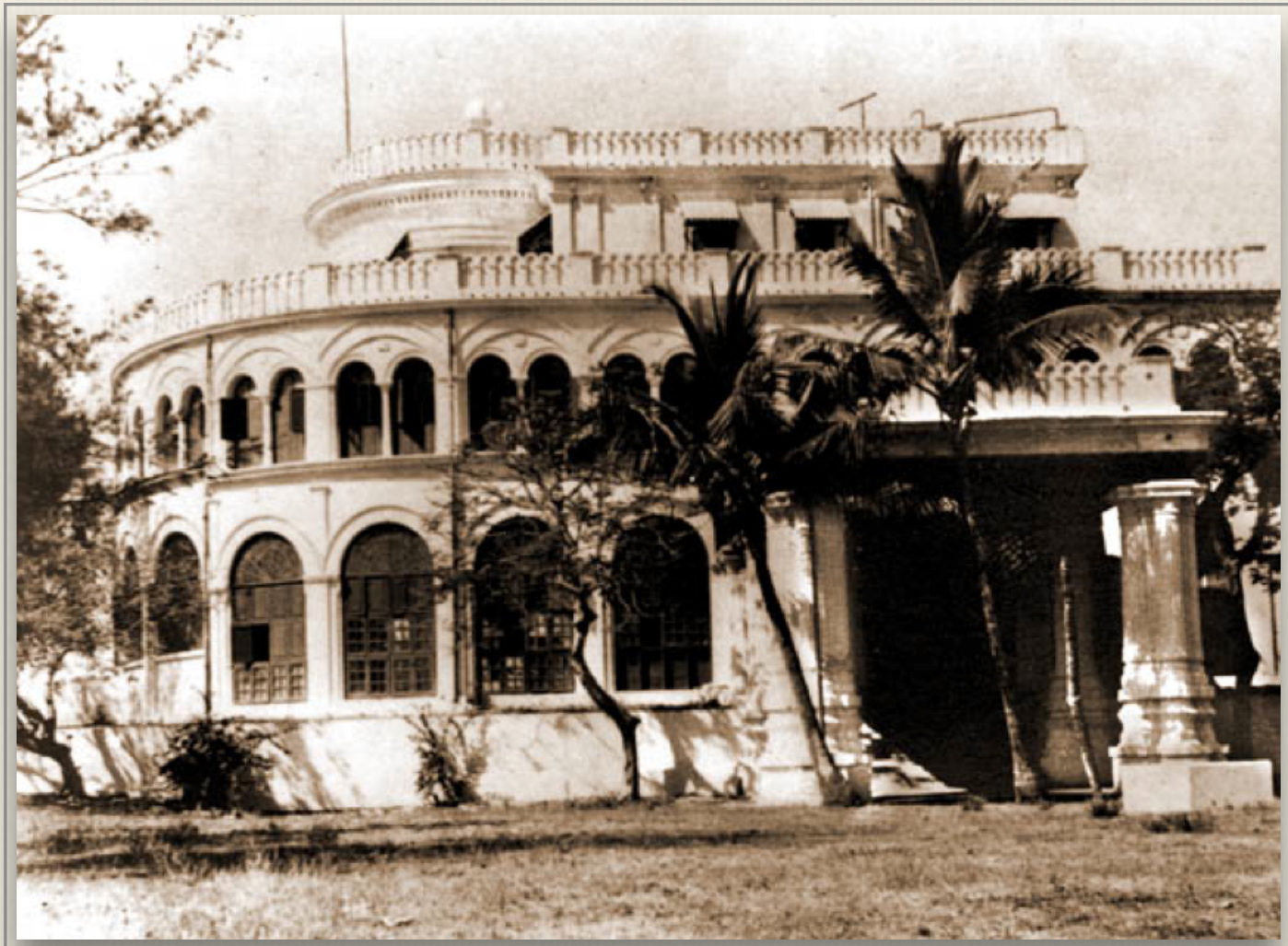


Looking back at these events, we can see what Thoreau had written about that long-ago winter in Walden Pond had come true:

"I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Bramin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges."



Vivekananda with devotees and fellow monks  
at the Ice House in Madras  
February 1897



The Ice House in 1897 when Vivekananda stayed there. It was called Castle Kernan at that time and is now called “Vivekananda Illam” or the Vivekananda House.



The Ice house in 2013. Windowed rooms used for living and work spaces were constructed around the outside of the well-insulated original cylinder. It now houses a museum of Vivekananda’s life and Indian culture.

## The Return of the Waters

"The Great Atlantic has been subdued! The eastern and western hemispheres are distinct no more. How unspeakable the influence which that one event must exercise upon the future destinies of both nations."

– the front page of the Bombay Times, 1838

Vivekananda lived on the Ganges River with his teacher, Ramakrishna, close to where Tudor's New England ice had been delivered to Calcutta. After visiting America, he returned to India and stayed at the very place where Tudor's New England frozen waters had once been stored.

A great pilgrimage had occurred. Just as the frozen Walden waters had been transported to India where they melted into the Ganges, the now-mingled sacred waters of the **Ganges**, (the ancient wisdom of the East), had been carried to the West and poured onto American soil where they seeped into our western thinking. What began as only a small seed, planted in the ground of the American psyche by the first translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* by Charles Wilkins, Merson and Thoreau, had been watered by Vivekananda and now, 120 years later had grown into a young sapling.

In the Age of Enlightenment, scientific thinking began to spread across Western Europe, replacing superstition and belief. In a similar way, the universal, non-sectarian worldview and principles of Yoga and Vedanta brought to America by Vivekananda, seeped into our language and awakened in our psyche, eventually giving rise to other aspects of the Yoga tradition: *Autobiography of a Yogi*, *Be Here Now*, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Transcendental Meditation, Bhaktivedanta Swami and the Hare Krishna movement, the practice of various kinds of meditation and asanas, Ayurveda and Vedic astrology. Our language and thinking now include words like karma, reincarnation, guru and dharma and the influence of Vedic culture continues to grow steadily, even though its roots which drink from the God-

Realizing, Yoga of ancient India are mainly forgotten. They can all be traced back to the first waters of the ancient Vedic tradition brought to America by Swami Vivekananda.

Few at the time saw the full import of his life.

“It is very difficult to evaluate his [Swami Vivekananda's] importance in the scale of world history. It is certainly far greater than any western historian or most Indian historians would have suggested at the time of his death. The passing of the years and the many stupendous and unexpected events which have occurred since then suggest that in centuries to come he will be remembered as one of the main molders of the modern world, especially as far as Asia is concerned, and as one of the most significant figures in the whole history of Indian religion.”

– **A.L. Basham**, scholar, author of *The Wonder that Was India*





# The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life



The Ganges River in Benaras

“And if any generation is without Living Masters, then its children are without light, even if holy books are piled up, one upon another, like a fortress in the night.”

– Adi Da Samraj

The mingling of waters from different holy places has been a theme of religious ritual for thousands of years in India. One of the greatest of these is the well-known pilgrimage called the **Kashi Yatra**, (*Kashi* is Benaras or Varanasi and *Yatra* is pilgrimage) which is performed even to this day.

In the Kashi Yatra, waters of the holy river Ganges are taken from the city of **Kashi** and carried, barefoot (now, some take a train or plane), about 1500 miles south to the southern tip of India. Then, at **Rameswaram**, on the coast of south India, the water is poured over a lingam, the sacred image of Shiva, in the same place where Lord Shiva was worshipped by an Avatar or divine incarnation of Vishnu – Lord Rama, in the Treta Yuga over ten thousand years ago, as related in the Ramayana. (see picture below)

After this, some water and sand are taken from the Indian ocean and carried by the devotee all the way back to Benaras, where the sand is made into a lingam, the water carried from Rameswaram is poured over it and the image is dissolved as both water and sand run back into the Ganges together.



(As related in the Ramayana, Lord Rama pours water over the Lingam of Lord Shiva. Rama's brother Lakshman stands behind Rama while the monkey Hanuman and his monkey companions look back at Sri Lanka in the distance. Read a fuller version of this story in the Glossary under: **Rama worships Shiva in Rameswaram**)

**Joseph Campbell**, the well-known teacher and mythologist, wrote:

“A ritual is an enactment of a myth. And by participating in the ritual, you’re participating in the myth.”

The Kashi Yatra centers around a great mysterious myth; one hidden in waters. But what could it be? Thoreau wrote about this mythic force in Walden:

“It is said that the British Empire is very large and respectable, and that the United States are a first-rate power. We do not believe that a tide rises and falls behind every man which can float the British Empire like a chip . . .”

To most of us, it is the gravitational pull of the moon that moves the tidal waters of the world. But the metaphor as Thoreau uses it indicates a force behind gravity; Now let us turn our attention to this force as represented by the water and consider what it represents; like any principle, it is seen only in its expression and always obscured by its effects. This principle is the hidden subject of the ritual of the Kashi Yatra, the essential meaning of the myth and the great mystery, which saints, poets and God-men throughout history have often used the word, “water,” to describe.

So far, we have considered images reflected upon the water. They comprised the events of our story. Now let us consider water itself; a living, intelligent, symbolic and even Divine phenomena; what has been called the *Living Water* of Life.

## **Living Water**

The Bible tells a story about a **Samaritan woman** who meets Jesus at a well: “So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son, Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour[noon].



A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (for Jews have no dealings with **Samaritans**)

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in



him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

In the story of this book, I refer to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as Spiritual Masters or Realizers. They were bearers of *Living Water* and that is why I make particular reference to them; I am pointing to a special class of beings who carry *Living Water* and offer it to others. It is the bearers of Living Water who refresh the thinking and culture into which they are born, often in the process creating new religions or new traditions within older ones that have dried up. The Indian scriptures not only recognize such beings, they distinguish differences amongst them as well. All do not perform the same function or even have the same Realization. Some are **saints**, some **sages**, some **siddhas** and some are **Avatars**. What I suggest here is that in one way or another, there is something special about these people and I use the term, “**Realizer**” to indicate this particular class of beings.

Throughout history, it has been the function of the greatest Spiritual Masters to bring what is called in the Bible “*Living Water*.” Whether it is the understanding of life, the meaning of a scripture, or the transmission of spirit, “*Living Water*” is the essence of religion.

Those who follow the rules of established rituals to the letter are called the “orthodox.” They tend to take over established religious organizations and define what it is to be a “true” devotee, practitioner or believer. Jesus summarized their liability this way: They follow the letter of the law but have lost the spirit. It is spirit that is the source and subject of religion. I refer to spirit here as the “*Living Water*” of life.

This is why it is necessary that living God-men, true Realizers, come to revitalize and interpret religious traditions, age after age, pouring out the *Living Water* of Realization and purifying the stagnant pools of laws and beliefs. This is what Jesus did for Judaism. Jesus was a Jew, yet he criticized

the Jewish orthodoxy of his day for their 'sinful' (lacking in spirit or *Living Water*) interpretation of the Hebrew religion.

Buddha always taught that Truth needed to be Realized. Born a Hindu, he made little of belief, insisting on experience and Realization. Neither Jesus nor Buddha set out to create a new system of religion; experiencing the Truth of life themselves and insisting on personal experience by others, they inspired two of the major religions in the world today.

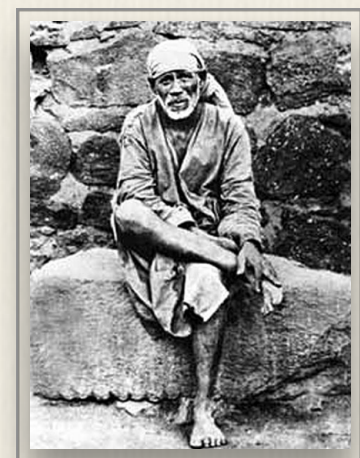
It is only the God-men who are by experience the Truth of Life. They live in "Divine Reality," the radiant recognition of God and they steer by a different star than what the orthodox believe in or think they know. These bearers of *Living Water* embody the essence of religion and are found at the source of every religious tradition. It is said that the waters of India have been richer in God-men and women than any other culture in history. Indeed, among all the nations of the earth, the greatest wealth of India has been its abundance of God-Realizers.



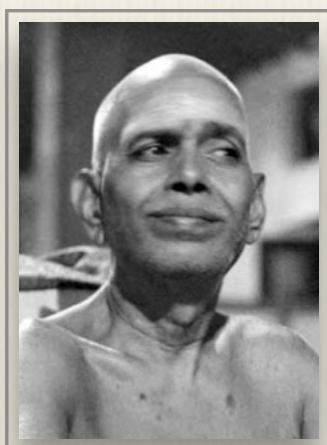
Lord Krishna



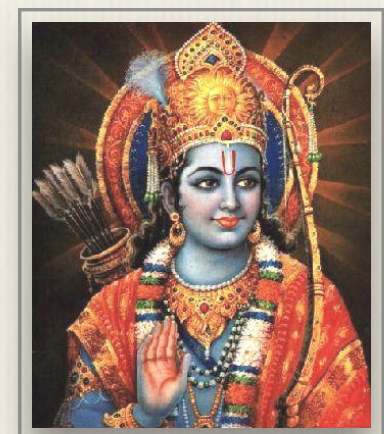
Buddha



Shirdi Sai Baba



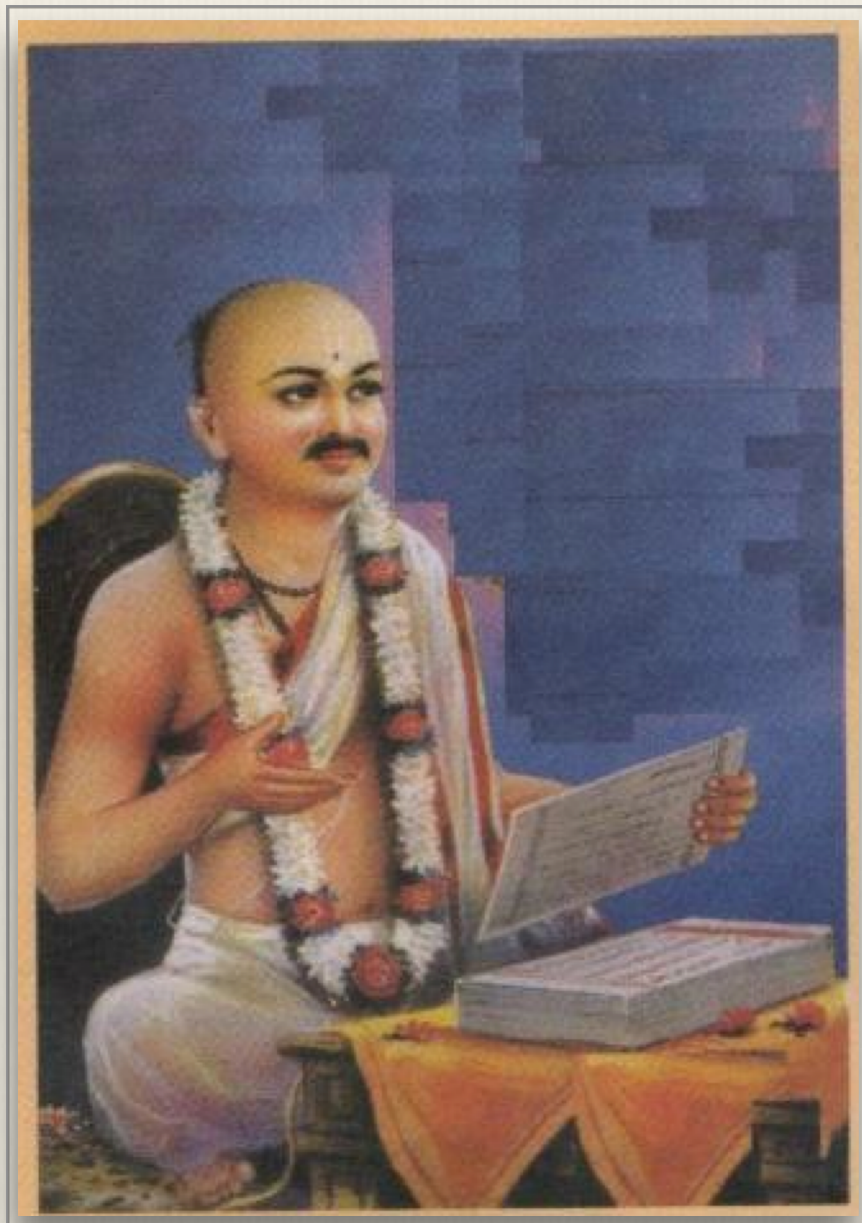
Ramana Maharshi



Lord Rama

## Ekknath

There is a story about a great Indian saint by the name of Eknath. He was a **Marathi** holy man, scholar and poet who lived in the 16th century. He undertook the Kashi Yatra one year, starting in Benaras:



In olden days, a person traveled by foot on the pilgrimage from Kashi to Rameshwaram. It was a pilgrimage that took about a year to complete.

Eknath had been traveling south from Benaras for nearly six months with a group of pilgrims and they were now walking the final miles to Rameshwaram in the furnace-like heat of south India. The sand was burning their feet, but they were excited as they only had a few more miles to go before they would finally reach their goal. Then, they came across a donkey which had fainted on the sand, its tongue hanging out. It was dying of thirst. Seeing the suffering of the donkey, Eknath felt pity. To save its life,

he took the only water he had, the sacred Ganges water he had been carrying in a pitcher from Benaras, and poured it into the mouth of the beast. The donkey began to revive.

The other pilgrims, who had traveled the whole way from Benaras in his company, rebuked him, “O terrible sinner! You have offered the holy water of the Ganges meant for **Abishekam** (devotional bath) of Lord Siva to a donkey! We forbid you from traveling with our group!” Eknath replied, “The Lord whom I worship, has come here, five miles before our destination in the form of a donkey and has accepted the water I have brought for Him.”

Often, situations present us with dilemmas that scriptures, rules and rituals have no answer for. Yet, it is here that the meaning of what we believe in, the ultimate import of a scripture and the God we worship becomes most evident. When Arjuna sat down on his chariot in the midst of two armies on the eve of battle, it was not because he was afraid of losing the battle. He was the greatest warrior of his day and no one could defeat him. But, he was afraid of committing a sin or going against Dharma. Most of all, he wanted to do the right thing, yet, the laws of Dharma or what is ‘right’ were in conflict with one another. If he fought and killed his relatives and teachers, that would be a sin against Dharma. If, as a warrior, he lay down his arms and allowed the forces of evil to overcome the earth, that would be sinful as well and he needed to do one or the other. Not finding any right way to act, Arjuna said, ‘I will not fight,’ put down his bow and sat down in despair.

Lord Krishna, recognizing the potential dilemmas inherent in every injunction of scripture, put forth the teaching of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Proceeding through a consideration of right and wrong, the subtleties of dharma, descriptions of the practices of devotion and meditation the qualities of a Realizer and the revelation of His Divine Form, at the end of the Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna to “Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil.” Speaking as the embodiment of the Divine, Krishna taught Arjuna to attain the ultimate

state of Yoga, the living Realization that would free him from the effects of all actions, right and wrong.

Like Arjuna, when Eknath met the dying donkey, he encountered a dilemma: Should he hold onto the holy water and let the creature die? Or, would he recognize God in everyone and everything? For Eknath, who saw God in everything, the answer was clear.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well and told her of the “*Living Water*” he offered, he asked if she thirsted for plain water, or the waters of eternal life? In both these situations, it was a Spiritual Master that offered *Living Water* to those who needed it.

*Living Water* is the essence of religion; not something to believe in, a technique to practice, or some ritual or sacrifice or (**yagya**) to carry out, although all of these may be engaged in. *Living Water*, not the words of a scripture or behavioral prescriptions, is the essence of religion; this is the water that gives us life.

It is a special function of the Spiritual Master to transmit *Living Water* to those who can receive it and part of his teaching is to criticize anything that obstructs the flow of those waters.

Adi Da Samraj states it clearly:

“And if any generation is without living Masters, then its children are without Light, even if holy books are piled up, one upon another, like a fortress in the night.”

## **The Three Christs of Ypsilanti**

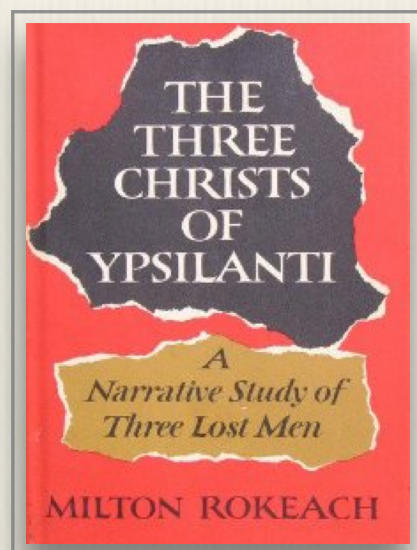
It has been a little more than 120 years since Vivekananda came to America and many things have changed since that time. Now, with high speed internet, we can bring the whole world into our living room. With a few strokes on the keyboard, I can know the weather at Walden Pond or in Calcutta. In our generation and for the first time in human history, if we go online, or visit nearly any library or bookstore, we will see before us the teachings and beliefs of every religion in the world, placed together side by side. Every God or gods, holy man, prophet, absolute truth, avatar, savior, sacred scripture, exclusive practice or secret technique is available. Different ideas of what constitutes Freedom or Liberation or what is right or wrong, stand in front of us, each claiming to be the one true way. How do we determine what is True?

Adi Da Samraj wrote about this situation:

"Particularly in the time in which we now live, when the ideas of all the provinces of earth are gathering together for the first time in human history, and all the absolute dogmas find themselves casually associated, to be judged like a crowd of silly Napoleons or mad Christs in an asylum, the complex mind of Everyman is remembering itself all at once. Therefore we are obliged to discover the Truth again by penetrating the bizarre consciousness of all the races combined as one."

The metaphor of "a crowd of silly Napoleons or mad Christs in an asylum" refers to the story of Milton Rokeach, who was the psychiatrist in charge of a mental hospital in Ypsilanti, Michigan in the 1960's. During that time, three individuals were committed to his institution, each of whom thought he was Jesus Christ. Rokeach put them all in a room together and wrote a book about what he observed.

The book is called the *Three Christs of Ypsilanti*. It describes what took place with these three individuals who each possessed mutually contradictory beliefs of a religious nature.



The 1893 World Parliament of Religions offered us a picture of that same situation and a prophetic image of our world today, where technology has brought all the peoples, cultures and religions of our planet together in the "same room" of our consideration for the first time in history.



The Stage at the World Parliament with 45 different religions in attendance

While over 45 representatives of the widely varying religions of the world gathered at the World Parliament in Chicago, not everyone who was invited attended. The Presbyterian Church of America passed a resolution against the Parliament.

The Archbishop of Canterbury refused the invitation, stating in a letter that ". . . the Christian religion is the one religion. I do not understand how that religion can be regarded as a member of a Parliament of Religions without assuming the equality of the other intended members and the parity of their position and claims." Several religious sects, most vociferous amongst them American Christian fundamentalists, also refused to participate. Any 'mingling of waters' in a gathering of this type, where their own religion would be put on a stage equal to another, was viewed as an overt challenge to their absolutist claims about what they believed concerning Truth and God. Merely to appear on the same podium together with people who worshipped a different God or Savior, or did not believe in God at all, like the Buddhists, showed their own (Christian) beliefs as relative, not absolute. They did not think, like Thoreau, their buckets 'grated together in the same well' with other religions. They saw no common 'well' at all. They were loud in their denunciations and the local papers published their abuse of the Parliament as well as many of its foreign, religious representatives. The contentious issue was considered by one of the speakers who called for a cessation of arguing. Vivekananda then stood and told a tale from his childhood:

"I will tell you a little story. You have heard the eloquent speaker who has just finished say, 'Let us cease from abusing each other,' and he was very sorry that there should be always so much variance.

"But I think I should tell you a story which would illustrate the cause of this variance. A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a long time. It was born there and brought up there, and yet was a little, small frog. Of course the evolutionists were not there then to tell us whether the frog lost its eyes or not, but, for our story's sake, we must take it for granted that it had its eyes, and that it every day cleansed the water of all the worms and bacilli that lived in it with an energy that would do credit to our modern bacteriologists. In this way it went on and became a little sleek and fat. Well, one day



another frog that lived in the sea came and fell into the well. 'Where are you from? 'I am from the sea.' 'The sea! How big is that? Is it as big as my well?' and he took a leap from one side of the well to the other. 'My friend,' said the frog of the sea, 'how do you compare the sea with your little well?' Then the frog took another leap and asked, 'Is your sea so big?' 'What nonsense you speak, to compare the sea with my well' 'Well, then,' said the frog of the well, 'nothing can be bigger than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this; this fellow is a liar, so turn him out . . .'

“That has been the difficulty all the while. I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world. I have to thank you America for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours, and hope that, in future, the Lord will help you to accomplish your purpose.”

The frog who comes from the ocean represents the Living Realization of God. However, this is not the reality of the frog who lives in the well; because of his lack of experience, this “well-frog” overestimates what he thinks he knows and is unaware of how little he actually does. Vivekananda is speaking of how this difference in experience is the root of the points of view they are arguing about. He is not suggesting another belief. He is calling for greater experience, the experience of God. Such Realization is extraordinarily rare and involves the sacrifice of self – the transcendence of mind, attention and point of view. History has shown that very few have ever done so or even been interested. It should humble us all.

## Reflections on Water

We have come far from that early winter morning when Thoreau saw men cutting the ice of Walden Pond into blocks to be shipped to India.

Those waters returned with Swami Vivekananda when he arrived at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, bringing the Sanatana Dharma from India to America. When he addressed the delegates of forty-five religions and seven thousand people, beginning with the words, “Sisters and brothers of America,” it marked a turning point in history. As he later said in his talk at the Parliament:

“The star arose in the East; it traveled steadily towards the West, sometimes dimmed and sometimes effulgent, till it made a circuit of the world, and now it is again rising on the very horizon of the East, the borders of the **Sanpo**, a thousand fold more effulgent than it ever was before.”

– Swami Vivekananda, Parliament of Religions, September 1893

With his arrival, the first Vedantic **God-Realizer** appeared in America. Coming from the oldest civilization on earth, he brought with him a new way of thinking about religion. God was not someone merely to believe in or doubt. God was to be Realized and in Advaita Vedanta, Realization is not of a God apart . . . there is neither one God, nor many Gods, there is only God.

The East India Company originally came to India for “quiet trade” with the continent. Through decades of fabulous profits, they established their own army and began to run the country as their private business after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. One hundred years later in 1857, with the failure of the Company to suppress a nationwide revolt, the British army was sent in. Queen Victoria dissolved the East India Company, and the English turned from businessmen into conquerors. India was transformed into the “Raj,” the largest and richest colony of England. This ever intensifying influence of western-Christian

culture, English education and Christian missionaries over the next several hundred years had a profound effect on the elite, western-educated Indians. Over time, they redefined their ancient culture in the light of Western thinking and Christianity giving rise to the Brahma Samaj and influencing Rammohun Roy, Keshab Sen, Pratap Chandra Sen and many others. This mixing of the waters of east and west also affected the worldview of the American Transcendentalists.

In 1775 translations of Vedic religious texts began to appear on the European continent and in 1785 the first translation of a Vedic text into English, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, was published in London. That book made its way into the hands of Thoreau and Emerson, and it is Thoreau's prophetic vision of the waters of Walden Pond and the Ganges mingling together gave rise to this story.

In the midst of the vibrant cultural milieu of 19<sup>th</sup> century India, Sri Ramakrishna, the last great God-man not touched by modernity, experienced the ultimate attainment of every religious tradition that was known in the Calcutta of his day. It was the first time any Realizer had demonstrated such a dramatically multi-religious, eastern-western, all-inclusive revelation, and it was his chosen disciple – Vivekananda – who first brought the eternal principles of the Vedic tradition to America.

In his final speech in Chicago Vivekananda said, "If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion would soon be written, in spite of their resistance: "Help and Not Fight," "Assimilation and Not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and Not Dissension."

This year, 2013, is the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration of the birth of Vivekananda. All over India and the world, many events have been planned in remembrance of who he was and what he did. Vivekananda is the man who first brought the Yoga of God-Realization to America and, as we have seen in this story, he did not accomplish this alone. Many people, forces and ideas and the very nature of the times contributed. There is a sublime power and intelligence creating these events and that consideration has brought me to reflect on water and write this story.

We are borne along by currents we can only wonder at, taken in directions we do not intend. The incomprehensible living intelligence of these waters is called by many names and adored and worshiped in many forms as it pours through the rivers of time. *Living Water* is a good name for this mystery: graceful, inexorable, creative, intelligent, divine; it guides the events of life, moves the tides of the world and satisfies the heart of man.

“In the midst of the waters, the Lord is moving,  
seeing men’s truths and lies.

How sweet are these waters, crystal clear and cleansing.  
Now may these great divine waters enliven me.”

– **Rig Veda**



The Ganges River near Gangotri

## Summary

I live about 7500 ft up in the Himalayas, in a small valley on the southern face of the **Rohtang Pass** in Himachal Pradesh, one of the northern-most states of India. There I have a one-room cottage on the slope of a huge **Deodar** (Divine Tree) cedar-forested mountain, in a small meadow, surrounded by apple and apricot trees, up above a snow-melt, glacier-fed river called the **Manalsu**, which pours down into the Beas River, that flows through the **Kullu** Valley. The Beas formed the boundary beyond which the armies of Alexander the Great refused to pass and marked the eastern-most extent of his eight-year world conquest. It runs down into the Sutlej, which heads southwest, flowing all the way across northern India, crossing the Punjab into Pakistan, where turning south it merges into the Indus, emptying at last into the Arabian Sea. ([see map](#))

If I follow a small path down across the meadow about 200 yards below my cottage, I can plunge my bare feet into the cold, clear Manalsu. When I do so, I contact a river of water that touches the Arabian Sea in another country; that is what it was like to write this story . . . no matter where I put my attention, in every character, event or idea, I touched a great river, in which I recognized sources further up in remote snow-covered mountains, that flowed into far-away seas. It is a vast river of life, of whose currents I live mostly unaware. What I wrote about and what I saw was not what I expected to find. But that is how this tale came to be told and much of it was a surprise.

I set out to write a story about the mingling of the waters of Walden Pond and the Ganges, and the return of those waters to New England, thinking to show how Yoga was brought to America by Swami Vivekananda in 1893. I found many rivers poured into this story, before, during and after Vivekananda's arrival. Many people and ideas had prepared the ground for him and, of course, there were the events and times that surrounded the tale told here.

There is a tendency in every of us to find a single cause, a great hero or the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back and make that responsible for what follows. But this ignores many contributing factors, distorts our understanding of cause and effect, blinds us to our own ignorance (the incomprehensible grace of living on a blue marble out in the midst of infinite space), and leaves us fascinated with celebrities, hoping for salvation and involved in a search for the ultimate cure. We remain focused in hopeful speculation, instead of surrendering out in all directions to an Arabian sea of infinity.

There is much that is good and great in this world. Many have said that the greatest of all are the God-men and women, and the greatest of these have always said they are not different from us, or from anything else for that matter. They confess they are God, not localized, not their bodies, their minds or even their teachings, and neither are we. Who they are is no different from who we are, but this is not a subject for argument or belief, it must be Realized to be true.

We stand with our feet immersed in a great river connecting us with all things. When **Carl Jung** built his stone house in Bollingen, Switzerland, he carved a saying from the **Oracle at Delphi** on the stone lintel above his front door. It read: *Vocatus atque non vocatus deus aderit*. It means, “Called or not called, God is present.” There is nothing we need do. We cannot control whether God is here or not. We need not invoke or pray to Him or Her. We can, however, Realize it is true, God is present, and that is what this book has been about for me.



## About the Author and India with Some Final Words



Peter Malakoff

I am a religious studies scholar, poet, storyteller, Ayurvedic practitioner, **ghee** maker, teacher and woodworker, living in the foothills of the Himalayas during most of the year and in Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, South India, at the foot of the sacred mountain, Arunachala, near the **Ramana Maharshi Ashram** for the winter months.

After growing up, going to school, founding and running several companies in the United States and arriving at the age of 60, the most unexpected thing happened – I had grown older. I found myself in what is traditionally called the **Vanaprastya** period of life, the time when an older person retires to the forest or a quieter and more remote area and devotes himself to religious practice. It seemed like the right idea to me. All my life I had studied the religions of the East, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism. I had sympathy with their teachings, and these cultures recognize such retreat as appropriate to one of my age. They certainly do not suggest a life of making money until the grave.

So, I left the technologically sophisticated, electricity always on, everything works, infra-structurally developed, relatively sanitized, small animals on leashes and large ones on farms, trash can clean, poverty is hidden, guaranteed your money back culture of the West and went to live in India; where the electricity cannot be depended on, many things do not work or are poorly built (except the ancient temples), you bought it you own it, trash is strewn about everywhere and there are few or no trash-cans, beggars and cows wander the streets; there are uncared-for dogs and gangs of monkeys that wreck everything, an undeveloped infrastructure and the many technologies developed before electricity are more commonly used. Of course, there are exceptions, especially in certain parts of the big cities. But for the most part, it was like leaving a world run by the mind and ideals and coming to live in the realm of the whole body, exposed to the elements.

Like the West, India is also a realm of sex, violence, death and rebirth. Only here, there is more of it and much of that is out in the open. None of this is to say that India is to be avoided . . . on the contrary, India is the most fertile ground for living that I know of. There are rare fruits and exquisite knowledge here. One must know what to look for, have good reason to do so and be very, very patient – for even the concept of time is different here; it is not oriented around a clock, but rather the moon, the sun, the seasons and religious holidays; which brings me to another reason I came to India, it is very inexpensive to live here. I need only a few hours of the day to make a living, allowing me much free time, a rare commodity in the West. Time offers me the ability to consider and the opportunity to create. The *Mahabharata*, the great Indian epic was composed in the Himalayan valley in which I live. It is a book of vast consideration, written in the brilliant sunlight of eternally snow-capped mountains, filled with the inspiration of clear sparkling waters, rarefied air and the life of the God-Man – Krishna.

In 1976 I asked **Buckminster Fuller**, “What should I do with my life?” There seemed to be so many roads I could travel and I didn’t know which one to choose. Fuller said when he was faced with that question, the best thing he



knew to do was to “go fishing.” He meant that I go out onto the river of life both literally and figuratively, without a necessity to catch a single fish, gaze at the flowing water before me and feel out to infinity, vanishing all concern in boundless meditation, and only then open up my lure box of accumulated thoughts, wishes and desires, select one that caught my fancy, tie it to the fishing line of consideration, cast out into the flowing waters of possibility and see what fish, if any, rises to the bait, saying, “Yes!” Fuller emphasized the importance of consideration and the necessity of taking time to engage it. That is why he suggested I “go fishing.” I would benefit from a better sense of Reality and might recognize the great mystery and power of God. We are living in the midst of an endless ocean, an intelligent force far beyond our comprehension, which affects the smallest things we do. Our control of life is limited and yet interconnected . . . like a fish rising to the bait, everything is a sign of spontaneous grace. Without such appreciation our lives are like cartoon characters, who have run off the edge of a cliff and even though out in the middle of space, continue to run for a while, before realizing where they truly are: falling to a certain death. When we “go fishing,” we become aware of the infinite miracle in which we exist and notice a fish always rises, not always when we want it, but always on time.

According to Joseph Campbell we can tell the dominant theme of a culture by its tallest building when we come into town. In the West today, in nearly every major city, the highest building is some sort of financial or business tower. It looms over the city, glorifying money, competition, expertise, technology, success and the triumph of individual will.

In most of India it is the religious temple that rises above all others, (except in the more westernized cities). Where I live in rural South India, a huge stone Shiva temple is higher than any other building in town and is a great living center of devotion. A different God is worshiped here and the fundamental metaphor by which people understand their lives is not business, finance or money, but rather the sacrificial nature of life, mutual gifting, inescapable obligation to others, the tremendous power of karma, inexorable natural laws, the necessity of cooperation with nature and the cannot-do-without support of community. These temples were built to glorify the nature of all and everything and dedicated to a particular

aspect of God. They are buildings for the focus for individual sacrifice, surrender and overwhelming gratitude.

Village India worships a different God than that of the modern world. I do not mean Krishna or Kali instead of Jesus, but the mystery of God with millions of faces, formless and with form; who is one God, many Gods and only God . . . a superior power and intelligence that must be taken into account, infinitely greater than our comprehension, who is worshipped, idolized, feared and adored and ultimately not other than what is.

In Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai or Bangalore, such understanding is no longer true in the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as all over India a flood-tide of westernization grows higher and buildings that embody the new ideals of business and finance are rising quickly.

India is the origin of the world's oldest civilization, the flowering tree at the heart of the world. Although many of its branches have been removed, the roots are still here, even though modern India is digging them out as quickly as it can with both hands, passionately trying to copy the West. This culture has withstood the Moguls, the Portuguese, the French and the English, and its walls have never been breached. But now something has changed . . . the Trojan horse of technology has been hauled within the walls of nearly every Indian household and the westernizing mind and values inside it are destroying the age-old traditions that protected this culture for thousands of years.

India is so old that we are like young children, dismissing our grandparents as out of touch, when in fact, it is we (like the frog in the well that Vivekananda referred to) who have never seen the ocean, who are immature, limited and have little idea of the insufficiency of our experience or what is even possible.

Something extraordinary once flourished here. It still does – it is merely sleeping in the winter of a world increasingly ruled by the concerns of business and money. The voice of true religion has fallen more quiet, but it is

not dead. Ancient India lies dreaming, its breathing soft, a massive body of revelation, full of the taste of all things mixed together, mysterious as a boundary at the end of space. Let us not forget this land has given birth to an abundance of saints, sages, religions, philosophies, arts, sciences, stories and a wealth of ideas that continue to inspire and illuminate the whole world.

In our time the internet offers a tremendous amount of quickly searchable information, but this does not make one wise, any more than memorizing every page in an encyclopedia would do so. Like never before in history, we are deluged by oceans of information, news and entertainment, overwhelming our ability to feel. Without feeling we cannot evaluate, and when we lose our ability to judge things, we are lost. Feeling is found in small things. When there is too much news, too much information to process, when life is too big or too fast, our feeling is disturbed; we are isolated, powerless to affect things and seek to distract ourselves through indulgence or **idealism**. We need not just information and knowledge, but also discrimination and love to find our way. This is what the ancients called wisdom, it is the age-old necessity and it has not changed.

“There is only God. The world is false. God is the world.” This statement is the great paradoxical Truth at the heart of Vedanta and the message of its greatest sages. It involves the sacrifice of self and always has. The ultimate teachings of Vedanta were originally given only to qualified aspirants; however, now, along with so much else, these teachings are available to every man and woman in our day and age, in bookstores and weekend seminars. But the requirements to Realize the Truth of this knowledge have not changed. These qualifications have little to do with what we believe or whether we have intellectual sympathy with the teachings. They have to do with something far more fundamental - our state of consciousness or point of view and the preliminary to such realization is purification and practice.

Most of us simply turn away from the mystery of God or Reality, satisfied with assumptions we already believe. We dismiss religious belief as cults and

childishness, take refuge in the scientific, rational mind and devote ourselves to family, health, business, politics or entertainment. But where has that taken us? – far beyond the small limited wars of our ancestors, to the edge of the ecological destruction of the whole world or atomic holocaust.

We have the ability (born of technological advancements within the last 100 years) to provide every single person in the world with a higher standard of living than enjoyed by kings of old. The future is where it always does, in our ability to use the natural miracles of our world – the everyday gifting of sun, water and food that is poured upon us in abundance, the changing seasons and weather, the dynamic play of the elements and the awakened heart of man, which is found giving thanks at the altar of God. The ancient roots of morality have always grown close to the waters of religion. We do not need another faith to believe in. If we are to align our life with the truth of our religion, it must be founded in our experience of Reality. We need to apply the gifts we have been given and to do so we must have *Living Water*.

In my teens I spent years hitch-hiking and hopping freight trains around the United States, camping out every night, cooking my own food of brown rice, miso and vegetables, wandering the high mountain ranges of the United States, swimming daily in lakes, rivers and oceans, visiting all the places of remote dramatic beauty I could find. I carried a knapsack, wore hiking boots, blue overalls and white shirts, practiced asanas and meditation, and was an ethical, macrobiotic vegetarian, healthy, hormonally proud to be young and unencumbered by possessions.

One day in Santa Barbara, California I met an older German man wearing a suit and tie who asked me ‘What was I doing with my life?’ He was cultured, well educated and seemed genuinely interested in what I was up to. I told him, “I’m going with the flow, following wherever the river of life takes me.” It was an answer I had given before and I felt assured telling him this as if it was the only way to be. Looking me straight in the eye, he gave a reply that would change the course of my life: “You need not hit every rock and

rapid on your way. You can take the rudder of the boat of your life and steer.” I was struck dumb by his answer. Awakening as if from a dream, I saw another way of approaching life: yes, I was being carried by great flowing waters, but I could also steer my boat down that river!

Like every other time in history, we live in a pivotal moment. Things can get better, stay the same or get worse and we are each responsible for where we are and what occurs. This is why education, understanding of history and stories are so important: without them, we might not recognize that we are going down the road to a bad place someone else had traveled to a long time ago.

Vivekananda taught “Practical Vedanta,” Vedanta set free from exclusive association with Hinduism or any other religion or culture. On the eighth day of the Parliament he presented his “Paper on Hinduism.” In it he offered a taste of the mingled waters of Vedanta and Christianity:

“A Vedic sage stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings: ‘Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! Even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again.’ ‘Children of immortal bliss’ – what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name – heirs of immortal bliss – yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth – sinners? It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.

Thus it is that the Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws, not an unforgiving prison of cause and effect, but

that at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One, “by whose command the wind blows, the fires burn, the clouds rain and death stalks upon the earth.” And what is His nature? He is everywhere, the Pure and Formless One, the Almighty and the All-merciful . . . Knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again and attain immortality.”

Known for his inspirational words, his intention was that knowledge would become wisdom and ideas step into reality, Vivekananda taught the Yoga of God-Realization. Yoga was the means to achieve the state that he described so eloquently. He proposed spiritual practices from the several classical systems of God-Realizing Yoga. He wrote: “Vedanta suggests four yogas (a) karma yoga – the path of unselfish action, (b) jnana yoga – the path of knowledge, (c) raja yoga – the path of meditation, and (d) bhakti yoga – the path of devotion. The word “yoga,” which is common to all these paths, signifies the union of the individual soul with the universal truth.” To understand what is meant by this takes us back to water.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well he said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

The “gift of God” is the knowledge Vivekananda sought ever since he was a young man. He always asked his elders, “Sir, have you seen God?” but it was not until he met Ramakrishna that he finally discovered someone who experienced God. In Ramakrishna, Vivekananda found what is called a **Sat Guru**, a teacher who embodies the “gift of God” and transmits it to others. Attending to his guru, Vivekananda renounced everything, devoting his whole life to *Living Water*, which was gifted to him by Ramakrishna. It is very rare that someone ever seeks this water and it is even rarer that a person is qualified to receive it, and rarest of all is to find someone who can give it to others. For Vivekananda, the Yoga he taught is the knowledge and practice and that prepares one to receive this greatest of gifts.

If we trace America's river of Yoga to its source, we must begin 120 years ago in Chicago and witness Vivekananda delivering his famous talks at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893. Then, going back still further in time, we cross to the other side of the world, to India, and find Ramakrishna undergoing his **sadhana** in Dakshineswar on the banks of the Ganges and observe the joining of the two great religious-philosophical rivers of Advaita and **Bhakti** with the arrival of the great Totapuri. Then, traveling back even further, through thousands of years, wandering across the length and breadth of India, we will notice the springs of different saints and sages that become tributaries which nourish the river of Yoga we are following. Eventually, our way leads up into the high Himalayas where we encounter the original seers, the Rishis, and find the Primeval mouth of the river of Yoga in Realization, the center of the world, the source of the waters, the eternal **Kailash** of God . . . this is the Yoga that Vivekananda brought to America. He said:

“The end of all religions is the realizing of God in the soul. That is the one universal religion. If there is one universal truth in all religions, I place it here – in realizing God. Ideals and methods may differ, but God-realization is the central point. There may be a thousand radii but they all converge to the one center, and that is the realization of God.”

In America today Yoga has come to mean physical exercises or asanas, with little or no spiritual context outside of health and well-being. While there is nothing wrong with this, it is not the Yoga of God-Realization that Vivekananda taught.

“What good is history if no one tells it?” This is the question asked at the beginning of this book and the reason I have told this story. It is important to establish what is true so we can measure what is false against it. It is necessary to identify the path so we can tell if we have strayed from it. I have tried to clarify the Yoga that Vivekananda brought to America so we can understand what we have made of it.

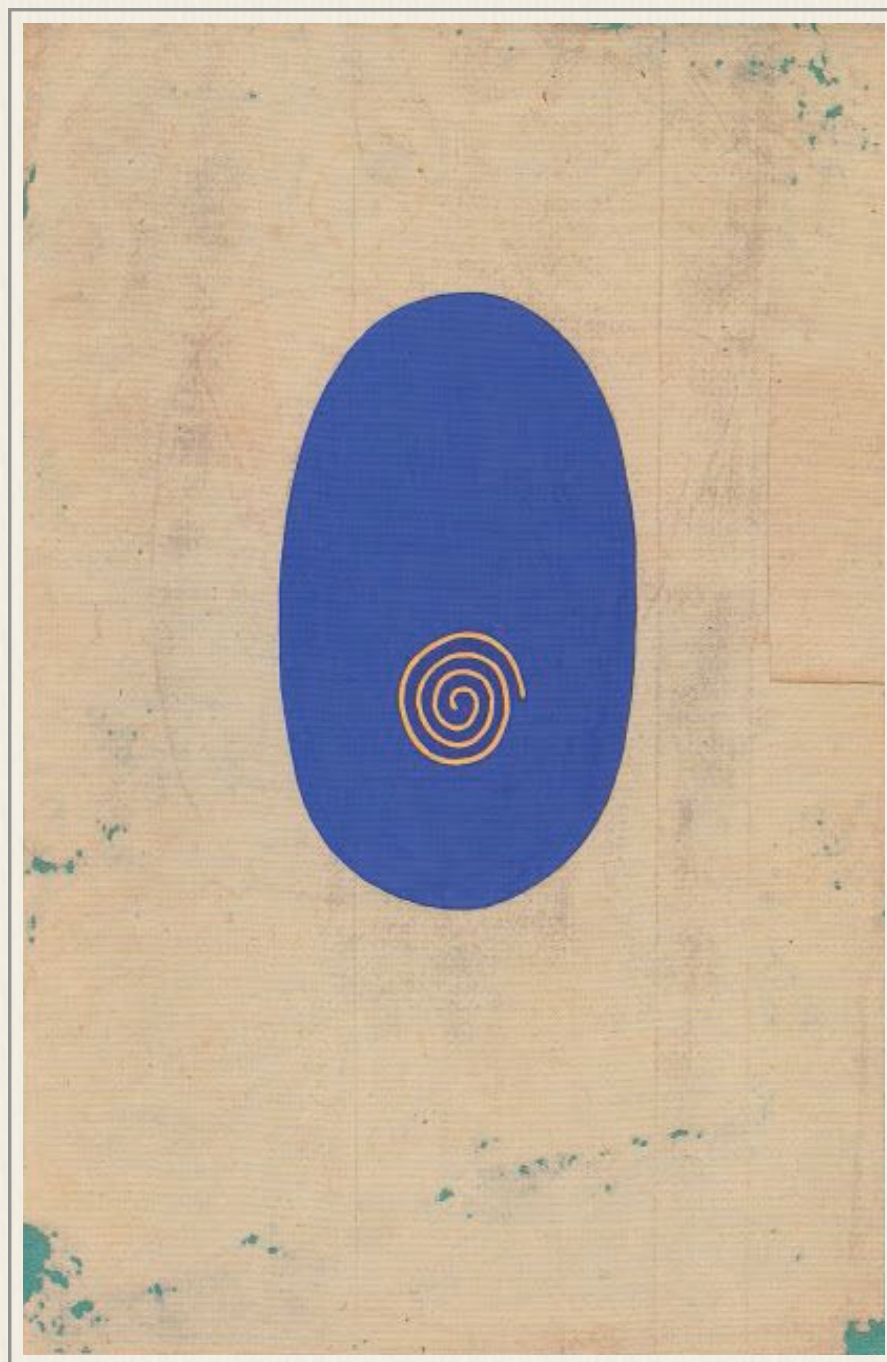
Thoreau and Vivekananda drank from the same well and their buckets still grate together nearly one hundred and fifty years later.

Lying in that well are the waters of Yoga, called the Sanatana Dharma in ancient India and the *Living Water* of life in the Bible. We have followed these waters and from reflections on their surface this tale has been woven. This is part of a story of the Living God, the God of all and everything, the God that lives us, the God of Living Waters.

Peter Malakoff

September 11, 2013

Old Manali, Himachal Pradesh, Northern India





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## **Other Books, my Blog and Contact:**

### **My personal Website: Peter Malakoff**

I have written stories, poems, articles, recorded audio tales and made small movies for nearly forty years. You can find them here:

website: [www.petermalakoff.com](http://www.petermalakoff.com)

### **My Blog: India my Walden Pond**

Essays and stories on miscellaneous topics, composed since I came to India:

[India my Walden Pond](#)

### **Peter Malakoff Books**

A site for books I have previously published as well as future book projects:

[www.petermalakoffbooks.weebly.com](http://www.petermalakoffbooks.weebly.com)

### **Contact me:**

I would be happy to hear from you:

email: [petermalakoff@gmail.com](mailto:petermalakoff@gmail.com)

## A.L. Basham



Arthur Llewellyn Basham (24 May 1914 – 2 January 1986) was a noted historian, indologist and author of a number of books . . .

Basham was one of the first western historians to critically gauge the impact of Swami Vivekananda from a global perspective. His well-known comment about Vivekananda: "in centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main molders of the modern world," is quoted frequently in appreciation and tributes of Vivekananda. Basham was a

appointed Swami Vivekananda Professor in Oriental Studies at the Asiatic Society of Calcutta in September 1985. He died in Calcutta in India in 1986.

His most popular book is The Wonder That was India (Sidgwick & Jackson London, 1954) - published seven years after the 1947 Independence of India.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

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## Abhishekam

“Abhisheka, also called Abhishekam, is conducted by priests, by pouring libations on the image of the deity being worshipped, amidst the chanting of mantras. Usually, offerings such as milk, yogurt, ghee, honey, Panchaamrutam (the five substances of bliss), sesame oil, rosewater, sandalwood paste may be poured among other offerings depending on the type of abhishekam being performed. This ritual is routinely performed in some Hindu and Jain temples. "Rudraabhisheka" (Abhisheka of Rudra-Shiva) is performed on Shivlingams.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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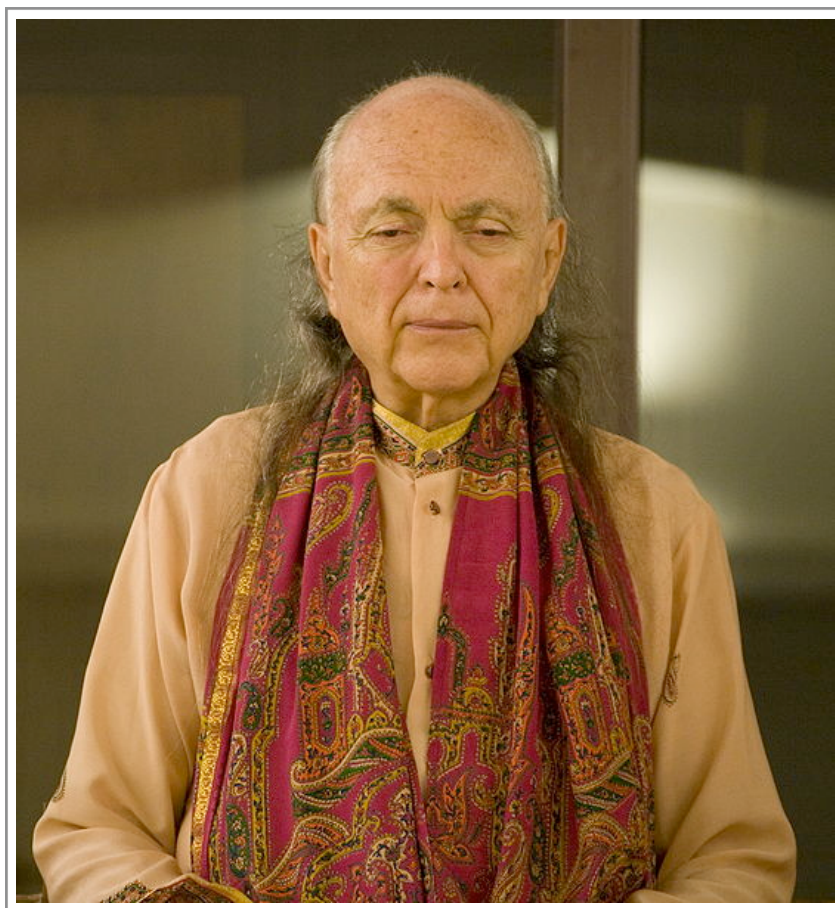
## Adi Da Samraj

“Adi Da Samraj (1939-2008) devoted His life to the realization and communication of Truth—what He called the “Bright,” Prior Unity, or the Indivisible Reality in which we all appear. He communicated that Truth through many means—literary, artistic, and spiritual. His numerous books of spiritual, philosophical, social, and practical wisdom are widely acknowledged as among the most insightful spiritual teachings of the modern world.”

– Adidam.org

Adi Da Samraj was born Franklin Albert Jones in Queens, New York. He was a spiritual teacher, writer and artist, and the founder of a new religious movement known as Adidam.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Advaita

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Chapter 2 - The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life

## Advaita

Advaita means “not-two” or “non-duality.” The duality being denied in Advaita is that of self and other [or, self and God, self and non-self, self and world].” According to Advaita, there is only one Reality in which all apparent separate things and beings appear. There is not a God apart from self, nor are there many Gods apart from self, there is only God, no self (or only apparent self), only the Divine Reality.

No “one” or self may attain this.

"Advaita" refers to the identity of the true Self, Atman, which is pure consciousness, and the highest Reality, Brahman, which is also pure consciousness. Followers seek liberation/release by acquiring *vidyā* (knowledge) of the identity of Atman and Brahman. Attaining this liberation takes a long preparation and training under the guidance of a guru.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Adi Da Samraj, Advaita Vedanta, Realization, Vedanta

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## Advaita Vedanta

"Advaita" refers to the identity of the true Self, Atman, which is pure consciousness, and the highest Reality, Brahman, which is also pure consciousness. Followers seek liberation/release by acquiring *vidyā* (knowledge) of the identity of Atman and Brahman. Attaining this liberation takes a long preparation and training under the guidance of a guru."

Advaita Vedanta is a school of Vedic philosophy and religious practice, giving "a



unifying interpretation of the whole body of Upanishads." The principal, though not the first, exponent of the Advaita Vedanta-interpretation was Shankara Bhagavadpada who systematized the works of preceding philosophers.

Advaita Vedanta is widely considered to be the most influential and most dominant sub-school of the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy and religious practice. Its teachings have influenced various sects of Hinduism and acquired a broad acceptance in Indian culture and beyond as the paradigmatic example of Hindu spirituality.

The key source texts for all schools of Vedānta are the Prasthanatrayi, the canonical texts consisting of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras, of which they give a philosophical interpretation and elucidation."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Advaita, Advaitic, Realization, Upanishads, Vedanta, Vedic literature of India

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# Advaitic

The quality or nature of Advaita Vedanta. (see: Advaita Vedanta)

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## Related Glossary Terms

Advaita Vedanta, Advaitin, Vedanta

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## **Advaitin**

A practitioner, a philosopher, or a Realizer of Advaita. Advaitins are non-sectarian, and sometimes advocate worship of Siva and Visnu over that of the other deities of Hinduism, like Sakti, the feminine form of Lord Sivanapati and others.

– Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia

As a “strict Advaitin,” Totapuri originally had no patience for a personal God.

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### **Related Glossary Terms**

Advaitic, Vedanta

# Analogy

analogy | ə'naləjē |

noun ( pl. analogies )

a comparison between two things, typically on the basis of their structure or function, for the purpose of explanation or clarification: an analogy between the processes of nature and those of human societies | he interprets logical functions in terms of analogy with machines.

- a correspondence or partial similarity: the syndrome is called *graphia* because of its analogy to deep dyslexia.
- a thing that is comparable to something else in significant respects: the works of art were seen as an analogy for works of nature Similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar.

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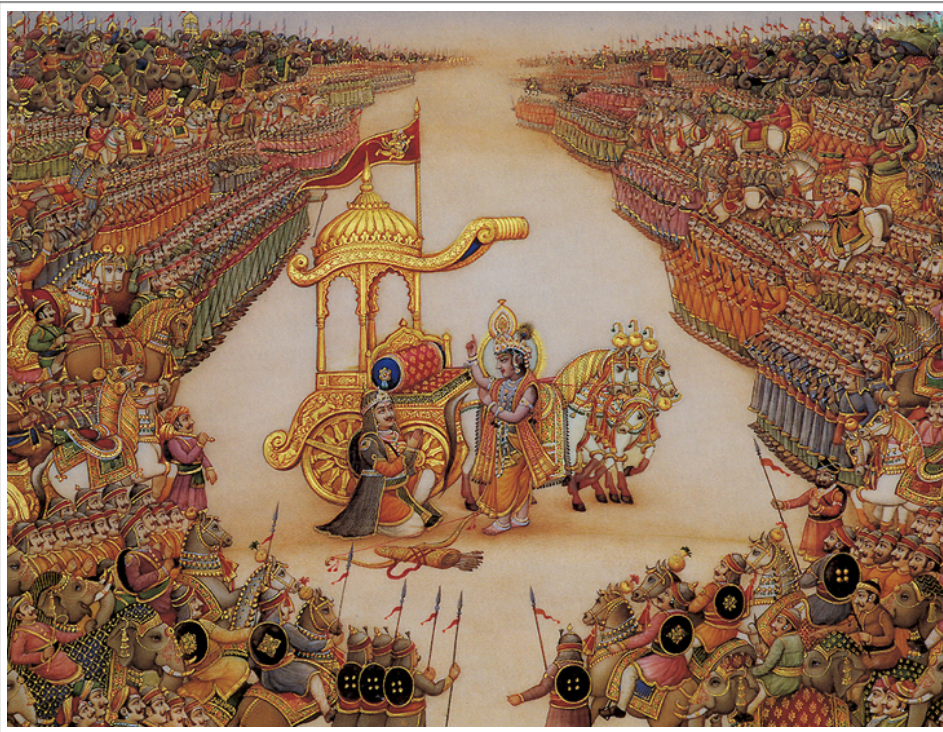
## Related Glossary Terms

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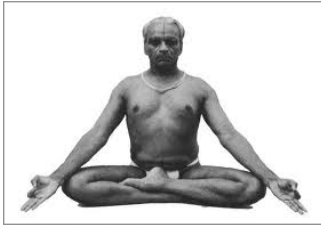
## Arjuna

In the Mahabharata, Arjuna is one of the five Pandava brothers and the friend and devotee of Lord Krishna. Arjuna was considered to be the greatest warriors of his time. Lord Krishna was his charioteer at the battle of Kurukshetra, the occasion of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. At the beginning of the battle, Arjuna asks Krishna to drive his chariot out between the two armies so that he could see who he was going to fight with. Krishna did so and Arjuna, looking across to the assembled enemy forces saw many relatives and teachers on the opposing side.

Arjuna fell into despair, seeing no good that could come out killing his relatives and teachers. He sat down on his war chariot and lay down his famous weapon, the Gandiva bow, saying, "I will not fight." This is what occasioned his charioteer, Lord Krishna, addressing him and teaching him. This instruction became the *Bhagavad-Gita* or song (*Gita*) of the Lord (*Bhagavan*).



## Asanas



Asanas or “bodily postures” are said to have been developed by the ancient Rishis of India and are practiced for a variety of reasons. Conducive to health and a sister science of Ayurveda, many practice asanas for the purpose of well-being alone. Asana practice has become so popular in the West that it is thought to represent the classical ancient *vidya* or sci-

ence of Yoga. However, this is not the case. ( for an excellent book on this subject read: Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice, by Mark Singleton)

Yoga is one of the six-systems of Indian Philosophy created by the Rishi Patanjali. Referred to as the “Yoga Sutras” or Ashtanga Yoga (eight limbed Yoga), Asana is mentioned in the Yoga Sutras as one of the limbs or *angas* in which Yoga is to be established, let me briefly describe them:

In the Yoga system of Patanjali, the whole world is divided into different interconnected spheres and the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga refer to them individually. The first two limbs are *Yama* (Do not’s) and *Niyama* (Do’s) which refer to the sphere of life lying outside the body. When Yoga is established here, the moral and ethical qualities such as purity of thought, contentment, spiritual effort, devotion to God, non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, not entering into debt, celibacy, patience, moderation in all things and steadiness are established.

The third and next limb is *asana*. This is the realm of the body itself. Patanjali says that Yoga is established in the body when the following qualities are found: *sthira sukham asanam* – one should be steady and comfortable in asanas (Yoga Sutras: 2.46). That is the complete mention of asana in the Yoga Sutras. In the Yoga Sutras, the purpose of asana is not for itself alone or merely for health, but to offer a stable bodily foundation for meditation on the Divine. But, even here there need not be obsessive concern.

Ramana Maharshi, the great Advaitic sage of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was asked about what asana should be used to sit in meditation:

Q: Should I sit in a particular posture [asana] and sit on a grass mat?

M: Stability in the Self [Atman] is the real asana. Be steady in that asana. In what asana will Atman sit? It is wrong to say that there is no Self-knowledge without asanas. Atman has no need of them. The compulsion of having a particular kind of asana makes the mind get agitated.

The other limbs of the eight limbed system are briefly as follows, going from grosser to subtlest:

Pranayama – the limb of the breath

Pratyadhara – the limb of the senses

Dharana – the limb of the mind

Dhyana – when the mind flows like oil being poured from one container to the other

Samadhi – when there is no difference between the meditator, the object of mediation and the process of meditation

These eight limbs are all interconnected. This is why they are called *angas* or limbs. If you pull one leg of the chair the other three come along with it. The dynamic working principal is that to whatever degree Yoga is found in any one of these limbs, yoga is established in all of them – to the same extent. The great Rishis spent little time with the grosser limbs, based on their observation that it is more effective to change everything by working at the subtler or subtlest level of creation since the subtle is at the root of the gross and the causal is at the root of the subtle . . . Like spokes coming into the hub of a wheel. Therefore they concentrated their teachings on the Realization of the Divine (Samadhi) and not on the asanas.

However, there have always been those who tried to pull the legs of the chair through hatha-yoga or the gross and subtle exercise of the body. Most people in the West today, practice Yoga asanas for their health benefits alone and “Yoga asanas” have been divorced from their original context of a God-Realizing Spiritual practice.

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### Related Glossary Terms

Hatha Yoga, Yoga, Yogendra Mastamani

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## Atonement

“In theology, atonement is a doctrine that describes how human beings are reconciled to God. In Christian theology the atonement refers to the pardoning of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which is possible the reconciliation between God and creation.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

I am reminded of the story told of Henry David Thoreau who was suffering from tuberculosis. His aunt asked him if he was at peace with God. Thoreau replied, "I was not aware that we had quarreled."

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### Related Glossary Terms

Brahmo Samaj, Evangelicals

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## Avatar

Whenever a decrease in righteousness exists  
And there is a rising up of unrighteousness  
Then I give forth myself  
for the protection of the good  
For the sake of establishing righteousness  
I come into being from age to age  
—*Bhagavad-Gita* 4.7- 8

An Avatar is one who has “descended or crossed down.” This is a Sanskrit word that describes a special class of being in the Vedic/Hindu culture. It is the term for a direct Incarnation of God, a principle recognized by the Vedic/Hindu cultures. According to the Hindu tradition, there have been many Avatars.

The Christian concept of Jesus is the son of God, being the one and only incarnation of Divinity. In the Indian system there have been many Avatars. Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus, as well as others have been declared to be Avatars. Ramakrishna was declared to be an Avatar by many.

Unlike a saint, who has attained to God-Realization in this life, an Avatar is one born already enlightened, for the sake of aiding and uplifting humanity.

The nature of an Avatar may even be hidden during part of his life as part of the *lila* or play of his incarnation for the sake of demonstrating or teaching.



The Ten Avatars of Vishnu

“In Hinduism, an avatar, (from Sanskrit, *avatāra* "descent") is a deliberate descent of a deity to Earth, or a descent of the Supreme Being (e.g., Vishnu for Vaishnavites), and is mostly translated into English as "incarnation," but more accurately as "appearance" or "manifestation.”

The term is most often associated with Vishnu, though it has also come to be associated with other deities. Varying lists of avatars of Vishnu appear in Hindu scriptures, including the ten Dashavatara of the Garuda Purana and the twenty-two avatars in the Bhagavata Purana, though the latter adds that the incarnations of Vishnu are innumerable. The avatars of Vishnu are a primary component of Vaishnavism. An early reference to avatar, and to avatar doctrine, is in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Shiva and Ganesha are also described as descending in the form of avatars. The various manifestations of Devi, the Divine Mother principal in Hinduism, are also described as avatars or incarnations by some scholars and followers of Shaktism. The avatars of Vishnu carry a greater theological prominence than those of other deities, which some scholars perceive to be imitative of the Vishnu avatar lists.

In Sikhism, an avatar is a deliberate descent of a soul to earth in any form.”

– Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia

# Avidya

*Avidya* means ignorance. As the word is used in Indian religious texts, it signifies ignorance of Truth or Ultimate Reality. The letter ‘*a*’ when placed before a word indicates “not.” Since ‘*vidya*’ means knowledge, *avidya* literally means “not-knowledge.”

One who is asleep to the Divine Reality of life necessarily lives in a state of *avidya*.

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## Related Glossary Terms

Ayurveda, Maya

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## Ayurveda

Ayurveda is the science or knowledge (Veda) of life (Ayu). It is the oldest medical science in the world and its principles can be found at the root of most other medical sciences in the world. Ayurveda and yoga asanas are sister sciences in the Vedic system. In the HathaYoga Pradipika, the “textbook” of yoga asanas, every yoga asana is described in terms of its doshic effect on the body. Usually, in the West, ayurveda and hatha yoga are considered, taught and understood in a secular context only.

Dhanvantari, shown in the picture below is the Lord of Ayurveda. He is said to have arisen out of the churning of the ocean of milk, bringing Amrit or the nectar of immortality.





## Benaras

Benaras is the (*ras* or essence) of *Bena* (all things mixed together) is also known as Varanasi (between the Varuna and Asi Rivers) as well as Kashi or Kasi.

Benaras is the oldest living city in the world. It was the center of learning and culture in ancient India, because of the great scholars and schools that were established there. Benaras was widely thought to be the ideal place to study the Vedic sciences, Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy. Many of the greatest teachers in Indian history have visited Benaras.

“Located on the banks of the Ganges in Uttar Pradesh, 320 kilometres (200 mi) southeast of the state capital, Lucknow. It is holiest of the seven sacred cities (Sapta Puri) in Hinduism and Jainism. Hindus believe that death at Varanasi brings salvation. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and the oldest in India.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



Manikarnika ghat, the cremation grounds in Benaras. It is thought that to die in Benaras is to be liberated.

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### Related Glossary Terms

Ganges, Kashi, Kasi, Varanasi

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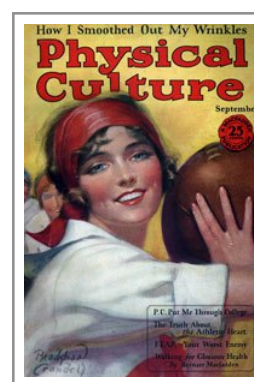
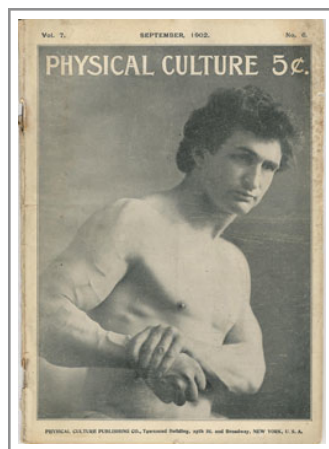
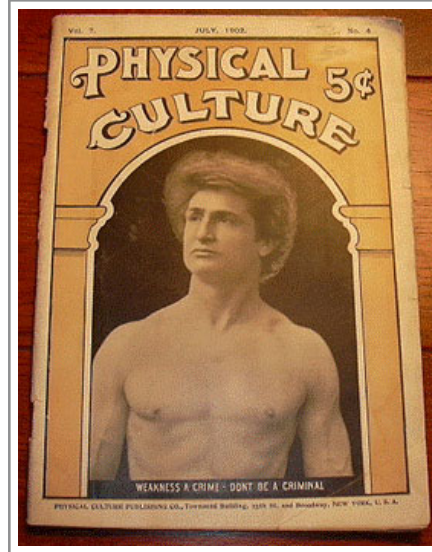
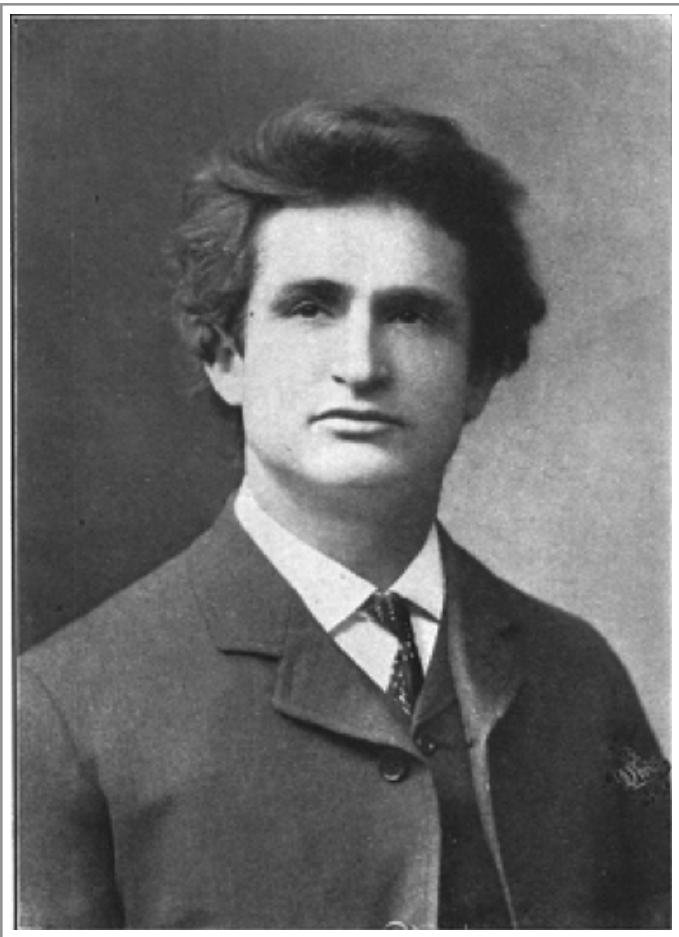
## Benard McFadden

Benard McFadden (1868-1955) “He was an influential American proponent of physical culture, teaching a combination of bodybuilding with nutritional and health theories. He was the predecessor of Charles Atlas and Jack Lalanne, and has been credited with beginning the culture of health and fitness in the United States . . .

Macfadden popularized the practice of fasting. He felt strongly that fasting was one of the surest ways to physical health. Many of his subjects would fast for a week in order to rejuvenate their body. He claimed that [through fasting] “a person could exercise unqualified control over virtually all types of disease . . .

Throughout his life, he campaigned tirelessly against “pill-pushers,” processed foods and prudery.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Benedict Lust, Sanitarium, Yogendra Mastamani

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## Benedict Lust



*B. Lust*

“Benedict Lust (1872-1945) opened the American School of Naturopathy in New York City, the first naturopathic medical school in the world. He went on to establish health resorts known as Yungborn in Butler, New Jersey and Tangerine, Florida (which also acted as the Winter Campus for the American School of Naturopathy until 2001). He also founded the American Naturopathic Association, the first national professional organization of naturopathic physicians. In 1918 he published the Universal Naturopathic Encyclopedia for drugless therapy, and also published Nature’s Path magazine . . .

He became known as the "Father of Naturopathy" in America, and his writings and magazines introduced Americans not only to German methods, but also Indian concepts of Ayurveda and Yoga. Paramahansa Yogananda was one of several Indians who wrote articles for Nature’s Path in the 1920s, gaining wide exposure to a large American audience.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Benedict Lust opened the first health food store in America

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### Related Glossary Terms

Benard McFadden, Yogendra Mastamani

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## Bengali Renaissance

“In 1765 the East India Company took possession of Bengal, Bihar and parts of Orissa from Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor. As a result, Bengal and its surrounding lands became the first regions in India to experience the direct impact of British rule and the beginnings of modernization. For the remainder of the eighteenth century and throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century, the British laid the foundations for civil administration. They established communication and transportation systems, a modern bureaucracy, an army and police. They further instituted law courts, and opened schools and colleges. The nineteenth century became the high point of British-Indian interaction, particularly within Bengal. Historians refer to this era as the Bengal Renaissance—a period of intense cultural and technological advancement as well as a time of great social, cultural, and political change.

The basis of the Bengal Renaissance was East-West contact. With the spread of European colonial power around the world through the agency of the East Indian Company and similar organizations, many regions of Asia, including India, experienced tremendous upheaval to their traditional cultures. Bengal was perhaps the first region in Asia to have its culture radically transformed through this interaction with the West. In Bengal five important influences led to the Bengal Renaissance: the rise of British–Bengali commerce, the introduction of English education, British Orientalism, Christianity, and perhaps most importantly how the Bengali intellectuals themselves responded to these influences.”

– Shukavak N. Dasa, *Bengal Renaissance*, Sanskrit Religions Institute

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### Related Glossary Terms

Brahmo Samaj, East India Company, Rabindranath Tagore, Ram Mohun Roy, Upanishads

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## Bhagavad-Gita

Sometimes referred to as the “*Gita*.”

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is the best-known religious scripture of the Hindu culture. It forms a very small part of the vast epic, the *Mahabharata*. It is a summary description and clarification of spiritual life and dharma given by Lord Krishna to his friend and devotee – Arjuna, on the occasion of a great battle.



Like the Bible, there are many interpretations of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and many different schools of religious belief and practice have developed around these interpretations.

Because the *Gita* is the direct utterance of Lord Krishna, it is considered to be a Divine scripture. Many of the great saints of India have written commentary on the *Gita*, using the *Gita* to clarify their own teaching.

Gandhi, Tolstoy, Thoreau and Emerson as well as many many others found

tremendous inspiration and insight in the *Gita*. The *Gita* was the first Vedic scripture to be translated directly from Sanskrit into English.



### Related Glossary Terms

Arjuna, Bhagvat-Geeta, Dilemma, Gita, Lord Krishna, Mahabharata, Upanishads, Vedic literature of India, Walden Pond

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## **Bhagvat-Geeta**

Old English spelling of the *Bhagavad-Gita* typical in many older western editions. This spelling is very rarely used in modern times. Sometimes referred to as the “Gita.”

see: *Bhagavad-Gita*

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### **Related Glossary Terms**

Arjuna, Bhagavad-Gita, Gita, Lord Krishna, Mahabharata

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## Bhakti

“The Sanskrit and old Hindi noun bhakti is derived from the verb root *bhaj*, whose meanings include "to share in", "to belong to", and "to worship". It also occurs in compounds where it means "being a part of" and "that which belongs to or is contained in anything else." *Bhajan*, or devotional singing to God, is also derived from the same root. "Devotion" as an English translation for bhakti doesn't fully convey two important aspects of bhakti—the sense of participation that is central to the relationship between the devotee and God, and the intense feeling that is more typically associated with the word "love". An advaitic interpretation of bhakti goes beyond "devotion" to the realization of union with the essential nature of reality as ananda, or divine bliss. Bhakti is sometimes used in the broader sense of reverence toward a deity or teacher. Bhaktimarga is usually used to describe a bhakti path with complete dedication to one form of God.

A more literal translation of bhakti would be "participation"; The sage Narada defines Bhakti as "intense love" for God. Similarly Sage Shandilya defines Bhakti as "intense attraction" for God. One who practices bhakti is called a bhakta, while bhakti as a spiritual path is referred to as bhakti marga, or the bhakti way. Bhakti is an important component of many branches of Hinduism, defined differently by various sects and schools.

Bhakti emphasizes religious devotion and sentiment above ritual and orthodoxy. In this sense it parallels the early 20th century movement of Pentecostalism in Christian history, where direct personal experience of God was also emphasized over liturgy or ritual.

The Classical Sanskrit term bhakti has a general meaning of "attachment, devotion, fondness for, devotion to" etc. also in terms of human relationships, most often as beloved-lover, friend-friend, parent-child, and master-servant. It may refer to devotion to a spiritual teacher (Guru) as guru-bhakti, to a personal form of God, or to divinity without form (nirguna) . . .

Bhakti can be done in four ways:

1. To the Supreme Self (Atma-Bhakti)
2. To God or the Cosmic Lord as a formless being (Ishvara-Bhakti)
3. To God in the form of various Gods or Goddesses (Ishta Devata-Bhakti)
4. To God in the form of the Guru (Guru-Bhakti)

The Bhagavad Gita introduces bhakti yoga in combination with karma yoga and jnana yoga, while the Bhagavata Purana expands on bhakti yoga, offering nine specific activities for the bhakti yogi. Bhakti in the Bhagavad Gita offered an alternative to two dominant practices of religion at the time: the isolation of the sannyasin and the practice of religious ritual. Bhakti Yoga is described by Swami Vivekananda as "the path of systematized devotion for the attainment of union with the Absolute". In the twelfth chapter of the Gita Krishna describes bhakti yoga as a path to the highest spiritual attainments. In the ninth chapter, he says,

Fill thy mind with Me, be My devotee, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me; thus having made thy heart steadfast in Me, taking Me as the Supreme Goal, thou shalt come to Me. (B-Gita 9.34)”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

## Bhaktivedanta Swami

Bhaktivedanta Swami (1896-1977 ) was the founder and leader of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement.



Bhaktivedanta Swami (September 1896 – 14 November 1977) was a Gaudiya Vaishnava teacher and the founder-acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), commonly known as the "Hare Krishna Movement." His mission was to propagate Gaudiya Vaishnavism, a school of Vaishnavite Hinduism (the association with Hinduism which Bhaktivedanta Swami frequently sought to dissuade) that had been taught to him by his guru, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, throughout the world.



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### Related Glossary Terms

Chaitanya, Hare Krishna movement, ISKCON, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Swami B.G. Narasingha, Vaishnaiva Bhakti

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## Brahma

Brahmā is the Hindu god (deva) of creation and one of the Trimūrti, the others being Viṣṇu and Śiva. According to the Brahmā Purāṇa, he is the father of Manu, and from Manu all human beings are descended. In the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, he is often referred to as the progenitor or great grandsire of all human beings. He is not to be confused with the Supreme Cosmic Spirit in Hindu Vedānta philosophy known as **Brahman**, which is genderless. In Hindu tradition, the creation of the Vedas is credited to Brahma.

Brahmā's wife is Saraswati. Saraswati is also known by names such as Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī, and has taken different forms throughout history. Brahmā is often identified with Prajāpati, a Vedic deity. Being the husband of Saraswati or Vaac Devi (the Goddess of Speech), Brahma is also known as "Vaagish," meaning "Lord of Speech and Sound."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



### Related Glossary Terms

Brahman, Brahmin, Brahmin pundit, Paramahansa, Saraswati

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## Brahma Sutras

“The Brahma Sūtras are also known by other names: Vedānta Sūtras, Uttara Mīmāṃsā-sūtras, Śārīraka Sūtras, Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā-sūtras. Vaishnavas also call this the Bhikṣu sūtras.

The Brahma Sūtras attempt to reconcile the seemingly contradictory and diverse statements of the various Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā, by placing each teaching in a doctrinal context. The word "sūtra" means "thread," and the Brahma sūtras literally stitch together the various Vedanta teachings into a logical and self-consistent whole.

However, the Brahma Sūtras are so terse that not only are they capable of being interpreted in multiple ways, but they are often incomprehensible without the aid of the various commentaries handed down in the main schools of Vedānta thought . . .

These sūtras systematize the jñānakāṇḍa, the (path of wisdom, as opposed to Karmakāṇḍa, the path of action) of the Veda, by combining the two tasks of concisely stating the teaching of the Veda and argumentatively establishing the specific interpretation of the Veda adopted in the sūtras.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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# Brahman

Shankara famously defined the word:

“There is only Brahman. The World is unreal. Brahman is the world.”

“In Hinduism, Brahman is "the unchanging Reality amidst and beyond the world," which "cannot be exactly defined." It has been described in Sanskrit as Sat-cit-ānanda (being-consciousness-bliss) and as the highest Reality.

The sages of the Upanishads teach that Brahman is the ultimate essence of all material phenomena (including the original identity of the human self) that cannot be seen or heard, but whose nature can be known through the development of self-knowledge (atma jnana). According to Advaita, a liberated human being (jivanmukta) has Realized Brahman as his or her own true self.

The Isha Upanishad says:

Aum - That supreme Brahman is infinite, and this conditioned Brahman is finite. The infinite proceeds from infinite. If you subtract the infinite from the infinite, the infinite remains alone.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Related Glossary Terms

Brahma

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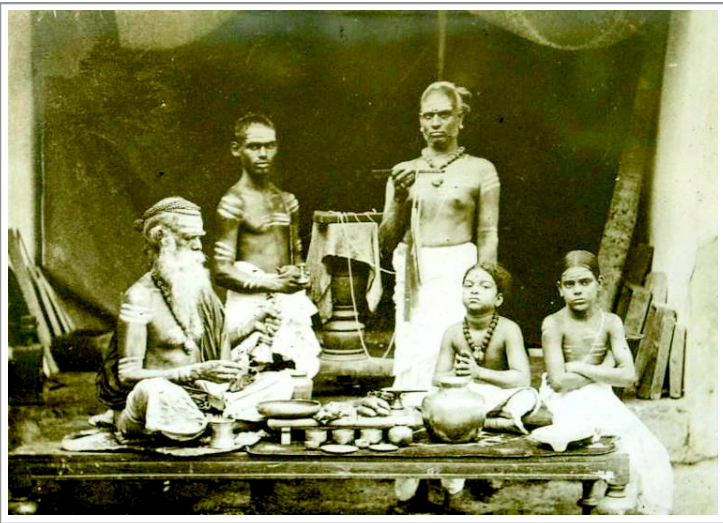
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## Brahmin



“According to ancient Indian philosophers and scholars, the human society comprises four pillars or classes called varnas or colors. In the ancient Indian texts such as the Smritis, vedas, upanishads, puranas, etc., these four "varnas" or classes or pillars of the society are: the priests / Acharya (Brahmins), the rulers and military (Kshatriyas), the merchants and agricul-

turists (Vaishyas), and the Assistants (Shudras). Brahmin priests / Acharya were engaged in attaining the highest spiritual knowledge (brahmavidya) of Brahman (God) and followed different branches (shakhas) of Vedas. A Brahmin priest is responsible for religious rituals in temples and homes of Hindus and is authorized only after rigorous training in vedas and sacred rituals, as a liaison between humans and the God. In general, as family vocations and businesses are inherited, priesthood used to be inherited among Brahmin priest families, as it requires years of practice of vedas from childhood after proper introduction to student life through a religious initiation called upanayana at the age of about five.

The Brahmin priest has to wake up at four in the morning and bathe in cold water, rain or shine, warm or cold. Then, without a break, he has to perform one rite after another: sandhyavandana, brahmajajna, aupasana, puja, vaisvadeva and at least one of the 21 sacrifices for hours, in front of a sacred fire, with all the heat and smoke. So many are the vows and the fasts the priest must keep, and as many are the ritual baths the priest must take in a day. The dharmastras require that the Brahmin priest adheres to the rules and rituals imposed on the priest not only during the performance of the many rites and rigorous discipline, but also every second of his life, because the Brahmin priest life is dedicated to God.

The priest performing rituals, may have his first meal at 1 or 2 PM (and on the day of a sraddha (cremation) it will be three or four PM. The Brahmin priest's vegetarian meal and dwelling are simple and humble. Brahmin (or Brahmana) refers to an individual belonging to the Hindu priest, artists, teachers, technicians class (varna or pillar of the society) and also to an individual belonging to the Brahmin tribe/ caste into which an individual is born; while the word Brahma refers to the creative aspect of the universal consciousness or God. The English word brahmin is an anglicized form of the Sanskrit word Brāhmana.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Brahma, Brahmin pundit, Upanishads, Vedas

## Brahmin pundit

“While Brahmin is the caste, “A pandit or pundit (Sanskrit: paṇḍita or paṇḍit) is a scholar and a teacher, particularly one skilled in the Sanskrit language, who has mastered the four Vedic scriptures, Hindu rituals, Hindu law, religion, music, and/or philosophy under a Guru in a Gurukul [school of the Guru] or has been tutored under the ancient Vedic Guru-Shishya academic tradition. The English word pundit is derived from it.

In the original usage of the word, "Pandit," synonymous to "Purohits," refers to a Hindu, almost always a Brahmin, who has memorized a substantial portion of the Vedas, along with the corresponding rhythms and melodies for chanting religious verses or singing them during prayers or rituals.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



### Related Glossary Terms

Brahma, Brahmin, Vedic literature of India

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## Brahmo Samaj

“The Brahmo Samaj literally denotes community (Sanskrit: samaj ) of men who worship Brahman. However, in actual practice, a Brahmo Samaj is an assembly of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction, meeting publicly for the sober, orderly, religious and devout adoration of "the (nameless) unsearchable Eternal, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe.

“At the time when Brahmo Samaj was born - the whole country was steeped in a debasing form of idolatry and the grossest superstitions had taken hold of the national mind. As a result, revolting practices like the suttee, or the throwing of children into the Ganges by their mothers, committing suicide under the wheels of the chariot of Lord Jagannath became fashionable and were looked upon as great acts of virtue. As many as 309 widows were burnt alive under the jurisdiction of Calcutta in 1828 . . .

The tenets of the Brahmo Samaj of India at this time were the following: (1) The wide universe is the temple of God. (2) Wisdom is the pure land of pilgrimage. (3) Truth is the everlasting scripture. (4) Faith is the root of all religions. (5) Love is the true spiritual culture. (6) The destruction of selfishness is the true asceticism.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Ram Mohun Roy

“Brahmo Samaj, Brahmo was quasi-Protestant, theistic movement within Hinduism, founded in Calcutta in 1828 by Ram Mohun Roy. The Brahmo Samaj does not accept the authority of the Vedas, has no faith in avatars (incarnations), and does not insist on belief in karma (causal effects of past deeds) or rebirth. It discards Hindu rituals and adopts some Christian practices in its worship. Influenced by Islām and Christianity, it denounces polytheism, idol worship, and the caste system. The society has had considerable success with its programs of social reform but has never had a significant popular following

Whereas Ram Mohun Roy wanted to reform Hinduism from within, his successor, Debendranath Tagore, broke away in 1850 by repudiating Vedic authority and making reason and intuition the basis of Brahmanism. He tried, however, to retain some of the traditional Hindu customs, and a radical group led by Keshab Chunder Sen seceded and organized the Brahmo Samaj of India in 1866 (the older group became known as the Adi—i.e., original—Brahmo Samaj). The new branch became eclectic and cosmopolitan and was also most influential in the struggle for social reform. It sponsored the Band of Hope temperance society, encouraged the education of women, and campaigned for the remarriage of widows and for legislation to prevent child marriages . . . Although the movement lost force in the 20th century, its fundamental social tenets were accepted, at least in theory, by Hindu society.”

– Encycloaedia Britannica Online, "Brahmo Samaj"

Keshab Chunder Sen

Debendranath Tagore

Ram Mohun Roy

### Related Glossary Terms

Atonement, Bengali Renaissance, Evangelicals, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ram Mohun Roy

Keshab Chunder Sen

Debendranath Tagore

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## Buckminster Fuller



Richard Buckminster Fuller (12 July 1895 – 1 July 1983) was an American philosopher, systems theorist, architect, and inventor, known to many of his friends and fans as "Bucky" Fuller. He created and popularized terms such as "Spaceship Earth," ephemeralization, and synergetics. He also developed numerous inventions, mainly architectural designs, the most famous of which is the geodesic dome.

Some quotes from Fuller:

- The Things to do are: the things that need doing, that you see need to be done, and that no one else seems to see need to be done.

Then you will conceive your own way of doing that which needs to be done – that no one else has told you to do or how to do it. This will bring out the real you that often gets buried inside a character that has acquired a superficial array of behaviors induced or imposed by others on the individual.

- We must do away with the absolutely specious notion that everybody has to earn a living. It is a fact today that one in ten thousand of us can make a technological breakthrough capable of supporting all the rest. The youth of today are absolutely right in recognizing this nonsense of earning a living. We keep inventing jobs because of this false idea that everybody has to be employed at some kind of drudgery because, according to Malthusian-Darwinian theory, he must justify his right to exist. So we have inspectors of inspectors and people making instruments for inspectors to inspect inspectors. The true business of people should be to go back to school and think about whatever it was they were thinking about before somebody came along and told them they had to earn a living.

- The most important thing to teach your children is that the sun does not rise and set. It is the Earth that revolves around the sun. Then teach them the concepts of North, South, East and West, and that they relate to where they happen to be on the planet's surface at that time. Everything else will follow.

- CALL ME TRIMTAB is the inscription on his headstone. On a ship the trimtab is a small but crucial part of the rudder mechanism, which controls the direction of the vessel; on an aircraft it is a small adjustable tab on the trailing edge of the elevator control surface set by the pilot to trim the aircraft in a steady and level orientation. This use for his epitaph comes from statements he had made in life, including an interview with Barry Farrell in Playboy (February 1972):

“Something hit me very hard once, thinking about what one little man could do. Think of the Queen Mary – the whole ship goes by and then comes the rudder. And there's a tiny thing at the edge of the rudder called a trimtab.

It's a miniature rudder. Just moving the little trim tab builds a low pressure that pulls the rudder around. Takes almost no effort at all. So I said that the little individual can be a trimtab. Society thinks it's going right by you, that it's left you altogether. But if you're doing dynamic things mentally, the fact is that you can just put your foot out like that and the whole big ship of state is going to go.

So I said, call me Trimtab.”

He is also quoted at the Buckminster Fuller Institute as having said:

“When I thought about steering the course of the "Spaceship Earth" and all of humanity, I saw most people trying to turn the boat by pushing the bow around.

I saw that by being all the way at the tail of the ship, by just kicking my foot to one side or the other, I could create the "low pressure" which would turn the whole ship. If ever someone wanted to write my epitaph, I would want it to say "Call me Trimtab.””

Below: Buckminster Fuller's Burial Stone next to his wife



### Related Glossary Terms

Cybernetics

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## Buddha

“Gautama Buddha, also known as Siddhārtha Gautama, Shakyamuni, or simply the Buddha, was a sage on whose teachings Buddhism was founded. A native of the ancient Shakya republic in the Himalayan foothills, Gautama Buddha taught primarily in northeastern India.



Buddha means "awakened one" or "the enlightened one." "Buddha" is also used as a title for the first awakened being in an era. In most Buddhist traditions, Siddhartha Gautama is regarded as the Supreme Buddha of our age.

Gautama taught a Middle Way between sensual indulgence and the severe asceticism found in the Sramana (renunciation) movement common in his region. He later taught throughout regions of eastern India such as Magadha and Kośala.

The times of Gautama's birth and death are uncertain: most historians in the early 20th century dated his lifetime as circa 563 BCE to 483 BCE, but more recent opinion dates his death to between 486 and 483 BCE or, according to some, between 411 and 400 BCE.

Gautama is the primary figure in Buddhism, and accounts of his life, discourses, and monastic rules are believed by Buddhists to have been summarized after his death and memorized by his followers. Various collections of teachings attributed to him were passed down by oral tradition, and first committed to writing about 400 years later.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Calcutta

“The term Kolikata is thought to be a variation of Kalikkhetro, meaning "Field of [the goddess] Kali. As a nucleus of the 19th- and early 20th-century Bengal Renaissance and a religiously and ethnically diverse centre of culture in Bengal and India, Kolkata has established local traditions in drama, art, film, theatre, and literature that have gained wide audiences. Many people from Kolkata—among them several Nobel laureates—have contributed to the arts, the sciences, and other areas.

Kolkata (formerly spelled ‘Calcutta’) is the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal. Located on the east bank of the Hooghly river, it is the principal commercial, cultural, and educational centre of East India, while the Port of Kolkata is India's oldest operating port as well as its sole major riverine port . . .

Under the East India Company and later under the British Raj, Kolkata served as the capital of India until 1911, when its perceived geographical disadvantages, combined with growing nationalism in Bengal, led to a shift of the capital to New Delhi. The city was a centre of the Indian independence movement; it remains a hotbed of contemporary state politics. Following Indian independence in 1947, Kolkata—which was once the centre of modern Indian education, science, culture, and politics—witnessed several decades of relative economic stagnation.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Three ice houses

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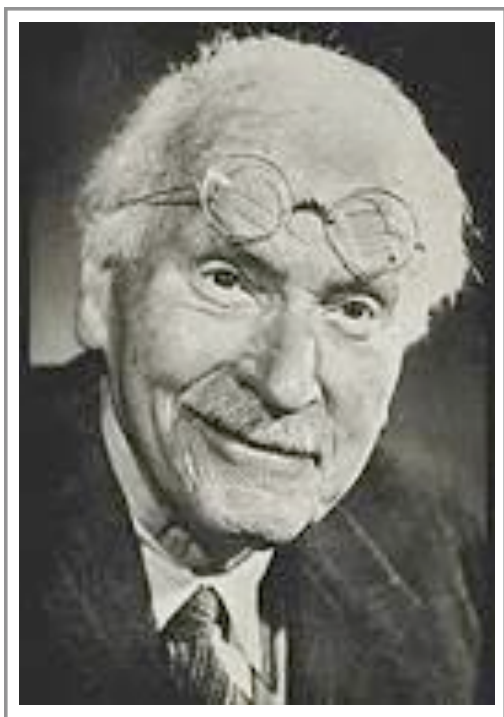
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## Carl Jung



“Carl Gustav Jung ; 26 July 1875 – 6 June 1961), often referred to as just C. G. Jung, was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist who founded analytical psychology. Jung proposed and developed the concepts of extraversion and introversion; archetypes, and the collective unconscious. His work has been influential in psychiatry and in the study of religion, philosophy, archeology, anthropology, literature, and related fields . . .

In a letter of November 19, 1960, Jung explains the inscription above his door:

By the way, you seek the enigmatic oracle *Vocatus atque non vocatus deus aderit* in vain in Delphi: it is cut in stone over the door of my house in Kusnacht near Zurich and otherwise found in Erasmus's collection of Adagia (XVIth cent.). It is a Delphic oracle though. It says: yes, the God will be on the spot, but in what form and to what purpose? I have put the inscription there to remind my patients and myself: *Timor dei initium sapientie* [“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”] Here another not less important road begins, not the approach to “Christianity” but to God himself and this seems to be the ultimate question.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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**Chapter 2 - The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life**

## Chaitanya

“Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534) was a social reformer in eastern India (specifically present-day Bangladesh and states of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur, Assam, and Odisha of India) in the 16th century, worshipped by followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism as the full incarnation of Lord Krishna. Sri Krishna Chaitanya was a notable proponent for the Vaishnava school of Bhakti yoga (meaning loving devotion to Krishna), based on the philosophy of the Bhagavata Purana and Bhagavad *Gita*. Specifically, he worshipped the forms of Krishna, popularised the chanting of the Hare Krishna maha mantra and composed the Siksastakam (eight devotional prayers) in Sanskrit. His line of followers, known as Gaudiya Vaishnavas, revere him as an Avatar of Krishna in the mood of Radharani who was prophesied to appear in the later verses of the Bhagavata Purana.

He is well known to be an incarnation of Lord Sri Krishna according to the Bhavishya Purana.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Bhaktivedanta Swami, Hare Krishna movement, ISKCON

## Chandala

Chandala is a Sanskrit word for someone who deals with disposal of corpses, and is a Hindu lower caste, formerly considered untouchables.

– Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia



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## Chennai Ice house

“Of the three ice houses Frederic Tudor built in India, the Chennai Ice House is the only one left standing. It is a large building built of concrete with extremely thick walls and originally very little ventilation, built for the sake of keeping ice long periods in the heat of south India.

Greatly remodeled since the time it was built, with the additions of windowed rooms around the outside of the building, it now is a Vivekananda Museum maintained by the Ramakrishna Math of Chennai.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Frederic Tudor, Madras Ice House, Three ice houses

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## Christian mystic

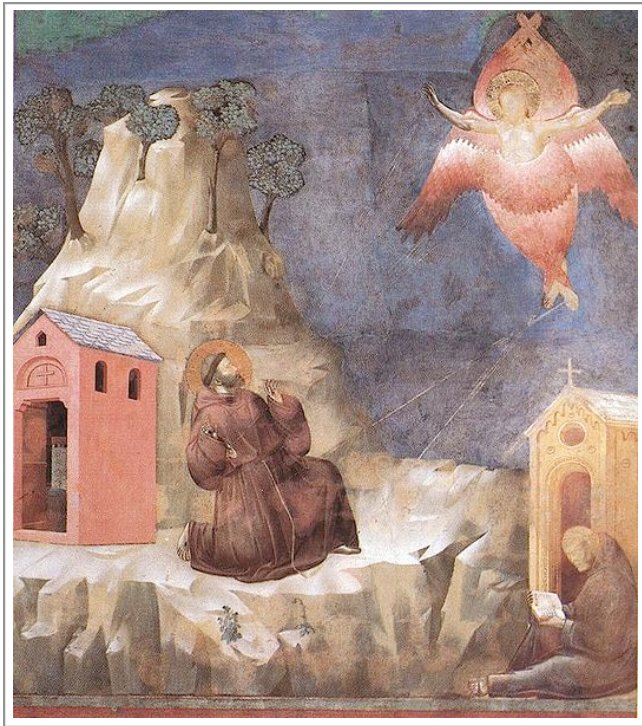
“The direct experience of God is a kind of knowing, which goes beyond intellectual understanding. It is not a matter of "belief." It is marked by love and joy, but it is not "emotional experience." In many ways, it is better described by what it is not. To describe what it is, we must use metaphors—the marriage of the soul to Christ, the death of the "old man" and birth of the "new man," being the "body of Christ."

Jesus proclaimed "I and the Father are one," (Jn. 10.30) showing the world what the union of God and man can be. Christian mysticism is about nothing else but this transforming union.

Christ is the sole end of Christian mysticism. Whereas all Christians have Christ, call on Christ, and can (or should) know Christ, the goal for the Christian mystic is to become Christ—to become as fully permeated with God as Christ is, thus becoming like him, fully human, and by the grace of God, also fully divine. In Christian teaching this doctrine is known by various names—theosis, divinization, deification, and transforming union.

A common misconception about mysticism is that it's about "mystical experiences," and there are many volumes on such experiences in religious literature. But true mysticism is not focussed on "experiences" (which come and go) but with the lasting experience of God, leading to the transformation of the believer into union with God.”

– John Zuck



Stigmatiza-  
Francis of Assisi

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## Consideration

'Consideration' is made of two roots, words or ideas. They are:  
'Con' meaning -with, and 'sidera' from 'sidereal' meaning -the stars.

Imagine this:

In ancient times, a person might go out under the stars at night.

He would walk out onto a sand dune in Egypt, or a mountaintop in Tibet, or a boat on the ocean and simply be with the stars- *considerere*

As he did so, night after night, moon after moon, year after year, perhaps, one evening he might say to his companion,

"Hey, have you seen that star there," pointing at the North Star. "That star does not seem to move, but all the other stars are circling around it."

He was not looking for the North Star. He was not looking for a star that did not move.

He was just *considerere*- being with the stars.

He had discovered the North Star. Not by looking for it, but by consideration.

Consideration is the basis of a unique form of knowledge called revelation.

It is attained not just by looking and analyzing a thing or object, but also, by being with it, with a vast, steady and sublimed attention.

When this is done, the Indian tradition holds the knowledge gained to be revelatory.

In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, it is a process called 'samyama.'

The unique aspect of samyama, as defined in the Yoga sutras, is that of 'being with' the object of attention to the point of non-difference or 'oneness' with it. Only at this stage, does it become revelatory.

Samyama is a combination of the last three angas or limbs of the Ashtanga (eight limbed) Yoga system- dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

Dharana is compared to fixing the mind on a particular object.

Dhyana is compared to the flow of that fixed or steady attention on that object like oil being poured from one container to another

Samadhi is when there is no difference between the object, the subject and the process of attention.

When these three are practiced together on a specific object, then 'siddhis,' special knowledge and/or powers arise.

This is the basis for ancient Indian 'science.' How effective was it? This tradition knew the speed of light as well as the distance to the moon thousands of years ago. They must of had something right.

When I suggest that what I will be doing is 'considering' life

This is what I am pointing and aspiring to . . .

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### Related Glossary Terms

Yoga

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## Cybernii

Cybernetics is the study of self-regulating mechanisms. It is a field that operates on the basis of perceived ‘mistakes’ and subsequent corrections. Cybernetics is rooted in the meaning of the nautical term-Cybernos, the Greek word for the helmsman, the person who steers the boat. Cybernii is the plural form of the word.

I once had dinner with Buckminster Fuller. Soon after we sat down to dinner and ordered our meals, Fuller made the following comment, “A drunk helmsman, makes less mistakes than a sober helmsman.” Puzzled by this, I interjected, "Bucky, I wouldn't want to be in a boat or any other vehicle with a drunk at the wheel." "Yes", he said and then paused, letting his words sink in and looking at me, his eyes large through his thick glasses. Then, seeing no comprehension on my side, he continued, "That is the point. Unless you make a mistake, you will not correct the course. The more mistakes you make, the more possible corrections and the more corrections you make, the more true your course."

I immediately realized he agreed with my objection to being in a boat or a car with a drunk at the wheel, but for a different reason – the drunk did not make enough mistakes and therefore not enough corrections. That was why he drove down the road erratically, swaying from side to side. Fuller was suggesting not only that mistakes were good, but, the recognition of mistakes is the necessary prerequisite for any and all corrections!

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### Related Glossary Terms

Buckminster Fuller

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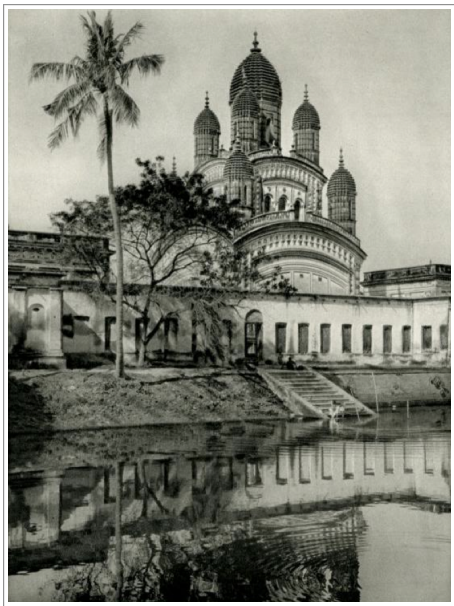


## Dakshineswar Kali Temple

“This large temple was built by a rich widow named Rani Rasmani, who belonged to the sudra caste [the lowest caste in the Vedic tradition]. The temple was constructed about 4 miles north of Calcutta on the east bank of the Ganges. It contains three temples on the grounds; one is dedicated to Siva, one to Vishnu in the form of Radhakanta containing the image of Krishna with Radha and the main temple which is dedicated to Kali or the Divine Mother in the form of Bhavatarini, the savior of the universe.

It was here that Ramakrishna lived as the temple priest in the Kali Temple and went through his God-Realizing sadhana or spiritual practice.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



Dakshineswar Temple

There are many schools of interpretation of Kali. Ramakrishna once said of Kali:

“My Mother is the principle of consciousness. She is Akhanda Satchidananda; indivisible Reality, Awareness, and Bliss. The night sky between the stars is perfectly black. The waters of the ocean depths are the same; The infinite is always mysteriously dark. This inebriating darkness is my beloved Kali.

-Sri Ramakrishna



Image of Kali at Dakshineswar Temple

“In her most famous pose as Dakshinakali, popular legends say that Kali, becoming drunk on the blood of her victims on the battlefield, dances with destructive frenzy. In her fury she fails to see the body of Shiva [her husband], who lies among the corpses on the battlefield and steps on his chest. Realizing Shiva to lie beneath her feet, her anger is pacified and she calms her fury. Though not added in any of the Puranas, the popular legends tell that Kali was ashamed at the prospect of keeping her husband beneath her feet and thus stuck her tongue out in shame. The 'Devi-Purana,' which goes into great depths about Goddess Kali, reveals the true reason for the symbolism of the tongue. The characteristic icons that depict Kali are the following; unbridled matted hair, open blood shot eyes, open mouth and a drooping tongue; in her hands, she holds: a Khadga (bent sword or scimitar) and a human head, she has a girdle of human hands across her waist and an enchanted Shiva lies beneath her feet. Each of these icons represent a deep philosophical epithet. The drooping out-stuck tongue represents her blood-thirst. Lord Shiva beneath her feet represents matter, as Kali is undoubtedly the primeval energy. .”

– Wikipedia

### Related Glossary Terms

Dakshineswar, Devi, Divine Mother, Kali

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## Dakshineswar

“Dakshineswar became the workplace for Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the famous 19th century saint of India, also regarded as an incarnation of God on earth by many. For the upcoming years Dakshineswar would witness spectacular sadhana and unparalleled asceticism by Ramakrishna. It would eventually draw numerous intellectual and aristocratic hindus from the nearby city of Calcutta which was the capital of British Empire at that time . . .

On the West bank of Hooghli River (almost across Dakshineswar), is Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, an association founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



Dakshineswar Temple



Belur Math

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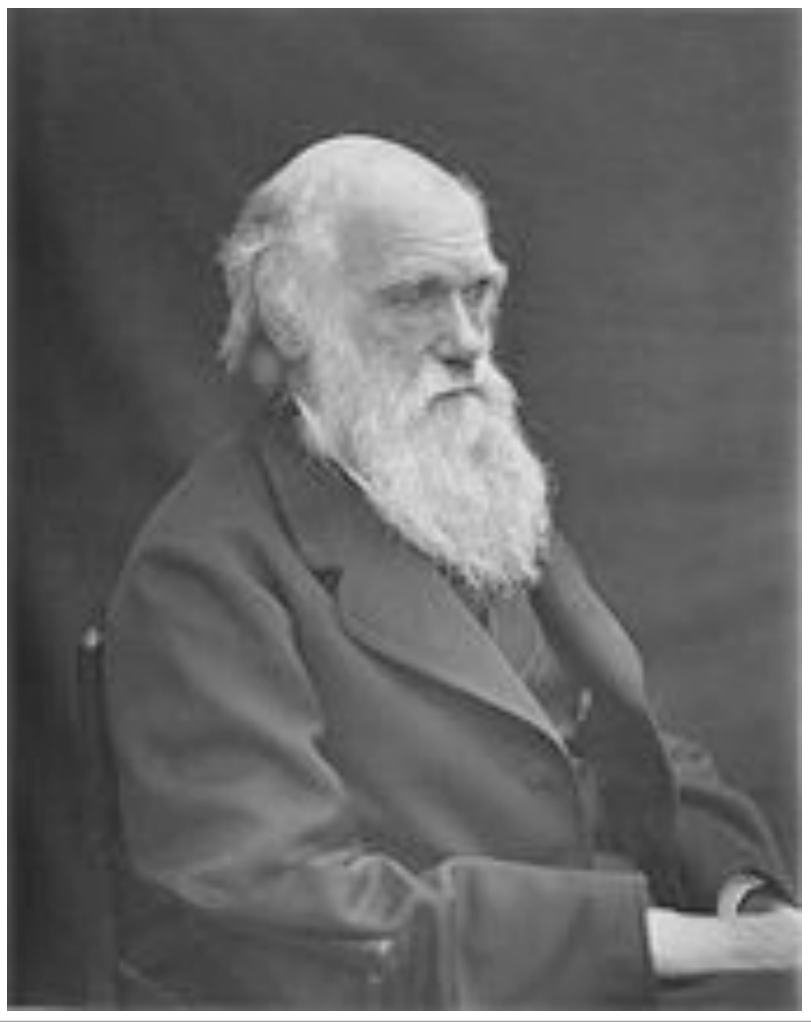
### Related Glossary Terms

Dakshineswar Kali Temple

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## Darwin



“Charles Robert Darwin, FRS (12 February 1809 – 19 April 1882) was an English naturalist and geologist, best known for his contributions to evolutionary theory. He established that all species of life have descended over time from common ancestors, and in a joint publication with Alfred Russell Wallace introduced his scientific theory that this branching pattern of evolution resulted from a process that he called natural selection, in which the struggle for existence has a similar effect to the artificial selection involved in selective breeding.

Darwin published his theory of evolution with compelling evidence in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*, overcoming scientific rejection of earlier concepts of transmutation of species. By the 1870s the scientific community and much of the general public had accepted evolution as a fact. However, many favoured competing explanations and it was not until the emergence of the modern evolutionary synthesis from the 1930s to the 1950s that a broad consensus developed in which natural selection was the basic mechanism of evolution. In modified form, Darwin's scientific discovery is the unifying theory of the life sciences, explaining the diversity of life.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Spencer

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## Deodar

Forests full of Deodar or Devadāru trees were the favorite living place of ancient Indian sages and their families who were devoted to the Hindu god Shiva. To please Lord Shiva, the sages used to perform very difficult tapasya (meditation) practices in deodar forests. Also the ancient Hindu epics and Shaivite texts regularly mention living in Darukavana, meaning a forest of deodars, as a sacred place.

Among Hindus, as the etymology of deodar suggests, it is worshiped as a divine tree. Deva [Deo], the first half of the Sanskrit term, means divine, deity, or deus. Dāru, the second part, is cognate with (related to) the words durum, druid, tree, and true.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Below: Forest of Deodar trees near Manali, Himachal Pradesh



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Chapter 2 - The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life

## Devi

“Devī (Devanagari: देवी) is the Sanskrit root-word of Divine, its related masculine term is Deva. Devi is synonymous with Shakti, the female aspect of the divine, as conceptualized by the Shakta tradition of Hinduism. She is the female counterpart without whom the male aspect, which represents consciousness or discrimination, remains impotent and void. Goddess worship is an integral part of Hinduism. Devi is, quintessentially, the core form of every Hindu Goddess. As the female manifestation of the supreme lord, she is also called Prakriti, as

she balances out the male aspect of the divine addressed as Purusha.



Devi is the supreme Being in the Shaktism tradition of Hinduism, while in the Smartha tradition, she is one of the five primary forms of God. In other Hindu traditions of Shaivism and Vaishnavism, Devi embodies the active energy and power of male deities (Purushas), such as Vishnu in Vaishnavism or Shiva in Shaivism. Vishnu's shakti counterpart is called Lakshmi, with Parvati being the female shakti of Shiva.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Dakshineswar Kali Temple

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## Dharma

“Dharma is the Law that "upholds, supports or maintains the regulatory order of the universe.” Dharma has the Sanskrit root *-dhri*, which means "that without which nothing can stand" or "that which maintains the stability and harmony of the universe . . .

. . . Dharma designates those behaviors considered necessary for the maintenance of the natural order of things. Dharma may encompass ideas such as duty, vocation, religion and all behavior considered appropriate, correct or morally upright.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Karma, Sanatana Dharma

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## Dharma Sastra

“Dharma-shastra, ( Sanskrit: “righteousness science”) ancient Indian body of jurisprudence that is still fundamentally the family law of Hindus living in territories outside India (e.g., Pakistan, Malaysia, East Africa) and is in force, subject to legislative modification, in India. Dharma-shastra is not primarily concerned with legal administration, though courts and their procedures are dealt with comprehensively, but with the right course of conduct in every dilemma. Some basic principles of Dharma-shastra are known to most Hindus brought up in a traditional environment. These include the propositions that duties are more significant than rights, that women are under perpetual guardianship of their closest male relatives, and that the king (i.e., the state) must protect the subjects from all harm, moral as well as material.

The Dharma-shastra literature, which is written in Sanskrit, exceeds 5,000 titles. It can be divided into three categories: (1) sutras (terse maxims); (2) Smritis (shorter or longer treatises in stanzas); and (3) nibandhas (digests of Smriti verses from various quarters) and vrittis (commentaries upon individual continuous Smritis). The nibandhas and vrittis are juridical works intended for legal advisers and exhibit considerable skill in harmonizing divergent sutras and smritis.”

– Encyclopædia Britannica Online, “Dharma Sastra”

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# Dilemma

A dilemma is a choice between equally undoable or undesirable alternatives.

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## Related Glossary Terms

Arjuna, Bhagavad-Gita

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## Divine Mother

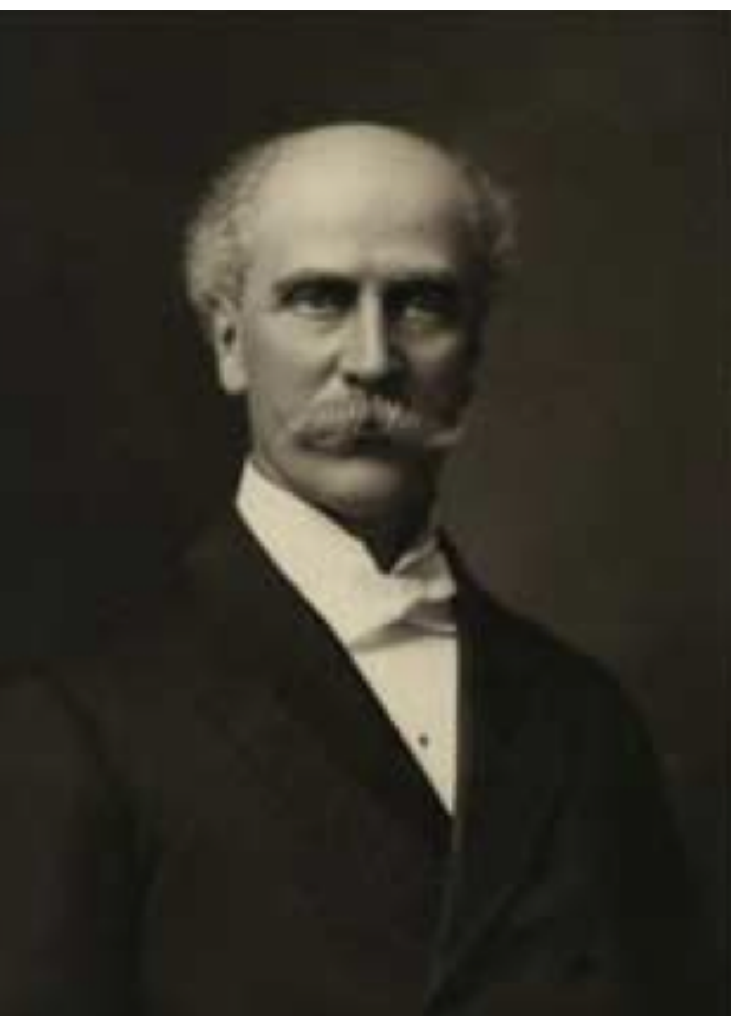
God, the supreme principle as shown in the form of a woman. Sometimes she is considered to be God Herself and sometimes as the female aspect of God.

“According to Hindu religion, Adi Parashakti, the Supreme, Original Power of Creation, is a female aspect of the divine venerated as the Supreme Being in Shaktism . The Devi Bhagwata Mahapurana suggests that Adi Parashakti is the original creator, observer and destroyer of whole universe.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



## Dr. Barrows



John Henry Barrows 1847-1902, was called the ‘architect’ of the World Parliament of Religions in 1893. He was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Chicago. Even though he praised the Parliament for bringing together many faiths of the world, he thought that Christianity was the apex of all religions and was called by many, “Christo-centric” instead of “homo-centric.” His closing speech at the Parliament claimed “there is no teacher to be compared with the Christ and no other teachings bring God so near to man as he is brought by Jesus’ Message of the fatherhood of God . . . We believe that Christianity is to supplant all other religions, because it contains all the truth there is in them and much besides...

and those who have the full light of the cross should bear brotherly hearts towards all who grope in the dimmer illumination.”

Vivekananda responded with indignation to this remark. Rising to his feet, he spoke out: "We who have come from the east have sat here day after day and have been told in a patronizing way that we ought to accept Christianity because Christian nations are the most prosperous... we look about us and see England the most prosperous Christian nation in the world, with her foot on the neck of the two hundred and fifty million Asians... Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throats of its fellow men."

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### Related Glossary Terms

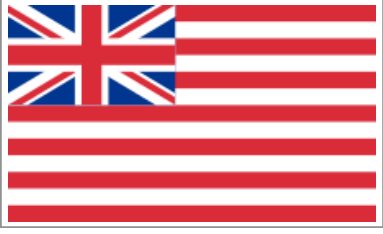
Professor Henry Wright

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## East India Company



The East India Company traded mainly in cotton, silk, indigo dye, salt, saltpetre (used for gunpowder and food preservation), tea and opium. The Company was granted a Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth in 1600, making it the oldest among several similarly formed European East India Companies. Shares of

the company were owned by wealthy merchants and aristocrats. The government owned no shares and had only indirect control. The Company eventually came to rule large areas of India with its own private armies, exercising military power and assuming administrative functions. Company rule in India effectively began in 1757 after the Battle of Plassey and lasted until 1858 when, following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the Government of India Act 1858 led to the British Crown assuming direct control of India in the era of the new British Raj.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Picture above: Flag of the East India Company (Notice its similarity to the flag of America)



(Above) East India House, London -Thomas Malton 1800



Map of India at the time of the East India Company

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### Related Glossary Terms

Bengali Renaissance, Evangelicals, Frederic Tudor, Jewel in the Crown, Madras

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Chapter 1 - How Thoreau's Walden Pond Mixed with the Ganges and Yoga Came to Ar

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## Ekknath



“Sant Eknath (1533–1599) was a prominent Marathi Saint, scholar and religious poet. In the development of Marathi literature, Sant Eknath is seen as a bridge between the towering predecessors Dnyaneshwar and Namdev and the equally noble successors Tukaram and Ramdas.

Ekknath was one of the earliest reformers of untouchability in Maharashtra, working as he was in the late Middle Ages. In times when Brahmins even avoided the shadow and the voice of an untouchable, he publicly showed courtesy toward untouchables and frequented them. Once he saved the life of a Mahar child, rescuing it from the scorching heat, the child was wandering in the hot sand of the Godavari. The Brahmins of the village got angry at Eknath im-

parting his touch to the body of a backward. In an act meant to mollify them, he famously took a bath in the same river to wash away the impurity, hoping they would see the inhumanity of their taboos.

Ekknath initiated in Maharashtra a movement called Wasudewa Sanstha. It involved house-to-house visitations by individuals known as Wasudewa, who, standing in front of peoples' houses, spread religious messages through bhajans (ballads).

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Realizer

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## Evangelicals

“A Christian sect or group that stresses the authority of the Bible, the importance of believing that Jesus Christ saved you personally from sin or hell, and the preaching of these beliefs to other people.

Evangelicals believe in salvation through faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ and the importance of preaching their faith to the unconverted.

They followed the Christian missionaries into India and gave many people a sense of fear that this foreign religion was part of the plan of the East India Company to convert Hindus to Christianity. Their actions in India played a role in the Sepoy Rebellion as well as the birth of the Brahma Samaj and the Bengali Renaissance.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Atonement, Brahma Samaj, East India Company

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## Fakir

The fakir, or faqir (derived from faqr (Arabic: فقر, "poverty"), is a Muslim Sufi ascetic in the Middle East and South Asia. The Faqirs were wandering Dervishes teaching Islam and living on alms.

The term has become a common Urdu, Bengali, and Hindi byword for "beggar." The term has also been used to refer to Hindu and Buddhist ascetics (e.g., sadhus, gurus, swamis and yogis).

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



## Frederic Tudor



Frederic Tudor (1783-1864) was known as Boston's "Ice King," and was the founder of the Tudor Ice Company. During the early 19th Century, he made a fortune shipping ice to the Caribbean, Europe, and even as far away as India from sources of fresh water ice in New England.

The Tudor Ice Company harvested ice in a number of New England ponds for export and distribution throughout the Caribbean, Europe, and India from 1826 to 1892.

Tudor ice was harvested at Walden Pond in Concord, Fresh Pond in Cambridge, Spy Pond in Arlington, Sandy Pond in Ayer, Horn Pond in Woburn, Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield, Haggett's Pond in Andover, Suntaug Lake in Lynnfield, Spot Pond and Doleful Pond in Stoneham, and Wenham Lake in Wenham (all these places are in Massachusetts).

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Chennai Ice house, East India Company, Three ice houses

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## Ganges

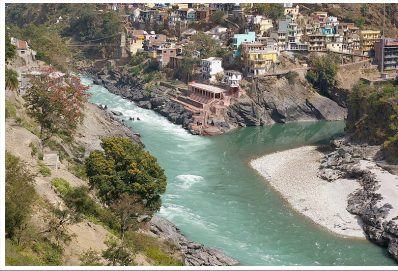
The Ganges is the most sacred river to Hindus and is also a lifeline to millions of Indians who live along its course and depend on it for their daily needs. It is worshiped as the goddess Ganga in Hinduism . . .

The Ganges begins at the confluence of the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda rivers.

The Bhagirathi is considered to be the true source in Hindu culture and mythology, although the Alaknanda is longer. The headwaters of the Alakananda are formed by snowmelt from such peaks as Nanda Devi, Trisul, and Kamet. The Bhagirathi rises at the foot of Gangotri Glacier, at Gaumukh, at an elevation of 3,892 m (12,769 ft).

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

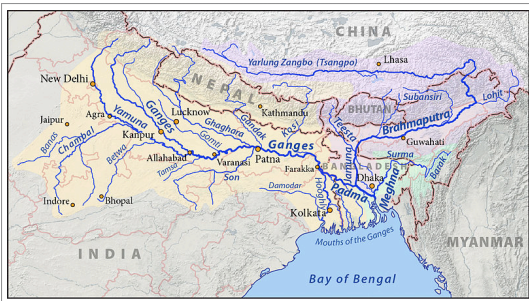
Below: Dev Prayag at the junction of the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers meet and take the name Ganga or Ganges River. The Alaknanda rises at the confluence and feet of the Satopanth and Bhagirath Kharak glaciers in Uttarakhand near the border with Tibet. The headwaters of the Bhagirathi are formed at Gaumukh, at the foot of the Gangotri glacier and Khatling glaciers in the Garhwal Himalaya. These two sacred rivers join to form the Ganges (Ganga) in Devprayag.



Below: Gaumukh, the source of the Bhagarathi River and considered by many as the source of the Ganges.



Below: A Map of the watershed of the Ganges and the rivers of northern India.



Below: The Goddess Ganga in a small riverside temple in Benaras





## Gaudiya Vaishnava

“Gaudiya Vaishnavism (also known as Chaitanya Vaishnavism and Hare Krishna) is a Vaishnava religious movement founded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534) in India in the 16th century. "Gaudiya" refers to the Gauḍa region (present day Bengal/Bangladesh) with Vaishnavism meaning "the worship of Vishnu.” Its philosophical basis is primarily that of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Bhagavata Purana*, as well as other Puranic scriptures and Upanishads such as the Isha Upanishad, Gopala Tapani Upanishad, and Kali Santarana Upanishad.

The focus of Gaudiya Vaishnavism is the devotional worship (bhakti) of Radha and Krishna, and their many divine incarnations as the supreme forms of God, Svayam Bhagavan. Most popularly, this worship takes the form of singing Radha and Krishna's holy names, such as "Hare," "Krishna" and "Rama," most commonly in the form of the Hare Krishna (mantra), also known as kirtan.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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# Ghee

Ghee is the essence of milk.

As the Ganges has poured down through the myths and plains of India for thousands of years, so has ghee flowed through all aspects of the Indian culture. In the Ayurvedic wisdom, family homes, religions, peoples and kitchens of India, ghee is a sacred and celebrated symbol of auspiciousness, nourishment and healing as well as an esteemed article of everyday use.



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## Related Glossary Terms

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## God-Realization

This is one of the terms used to indicate the Truth of life and Reality. There are many definitions of God-Realization. For instance, are we referring to Realization of one God or many Gods or only God? Here is one definition put forth by Meher Baba, a great God-man of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in India.

“God-realization is different from all other states of consciousness because they are experienced through the medium of the individual mind, whereas God-consciousness is not dependent upon the individual mind. A medium is necessary for knowing anything other than one's self: for knowing one's self no medium is necessary. In fact, the association of consciousness with the mind is a hindrance to the attainment of realization. As the seat of the ego the individual mind is conscious of being isolated. From it arises the limited individuality, which at once feeds and is fed by the illusion of duality, time and change. To know the self as it is, consciousness has to be freed from the limitation of the individual mind. In other words, the individual mind has to disappear while consciousness is retained.”

– *God to Man and Man to God*

The discourses of Meher Baba

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### Related Glossary Terms

God-Realizer, Reality, Realization, Realized, Realizer

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## **God-Realizer**

A person who has Realized God. (see God-Realization)

This Realization can vary widely in type; for instance: whether the Realizer realizes one God, many Gods or only God.

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### **Related Glossary Terms**

God-Realization, Reality, Realization, Realized, Realizer

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## Gurudeva

“Gurudeva is a generic address to a guru in Hinduism.

Guru is a Sanskrit term for "teacher" or "master," especially in Indian religions. The Hindu guru-shishya tradition is the oral tradition or religious doctrine or experiential wisdom transmitted from teacher to student.

The importance of finding a guru who can impart transcendental knowledge (vidyā) is emphasized in Hinduism. One of the main Hindu texts, the Bhagavad Gita, is a dialogue between God in the form of Krishna and his friend Arjuna, a Kshatriya prince who accepts Krishna as his guru on the battlefield, prior to a large battle. Not only does this dialogue outline many of the ideals of Hinduism, but their relationship is considered an ideal one of Guru-Shishya. In the Gita, Krishna speaks to Arjuna of the importance of finding a guru:

*Acquire the transcendental knowledge from a Self-realized master by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service. The wise ones who have realized the Truth will impart the Knowledge to you.*

In the sentence mentioned above, guru is used more or less interchangeably with satguru (literally: true teacher), paratpar Guru and satpurusha. However, there is a marked difference between them in the spiritual context. The disciple of a guru is called a śiṣya or chela. Often a guru lives in an ashram or in a gurukula (the guru's household), together with his disciples. The lineage of a guru, spread by disciples who carry on the guru's message, is known as the guru parampara, or disciplic succession.

The role of the guru continues in the original sense of the word in such Hindu traditions as the Vedānta, yoga, tantra and bhakti schools. Indeed, it is now a standard part of Hinduism that a guru is one's spiritual guide on earth. In some more mystical traditions it is believed that the guru could awaken dormant spiritual knowledge within the pupil. The act of doing this is known as shaktipat.

In Hinduism, the guru is considered a respected person with saintly qualities who enlightens the mind of his or her disciple, an educator from whom one receives the initiatory mantra, and one who instructs in rituals and religious ceremonies. The Vishnu Smriti and Manu Smriti regard the teacher and the mother and father as the most venerable influences on an individual.

In Indian culture, a person without a guru or a teacher (acharya) was once looked down on as an orphan or unfortunate one. The word anatha in Sanskrit means "the one without a teacher." An acharya is the giver of gyan (knowledge) in the form of shiksha (instruction). A guru also gives diksha initiation which is the spiritual awakening of the disciple by the grace of the guru. Diksha is also considered to be the procedure of bestowing the divine powers of a guru upon the disciple, through which the disciple progresses continuously along the path to divinity.

The concept of the "guru" can be traced as far back as the early Upanishads, where the idea of the Divine Teacher on earth first manifested from its early Brahmin associations.

The guru-shishya tradition is the transmission of teachings from a guru (teacher,) to a 'śiṣya' (disciple). In this relationship, subtle and advanced knowledge is conveyed and received through the student's respect, commitment, devotion and obedience. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the guru embodies.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

## Hare Krishna movement

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), known colloquially as the Hare Krishna movement or Hare Krishnas, is a Gaudiya Vaishnava religious organisation. It was founded in 1966 in New York City by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Its core beliefs are based on traditional Indian scriptures, such as the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and the Bhagavad-gītā.

The distinctive appearance of the movement and its culture come from the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, which has had adherents in India since the late 15th century and Western converts since the early 1900s in America, and in England in the 1930s.

ISKCON was formed to spread the practice of bhakti yoga, in which aspirant devotees (bhaktas) dedicate their thoughts and actions towards pleasing the Supreme Lord, Krishna.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Bhaktivedanta Swami, Chaitanya, ISKCON, Lord Krishna, Swami B.G. Narasingha, Vaishnava Bhakti

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# Hatha

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## Hatha Yoga



“Traditional hatha yoga is a holistic yogic path, including disciplines, postures (asana), purification procedures (shatkriya), gestures (mudra), breathing (pranayama), and meditation. The hatha yoga predominantly practiced in the West consists of mostly asanas understood as physical exercises.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

(Above) B.K.S Iyengar - One of the best known teachers of Hatha Yoga in the twentieth century

The classic text of Hatha Yoga is the Hatha Yoga Pradeepika:

“The Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā (Sanskrit: haṭhayōgapradīpikā, is a classic Sanskrit manual on hatha yoga, written by Svāmi Svātmārāma, a disciple of Swami Gorakhnath. Said to be the oldest surviving text on the hatha yoga, it is one of the three classic texts of hatha yoga, the other two being the Gheranda Samhita and the Shiva Samhita. A fourth major text, written at a later date by Srinivasabhata Mahayogaindra, is the Hatharatnavali.

The text was written in 15th century CE. The work is derived from older Sanskrit texts and Swami Svātmārāma's own yogic experiences. Many modern English translations of the text are available.

The book consists four Upadeśas (chapters) which include information about asanas, pranayama, chakras, kundalini, bandhas, kriyas, shakti, nadis and mudras among other topics. It runs in the line of Hindu yoga (to distinguish from Buddhist and Jain yoga) and is dedicated to Śrī (Lord) ādi nāthā (Adinatha), a name for Lord Shiva (the Hindu god of destruction and renewal), who is believed to have imparted the secret of hatha yoga to his divine consort Parvati.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Ramakrishna and his disciples always considered Hatha Yoga in terms of God-Realization. It is not that they thought is bad for a person. Only that it had very little or nothing to do with what they held to be the supreme goal of life – God Realization.

“Have you dived deep into Shivananda’s pamphlet on Hatha Yoga? You must not be deluded by what Hatha Yoga teachers say. For Shivananda (Swami Shivananda, an intimate devotee of Sri Ramakrishna) is right. If you learn to control your breath, if you increase your powers of concentration, all those things tend to make you strong. Even physical health is affected by them. *Na tasya roga na jara na mrtyu praptasyayogagnimayam shariram* – he has no age, disease, nor decay, who has put on the flame garb of Yoga [Hatha Yoga].

That is true, but perpetual youth is no good to you if you cannot find Him, the ageless, who does not have to be even young . . . There is no doubt that while concentrating on the Divine, the Rishis, sages, sages of ancient India, stumbled upon the science of Yoga [Hatha Yoga]. It was just an incident of their spiritual life. Alas, unfortunately, later came a race of bastard holy men who did not care much for God. They wanted fireworks, so they prostituted Yoga into a science for acquiring occult power. “

A discussion between Swami Nikhilananda and another Swami.

Taken from: *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Nikhilananda

## Henry David Thoreau



Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was an American author, poet, philosopher, abolitionist, naturalist, tax resister, development critic, surveyor, historian, and leading transcendentalist. He is best known for his book *Walden*, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay *Resistance to Civil Government* (also known as *Civil Disobedience*), an argument for disobedience to an unjust state.

Thoreau's books, articles, essays, journals, and poetry total over 20 volumes. Among his lasting contributions were his writings on natural history and philosophy, where he anticipated the methods and findings of ecology and environ-

mental history, two sources of modern day environmentalism. His literary style interweaves close natural observation, personal experience, pointed rhetoric, symbolic meanings, and historical lore, while displaying a poetic sensibility, philosophical austerity, and "Yankee" love of practical detail. He was also deeply interested in the idea of survival in the face of hostile elements, historical change, and natural decay; at the same time he advocated abandoning waste and illusion in order to discover life's true essential needs.

He was a lifelong abolitionist, delivering lectures that attacked the Fugitive Slave Law while praising the writings of Wendell Phillips and defending abolitionist John Brown. Thoreau's philosophy of civil disobedience later influenced the political thoughts and actions of such notable figures as Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thoreau was heavily influenced by Indian spiritual thought. In *Walden*, there are many overt references to the sacred texts of India. For example, in the first chapter "Economy," he writes:

"How much more admirable the Bhagvat-Geeta than all the ruins of the East!"

Thoreau followed various Hindu customs, including following a diet of rice ("It was fit that I should live on rice, mainly, who loved so well the philosophy of India."), flute playing (reminiscent of the favorite musical pastime of Krishna), and yoga.

In an 1849 letter to his friend H.G.O. Blake, he wrote about yoga and its meaning to him:

"Free in this world as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chains, those who practice yoga gather in Brahma (God) the certain fruits of their works. Depend upon it that, rude and careless as I am, I would fain practice the yoga faithfully. The yogi, absorbed in contemplation, contributes in his degree to creation; he breathes a divine perfume, he hears wonderful things. Divine forms traverse him without tearing him, and united to the nature which is proper to him, he goes, he acts as animating original matter. To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a yogi."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Arjuna, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ram Mohun Roy, Walden, Walden Pond

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## Hooghly

The Hooghly River is a distributary of the Ganges. It is one of several major channels through which the Ganges pours into as it is about to enter the Bay of Bengal. The Hooghly is the largest of all of them. The Ganges (under the name of the Hooghly) flows through Calcutta.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

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# Idealism

Idealism is the beliefs and behavior of someone who has ideals and v  
base their behavior on these ideals.

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## Related Glossary Terms

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## Identification

When the eternal Being is identified with the body mind and senses, the identification.

“The separate self dissolves in the sea of pure consciousness, infinite and eternal. Separateness arises from identifying the Self with the body, which is made of the elements; when this physical identification dissolves, there can be no separate self. This is what I want to tell you, beloved.”

(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Chapter 2, 4:12)

“As the rivers flowing east and west  
Merge in the sea and become one with it,  
Forgetting they were ever separate rivers,  
So do all creatures lose their separateness  
When they merge at last into pure Being.”

(Chandogya Upanishad. 10:1-2)

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### Related Glossary Terms

Reality, Realization, Realized, Realizer, Upanishads

# Indologist

A student of Indian literature, history, philosophy, religion. Perhaps the most known Indologist of all time was Max Muller.

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## Related Glossary Terms

Max Muller, Vedic literature of India

## Indra



“In the Rig Veda, Indra is the king of the gods and ruler of the heavens. Indra is the god of thunder and rain and a great warrior, a symbol of courage and strength. He leads the Devas (the gods who form and maintain Heaven) and the elements, such as Agni (Fire), Varuna (Water) and Surya (Sun), and constantly wages war against the opponents of the gods, the demon-like Asuras. As the god of war, he is also regarded as one of the Guardians of the directions, representing the east.

As the favorite 'national' god of the Vedic Indians, Indra has about 250 hymns dedicated to him in the Rigveda.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here



## ISKCON

International Society for Krishna Consciousness. This is the organization started by Bhaktivedanta Swami to promote the consciousness of Krishna as the Supreme form of God.

This is a well-known form of belief and practice in India, but by no means the only interpretation of the incarnation or Avatar of Lord Krishna.

“Popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement. The purpose of this movement was to write about Krishna in English and to share the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy with people in the Western world by spreading the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (an incarnation of Lord Sri Krishna according to the Bhavishya Purana). In an effort to gain attention, followers chanted the names of God in public locations. This chanting was known as hari-nama sankirtana and helped spread the teaching. Additionally, the practice of distributing prasadam or “sanctified food” worked as a catalyst in the dissemination of his works. In the Hare Krishna movement, Prasad was a vegetarian dish that would be first offered to Krishna. The food’s proximity to Krishna added a “spiritual effect,” and was seen to “counteract material contamination affecting the soul.” Sharing this sanctified food with the public, in turn, enabled the movement to gain new recruits and further spread these teachings.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Below: Chaitanya performing a kirtan in Navadvip



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### Related Glossary Terms

Bhaktivedanta Swami, Chaitanya, Hare Krishna movement, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Swami B.G. Narasingha, Vaishnaiva Bhakti

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Chapter 1 - How Thoreau's Walden Pond Mixed with the Ganges and Yoga Came to Ar

## Jewel in the Crown

“India was the centerpiece, the "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire. Trade with and eventual political dominance over India provided England with large parts of its wealth in the 1700-1900's. India offered huge resources, massive markets for British factories and goods. It provided tax income, mineral wealth, and a population who were inducted into the British civil services. Indian Clerks and Soldiers worked and fought around the world.

India was rich in spices, silk, indigo, gold, cotton and other products. Europeans who came to India gained great riches. At that time pepper which was famous and valuable in India was known as the black gold in the British Empire.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

East India Company

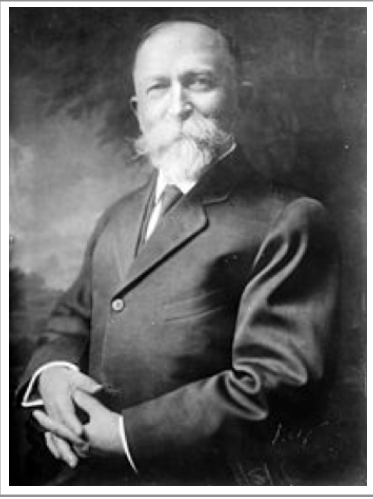
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## John Kellogg



“John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) was an American medical doctor in Battle Creek, Michigan, who ran a sanitarium using holistic methods, with a particular focus on nutrition, enemas and exercise. Kellogg was an advocate of vegetarianism and is best known for the invention of the corn flakes breakfast cereal with his brother, Will Keith Kellogg. He led the establishment of the American Medical Missionary College. The College, founded in 1895, operated until 1910 when it merged with Illinois State University.

Kellogg was a Seventh-day Adventist until mid-life and gained fame while being the chief medical officer of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, which was owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Sanitarium was run based on the church's health principles. Adventists believe in a vegetarian diet, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and a regimen of exercise, which Kellogg followed, among other things. He is remembered as an advocate of vegetarianism and wrote in favor of it, even after leaving the Adventist Church. His dietary advice in the late 19th century, which was in part concerned with reducing sexual stimulation, discouraged meat-eating, but not emphatically so.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Below: Exercises at the Sanitarium



## Johnny Appleseed



John Chapman (September 26, 1774 – March 11, 1845), often called Johnny Appleseed, was an American pioneer nurseryman who introduced apple trees to large parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, including the northern counties of present day West Virginia. He became an American legend while still alive, due to his kind, generous ways, his leadership in conservation, and the symbolic importance he attributed to apples. He was also a missionary for The New Church (Swedenborgian) . . .

(Swedenborg claimed to have received a new revelation from Jesus Christ through continuous heavenly visions which he experienced over a period of at

least twenty-five years. In his writings, he predicted that God would replace the traditional Christian Church, establishing a 'New Church', which would worship God in one person: Jesus Christ.)

He would tell stories to children, spread the The New Church gospel to the adults, receiving a floor to sleep on for the night, sometimes supper in return. "We can hear him read now, just as he did that summer day, when we were busy quilting upstairs, and he lay near the door, his voice rising denunciatory and thrilling—strong and loud as the roar of wind and waves, then soft and soothing as the balmy airs that quivered the morning-glory leaves about his gray beard. His was a strange eloquence at times, and he was undoubtedly a man of genius," reported a lady who knew him in his later years.

Chapman was quick to preach the Gospel as he traveled, and during his travels he converted many Indians, whom he admired. The Native Americans regarded him as someone who had been touched by the Great Spirit, even hostile tribes left him strictly alone. He once wrote, "I have traveled more than 4,000 miles about this country, and I have never met with one single insolent Native American."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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Section 6 - Introduction

# Jones

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## Related Glossary Terms

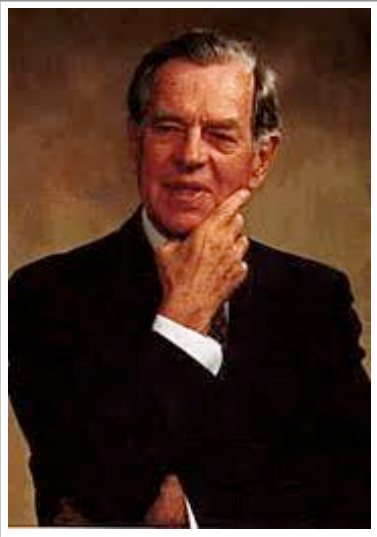
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## Joseph Campbell



Joseph John Campbell (1904–1987) was an American mythologist, writer and lecturer, best known for his work in comparative mythology and comparative religion. His work is vast, covering many aspects of the human experience . . .

One of Campbell's most identifiable, most quoted and arguably most misunderstood sayings was his admonition to "follow your bliss." He derived this idea from the Upanishads:

Now, I came to this idea of bliss because in Sanskrit, which is the great spiritual language of the world, there are three terms that represent the brink, the jumping-off place to the ocean of transcendence: Sat-Chit-Ananda. The word "Sat" means being. "Chit" means consciousness. "Ananda" means bliss or rapture. I thought, "I don't know whether my consciousness is proper consciousness or not; I don't know whether what I know of my being is my proper being or not; but I do know where my rapture is. So let me hang on to rapture, and that will bring me both my consciousness and my being." I think it worked.

He saw this not merely as a mantra, but as a helpful guide to the individual along the hero journey that each of us walks through life:

“If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are—if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.”

Campbell began sharing this idea with students during his lectures in the 1970s. By the time that *The Power of Myth* was aired in 1988, six months following Campbell's death, "Follow your bliss" was a philosophy that resonated deeply with the American public—both religious and secular.

During his later years, when some students took him to be encouraging hedonism, Campbell is reported to have grumbled, "I should have said, 'Follow your blisters.'"

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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Section 5 - How to use this Book

**Chapter 2 - The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life**

Chapter 2 - The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life

## Jyotish



"Jyotisha is the traditional Indian system of astrology rooted in Vedic-Purānic tradition. It is often called Vedic Jyotiṣa by its practitioners and Hindu or Indian astrology by foreigners. Jyotiṣa is a Vedāṅga or an auxiliary text to the the Veda.

Jyotiṣa reasons out destiny in terms of Karma phala [fruit of actions] and its predictions are reflections of karma phalas. The shortest and best definition of Jyotiṣa is 'Karma-phala-vipāka-kāla-vidhānam', i.e., set of rules for timing of fruition of past actions. All actions do

not bear fruits instantly. Some results may be instantaneous while others may be deep and far reaching, often going beyond a single life. Jyotiṣa studies these obscure fruits of actions which we do not even remember. Destiny or prārabdha is that part of fruits of past actions which has become dominant and has pushed other fruits into background because they do not match with the dominant group of fruits which have resulted into one's birth in this world.

Jyotiṣa is a Vedāṅga. The first ever record for Jyotiṣa is found in the Veda. The earliest reference to Jyotiṣa as a vedāṅga is found in the Mundaka Upanishad and Chāndogya Upanishada also mentions it as a distinct discipline. The first Vedic Yajna in Yajurveda is Darsha-paurnamāsa Yajna, which needed correct timing of tithis (eg, New Moon or Darsha, and Full Moon or Poornamāsa). Vedas are concerned with Yajnas which can be performed only at astrologically auspicious moments.

Jyotiṣa has been referred to as the Eye of Veda, i.e., Eye of real Knowledge (Veda means real Knowledge), because Jyotisha provides the tangible proofs in favor of existence of soul and rebirth by means of horoscope in this life reflecting the karmas of past life.”

—Hindupedia

Vivekananda’s teaching on Jyotish tended to be critical but must be understood in terms of what he is criticizing and the audience he is addressing. He said:

“If you can get an explanation of a phenomenon from within its nature, it is nonsense to look for an explanation from outside. If the world explains itself, it is nonsense to go outside for an explanation. Have you found any phenomena in the life of a man that you have ever seen which cannot be explained by the power of the man himself? So what is the use of going to the stars or anything else in the world? My own Karma is sufficient explanation of my present state. So in the case of Jesus himself. We know that his father was only a carpenter. We need not go to anybody else to find an explanation of his power. He was the outcome of his own past, all of which was a preparation for that Jesus. Buddha goes back and back to animal bodies and tells us how he ultimately became Buddha. So what is the use of going to stars for explanation? They may have a little influence; but it is our duty to ignore them rather than hearken to them and make ourselves nervous. This I lay down as the first essential in all I teach: anything that brings spiritual, mental, or physical weakness, touch it not with the toes of your feet. Religion is the manifestation of the natural strength that is in man. A spring of infinite power is coiled up and is inside this little body, and that spring is spreading itself. And as it goes on spreading, body after body is found insufficient; it throws them off and takes higher bodies. This is the history of man, of religion, civilization, or progress. That giant Prometheus, who is bound, is getting himself unbound. It is always a manifestation of strength, and all these ideas such as astrology, although there may be a grain of truth in them, should be avoided.”

Vivekananda was criticizing that aspect of Jyotish that speaks of fate (Vithi) as the determining factor. That aspect of jyotish has grown tremendously in India to the point that people resign themselves to their fate without trying to make a change. It seems to me, it was that disposition Vivekananda was addressing.

There is another aspect of jyotish: the casting light on life (*jyoti* means light). This light enables a person to avoid the trouble that has not yet come by a determination of the qualities of nature and ones relationship to them. It has little difference from getting a weather report before going sailing across the ocean. Doing so allows you to set out on one day as opposed to a less favorable one and to sail on this route instead of another one.

Jyotish can be interpreted in such a way that it is all about fate and that things are determined. This is the tendency among many people and especially so in India. However, the Indian traditions also recognize free will and a better informed person has a better field in which to operate. This does not make one weak unless one merely resigns himself to his fate.

Sri Yuktswar, the Guru of Paramahamsa Yogananda who was himself a well-known Vedic Astrologer wrote the following:

“The message boldly blazoned across the heavens at the moment of birth is not meant to emphasize fate- the result of past good and evil- but to arouse man’s will to escape from his universal thralldom. What he has done, he can undo. None other than himself was the instigator of the causes of whatever effects are now prevalent in his life. He can overcome any limitation, because he created it by his own actions in the first place, and because he has spiritual resources which are not subject to planetary pressure.”

“The wise man defeats his planets. There are certain mechanical features in the law of karma which can be skillfully adjusted by the fingers of wisdom”

-Sri Yuktswar

#### Related Glossary Terms

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## Kailash



If we trace the major rivers of India to their headwaters in the Himalayas, they all find their source in close vicinity to Mount Kailash (21,778' ) in Tibet. Mount Kailash is considered by many religions to be the center of the world and even the spiritual center of the Universe by five religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Bon. In this way, it is the physi-

cal symbol of the center of the world. Kailash is the astoundingly perfect physical symbol of the center of the world and has been honored as such for thousands of years.

“Mount Kailash is a peak in the Kailas Range, which are part of the Transhimalaya in Tibet. It lies near the source of some of the longest rivers in Asia: the Indus River, the Sutlej River (a major tributary of the Indus River), the Brahmaputra [Sanpo] River, and the Karnali River (a tributary of the River Ganga). It is considered a sacred place in four religions: Bön, Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism.



According to Hinduism, Lord Shiva, the destroyer of ignorance and illusion, resides at the summit of a legendary mountain named Kailās, where he sits in a state of perpetual meditation along with his wife Pārvatī.”

– Wikipedia, the Free Online Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Shiva, Siva lingam

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## Kali

There are many different schools of interpretation of Kali. Ramakrishna once said:

“My Mother is the principle of consciousness. She is Akhanda Satchidananda; indivisible Reality, Awareness, and Bliss. The night sky between the stars is perfectly black. The waters of the ocean depths are the same; The infinite is always mysteriously dark. This inebriating darkness is my beloved Kali.

-Sri Ramakrishna

“In her most famous pose as Dakshinakali (image below) popular legends say that Kali, becoming drunk on the blood of her victims on the battlefield, dances with destructive frenzy. In her fury she fails to see the body of Shiva [her husband], who lies among the corpses on the battlefield and steps on his chest. Realizing Shiva lies beneath her feet, her anger is pacified and she calms her fury. Though not added in any of the puranas, the popular legends tell that Kali was ashamed at the prospect of keeping her husband beneath her feet and thus stuck her tongue out in shame. The 'Devi-purana,' which goes into great depths about Goddess Kali, reveals the true reason for the symbolism of the tongue. The characteristic icons that depict Kali are the following; unbridled matted hair, open blood shot eyes, open mouth and a drooping tongue; in her hands, she holds: a Khadga (bent sword or scimitar) and a human head, she has a girdle of human hands across her waist and an enchanted Shiva lies beneath her feet. Each of these icons represent a deep philosophical epithet. The drooping out-stuck tongue represents her blood-thirst. Lord Shiva beneath her feet represents matter, as Kali is undoubtedly the primeval energy. ”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



### Related Glossary Terms

Dakshineshwar Kali Temple

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## Kanyakumari

“Kanyakumari, formerly known as Cape Comorin, is a town in Kanyakumari District in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. Kanyakumari lies at the southernmost tip of mainland India.

According to Hindu legend, Kanya Devi, an Avatar of Parvati, was to marry Siva, but as he failed to show up on his wedding day, the rice and other grains meant for the wedding feast remained uncooked and remain unused thereafter. As the legend goes, the uncooked grains turned into stones as time went by. Some believe that the small stones on the shore today, which look like rice, are indeed grains from the wedding that was never solemnized. Kanya Devi is now considered a virgin goddess who blesses pilgrims and tourists who flock the town.

According to another Hindu legend, Lord Hanuman dropped a piece of earth as he was carrying a mountain with his life-saving herb, Mrita Sanjivani, from the Himalayas to Lanka (Sri Lanka) during the Rama-Ravana war. This chunk of earth is called Marunthuvazh Malai, literally "hills where medicine lives." This is said to be the reason for the abundance of unique native medicinal plants in the area.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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# Karma

“ God created the law of karma and then retired.” – Gandhi

“Karma in Indian religions is the concept of "action" or "deed," understood as that which causes the entire cycle of cause and effect (samsara). Karma is not punishment or retribution, but simply an extended expression or consequence of natural acts. Karma means "deed" or "act" and more broadly names the universal principle of cause and effect, action and reaction, that governs all life. The effects experienced are also able to be mitigated by actions and are not necessarily fated. That is to say, a particular action now is not binding to some particular, pre-determined future experience or reaction; it is not a simple, one-to-one correspondence of reward or punishment.

Karma is not fate, for humans act with free will, creating their own destiny. According to the Vedas, if one sows goodness, one will reap goodness; if one sows evil, one will reap evil. Karma refers to the totality of our actions and their concomitant reactions in this and previous lives, all of which determines our future. The conquest of karma lies in intelligent action and dispassionate response.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Related Glossary Terms

Dharma

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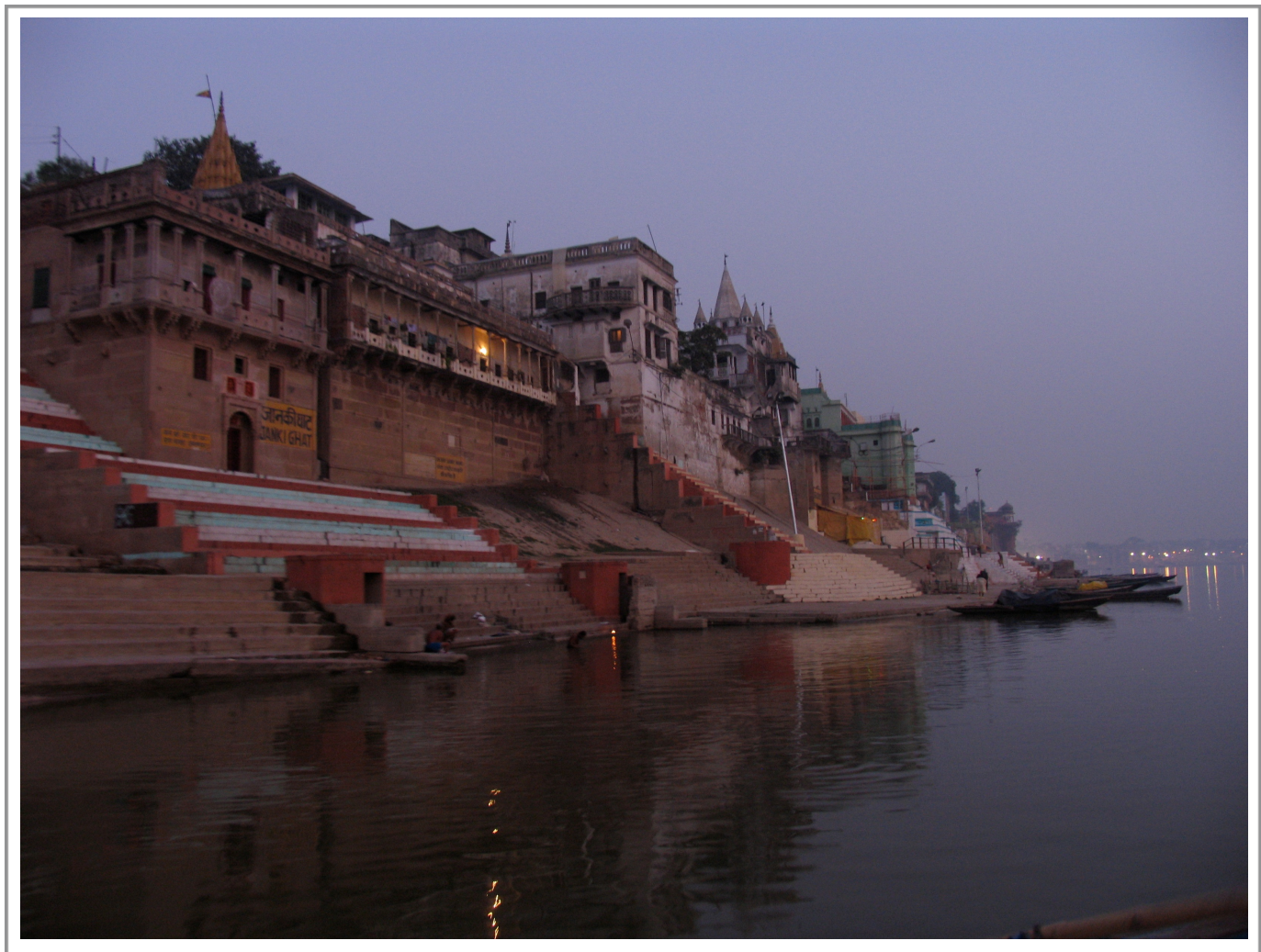
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# Kashi

One of the names of Varanasi or Benaras. It is the oldest city in the world and is sacred to Lord Shiva. It is situated on a bend of the Ganges River and has been a center of culture and religion for thousands of years.

(see: Benaras)



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## Related Glossary Terms

Benaras, Kashi Yatra, Kasi

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## **Kashi Yatra**

The great and ancient ritual pilgrimage (Yatra) in which Ganges was carried from Kashi (also called Varanasi or Benaras) and carried south 15 miles to Rameswaram where it is poured over a Shiva Lingam. Then some water is taken from Rameswaram and carried back to Kashi where it is made into a symbol of Lord Shiva, a Lingam and then the water is poured over it and they both run back into the Ganges.

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### **Related Glossary Terms**

Kashi

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## Kasi

“Kasi, Benaras or Varanasi is the spiritual capital of India. Many scholarly books have been written in the city, including the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas. Today there is a temple of his namesake in the city, the Tulsi Manas Mandir. One of the largest residential universities of Asia the Banaras Hindu University is located here. Varanasi is often referred to as "the city of temples," "the holy city of India," "the religious capital of India," "the city of lights," "the city of learning," and "the oldest living city on earth."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



## Keshab Chandra Sen



Keshub Chandra Sen, (19 November 1838 – 8 January 1884) was an Indian Bengali Hindu philosopher and social reformer who attempted to incorporate Christian theology within the framework of Hindu thought. Born a Hindu, he became a member of the Brahmo Samaj in 1856 but founded his own breakaway "Brahmo Samaj of India" in 1866 while the Brahmo Samaj remained under the leadership of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore (who headed the Brahmo Samaj till his death in 1905). In 1878 his followers abandoned him after the underage child marriage of his daughter which exposed his campaign against child marriage as hollow. Later in his life he came under the influence of Ramakrishna and founded a syncretic "New Dispensation" or Nôbobidhan inspired by Christianity, and Vaishnav bhakti, and Hindu practices.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Brahmo Samaj, Ram Mohun Roy, Unitarian

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## Kullu

“Kullu (1,220 m or 4,000 ft) was once known as Kulanthpitha - `the end of the habitable world`. Beyond rose the forbidding heights of the Greater Himalayas and, by the banks of the shining river Beas, lay the fabled `Silver Valley`.

The Chinese pilgrim monk Xuanzang visited the Kullu Valley in 634 or 635 CE. He described it as a fertile region completely surrounded by mountains, about 3,000 li in circuit, with a capital 14 or 15 li in circumference. It contained a stupa (tope) built by Ashoka, which is said to mark the place where the Buddha preached to the local people and made conversions. The stupa was taken away by a mughal ruler and put in feroz shah kotla maidan in Delhi. There were some twenty Buddhist monasteries, with about 1,000 monks, most of whom were Mahayanist. There were also some fifteen Hindu temples, and people of both faiths lived mixed together. There were meditation caves near the mountain passes inhabited by both Buddhist and Hindu practitioners. The country is said to have produced gold, silver, red copper, crystal lenses and bell-metal.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here



## Kundalini Shakti



“One energy with many names and forms: There is one energy that keeps taking on new shapes and forms. In Tantra the name of that energy is Shakti, which is the manifesting, or feminine force that is actually one and the same with its only apparent companion Shiva, the latent, or masculine. Each time the energy takes on a new form, we give it

a new name. Shakti becomes Kundalini Shakti, or simply Kundalini. Kundalini becomes the energy of Prana, which flows in patterns or channels called Nadis, and concentrates itself by forming intersections known as Chakras. The subtle energies condense and become known as earth, water, fire, air, and space, forming our experience of the gross world. With Kundalini awakening, the primal energy of Shakti awakens in its true form.

Seek to experience that one energy: To know, in direct experience, that unchanging truth, the one energy that is the substratum of all of the names and forms, is one of the ways of describing the universal goal of spiritual life. It is the experience of the union of Shakti and Shiva, creation and its ground, feminine and masculine, even though they were never actually divided in the first place. It is like wetness that is never separate from water, sweetness that is never separate from sugar, and warmth that is never separate from sunlight.”

— Hindupedia

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## Liberation

Religions can be divided into two main types: The vast majority offer Salvation to the individual. Usually, in these traditions, the individual is not defined in terms of the body, but rather as a soul or spirit. In such teachings, the individual being has some experience or attains to some state, purification, level or grace such as 'heaven'. This is the general understanding of what is meant by religion and the underlying principle of the traditions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and most sects of Hinduism.

Salvation of "self" "or soul" is the most common basis for religion and religious thinking in the world. It is so common, it has come to be the only way of considering a religion and what it proposes. However, this is a naïve assumption and is simply not true. We are just unaware of any other way of looking at what religion seems to offer.

There is another viewpoint and type of religious tradition and understanding. It is Liberation, or freedom. It is Liberation from the idea or assumption of any form of separate self, soul or even Self. The traditions of Liberation, hold that the assumption of 'self,' or any form or idea of individuality is illusory, non-necessary and false. Such an assumption is at the basis of duality, a reality that is held to not be the case. Duality is at the root of all suffering, As the Upanishad says, "Certainly fear is born of duality."

For the Religions of Liberation, herein lies the root of all suffering . . . The assumption of Self or Soul, which is criticized from the point of view of Liberation.

There are very few traditions of Liberation in the great tradition of religion and spirituality. It is found elaborated in Advaita Vedanta and in certain schools of Mahayana Buddhism.

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### Related Glossary Terms

Salvation

## Lingam

“The lingam (also, linga, ling, Shiva linga, Shiv ling, lingam, meaning "mark," "sign," "inference" or is a representation of the Hindu deity Shiva used for worship in temples. The lingam is often represented alongside the yoni, a symbol of the goddess or of Shakti, female creative energy. The union of lingam and yoni represents the "indivisible two-in-oneness of male and female, the passive space and active time from which all life originates.” The lingam and the yoni have been interpreted as the male and female sexual organs since the end of the 19th century by some scholars, while to practicing Hindus they stand for the inseparability of the male and female principles and the totality of creation.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Shiva, Siva lingam

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## Lord Krishna

Krishna is the eighth incarnation or Avatar of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism. The *Bhagavad-Gita* is the most famous Teaching of Lord Krishna. In some sects such as the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, Lord Krishna is thought to be the actual literal form of the Supreme Being.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Arjuna, Avatar, Bhagavad-Gita, Bhagvat-Geeta, Bhaktivedanta Swami, Hare Krishna movement, ISKCON

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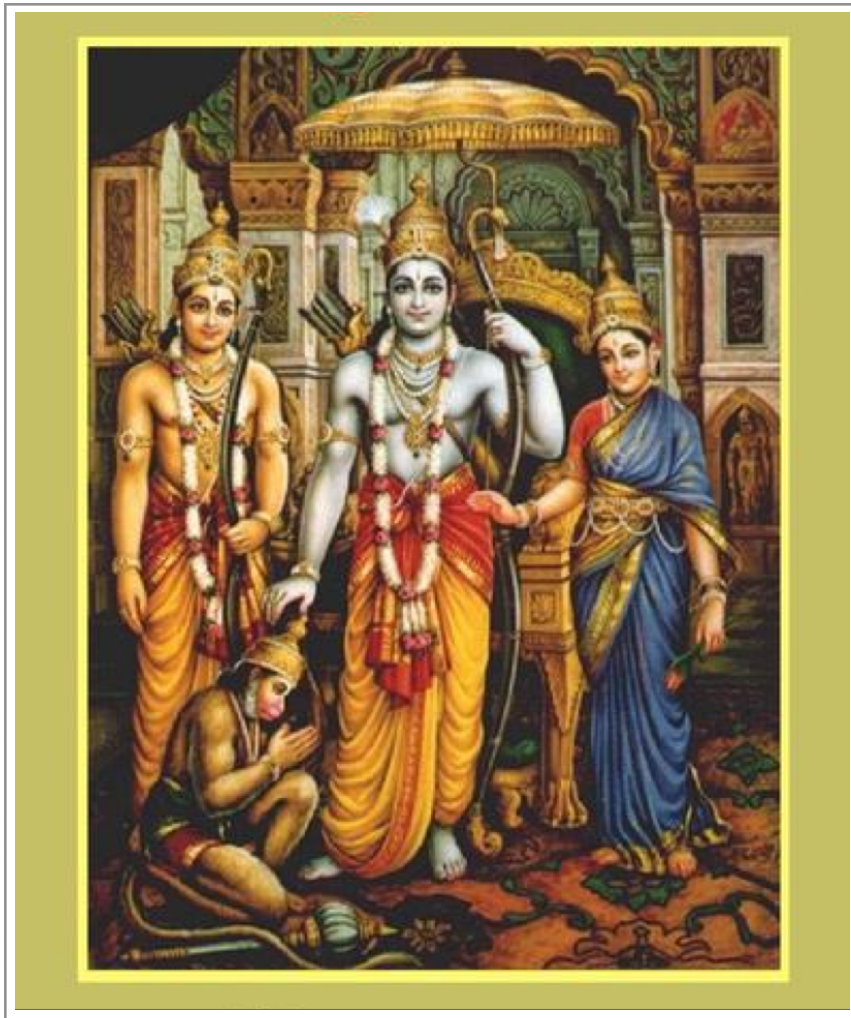
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## Lord Rama

“Rama or Ram is the seventh Avatar of the God Vishnu in Hinduism and a king of Ayodhya in Hindu scriptures [Ramayana]. Along with Krishna, the eighth Avatar of Vishnu, Rama is considered to be the most important Avatar of Vishnu. He is also one of the most popular gods in Hinduism and is widely worshiped throughout Nepal and India. In a few Rama-centric sects, Rama is considered the Supreme Being, rather than an Avatar. Rama was born in Suryavansha (Ikshvaku Vansham) later known as Raghuvansha after king Raghu. When depicted with his brother Lakshman and consort Sita, with Hanuman kneeling in a state of prayer, this form is called Ram Parivar, and is the typical fixture depicting Rama in Hindu temples. The Hindi word parivar translates as ‘family.’”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Avatar, Bhaktivedanta Swami, ISKCON, Ramayana, Rameswaram

## Madras

“Chennai, (also known as Madras) is the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Located on the Coromandel Coast off the Bay of Bengal, it is a major commercial, cultural, economic and educational center in South India. The area around Chennai had been part of successive South Indian kingdoms through centuries. The recorded history of the city began in the colonial times, specifically with the arrival of British East India Company and the establishment of Fort St. George in 1644. The British defended several attacks from the French colonial forces, and from the kingdom of Mysore, on Chennai's way to becoming a major naval port and presidency city by the late eighteenth century. Following the independence of India, Chennai became the capital of Tamil Nadu.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Below is antique photo of the beach area where the Tudor Ice house and the present day Vivekananda Museum resides.



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### Related Glossary Terms

East India Company

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## Madras Ice House

The Madras Ice house built by Frederic Tudor, is known today as the Vivekananda House or Vivekananda Illam.

“THE VIVEKANANDAR Illam, built more than 150 years ago, was popularly known as the Ice House. This was the place where ice was stored in those days. In 1833, it was Fredric Tudor, an ice merchant of Boston, USA, who brought ice to India in a Clipper ship named, Tuscany. That was the first time ice was brought into India from abroad.

Tudor, the 'Ice King', built three houses, one each in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, to keep ice under proper insulation. The building in Madras still stands, but the others have "evaporated" into thin air.

After the invention of making ice by the stream process in India, Tudor's business collapsed and the building was purchased by Biligiri Iyengar, an advocate of the Madras High Court. He named it Castle Kernan and added circular verandahs to the old frame of the building to make it fit for inhabitation. However, it did not succeed as residential quarters because of inadequate ventilation.

Swami Vivekananda returned to India via Madras after a triumphant tour of the West in February 1897. He was taken from the station to the Ice House in a grand procession. He stayed there from February 6 to 15 and delivered seven electrifying speeches.

Swami Ramakrishnanda, a disciple and the indomitable messenger of Swami Vivekananda's mission to South India, came to Madras in the third week of March 1897. Soon, he established a shrine for Sri Ramakrishna in the basement floor with help extended by Biligiri Iyengar. Thus the first branch of the Ramakrishna Mutt was established in Madras.

Among the visitors to the Math were sister Nivedita, an Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda, in 1902, and British devotees Charlottee Elizabeth Sevier and Captain John Henry Sevier, who stayed on the third floor of the Ice House during the time Swamiji was present in 1897.

After the death of Biligiri Iyengar the property was sold to a zamindar (land owner) in Waltair (Vishakhapatnam) in 1906. The Government acquired the Ice House in 1917 and set up the Brahmana Widows' Hostel (1917-22). Thereafter, the building became the Elementary & Secondary Grade Teachers' Hostel, and between 1941 and 1993, the B.Ed. Trainees Hostel. In 1963, the Government renamed the building as Vivekananda House (Vivekanandar Illam) as a token of respect to Swamiji in his birth centenary year.

In February 1997, a hundred years after Swami Vivekananda's visit to Madras, the Tamil Nadu Government gave the building and a portion of the adjacent land to Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, on lease to set up a permanent exhibition on Swami Vivekananda and the cultural heritage of India.”

– SASHI NAIR, The Hindu, Thursday, Jan 02, 2003

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### Related Glossary Terms

Chennai Ice house, Three ice houses

## Mahabharata

It is said of the Mahabharata: ‘Whatever is found here is found elsewhere. But, whatever is not here is nowhere else’.

Called the ‘Fifth Veda’, many consider the Mahabharata to be the greatest epic in the world. One very small part of the story is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, one of the best-known scriptures of all time. It was recited by Veda Vyasa and written down by Ganesh.

The Mahabharata is considered to be not just a mythical or epic text, but also a scripture of the highest order. Like the Bible or the Koran, it contains the Life, Teaching and Lila or play of the Lord.

On the surface, it recites the story of two royal families and their struggle for dominance. One family is influenced by an evil prince, Duryodhana and his blind father, the king, who dotes on his son. The other family is of five noble and great princes who seek to practice righteousness and see Lord Krishna as their friend and Lord. But this is only the barest outline- of the story.



“The epic is traditionally ascribed to the sage Vyasa, who is also a major character in the epic. Vyasa described it as being itihāsa (history). He also describes the Guru-shishya parampara, which traces all great teachers and their students of the Vedic times.

The first section of the Mahabharata states that it was Ganesha who wrote down the text to Vyasa's dictation. Ganesha is said to have agreed to write it only if Vyasa never paused in his recitation. Vyasa agrees on condition that Ganesha takes the time to understand what was said before writing it down.

The epic employs the story within a story structure, otherwise known as frame tales, popular in many Indian religious and non-religious works. It is recited by the sage Vaisampayana, a disciple of Vyasa, to the King Janamejaya who is the great-grandson of the Pandava prince Arjuna. The story is then recited again by a professional storyteller named Ugrasrava Sauti, many years later, to an assemblage of sages performing the 12-year sacrifice for the king Saunaka Kulapati in the Naimisha Forest.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Arjuna, Avatar, Bhagavad-Gita, Bhagvat-Geeta, Vedic literature of India

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Chapter 2 - The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life



## Mahabhava

Sri Ramakrishna said: "The manifestation in the same individual of nineteen different kinds of emotion for God is called, in the books on bhava, Mahabhava. An ordinary man takes a whole lifetime to express even a single one of these. But in this body [meaning himself] there has been a completion of all nineteen."

—*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, edited by Swami Nikhilananda

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## Mahendranath Gupta



Mahendranath Gupta (March 12, 1854–June 4, 1932), (also famously known as M and Master Mahashay), was a disciple of Ramakrishna—a 19th-century mystic and the author of *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*, a Bengali classic. He was also a teacher to Paramahansa Yogananda, a famous 20th century yogi, guru and philosopher.

As an adult, Mahendranath, like some of the other disciples of Ramakrishna, was connected with the Brahmo Samaj for several years. Ma-

hendranath had lost his mother at a very early age and was experiencing domestic friction in the joint family. As the friction within the joint family increased, Mahendranath decided to commit suicide. At this critical juncture, Mahendranath's nephew took him to the temple garden of Dakshineswar Kali Temple, where Ramakrishna, a mystic and the chief priest of the Kali temple lived. It was here that Gupta met Ramakrishna for the first time and this meeting was a turning point in his life. Years later, when Mahendranath was asked about the greatest day in his life, he said, "the day I had my first darshan of Thakur [Ramakrishna] in February 1882." According to other traditional accounts, Mahendranath related that he may have met Ramakrishna for the first time when he was four years old and became separated from his mother while visiting the Dakshineswar Kali Temple. He began crying, and a blissful and youthful man came up and consoled him. He believed it to be Ramakrishna, who was then a priest at the Kali temple.

M had the habit of maintaining a personal diary since the age of thirteen. M met Ramakrishna in 1882 and attracted by Ramakrishna's teachings, M started to maintain a stenographic record of Ramakrishna's conversations and actions in his diary, which finally took the form of a book *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*. Initially when M began writing the diaries, he had no plans of publication. Regarding his methodology M wrote,

I wrote everything from memory after I returned home. Sometimes I had to keep awake the whole night...Sometimes I would keep on writing the events of one sitting for seven days, recollect the songs that were sung, and the order in which they were sung, and the samadhi and so on...Many a time I did not feel satisfied with my description of the events; I would then immediately plunge myself in deep meditation ...Then the correct image would arise...That is why in spite of the big gap in the physical sense, this story remains so fresh and lifelike in my mind as if it happened just now.

In each of his *Kathamrita* entries, M records the date, time and place of the conversation. The title *Kathamrita*, literally "nectarine words" was inspired by verse 10.31.9 from the Vaishnava text, the *Bhagavata Purana*. Both Ramakrishna's wife, Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda later testified to Mahendranath's faithfulness to Ramakrishna's words. The first four volumes were published in 1902, 1904, 1908 and 1910 respectively and the fifth volume in 1932, delayed because of M's health problems. The *Kathamrita* contains the conversations of Ramakrishna from 19/26 February 1882 to 24 April 1886, during M's visits. The *Kathamrita* is regarded as a Bengali classic and revered among the followers as a sacred scripture. Famous translations of *Kathamrita* include works by Swami Nikhilananda(1942), and Dharma Pal Gupta.

— Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

## Manalsu

The Manalsu is a small river flowing from a bowl of snowcapped mountains forming the Beas River in Manali, Himachal Pradesh, India.



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## Marathi

“The Marathi people or Maharashtrais are an Indo-Aryan ethnic group that inhabits the Maharashtra region and state of western India. Their language, Marathi, is part of the southern group of Indo-Aryan languages. Although its history goes back more than two millennia, the community came to prominence when Maratha warriors under Shivaji established the Maratha Empire in the 17th century.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Max Muller



“Max Müller is a Vedantist of Vedantists. He has, indeed, caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta, in the midst of all its settings of harmonies and discords – the one light that lightens the sects and creeds of the world, the Vedanta, the one principle of which all religions are only applications.”

– Swami Vivekananda, in "On Professor Max Müller"

“It is necessary that we too should see the beam in our own eyes, and learn to distinguish between the Christianity of the nineteenth century and the religion of Christ. If we find that the Christianity of the nineteenth century does not win as

many hearts in India and China as it ought, let us remember that it was the Christianity of the first century in all its dogmatic simplicity, but with its overpowering love of God and man, that conquered the world and superseded religions and philosophies, more difficult to conquer than the religious and philosophical systems of Hindus and Buddhists. If we can teach something to the Brahmans in reading with them their sacred hymns, they too can teach us something when reading with us the gospel of Christ. Never shall I forget the deep dependency of a Hindu convert, a real martyr to his faith, who had pictured to himself from the pages of the New Testament what a Christian country must be, and who when he came to Europe found everything so different from what he had imagined in his lonely meditations at Benares!”

– Max Muller

## Maya

Literally, “that which does not exist.” This is the sanskrit word for “illusion,” and is sometimes used to describe the world or the what the world seems to be when seen by a person under the influence of *avidya*.

Some of the analogies traditionally used to define maya are “a snake seen in a rope” or a mirage of water in the desert.



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### Related Glossary Terms

Avidya

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# Mohammedan

A follower of the Way of Islam and the Prophet Mohammed.



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## Mother Kumari's

God in the form of the Virgin Divine Mother.

“According to Hindu legend, Kanya Devi, an Avatar of Parvati, was to marry Siva, but as he failed to show up on his wedding day, the rice and other grains meant for the wedding feast remained uncooked and remain unused thereafter. As the legend goes, the uncooked grains turned into stones as time went by. Some believe that the small stones on the shore today, which look like rice, are indeed grains from the wedding that was never solemnized. Kanya Devi is now considered a virgin goddess who blesses pilgrims and tourists who flock the town.

This is one of the rare temples in India where Devi (Mother Goddess) is worshipped as a child. The rites and rituals are done in Kerala Namboothiri method, so there will be slight difference in the way of worship compared to the temples of the nearby region. The deity is the goddess of Sanyasa as per Hindu religion. So the people everywhere from India who desire to devote their life as Sannyasins come here and takes the deeksha[initiation of the Goddess].

Swami Vivekananda came in this temple as directed by his Guru Shri Ramakrishna Praramahamsa, being a Sannyasin. The temple is very old and is mentioned in ancient Sanskrit literatures. The sands of sea is multi colored and is likened to a mythological story. The goddess is believed to be the one who removes the rigidity of our mind, devotees usually feel the tears in their eyes or even inside their mind when they pray to the goddess in deep contemplation. The prayers are done by women for marriage, the goddess is considered as Shri Krishna's sister. There is a shrine for Kalabhairava in the temple. The temple is one of the Shakti Peethas, it is said that the back bone area of Sati Devi's corpse fell here.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia





## Naturopathy

A Naturopath is a health practitioner who applies natural therapies. Her/his spectrum comprises far more than fasting, nutrition, water, and exercise; it includes approved natural healing practices such as Homeopathy, Acupuncture, and Herbal Medicine, as well as the use of modern methods like Bio-Resonance, Ozone-Therapy, and Colon Hydrotherapy.

At a time when modern technology, environmental pollution, poor diet, and stress play a significant role in the degradation of health, a Naturopath's ability to apply natural methods of healing is of considerable importance. Frequently, a Naturopath is the last resort in a patient's long search for health. Providing personalized care to each patient, the naturopath sees humankind as a holistic unity of body, mind, and spirit.

Naturopathy focuses on naturally occurring substances, minimally invasive methods, and encouragement of natural healing. Naturopaths generally favor an intuitive and vitalistic conception of the body, and complete rejection of biomedicine and modern science is common. Prevention through stress reduction and a healthy diet and lifestyle is emphasized, and pharmaceutical drugs, ionizing radiation, and surgery are generally minimized. The tenet of naturopathic practice is self-described by six core values:

1. First, do no harm; provide the most effective health care available with the least risk to patients at all times .
2. Recognize, respect and promote the self-healing power of nature inherent in each individual human being. .
3. Identify and remove the causes of illness, rather than eliminate or suppress symptoms .
4. Educate, inspire rational hope and encourage self-responsibility for health (Doctor as Teacher).
5. Treat each person by considering all individual health factors and influences. (Treat the Whole Person).
6. Emphasize the condition of health to promote well-being and to prevent diseases for the individual, each community and our world. (Health Promotion, the Best Prevention)

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Nivedita



Sister Nivedita; born Margaret Elizabeth Noble; 28 October 1867 – 13 October 1911) was a Scots-Irish social worker, author, teacher and a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She spent her childhood and early days of her youth in Ireland. From her father, from her college professor etc. she learned many valuable lessons like – service to mankind is the true service to God. She worked as school teacher and later also opened a school. She was committed to marry a Welsh youth who died soon after engagement.

Sister Nivedita met Swami Vivekananda in 1895 in London and travelled to Calcutta, India (present-day Kolkata) in 1898. Swami

Vivekananda gave her the name Nivedita (meaning "Dedicated to God") when he initiated her into the vow of Brahmacharya on 25 March 1898. In November 1898, she opened a girls' school in Bagbazar area of Calcutta. She wanted to educate those girls who were deprived of even basic education. During the plague epidemic in Calcutta in 1899 Nivedita nursed and took care of the poor patients.

Nivedita had close associations with the newly established Ramakrishna Mission. However, because of her active contribution in the field of Indian Nationalism, she had to publicly dissociate herself from the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission under the then president Swami Brahmananda. She was very intimate with Sarada Devi, the spiritual consort of Ramakrishna and one of the major influences behind Ramakrishna Mission and also with all brother disciples of Swami Vivekananda. She died on 13 October 1911 in Darjeeling. Her epitaph reads, "Here reposes Sister Nivedita who gave her all to India."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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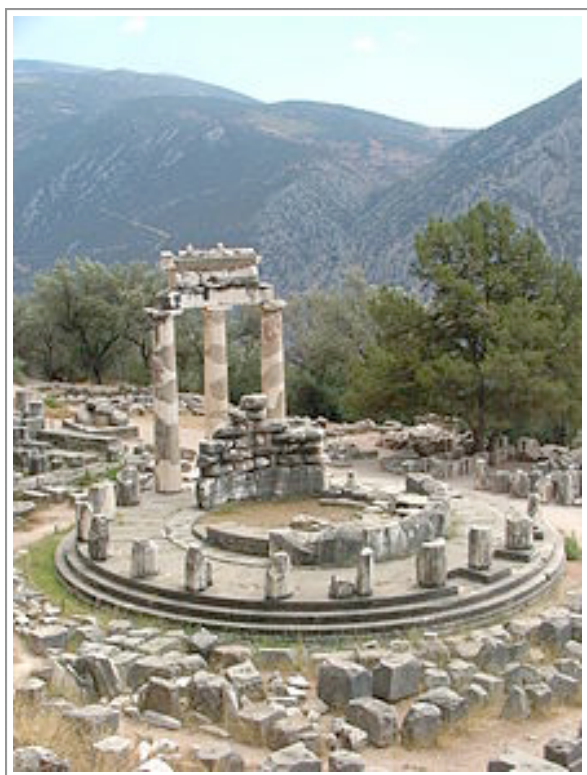
## Oracle at Delphi

“Delphi is perhaps best known for the oracle at the sanctuary that was dedicated to Apollo during the classical period. According to Aeschylus in the prologue of the Eumenides, it had origins in prehistoric times and the worship of Gaia. In the last quarter of the 8th century BC there is a steady increase in artifacts found at the settlement site in Delphi, which was a new, post-Mycenaean settlement of the late 9th century. Pottery and bronze work as well as tripod dedications continue in a steady stream, in comparison to Olympia. Neither the range of objects nor the presence of prestigious dedications proves that Delphi was a focus of attention for a wide range of worshippers, but the large quantity of high value goods, found in no other mainland sanctuary, certainly encourages that view.

Apollo spoke through his oracle: the sibyl or priestess of the oracle at Delphi was known as the Pythia; she had to be an older woman of blameless life chosen from among the peasants of the area. She sat on a tripod seat over an opening in the earth. When Apollo slew Python, its body fell into this fissure, according to legend, and fumes arose from its decomposing body. Intoxicated by the vapors, the sibyl would fall into a trance, allowing Apollo to possess her spirit. In this state she prophesied. It has been speculated that a gas high in ethylene, known to produce violent trances, came out of this opening, though this theory remains debatable.

While in a trance the Pythia "raved" – probably a form of ecstatic speech – and her ravings were "translated" by the priests of the temple into elegant hexameters. People consulted the Delphic oracle on everything from important matters of public policy to personal affairs.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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# Paramahamsa

Literally, Supreme (Para), Swan (Hamsa). Paramahamsa refers to a type of Realizer who is possessed of a supreme state of discrimination. The age of the paramahamsa is related to the following story:

A swan when presented with a mixture of milk and water is able to separate the milk and leave the water. The way it does this is by secreting an enzyme from its mouth (Viveka) which curdles the milk. Then the swan eats the curds and leaves the water behind.

This is an analogy for how the paramahamsa when confronted by the qualities of the world, leaves behind all that is not God.

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## Related Glossary Terms

Brahma, Paramahamsa Yogananda, Realization

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## Paramahansa Yogananda



“Let me be Christian, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem or Sufi: I care not what my religion, my race, my creed, or my color be, if only I can win my way to Thee! Let me travel the royal road of realization which leads to Thee. I care not what bypaths of religion I follow, if at last I can travel by the one highway of common realization, which straightway leads to Thee.”

– Paramahansa Yogananda

“Paramahansa Yogananda (January 5, 1893 – March 7, 1952), born Mukunda Lal Ghosh, was an Indian yogi and guru who introduced millions of westerners to the teachings of meditation and Kriya Yoga through his book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

In 1920, Yogananda went to the United States aboard the ship City of Sparta, as India's delegate to an International Congress of Religious Liberals convening in Boston. That same year he founded the Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) to disseminate worldwide his teachings on India's ancient practices and philosophy of Yoga and its tradition of meditation. For the next several years, he lectured and taught on the East coast and in 1924 embarked on a cross-continental speaking tour. Thousands came to his lectures. During this time he attracted a number of celebrity followers, including soprano Amelita Galli-Curci, tenor Vladimir Rosing and Clara Clemens Gabrilowitsch, the daughter of Mark Twain. The following year, he established an international center for Self-Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles, California, which became the spiritual and administrative heart of his growing work. Yogananda was the first Hindu teacher of yoga to spend a major portion of his life in America. He lived there from 1920–1952, interrupted by an extended trip abroad in 1935–1936 which was mainly to visit his guru in India though he undertook visits to other living western saints like Therese Neumann the stigmatist of Konnesreuth and places of spiritual significance en route.

In 1935, he returned to India to visit Yukteswar and to help establish his Yogoda Satsanga work in India. During this visit, as told in his autobiography, he met with Mahatma Gandhi, the Bengali saint Anandamoyi Ma, renowned physicist Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman, and several disciples of Yukteswar's guru Lahiri Mahasaya.<sup>[3]</sup> While in India, Yukteswar gave Yogananda the monastic title of Paramahansa. Paramahansa means "supreme swan" and is a title indicating the highest spiritual attainment. In 1936, while Yogananda was visiting Calcutta, Yukteswar died in the town of Puri.

After returning to America, Yogananda continued to lecture, write, and establish churches in southern California. He took up residence at the SRF hermitage in Encinitas, California which was a surprise gift from his disciple Rajarsi Janakananda. It was while at this hermitage that Yogananda wrote his famous *Autobiography of a Yogi* and other writings plus created an "enduring foundation for the spiritual and humanitarian work of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India."

The last four years of his life were spent primarily in seclusion with some of his inner circle of disciples at his desert ashram in Twenty-nine Palms in order to finish his writings and to finish revising books, articles and Lessons written previously over the years. During this period he gave few interviews and public lectures. He told his close disciples, “I can do much more now to reach others with my pen.”

In the days leading up to his death, he began hinting that it was time for him to leave the world On March 7, 1952, he attended a dinner for the visiting Indian Ambassador to the U.S., Binay Ranjan Sen, and his wife at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. At the conclusion of the banquet Yogananda spoke of India and America, their contributions to world peace and human progress, and their future cooperation, expressing his hope for a "United World" that would combine the best qualities of "efficient America" and "spiritual India." According to an eyewitness - Daya Mata, a direct disciple of Yogananda, who was head of Self-Realization Fellowship from 1955–2010, as Yogananda ended his speech, he read from his poem *My India*, concluding with the words "Where Ganges, woods, Himalayan caves, and men dream God—I am hallowed; my body touched that sod." "As he uttered these words, he lifted his eyes to the Kutasha center (the Ajna Chakra), and his body slumped to the floor" Followers say that he entered mahasamadhi. The official cause of death was heart failure.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

## Practical Vedanta

The “Practical Vedanta” revealed in the person and teachings of Vivekananda, brought a different way of looking at Vedanta, the world and religion to both the West and to India. Vivekananda attempted to free the principles of Vedanta from their cultural roots in Hinduism, much like applying the principle of gravity without insisting on any necessary linkage of gravity to Isaac Newton or the English. He taught the universal principles of the Truth of Vedanta, the same principles which he saw in every religion in the world. He taught that Vedanta carries the essence of the Hindu religion which was no different from the essence of any other religion.

The following is one definition of Vedanta put forth by Swami Vivekananda:

“The truth is one and universal, it cannot be limited to any country or race or individual. All religions of the world express the same truth in different languages and in different ways. Just as the sun is no one's property, so also truth is not confined to one particular religion or philosophy. No one can say that the sun is a Christian sun or a Hindu sun or Buddhist sun or a Jewish sun or an Islamic sun. Vedanta, rather, promulgates the harmony of religions. As different rivers originate from different sources but mingle in the ocean, losing their names and forms, so all the various religious paths that human beings take, through different tendencies, lead to God, or the truth . . . the three basic scriptures, evolving for over five thousand years, of Vedanta are, the Upanishads (the revealed truths), the Brahma sutras (the reasoned truths), and the *Bhagavad Gita* (the practical truths)... how does one manifest divinity within? Vedanta suggests four yogas (a) karma yoga -- the path of unselfish action; (b) jnana yoga -- the path of knowledge; (c) raja yoga -- the path of meditation; and (d) bhakti yoga -- the path of devotion. The word yoga signifies the union of the individual soul with the universal truth(s).”

– Swami Vivekananda

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### Related Glossary Terms

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## Professor Henry Wright



“John Henry Wright (February 4, 1852 – November 25, 1908) was an American classical scholar born at Urumiah (Rezaieh), Persia. He earned his Bachelors (1873) and Masters (1876) at Darmouth College, New Hampshire. After junior appointments (first in Ohio and then at Dartmouth) in 1886 he joined Johns Hopkins as a professor of classical philology. In 1887, he became a professor of Greek at Harvard, where, from 1895 to 1908, he was also Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences . . .

On 25 August 1893, at Boston, Vivekananda met Wright for the first time. Wright was amazed by Vivekananda's profound knowledge and urged him to attend the upcoming Parliament as a speaker. He was so much astonished that he invited Vivekananda to stay in his house as a guest. From 25 August to 27 August 1893, Vivekananda stayed at Wright's house at 8 Arlington Street.

When Vivekananda told Wright that he did not have any credential or bona fide to attend the Parliament he reportedly told him— "To ask you, Swami, for your credentials is like asking the sun about its right to shine." Then Wright himself wrote a letter of introduction to the chairman of the Parliament of the World's Religion and suggested to him to invite Vivekananda as a speaker stating – "Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together."

Wright also learned that Vivekananda did not have enough money to buy a railway ticket, so, he bought him a railway ticket too. Even after the conclusion of the Parliament, they kept in touch with each other through correspondence. Vivekananda remained ever thankful to Wright for his help and kindness. In a letter written on 18 June 1894, Vivekananda addressed Wright as brother and wrote – "Stout hearts like yours are not common, my brother. This is a queer place – this world of ours. On the whole I am very very thankful to the Lord for the amount of kindness I have received at the hands of the people of this country – I, a complete stranger here without even 'credentials'. Everything works for the best.”

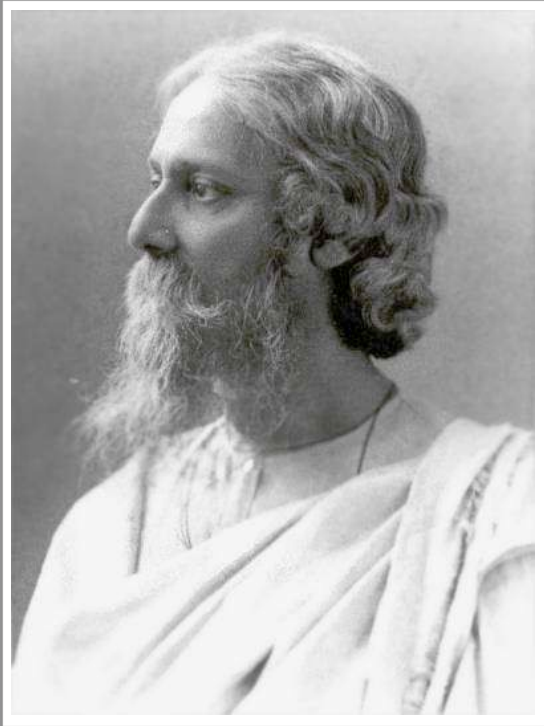
– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Dr. Barrows

## Rabindranath Tagore



Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the Upanishads. He was educated at home; and although at seventeen he was sent to England for formal schooling, he did not finish his studies there. In his mature years, in addition to his many-sided literary activities, he managed the family estates, a project which brought him into close touch with common humanity and increased his interest in social re-

forms. He also started an experimental school at Shantiniketan where he tried his Upanishadic ideals of education. From time to time he participated in the Indian nationalist movement, though in his own non-sentimental and visionary way; and Gandhi, the political father of modern India, was his devoted friend. Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915, but within a few years he resigned the honor as a protest against British policies in India.

Tagore had early success as a writer in his native Bengal. With his translations of some of his poems he became rapidly known in the West. In fact his fame attained a luminous height, taking him across continents on lecture tours and tours of friendship. For the world he became the voice of India's spiritual heritage; and for India, especially for Bengal, he became a great living institution.

He received The Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913

– From Nobel Lectures, Literature 1901-1967, Editor Horst Frenz, Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1969

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### Related Glossary Terms

Bengali Renaissance

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## Ralph Waldo Emerson



“Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) was an American essayist, lecturer, and poet, who led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society. He disseminated his thoughts through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public lectures across the United States.

Emerson gradually moved away from the religious and social beliefs of his contemporaries, formulating and expressing the philosophy of Transcendentalism in his 1836 essay, *Nature*. Following this ground-breaking work, he gave a speech entitled "The American Scholar" in 1837, which Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. considered to be America's "Intellectual Declaration of Independence."

Emerson wrote on a number of subjects, never espousing fixed philosophical tenets, but developing certain ideas such as individuality, freedom, the ability for humankind to realize almost anything, and the relationship between the soul and the surrounding world. Emerson's "nature" was more philosophical than naturalistic: "Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul."

His essays remain among the linchpins of American thinking and his work has greatly influenced the thinkers, writers and poets that have followed him. When asked to sum up his work, he said his central doctrine was "the infinitude of the private man." Emerson is also well known as a mentor and friend of fellow Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Arjuna, Henry David Thoreau, Ram Mohun Roy, Transcendentalists, Walden, Walden Pond

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## Ram Mohun Roy



“Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), a Hindu monotheist, who made early translations of Vedic scriptures into English, co-founded the Calcutta Unitarian Society, and later founded the Brahmo Samaj. He successfully campaigned against sati, the practice of burning widows. He sought to integrate Western culture with the best features of his own country's traditions. He promoted a rational, ethical, non-authoritarian, this-worldly, and social-reform Hinduism. Thus he has been called the "Father of Modern India." His writings sparked interest among British and American Unitarians, inspired Unitarian missionary work in India, and influenced the Transcendentalists . . .

Roy's poetic English translations of Vedic literature later fired the oracular imaginations of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. His greatest legacy was the dream of a universal religion based on the belief of a Divine Unity. Rabindranath Tagore declared that Roy "realized that a bond of spiritual unity links the whole of mankind."

“British and American Unitarians first heard of Roy as a great Hindu monotheist in 1818. The following year his Abridgment of the Vedanta and Upanishad translations and commentaries were reviewed in the British Unitarian Monthly Repository. He corresponded with Thomas Belsham, Harriet Martineau, Jeremy Bentham, and Lant Carpenter. News of the Precepts controversy and of Roy's conversion of Adam arrived in America in 1822. Meanwhile, in Calcutta, Roy published William Ellery Channing's landmark sermon, "Unitarian Christianity," together with a critical review.

In 1824 Roy replied to a letter from Harvard Professor Henry Ware, Sr., who had asked "Whether it be desirable that the inhabitants of India should be converted to Christianity?" in his answer Roy hinted otherwise, saying that "I am led to believe, from reason, what is set forth in scripture, that 'in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him,' in whatever form of worship he may have been taught to glorify God."”

Sumit Chanda said in his 2003 address at Roy's tomb,

“He (Roy) was the original Multiculturalist ... He perceived that Universal Truth was expressed in different ways. There were different nuances in different cultural, geographical and historical settings. From the Hindu scripture, Vedanta, he learnt about Brahma, the one Supreme Being who is the source and sustainer of the universe. In Islam, he admired the theme of the equality of man. In Christianity, he found the ethical and social guidance appealing.”

– From the biography of Ram Mohun Roy, written by Marilyn Richards and Peter Hughes in the Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography, an online resource of the Unitarian Universalist History & Heritage Society.

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### Related Glossary Terms

Bengali Renaissance, Brahmo Samaj, Henry David Thoreau, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sati, Transcendentalists

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## Ram-Bhaktis

Ram Bhakti's are the devotees of Rama in one or another of his forms. One of the most popular of his forms to which devotees have been attracted is that of Ram in the form of a baby. It was to this form that Ramakrishna became a bhakti or devotee.

We have a similar cult of devotees that gathered around the different forms of Jesus, for instance, the baby Jesus, around whom a great cult of devotion has occurred in the Western world.



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### Related Glossary Terms

Ramayana

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## Rama worships Shiva in Rameswaram

Rameshwaram, an island off the coast of the state of Tamil Nadu in mainland India, is home to one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. Named Ramalingam, the Linga was worshipped by Shri Rama before he left for Lanka to wage a war against Ravana to free Mata Sita, who had been held captive by the demon king.

According to a legend, Lord Rama sent Hanuman to Varanasi (Kashi) to bring a Linga so that he could worship Lord Shiva before leaving for Lanka. However, soon after sending Hanuman to Kashi, Rama, anticipating that his prayer would get delayed, made a small linga of sand from the sea shore and worshipped it.

When Hanuman returned with a Linga from Kashi, he was upset to see Shri Rama already offering prayers. In a fit of rage, childlike Hanuman tried to destroy the Linga made of sand with his tail.

But his might couldn't work against Lord Shiva, who had been invoked by Shri Rama in the Linga. The sand structure soon hardened and turned into stone and Hanuman fell a few feet away owing to the sheer force.

In order to pacify his dearest devotee's anger, Lord Rama applied Kumkuma (sindoor) and ghee all over his body. On seeing Lord Rama's compassion, Hanuman cooled down.

And to ensure Hanuman's efforts don't go in vain, Rama also worshipped the Linga brought by him from Kashi.

Hence in the Ramanathaswamy Temple in Rameshwaram, the Linga (Vishwalingam) brought by Hanuman is worshipped before the RamaLingam even today.



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### Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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## Ramakrishna Math



“Ramakrishna Math is a monastic organization for men brought into existence by Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886), the great 19th century saint of Bengal who is regarded as the Prophet of the Modern Age.

The motto of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission is:

Atmano mokshartham jagad hitaya cha,

"For one's own salvation, and for the welfare of the world.”

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are twin organizations which form the core of a worldwide spiritual movement (known as Ramakrishna Movement or Vedanta Movement), which aims at the harmony of religions, harmony of the East and the West, harmony of the ancient and the modern, spiritual fulfillment, all-round development of human faculties, social equality, and peace for all humanity, without any distinctions of creed, caste, race or nationality.

The main goals and objectives of these twin organizations, based on the principles of Practical Vedanta, are:

To spread the idea of the potential divinity of every being and how to manifest it through every action and thought.

To make all possible attempts to alleviate human suffering by spreading education, rendering medical service, extending help to villagers through rural development centers, etc.

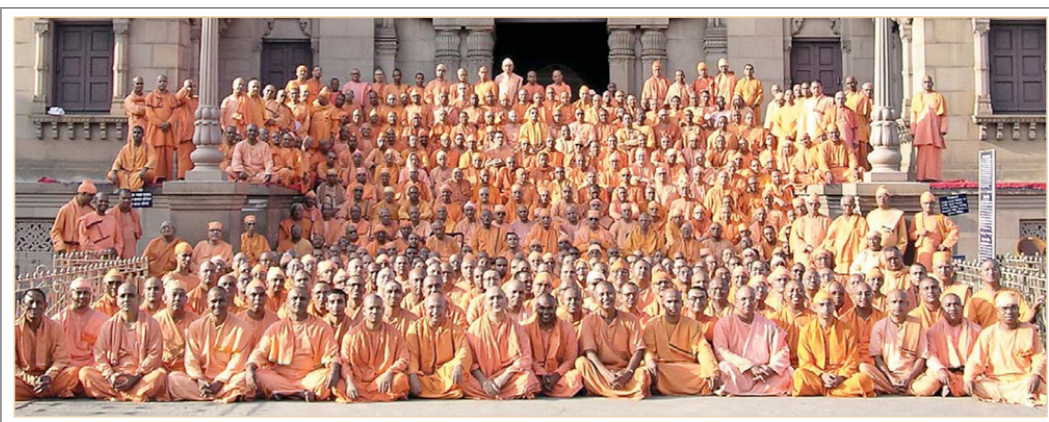
To treat all work as worship, and service to man as service to God.

To work for the all-round welfare of humanity, especially for the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden.

To develop harmonious personalities by the combined practice of Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma.

To spread the idea of harmony of religions based on Sri Ramakrishna's experience that all religions lead to the realization of the same Reality known by different names in different religions. The Mission honors and reveres the founders of all world religions such as Buddha, Christ and Mohammed.”

– Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission



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### Related Glossary Terms

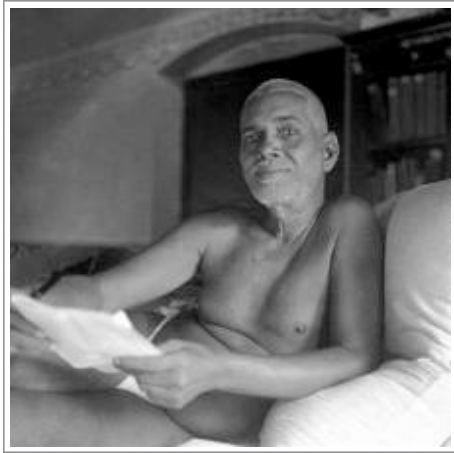
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## Ramana Maharshi



"Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950) is widely acknowledged as one of the outstanding Indian gurus of modern times. He was born as Venkataraman Iyer, in Tiruchuli, Tamil Nadu (South India).

At the age of sixteen, Venkataraman lost his sense of individual selfhood, an awakening which he later recognized as enlightenment. A few weeks thereafter he traveled to the holy mountain Arunachala, at Tiruvannamalai, where he remained for the rest of his life.

His first years were spent in solitude, but his stillness and his appearance as a sannyasin soon attracted devotees. In later years, he responded to questions, but always insisted that silence was the purest teaching. His verbal teachings flowed from his own understanding of Reality. In later years, a community grew up around him, where he was available twenty-four hours a day to visitors. Though worshipped by thousands, he never allowed anyone to treat him as special, or receive private gifts. He treated all with equal respect. Since the 1930s, his teachings have also been popularized in the west.

Venkataraman was renamed Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi by one of his earliest followers, Ganapati Muni. This was the name he became known by to the world.

In response to questions on self-liberation and the classic texts on Yoga and Vedanta, Ramana recommended self-enquiry as the principal way to awaken to the "I-I," realizing the Self and attaining liberation. He also recommended Bhakti, and gave his approval to a variety of paths and practices."

– Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission

Below is Ramana Maharishi's story of his enlightenment:

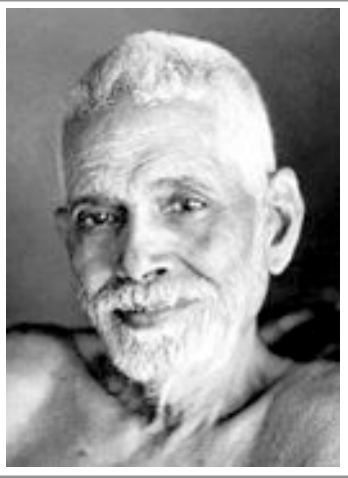
"It was in 1896, about 6 weeks before I left Madurai for good (to go to Tiruvannamalai-Arunachala) that this great change in my life took place. I was sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I seldom had any sickness and on that day there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it nor was there any urge in me to find out whether there was any account for the fear. I just felt I was going to die and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor or any elders or friends. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there. The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: 'Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' And at once I dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out still as though rigor mortis has set in, and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, and that neither the word 'I' nor any word could be uttered. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of the body, am I dead? Is the body I? It is silent and inert, but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of I within me, apart from it. So I am the Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit.' All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truths which I perceived directly almost without thought process. I was something real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with the body was centered on that I. From that moment onwards, the "I" or Self focused attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death vanished once and for all. The ego was lost in the flood of Self-awareness. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time. Other thought might come and go like the various notes of music, but the I continued like the fundamental sruti note ["that which is heard" i.e. the Vedas and Upanishads] a note which underlies and blends with all other notes."

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### Related Glossary Terms

Sages, Samadhi

## Ramana Maharshi Ashram



“Sri Ramana Ashram, also known as Sri Ramanasramam, is the ashram which was home to modern sage and Advaita Vedanta philosopher Ramana Maharshi from 1922 until his death in 1950. It is situated at the foot of the Arunachala hill, to the west of Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, where thousands of seekers flocked to be in his presence. His samadhi shrine continues to attract devotees from all over the world.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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## Ramayana



*As long as mountain ranges stand  
And rivers flow upon the earth  
So long will this Ramayana  
Survive upon the lips of men”*

– Lord Brahma to the Sage Valmiki  
who wrote the first version of the Ra-  
mayana

“The Ramayana is one of the great Hindu epics. It is ascribed to the Hindu sage Valmiki and forms an important part of the Hindu literature (smṛti), considered to be itihāsa (refers to purvavritta, i.e. events of the past). The Ramayana is one of the two great epics of Hinduism, the other being the Mahabharata. It depicts the duties of relationships, portraying ideal characters like the ideal

father, ideal servant, the ideal brother, the ideal wife and the ideal king. The Ramayana tells the story of Rama (an Avatar of the Hindu Supreme-God Vishnu), whose wife Sita is abducted by the king of Ravan. Thematically, the Ramayana explores human values and the concept of dharma.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Avatar, Lord Rama, Ram-Bhaktis, Rameswaram, Treta Yuga, Vedic literature of India

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## Rameswaram



Above: Rama and Lakshman watching the monkey army building the stone bridge to Sri Lanka. One monkey is writing the name of God – ‘Rama’ on the stones to make them float upon the water

“According to Hindu mythology, this is the place where the Hindu Avatar Rama built a bridge, across the sea to Lanka to rescue his wife Sita from her abductor, the demon Ravana.

The Ramanathaswamy Temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva is located at the centre of the town and is closely associated with Rama. The temple along with the town is considered a holy pilgrimage site for both Shaivites and Vaishnavites.”

–Wikipedia

Below: A picture from space of the submerged land bridge that used to extend from Sri Lanka to India.



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### Related Glossary Terms

Lord Rama, Ramayana

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## Reality

To Realize the nature of Reality is Realization of God since in many Indian religious sects, God and Reality are the same. When the Realizer Realizes Reality that is what I refer to as **Realization**.

Throughout this story I have capitalized the words: **Realization**, **Realized**, **Reality** and **Realizer**. The Capitalization of these four words is a literary device (Capitalization). I am using it to indicate something beyond what can be imagined or thought and indicate that the type of knowledge referred to here is unique and distinct.

The fundamental operating principle of the Vedic tradition is: whatever you meditate on, you become; in this way, the Realizer becomes the Realization. In the highest schools of the Indian tradition, subject and object, Realizer and what is Realized are ultimately one and the same or not two (advaita).

These four words (**Realizer**, **Realization**, **Reality**, **Realized**) and the different ways they can be interpreted, are found at the root of the varying philosophies of India as well as all the many religions and their sects. The possible meanings of these few words are spokes that turn round the center of the various possible understandings about religion and God. Much is embodied in these few words and the interpretations are many. Perhaps it all comes down to the different ways one can answer the following question: “Who is Realizing What?”

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### Related Glossary Terms

God-Realization, God-Realizer, Identification, Realization, Realized, Realizer, Samadhi

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### Related Glossary Terms

Advaita, Advaita Vedanta, God-Realization, God-Realizer, Identification, Paramahansa, Reality, Realized, Realizer, Samadhi

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### Related Glossary Terms

God-Realization, God-Realizer, Identification, Reality, Realization, Realizer, Samadhi

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### Related Glossary Terms

Ek Nath, God-Realization, God-Realizer, Identification, Reality, Realization, Realized, Samadhi

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# Reincarnation

Reincarnation is the religious or philosophical concept that the soul or spirit, after biological death, begins a new life in a new body that may be human, animal or spiritual depending on the moral quality of the previous life's actions. This doctrine is a central tenet of the Indian religions.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



## Related Glossary Terms

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## Rig Veda

“The Rigveda is an ancient Indian sacred collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns. It is counted among the four canonical sacred texts (śruti) of Hinduism known as the Vedas. Some of its verses are still recited as Hindu prayers, at religious functions and other occasions, putting these among the world's oldest religious texts in continued use. The Rigveda contains several mythological and poetical accounts of the origin of the world, hymns praising the gods, and ancient prayers for life, prosperity, etc.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Upanishads, Vedanta, Vedic literature of India

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## Rishis

The term Rishi originates from the ancient pre-Hindu culture of the Indus region earth-based cultures. Rishis were the scribes of the large body of nature hymns and spiritual science known as the Vedas.

A Rishi (or rishika, when referring to female rishis) is a sage of insight, one who practices self-cultivation as a Yogini or Yogi and attains asamprajñata Samadhi. A person through Yogic concentration first attains samprajñata samadhi (realisation of the independence of soul and body, Atma and Prakriti) and with continued effort attains asamprajñata samadhi (realisation of oneness with all). The Rishi's soul is interpreted as imbibing wisdom directly from the universal source. Vedic hymns are sermons conceived as delivered by divine inspiration by the rishis.

According to the term in popular culture, a Rishi will never contradict another Rishi due to their knowledge being directly revealed from God.

Seven Rishis (the Saptarshi) are often mentioned in the Brahmanas and later works as typical representatives of the pre-historic or mythical period, their names are Uddālaka Āruni (also called Gautama), Bharadvaja, Vishvamitra, Jamadagni, Vashista, Kashyapa, and Atri. Daksha, Bhrigu and Nārada were also added to the saptarshis rishis in Āshvalāyana-Shrauta-Sutra.

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## Rohtang Pass

“Rohtang Pass (lit: pile of corpses) due to people dying in bad weather trying to cross the pass) (altitude 3,978 m or 13,051 ft), is a high mountain pass on the eastern Pir Panjal Range of the Himalayas around 51 km (32 mi) from Manali. It connects the Kullu Valley with the Lahaul and Spiti Valleys of Himachal Pradesh, India.

This pass is an ancient trade route between the people on either side of Pir Panjal. This must have been the oldest and most frequented pass in the region, or the fact that it is the main pass leading from one cultural region (India-Hindu) to another, quite different one (Tibet-Buddhist), to the north.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

Picture Below: View from the top of the Rohtang Pass looking into Ladakh



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### Related Glossary Terms

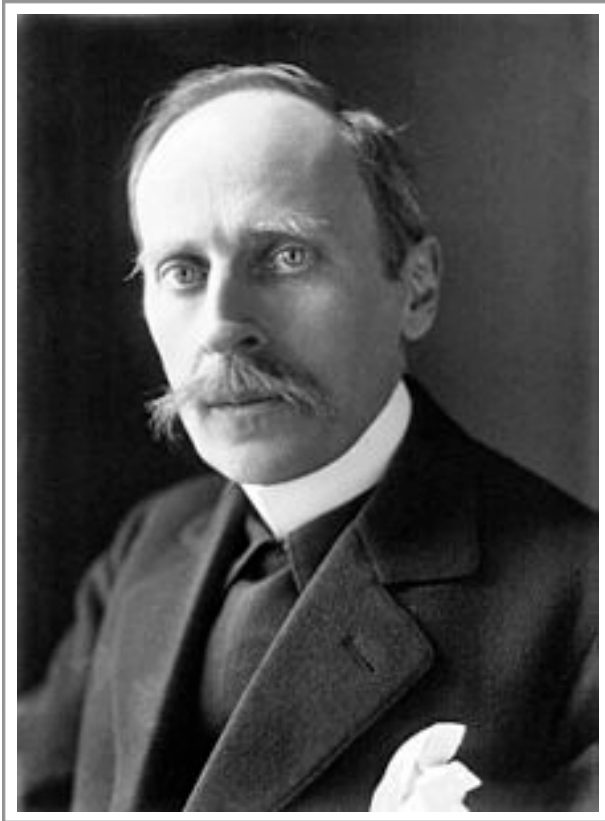
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## Romain Rolland



Romain Rolland (1866–1944) was a French dramatist, novelist, essayist, art historian and mystic who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1915 "as a tribute to the lofty idealism of his literary production and to the sympathy and love of truth with which he has described different types of human beings."

"If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India....For more than 30 centuries, the tree of vision, with all its thousand branches and their millions of twigs, has sprung from this torrid land, the burning womb of the Gods. It renews itself tirelessly showing no signs of decay." From Romain Rolland's book – *Life of Ramakrishna*.

Rolland was very interested in India and wrote a book on Gandhi (*Above the Battle*, 1916) as well as a book on Vivekananda: *Life of Vivekananda*, 1930)

Herman Hesse dedicated his classic book – *Siddhartha*, to "Romain Rolland my dear friend"

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Sadhana

The term "sādhana" means spiritual exertion towards an intended person undertaking such a practice is known as a sādhu or a sādha. The sādhana is to attain some level of spiritual realization, which can be enlightenment, pure love of God (prema), liberation (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra), or a particular goal such as the blessings of the deity in the Bhakti traditions.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Sadhu

In Hinduism, sādhu (skt साधु sādhu, "good; good man, holy man") denotes an ascetic, wandering monk. Although the vast majority of sādhus are yogīs, not all yogīs are sādhus. The sādhu is solely dedicated to achieving mokṣa (liberation), the fourth and final aśrama (stage of life), through meditation and contemplation of brahman. Sādhus often wear saffron-colored clothing, symbolizing their sanyāsa (renunciation).

This way of life is open to women; the female form of the word is sādhvī



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### Related Glossary Terms

## Sages

A being who has Realized the Atman or Divine Self and identifies as Atman is not different from Brahman or God. An example would be Maharshi. There are other definitions for this word, each of which has a whole world-view.

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### Related Glossary Terms

Ramana Maharshi

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## **Saints**

A being who has a living relationship with God who is seen as a superior being. Sri Ramakrishna spent part of his sadhana in that disposition. There are many definitions of this word, each of which has a different world-view behind it.

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### **Related Glossary Terms**

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## Salvation

Religions can be divided into two main types: The vast majority offer Salvation to the individual. Here, the individual is not defined in terms of the body, but rather as a soul or spirit. In such traditions, the individual has some experience or attains to some state, purification, level or grace such as 'heaven'. This is the general understanding of what is meant by religion and the underlying principle of the traditions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and most sects of Hinduism.

It is called, "Salvation" of self or soul and is the most common basis for religion and religious thinking in the world. It is so common, it has come to be the only way of considering any religion and what it proposes. However, this is not true. We are simply unaware of any other way of looking at what religion seems to offer.

There is another viewpoint and type of religious tradition and understanding. It is called –Liberation, or freedom, from the idea or assumption of any form of separate self, soul or Self. The traditions of Liberation, hold that the assumption of individuality is illusory, non-necessary, false and is the root of all suffering.

Assumption of self and other is the basis of duality, a condition that is held in Advaita Vedanta to not be the case.

The Upanishad says, "Certainly fear is born of duality." Here lies the root of all suffering. It is the assumption of Self or Soul, which is criticized from the point of view of Liberation.

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## Samadhi

There are different types of samadhi. One is permanent; this is the natural or “sahaj” state. The other two are temporary. In every samadhi, there is no difference between the subject, the object and the process of attention. All samadhis give the appearance of bliss.

**Savikalpa samadhi** is a samadhi “with form.” This is a samadhi that is temporary and involves a form or object of attention. The subject is absorbed in the object of meditation.

**Nirvikalpa samadhi** is a samadhi “without form.” This is a temporary samadhi in which the practitioner goes into a trancelike, motionless state of absorption that can last for days at a time. But, when the person comes out of that state, he is back in the world of duality.

**Sahaj Nirvikalpa Samadhi** is a samadhi without form that is sahaj (natural) and never fades away. It is “open eyed,” including waking dreaming and sleeping, both formless and form, the ever changing world and the eternally existent unchanging being. It is a state of utter paradox and the “Truth” of Reality. According to Ramana Maharshi, "Remaining in the primal, pure natural state without effort is sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi.”

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### Related Glossary Terms

Ramana Maharshi, Reality, Realization, Realized, Realizer, Yoga

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## Samaritan woman

John 4:1-26 Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman



Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[a])

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

"I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

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### Related Glossary Terms

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## Samaritans

“The Samaritans are an ethno-religious group of the Levant, descended from ancient Semitic inhabitants of the region. Religiously the Samaritans are practitioners of Samaritanism, an Abrahamic religion closely related to Judaism. Based on the Samaritan Pentateuch, Samaritans assert their worship is the true religion of ancient Israelites prior to the Babylonian Exile, preserved by those who remained in the Land of Israel, as opposed to Judaism, which they consider a related but altered and amended religion, brought back by those who returned from the Babylonian exile.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## **Sanatana Dharma**

“The term Sanatana Dharma can be roughly translated to mean "the natural, ancient and eternal way."

When translated to English, Sanatana refers to Eternal, Perennial, Never Beginning nor Ending, Abiding, Universal, Ever-present, Unceasing, Natural, and Enduring while Dharma refers to Harmony, The Way, Righteousness, Compassion, Natural Law, Truth, Teachings, Tradition, Philosophy, Order, Universal, Flow, Religion, Wisdom, Divine Conformity, Cosmic Norm, Blueprint, Inherent Nature, Law of Being, and Duty.”

“Sanatana Dharma is the original name of what is now popularly called Hinduism or Hindu Dharma. The terms Hindu and Hinduism are said to be a more recent development, while the more accurate term is Sanatana Dharma. It is a code of ethics, a way of living through which one may achieve moksha (enlightenment, liberation). It is the world's most ancient culture and the socio, spiritual, and religious tradition of almost one billion of the earth's inhabitants. Sanatana Dharma represents much more than just a religion; rather, it provides its followers with an entire worldview, way of life and with a coherent and rational view of reality.”

– Vedic Knowledge Online

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### **Related Glossary Terms**

Dharma, Upanishads, Vedic literature of India

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## Sanitarium



“The Battle Creek Sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan, United States, was a health resort based on the health principles advocated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, most notably associated with John Harvey Kellogg.

As Kellogg put it, they took the word "sanatorium," which back then was defined as an English term designating a health resort for invalid soldiers. "A

change of two letters transformed 'sanatorium' to 'sanitarium', and a new word was added to the English language.”

At the sanitarium, Kellogg explored various treatments for his patients, including diet reform and frequent enemas. He encouraged a low-fat, low-protein diet with an emphasis on whole grains, fiber-rich foods, and most importantly, nuts. Kellogg also recommended a daily intake of fresh air, exercise, and the importance of hygiene. Many of the theories of John Harvey Kellogg were later published in his book *The Road to Wellness*.

Kellogg described the Sanitarium system as "a composite physiologic method comprising hydrotherapy, phototherapy, thermotherapy, electrotherapy, mechanotherapy, dietetics, physical culture, cold-air cure, and health training." To assist with diagnostics and evaluation of therapeutic efficacy, various measures of physiological integrity were utilised to obtain numerous vital coefficients "especially in relation to the integrity and efficiency of the blood, the heart, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, stomach, intestines, brain, nerves and muscles."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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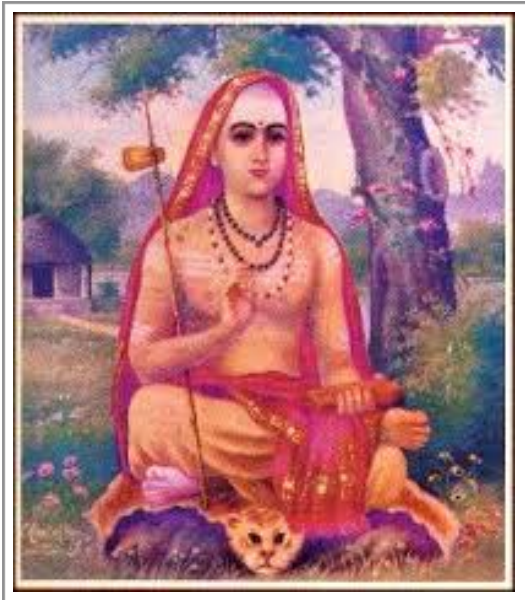
Benard McFadden, John Kellogg, Yogendra Mastamani

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## Sankara



Adi Shankara was a Hindu philosopher from Kaladi in present day Ernakulam district, Kerala, India who consolidated the doctrine of advaita vedānta.

His works in Sanskrit establish the doctrine of advaita, the unity of the ātman and nirguna brahman, brahman without attributes. His works elaborate on ideas found in the Upanishads. He wrote copious commentaries on the Vedic canon (Brahma Sutra, principal upani-

shads and Bhagavad Gita) in support of his thesis.

The main opponent in his work is the Mimamsa school of thought, though he also offers arguments against the views of some other schools like Samkhya and certain schools of Buddhism.

Shankara travelled across the Indian subcontinent to propagate his philosophy through discourses and debates with other thinkers. He established the importance of monastic life as sanctioned in the Upanishads and Brahma Sutra, in a time when the Mimamsa school established strict ritualism and ridiculed monasticism. He is reputed to have founded four mathas ("monasteries"), which helped in the historical development, revival and spread of Advaita Vedanta of which he is known as the greatest revivalist. Adi Shankara is believed to be the organiser of the Dashanami monastic order and the founder of the Shanmata tradition of worship.

– Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia

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## Sannyasi



A Sannyasi is a practitioner of sannyas or renunciation. Sannyas can be a lifestyle as in the case of most of the orange robed sannyasins wandering about India who have chosen sannyas or renunciation as a lifestyle, or, Sannyas can refer to that state of being in which one is spontaneously renounced of all attachments based on a Realized state of freedom and Liberation.

The great Upanishadic saint Ashthavakra said, “for the wise-one, there is nothing to renounce, accept or destroy. In truth, nobody has ever renounced anything. Nobody has anything to really renounce. That which is yours today was somebody else’s yesterday and will again be someone else’s tomorrow.”

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### Related Glossary Terms

Yogis

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## Sannyasins



Sannyasa is the life stage of the renouncer within the Hindu scheme of āśramas. It is considered the topmost and final stage of the ashram systems and is traditionally taken by men or women over fifty or by young monks who wish to renounce worldly and materialistic pursuits and dedicate their lives to spiritual pursuits. People in this stage of life develop vairāgya, or a state of dispassion and detachment from material life, renouncing worldly thoughts and desires in order to spend the remainder of their lives in spiritual contemplation. A member of the sannyasa order is known as a sannyasin (male) or sannyasini (fe-

male).

During the sannyasa phase of life, a person abandons fire, or Agnihotra, allowed to the Grihastha ashram or householder phase of life. People who have entered the sannyasa ashram may choose not to cook, perform fire rituals or take heat from fire. In practice, however, Sannyasis do various services and partake in sacred rituals to set an example for others. Sannyasa focuses only on the self and spirituality and not even the gods (as abandoning fire suggests). Symbolically, a sannyasi casts his physical body into fire by wearing saffron robes when entering this phase, signifying purification of body through fire thus freeing the soul while the body is still alive. Hence, sannyasis are not cremated after death as most Hindus are, but may instead be buried.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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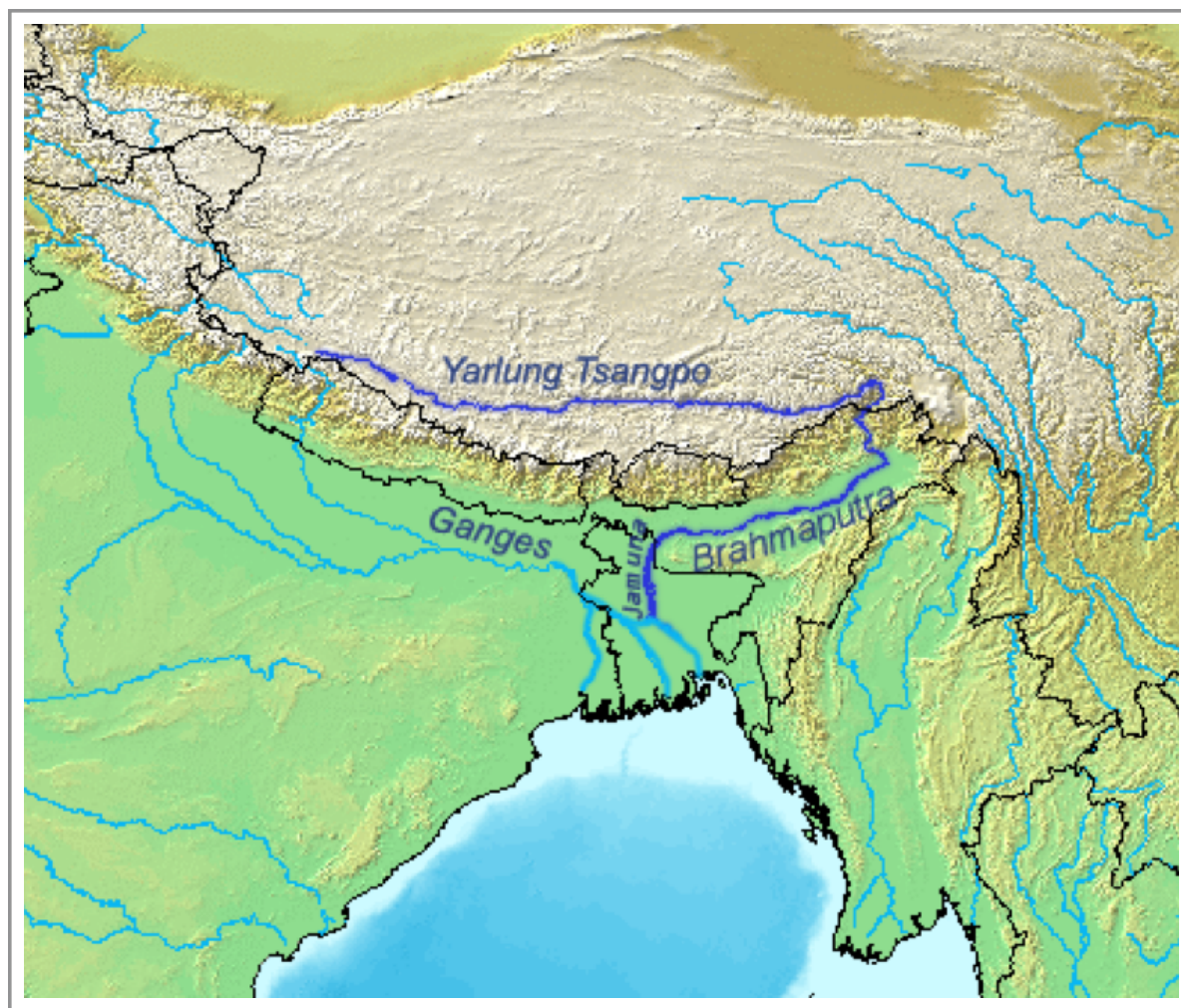
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## Sanpo

The Sanpo is another name for the Brahmaputra River which flows from its headwaters at the foot of Mount Kailash, flowing eastward across Tibet in a river named the Yarlung Tsangpo. Then, it makes a huge horseshoe turn, passing through the deepest river gorge in the world and is called the Brahmaputra after it turns south. Then, it flows around the eastern edge of modern day India, pouring into the Ganges and finally empties into the Bay of Bengal.



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## Sanskrit



Hinduism and Sanskrit are inseparable. The roots of much of Hinduism can be traced to the dawn of Vedic civilization. From the beginning, Vedic thought has mainly been expressed through the medium of the Sanskrit language. Sanskrit, therefore, forms the basis of Hindu civilization.

– Devasthanam, the website of the Sarva Dharma Samiksha Institute

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Upanishads

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## Sarasvati



“The goddess Saraswati is often depicted as a beautiful woman dressed in pure white, often seated on a white lotus, which symbolizes that she is founded in the experience of the absolute truth. Thus, she not only has the knowledge but also the experience of the highest reality. She is mainly associated with the color white, which signifies the purity of true knowledge. Occasionally, however, she is also associated with the color yellow, the color of the flowers of the mustard plant that bloom at the time of her festival in the spring. Unlike the goddess Lakshmi, Saraswati is adorned with simple jewels and gold, representing her preference of

knowledge over worldly material things.

Saraswati is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, arts and science. She is strongly associated with flowing water in her role as a goddess of knowledge. The beautiful human form of Saraswati comes to the fore in this English translation of the Saraswati hymn:

"May Goddess Saraswati, who is fair like the jasmine-colored moon, and whose pure white garland is like frosty dew drops, who is adorned in radiant white attire, on whose beautiful arm rests the veena, and whose throne is a white lotus, who is surrounded and respected by the Gods, protect me. May you fully remove my lethargy, sluggishness, and ignorance.

A hansa / hans or swan is often located next to her feet. The sacred bird, if offered a mixture of milk and water, is said to be able to drink the milk alone. It thus symbolizes discrimination between the good and the bad or the eternal and the evanescent. Due to her association with the bird, Saraswati is also referred to as Hansvahini, which means "she who has a hansa / hans as her vehicle."

She is usually depicted near a flowing river, which may be related to her early history as a river goddess.

Sometimes a peacock is shown beside the goddess. The peacock represents arrogance and pride over its beauty, and by having a peacock as her mount, the goddess teaches not to be concerned with external appearance and to be wise regarding the eternal truth."

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



## Sat Guru

The Sat Guru is the Truth he teaches.

“Satguru or sadguru, means the true guru. However, the term is distinguished from other forms of gurus, such as musical instructors, scriptural teachers, parents, and so on. The satguru is a title given specifically only to an enlightened rishi/sant whose life's purpose is to guide initiated shishya along the spiritual path, the summation of which is the realization of the Self through realization of God, who is omnipresent. A Satguru has some special characteristics that are not found in any other types of Spiritual Guru . . . “

– Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia

Saint Kabir wrote about him in this way:

“He is the real Sadhu, who can reveal the form of the Formless to the vision of these eyes;  
Who teaches the simple way of attaining Him, that is other than rites or ceremonies;  
Who does not make you close the doors, and hold the breath, and renounce the world;  
Who makes you perceive the Supreme Spirit wherever the mind attaches itself;  
Who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities.  
Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind, he keeps the spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments.  
The infinite dwelling of the Infinite Being is everywhere: in earth, water, sky, and air;  
Firm as the thunderbolt, the seat of the seeker is established above the void.  
He who is within is without: I see Him and none else.”

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## Sati



“Sati (the feminine of sat "true;” also called suttee) was a social funeral practice among some Indian communities in which a recently widowed woman would immolate herself on her husband’s funeral pyre. The practice was banned several times, with the current ban begun

in 1829 by the British.

(above) A Sati stone at Manikarnika Ghat in Benaras. It indicates that a woman committed sati here.

The term is derived from the original name of the goddess Sati, also known as Dakshayani, who self-immolated because she was unable to bear her father Daksha's humiliation of her (living) husband Shiva. The term may also be used to refer to the widow. The term sati is now sometimes interpreted as "chaste woman..” Sati appears in both Hindi and Sanskrit texts, where it is synonymous with "good wife;” the term suttee was commonly used by Anglo-Indian English writers.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

(below) A drawing of a Sati from 1800’s



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### Related Glossary Terms

Ram Mohun Roy

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## Self-Realization Fellowship



“Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) is a worldwide spiritual organization founded by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1920 . . . Yogananda's mission for his organization, SRF/YSS, was to reach out to the worldwide community. The society means to foster a spirit of greater understanding and goodwill among the diverse people and nations of the global family and help those of all cultures and creeds to realize and express more fully in their lives the beauty, nobility, and divinity of the human spirit, which mission it intends to fulfill through worldwide service . . .

Central to Paramahansa Yogananda's teachings, which embody a complete philosophy and way of life, are scientific techniques of concentration and meditation that lead to the direct personal experience of God. These yoga methods quiet body and mind, and make it possible to withdraw one's energy and attention from the usual turbulence of thoughts, emotions, and sensory perceptions. In the clarity of that inner stillness, one comes to experience a deepening interior peace and awareness of God's presence.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Paramahansa Yogananda

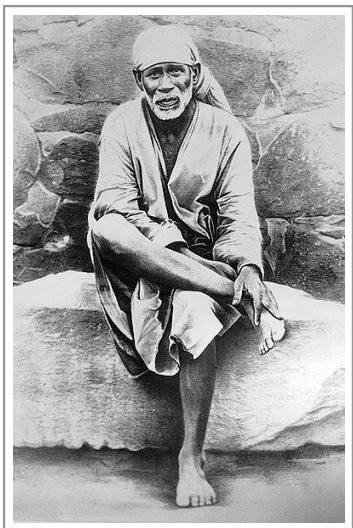
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## Shirdi Sai Baba



Sai Baba of Shirdi (unknown–1918), also known as Shirdi Sai Baba, was an Indian guru, yogi, and fakir who is regarded by his devotees as a saint. He was revered by both his Muslim and Hindu devotees. During and after his life on earth it remained uncertain if he was a Muslim or Hindu himself. This however was of no consequence to Sai Baba himself. Sai Baba stressed the importance of surrender to the guidance of the true Sadguru or Murshad, who, having gone the path to divine consciousness himself, will lead the disciple through the jungle of spiritual training.

Sai Baba remains a very popular saint, especially in India, and is worshiped by people around the world. He had no love for perishable things and his sole concern was self-realization. He taught a moral code of love, forgiveness, helping others, charity, contentment, inner peace, and devotion to God and guru. He gave no distinction based on religion or caste. Sai Baba's teaching combined elements of Hinduism and Islam: he gave the Hindu name Dwarakamayi to the mosque he lived in, practiced Muslim rituals, taught using words and figures that drew from both traditions, and was buried in Shirdi. One of his well known epigrams, "Sabka Malik Ek" ("One God governs all"), is associated with Islam and Sufism. He also said, "Trust in me and your prayer shall be answered." He always uttered "Allah Malik" ("God is King").

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

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## Shiva

“Shiva (Śiva) meaning "The Auspicious One"), also known as Mahadeva, Mahesh ("Great God") or Bholenath ("Simple Lord"), is a popular Hindu deity and considered the Supreme God within Shaivism, one of the three most influential denominations in Hinduism. Shiva is regarded as one of the primary forms of God, such as one of the five primary forms of God in the Smarta tradition, and "the Destroyer" or "the Transformer" among the Trimurti, the Hindu Trinity of the primary aspects of the divine. Shiva is also regarded as the patron god of yoga and arts.



Shiva is usually worshiped in the aniconic form of Lingam. Shiva of the highest level is limitless, transcendent, unchanging and formless.



However, Shiva also has many benevolent and fearsome forms. In benevolent aspects, he is depicted as an omniscient yogi who lives an ascetic life on Mount Kailash, as well as a householder with wife Parvati and two sons, Ganesha and Kartikeya or as the Cosmic Dancer.



In fierce aspects, he is often depicted slaying demons. The most recognizable iconographical attributes of the god are a third eye on his forehead, a snake around his neck, the crescent moon adorning and the river Ganga flowing from his matted hair, the trishula as his weapon and the damaru as his instrument.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



### Related Glossary Terms

Kailash, Lingam, Siva lingam

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## Shrutidhara

“When ever I took up a book, I do not find it necessary to go through line in order to understand the author. I could grasp the point by first and the last lines of a paragraph. Gradually, that power developed was not necessary to read the paragraph also in the aforesaid way. I read and last line of each page and the content was known. Again, when I was explaining a particular point of view with argument in any part of I could understand his whole chain of reasoning by merely reading the beginning of his arguments”

– Vivekananda describing his own mental qualities

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## Siddhas

A complete, full or perfected being.

Ramakrishna said, “There are five kind of Siddhas (perfect beings) found in the world.

They are: (1) The Svapna-siddhas, or those who attain perfection by means of dream-inspiration. (2) The Mantra-siddhas, or those who attain perfection by means of a Mantra or sacred ‘name’ of God. (3) The Hathat-siddhas, or those who attain perfection suddenly, like a poor man who at once becomes rich by finding a hidden treasure or by marrying a rich wife. Similarly, many who are sinful somehow become pure all of a sudden and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. (4) The Kripa-siddhas, or those who attain perfection through the Grace of God. As a man in clearing a forest may discover some ancient tank and himself need not construct one with pain and trouble, so some fortunately become perfect with little effort on their own part. (5) the Nitya-siddhas, or those who are ever perfect. As the vine of a gourd or pumpkin brings forth first its fruit and then its flower, so the ever perfect soul is born a Siddha, and all his seeming exertions after perfection are merely for the sake of setting an example to humanity.”

— *From the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, by Mahendranath Gupta

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## Siva lingam

“The lingam (also, linga, ling, Shiva linga, Shiv ling, lingam, meaning "mark," "sign," "inference" or is a representation of the Hindu deity Shiva used for worship in temples. The lingam is often represented alongside the yoni, a symbol of the goddess or of Shakti, female creative energy. The union of lingam and yoni represents the "indivisible two-in-oneness of male and female, the passive space and active time from which all life originates.” The lingam and the yoni have been interpreted as the male and female sexual organs since the end of the 19th century by some scholars, while to practicing Hindus they stand for the inseparability of the male and female principles and the totality of creation.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

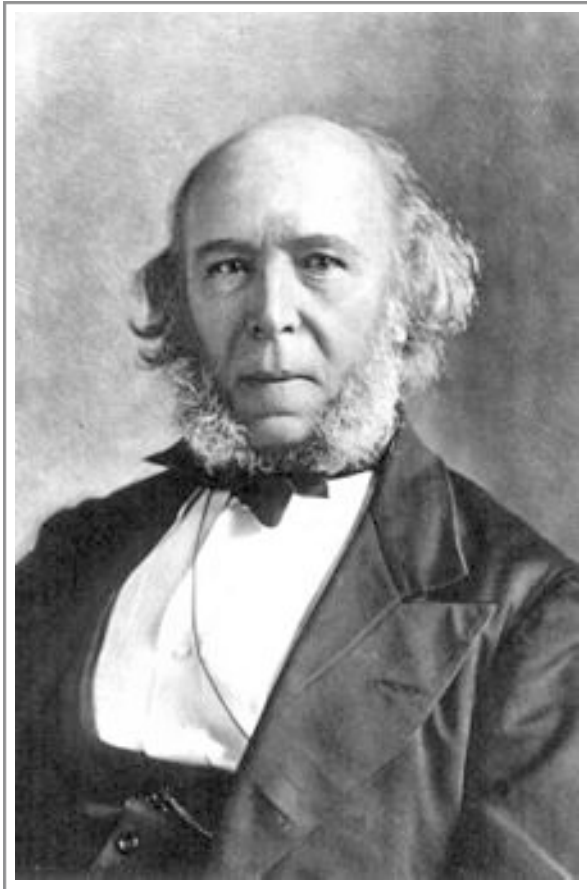
Kailash, Lingam, Shiva

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## Spencer



Herbert Spencer (27 April 1820 – 8 December 1903) was an English philosopher, biologist, anthropologist, sociologist, and prominent classical liberal political theorist of the Victorian era.

Spencer developed an all-embracing conception of evolution as the progressive development of the physical world, biological organisms, the human mind, and human culture and societies. He was "an enthusiastic exponent of evolution" and even "wrote about evolution before Darwin did." As a polymath, he contributed to a wide range of subjects, including ethics, religion, anthropology, economics, political theory, philosophy, literature, biology, sociology, and psychology. During his life-

time he achieved tremendous authority, mainly in English-speaking academia. "The only other English philosopher to have achieved anything like such widespread popularity was Bertrand Russell, and that was in the 20th century." Spencer was "the single most famous European intellectual in the closing decades of the nineteenth century" but his influence declined sharply after 1900; "Who now reads Spencer?" asked Talcott Parsons in 1937.

Spencer is best known for coining the expression "survival of the fittest," which he did in *Principles of Biology* (1864), after reading Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Darwin

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## Sri Ramakrishna



“Ramakrishna (18 February 1836 – 16 August 1886), was a famous mystic of 19th-century India. His religious school of thought led to the formation of the Ramakrishna Mission by his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda. He is also referred to as "Paramahansa" by his devotees, as such he is popularly known as Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Ramakrishna was born in a poor Brahmin Vaishnava family in rural Bengal. He became a priest of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, dedicated to the goddess Kali, which had the influence of the main strands of Bengali bhakti tradition. The most widely known amongst his first spiri-

tual teachers was an ascetic woman, called Bhairavi Brahmani, who was skilled in Tantra and Vaishnava bhakti. Later an Advaita Vedantin ascetic taught him non-dual meditation, and according to Ramakrishna, he experienced nirvikalpa samadhi under his guidance. Ramakrishna also practised other religions, notably Islam and Christianity, and said that all religions lead to the same God.”

– Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

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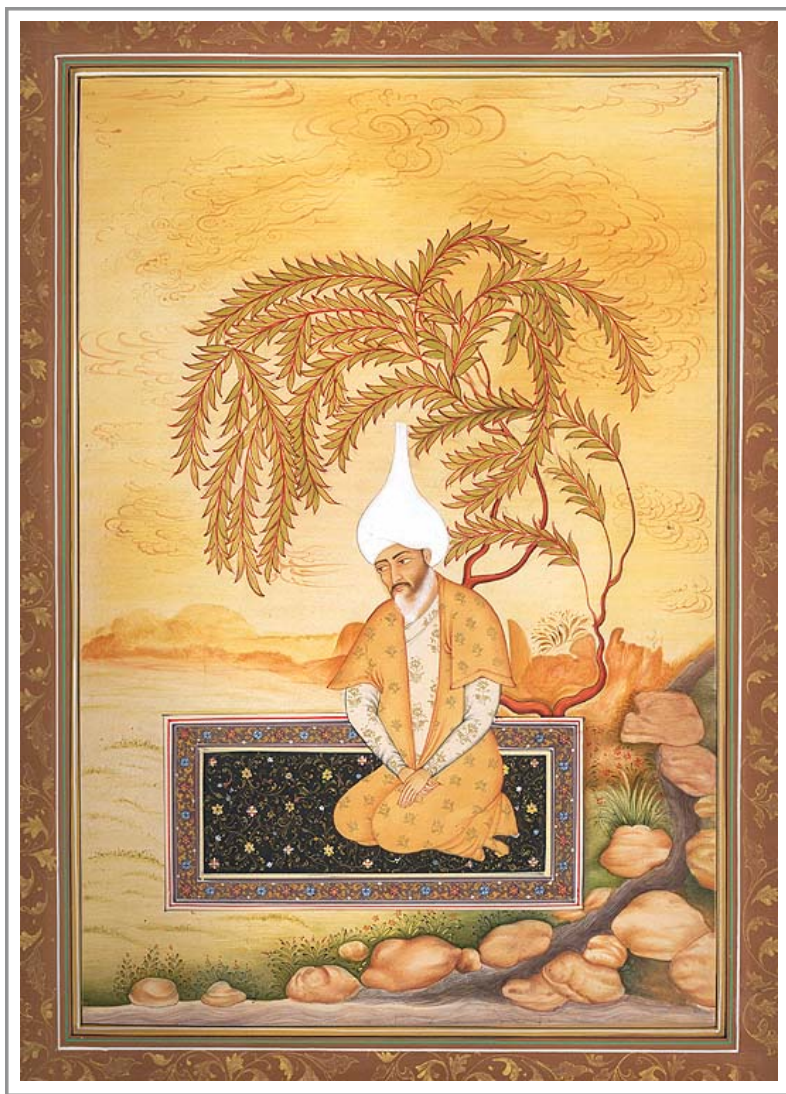
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## Sufi



“Sufism is defined by some adherents as the inner, mystical dimension of Islam, others contend that it is a perennial philosophy of existence that pre-dates religion, the expression of which flowered within Islam.

Sufis believe they are practicing *ihsan* (perfection of worship) as revealed by Gabriel to Muhammad: "Worship and serve Allah as you are seeing Him and while you see Him not yet truly He sees you." Sufis consider themselves as the original true proponents of this pure original form of Islam.

Classical Sufi scholars have defined Sufism as "a science whose objective is the reparation of the heart and turning it away from all else but

God.” Alternatively, in the words of the Darqawi Sufi teacher Ahmad ibn Ajiba, "a science through which one can know how to travel into the presence of the Divine, purify one's inner self from filth, and beautify it with a variety of praiseworthy traits.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

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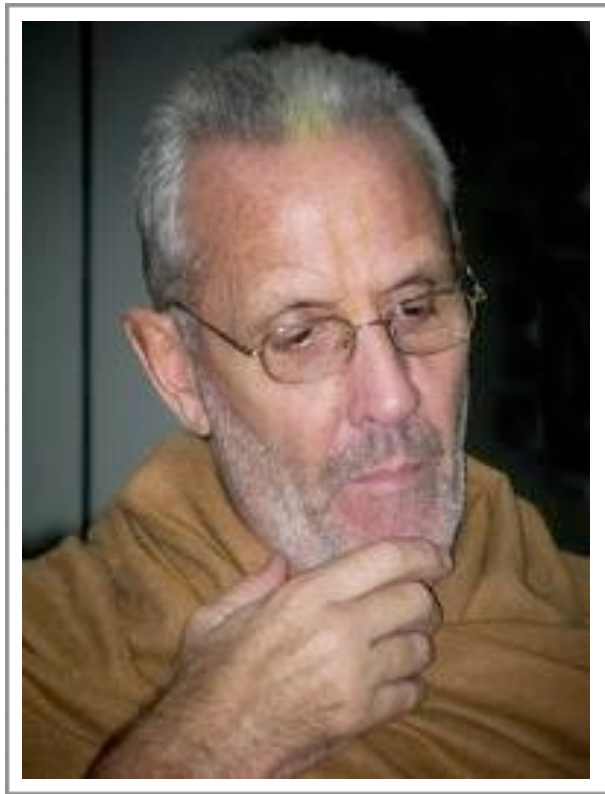
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## Swami B.G. Narasingha



Swami B.G. Narasingha [Jack B. Hebner] is a Hindu Gaudiya Vaishnava monk, author, photographer, videographer, and documentarian. He currently resides in India at Narasingha Chaitanya Matha.

“Gaudiya Vaishnavas believe that God has many forms and names, but that the name "Krishna" is the 'fullest' designation because it means "He who is all-attractive," covering all of God's aspects, such as being all-powerful, supremely merciful and all-loving. God is worshiped as the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful and all-attractive

Supreme Person. Names of God from other religious traditions, such as Allah and Jehovah, are also accepted as bonafide titles of the same Supreme Person.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Bhaktivedanta Swami, Hare Krishna movement, ISKCON, Vaishnaiva Bhakti

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## Tantra



“Tantra has been one of the most neglected branches of Indian spiritual studies despite the considerable number of texts devoted to this practice, which dates back to the 5th-9th century AD.

Many people still consider tantra to be full of obscenities and unfit for people of good taste. It is also often accused of being a

kind of black magic. However, in reality, tantra is one of the most important Indian traditions, representing the practical aspect of the Vedic tradition.

The religious attitude of the tantriks is fundamentally the same as that of the Vedic followers. It is believed that the tantra tradition is a part of the main Vedic tree. The more vigorous aspects of Vedic religion were continued and developed in the tantras. Generally tantriks worship either Goddess Shakti or Lord Shiva.

The word "tantra" is derived from the combination of two words "tattva" and "mantra." "Tattva" means the science of cosmic principles, while "mantra" refers to the science of mystic sound and vibrations. Tantra therefore is the application of cosmic sciences with a view to attain spiritual ascendancy. In another sense, tantra also means the scripture by which the light of knowledge is spread: Tanyate vistaryate jnanam anemna iti tantram.

There are essentially two schools of Indian scriptures - "Agama" and "Nigama." Agamas are those which are revelations while Nigama are the traditions. Tantra is an Agama and hence it is called "srutishakhavisesah," which means it is a branch of the Vedas.

The main deities worshipped are Shiva and Shakti. In tantra there is a great significance of "bali" or animal sacrifices. The most vigorous aspects of Vedic traditions evolved as an esoteric system of knowledge in the Tantras. The Atharva Veda is considered to be one of the prime tantrik scriptures.”

– Shri Aghorinath Ji, Tantrik Master



## Three ice houses

Tudor, the 'Ice King' of New England, built three ice houses in India, one each in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, to keep ice under proper insulation. The building in Madras still stands, but the others have "evaporated" into thin air.

– the Hindu Newspaper, Thursday, Jan 02, 2003

Below is the Tudor Ice House in Bombay-Mumbai 1870. Seen as a round white building behind the church. This is in the area near the harbor.



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### Related Glossary Terms

Calcutta, Chennai Ice house, Frederic Tudor, Madras Ice House

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## Transcendentalists

“Transcendentalism first arose among New England congregationalists, who . . . rejected predestination, and emphasized the unity instead of the trinity of God . . . the transcendentalists took the stance that empirical proofs of religion were not possible . . .

The publication of Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1836 essay *Nature* is usually considered the watershed moment at which transcendentalism became a major cultural movement. Emerson wrote in his 1837 speech "The American Scholar": "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds... A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men." Emerson closed the essay by calling for a revolution in human consciousness to emerge from the brand new idealist philosophy:

‘So shall we come to look at the world with new eyes. It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect, — What is truth? and of the affections, — What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will. ...Build, therefore, your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit.’ . .

Transcendentalists believed that society and its institutions—particularly organized religion and political parties—ultimately corrupted the purity of the individual. They had faith that people are at their best when truly "self-reliant" and independent. It is only from such real individuals that true community could be formed.

Transcendentalism has been influenced by Vedic thought. Thoreau in *Walden* spoke of the Transcendentalists' debt to Vedic thought directly:

‘In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavat Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma, and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water-jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges.’ . . .

### The Transcendental Club

The Transcendental Club was a group of New England intellectuals of the early-to-mid-19th century which gave rise to Transcendentalism.

Frederick Henry Hedge, Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Ripley, and George Putnam (1807–1878; the Unitarian minister in Roxbury) met in Cambridge, Massachusetts on September 8, 1836, to discuss the formation of a new club; their first official meeting was held eleven days later at Ripley's house in Boston. Other members of the club included Bronson Alcott, Orestes Brownson, Theodore Parker, Henry David Thoreau, William Henry Channing, James Freeman Clarke, Christopher Pearse Cranch, Convers Francis, Sylvester Judd, and Jones Very. Female members included Sophia Ripley, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, and Ellen Sturgis Hooper.

Originally, the group went by the name "Hedge's Club" because it usually met when Hedge was visiting from Bangor, Maine. The name Transcendental Club was given to the group by the public and not by its participants. James Eliot Cabot, a biographer of Emerson, wrote of the group as "the occasional meetings of a changing body of liberal thinkers, agreeing in nothing but their liberality." Hedge wrote: "There was no club in the strict sense... only occasional meetings of like-minded men and women." It was sometimes referred to by the nickname "the brotherhood of the 'Like-Minded'."

The club was a meeting-place for these young thinkers and an organizing ground for their idealist frustration with the general state of American culture and society at the time, and in particular, the state of intellectualism at Harvard University and in the Unitarian church.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ram Mohun Roy, Walden Pond

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# Transla

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## Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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## Treta Yuga

“Treta Yuga is the second of four yugas, or ages of mankind, in the Hinduism. Treta means, third in Sanskrit. The first yuga is Satya Yuga, morality and the one after Treta is the Dvapara Yuga. The most famous in this yuga were Lord Vishnu's fifth, sixth and seventh incarnations: Parashurama and Ramachandra respectively. The Dharma bull, which symbolises morality, stood on three legs during this period. It had all four legs in Satya Yuga and two in the later Dvapara Yuga. Currently, in the immoral Kali Yuga, it stands on one leg. The Treta Yuga lasts 12,96,000 years.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Ramayana

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## Unitarian

‘We do not hold the Bible—or any other account of human experience—to be either an infallible guide or the exclusive source of truth. Much biblical material is mythical or legendary. Not that it should be discarded for that reason! Rather, it should be treasured for what it is. We believe that we should read the Bible as we read other books—with imagination and a critical eye. We also respect the sacred literature of other religions. Contemporary works of science, art, and social commentary are valued as well. We hold, in the words of an old liberal formulation, that "revelation is not sealed." Unitarian Universalists aspire to truth as wide as the world—we look to find truth anywhere, universally.’

In short, Unitarian Universalists respect the important religious texts of other religions. UUs believe that all religions can coexist if viewed with the concept of love for one's neighbor and for oneself. Other church members who do not believe in a particular text or doctrine are encouraged to respect it as a historically significant literary work that should be viewed with an open mind. It is intended that in this way, individuals from all religions or spiritual backgrounds could live peaceably.”

– Our Unitarian Universalist Faith: Frequently Asked Questions, published by the Unitarian Universalist Church

“The following are general tenets of Unitarians:

The universe is a beautiful, intricate, complex place, the foundations of which are a Mystery. The "whole truth" is too large, and our minds/knowledge/intuitions are too small to grasp it all. Therefore, we cherish and learn from diversity.

If the Universe can be said to have a purpose, its purpose is for us, not against us, and it is for, not against, us all.

Given how little we can know for sure, our focus should be on this earth and life; beauty, justice, love.

We claim the rational, eschew the irrational, (contrary to reason) and question the non-rational (that which is neither provable nor disprovable by reason alone, i.e. life after death).

Poetically, this might be stated, "We come from One origin, we are headed to One destiny, but we cannot know completely what these are, so we are to focus on making this life better for all of us, and we use reason when we can, to find our way.

–Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

## Upanishads

"They [Upanishads] haunt me. In them I have found eternal compensation, unfathomable power, unbroken peace."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The Upanishads are known as the Vedanta, both because chronologically they come at the end of the Vedas and also because philosophically they represent the noblest upshot, the highest watermark of the Vedic civilization and genius. One meaning of the word Upanishad is to sit nearby. In the Indian tradition, the guru would be seated under a tree, near a river or lake, and one or more disciples would cluster around him to learn his wisdom. They are the dialogues between guru and sisya (disciple).”

– *Tribute To Hinduism*

“The Upanishads are a collection of philosophical texts which form the theoretical basis for the Hindu religion. They are also known as Vedanta ("the end of the Veda"). The Upanishads are considered by orthodox Hindus to contain revealed truths (Sruti) concerning the nature of ultimate Reality (Brahman) and describing the character and form of human salvation (moksha). The Upanishads are found mostly in the concluding part of the Brahmanas and Aranyakas and have been passed down in oral tradition.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Advaita Vedanta, Bengali Renaissance, Bhagavad-Gita, Brahmin, Identification, Rig Veda, Sanatana Dharma, Sanskrit, Vedas, Vedic literature of India

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## Vaishnaiva Bhakti



“Gaudiya Vaishnavism (also known as Chaitanya Vaishnavism and Hare Krishna) is a Vaishnava religious movement founded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534) in India in the 16th century. "Gaudiya" refers to the Gauḍa region (present day Bengal/Bangladesh) with Vaishnavism meaning "the worship of Vishnu.” Its philosophical basis is primarily that of the Bhagavad Gita and Bhagavata Purana, as well as other Puranic scriptures and Upanishads such as the Isha Upanishad, Gopala Tapani Upanishad, and Kali Santarana Upanishad.

The focus of Gaudiya Vaishnavism is the devotional worship (bhakti) of Radha and Krishna, and their many divine incarnations as the supreme forms of God, Svayam Bhagavan. Most popularly, this worship takes the form of singing Radha and Krishna's holy names, such as "Hare," "Krishna" and "Rama," most commonly in the form of the Hare Krishna (mantra), also known as kirtan. The movement is sometimes referred to as the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya sampradaya, referring to its traditional origins in the succession of spiritual masters (gurus) believed to originate from Brahma. It classifies itself as a monotheistic tradition, seeing the many forms of Vishnu as expansions or incarnations of the one Supreme God, adipurusha . . .

Release from the process of samsara (known as moksha) is believed to be achievable through a variety of yoga processes. However, within Gaudiya Vaishnavism it is bhakti in its purest state (or "pure love of God") which is given as the ultimate aim, rather than liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

Gaudiya Vaishnavas believe that God has many forms and names, but that the name "Krishna" is the 'fullest' description because it means "He who is all-attractive," covering all of God's aspects, such as being all-powerful, supremely merciful and all-loving. God is worshiped as the eternal, all-knowing, omnipresent, all-powerful and all-attractive Supreme Person. Names of God from other religious traditions, such as Allah and Jehovah, are also accepted as bonafide titles of the same Supreme Person.”

One of the defining aspects of Gaudiya Vaishnavism is that Krishna is worshiped specifically as the source of all Avataric incarnations of God. This is based on quotations from the Bhagavata Purana, such as "krsnas tu bhagavan svayam," translated as "Krishna is the original Personality of Godhead" and from the Bhagavad Gita where Arjuna, when speaking to Krishna, states:

"You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest, the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn, the greatest. All the great sages such as Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa confirm this truth about You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me."

Krishna is described elsewhere as the "seed-giving father of all living beings" and is worshiped within the Gaudiya tradition literally, as such - Krishna being the "sustaining energy of the universe"

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Bhaktivedanta Swami, Hare Krishna movement, ISKCON, Swami B.G. Narasingha

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## Vanaprastya



This word is generally used to denote a particular phase of life in the Vedic ashram system when a person is between the ages of 50 and 74. In this phase of life, the person is in a retreat from worldly life. He lives away from the city, in a forest as a hermit [often with his wife], with as little material possessions as possible. This stage denotes a transition phase from material to spiritual life. It is the third of four phases of a man in the system, as prescribed by the Manusmriti for the Dvija (twice-born) castes, in the Hindu religion.”

“A Vanaprastha is a person who is living in the forest as a hermit after partially giving up material desires. Vanaprastha ashram is the third stage of life in the Vedic ashram system, when a person gradually withdraws from the world. This stage comes after the completion of household duties in the second ashram phase Grihastha (household life), but one can enter into it straight from the first stage Brahmacharya (student life) ashram.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Vedic literature of India

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# Varanasi

Varanasi (between the Varuna and the Asi River) is another name for Benaras or Kasi. (see Benaras).



## Related Glossary Terms

Benaras, Kasi

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## Vedanta

Vedanta is one of the six systems of Indian Philosophy. The word, Vedanta, means the *anta* or end of the *Veda* or knowledge.

“Vedanta was originally a word used in Hindu philosophy as a synonym for that part of the Veda texts also known as the Upanishads.

It is speculated that "Vedānta" means "the purpose or goal [end] of the Vedas." Vedanta can also be used as a noun to describe one who has mastered all four of the original Vedas.

By the 8th century, the word came to be used to describe a group of philosophical traditions concerned with the self-realisation by which one understands the ultimate nature of Reality (Brahman).

In this respect Vedānta is also called Uttarā Mīmāṃsā, or the 'latter enquiry' or 'higher enquiry', and is often paired with Purva Mīmāṃsā, the 'former enquiry'. Pūrva Mimamsa, usually simply called Mimamsa, deals with explanations of the fire-sacrifices of the Vedic mantras (in the Samhita portion of the Vedas) and Brahmanas, while Vedanta explicates the esoteric teachings of the Āraṇyakas (the "forest scriptures"), and the Upanishads, composed from the 9th century BCE until modern times.

Vedanta is not restricted or confined to one book and there is no sole source for Vedāntic philosophy.

The primary philosophy captured in the Upanishads, that of one absolute

Reality termed as Brahman is the main principle of Vedanta. The sage Vyāsa was one of the major proponents of this philosophy and author of the Brahma Sūtras based on the Upanishads. The concept of Brahman – the eternal, self-existent, immanent and transcendent Supreme and Ultimate Reality which is the divine ground of all Being - is central to most schools of Vedānta. The concept of God or Ishvara is also there, and the Vedantic sub-schools differ mainly in how they identify God with Brahman.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Advaita, Advaita Vedanta, Advaitic, Advaitin, Rig Veda, Vedas

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## Vedas

"The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous, that a book can be without beginning or end. But by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times. Just as the law of gravitation acted before its discovery by humanity, and would continue to act if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The discoverers of these laws are called Rishis, and we honor them as perfected beings. Now the Vedas teach us that creation is without beginning or end. Science has proved to us that the sum total of cosmic energy is always the same.

They were written, nobody knows at what date, it may be 8,000 years ago, in spite of all modern scholars may say; it may be 9,000 years ago. Not one of these religious speculations is of modern date, but they are as fresh today as they were when they were written..."

– Vivekananda in his address to the World Parliament of Religions 1893

“The Vedic literature opens to us a chapter in what has been called the education of the human race, to which we can find no parallel anywhere else.”

– Max Muller, Indologist

“The Vedas (knowledge) are a large body of texts originating in ancient India. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism. The Vedas are *apauruṣeya* ("not of human agency"). They are supposed to have been directly revealed, and thus are called *śruti* ("what is heard"), distinguishing them from other religious texts, which are called *smṛti* ("what is remembered").”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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### Related Glossary Terms

Brahmin, Max Muller, Upanishads, Vedanta, Vedic literature of India

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## Vedic literature of India

The Vedic Literature of India is a vast amount of texts. The main texts referred to were the Laws of Manu, The Upanishads and the *Bhagavad-Gita*. However below is a more complete accounting:

“The wisdom and knowledge of the Aryans is contained in their sacred literature, collectively known as the Vedic literature.

Early Vedic Literature:

1. The Vedas are the oldest and the most sacred books of the Aryans, and are four in number: the Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda.

2. The Brahmanas are the prose texts containing observations on the various sacrificial rites and ceremonies.

3. The wisdom and knowledge of the Aryans is contained in their sacred literature, collectively known as the Vedic literature.

4. Early Vedic Literature:

5. 1. The Vedas are the oldest and the most sacred books of the Aryans, and are four in number: the Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda.

6. 2. The Brahmanas are the prose texts containing observations on the various sacrificial rites and ceremonies.

7. 3. The Aranyakas, also known as the 'Forest Books', are the concluding portion of the Brahmanas and deal with mysticism and philosophy.

8. 4. The Upanishads are the main source of Indian philosophy and have found an important place in the history of world literature, having been translated into various foreign languages like English, French, German and Persian. They are about 300 in number, the more prominent ones being Isa, Kena, Katha, Mundaka and Brihadaranyaka.

9. Later Vedic Literature

10.1. The Sutras: They are a collection of the various new customs developed with the passage of time and are divided into three classes- Sruta-Sutras, Griha-Sutras and Dharma-Sutras.

11.2. Vedangas and Upavedas : Vedangas are a part of Vedic texts and deal with religious practices, pronunciation, grammar, etymology (science of words), metro and astronomy. The Upavedas deal with subjects such as medicine, music, art and architecture and war.

12. The important Upavedas are Ayurveda, Gandharvaveda, Dhanurveda and Shilpaveda.

13.3. Six Shastras: These are the six well-known schools of Hindu philosophy, known as Darshanas or Shastras. In these, the ancient sages have tried to give answers to certain difficult philosophical questions concerning God, soul, birth and death. These are Sankhya Shastra by Kapila, Yoga Shastra of Patanjali, Nyaya Shastra of Gautama, Vaisheshik Shastra of Kanad, Puna Mimamsa of Jamini and Uttara Mimamsa of Vyasa.

14.4. The Puranas: They are the ancient texts of Hindus and are 18 in number.

15.5. The Epics: The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the two great epics of Hindus, which throw an important light on the social, religious, economic and political life of the Vedic Age Aryans.

16.6. Dharma Shastras: These are a very important source of information about the laws and judicial procedures of the Aryans. Manu Smriti is the most important of the Dharma Shastras.”

—Brief Notes on the Vedic Literature of India, by Bharti Preeti

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### Related Glossary Terms

Advaita Vedanta, Bhagavad-Gita, Brahmin pundit, Indologist, Mahabharata, Max Muller, Ramayana, Rig Veda, Sanatana Dharma, Upanishads, Vanaprastya, Vedas, Yoga

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## Vishnu

Vishnu is the Almighty Supreme God of Hinduism and Purushottama or Supreme Purusha [Person] in ancient sacred texts like the *Bhagavad Gita*. Vishnu is also known as Narayana and Hari. The Vishnu Sahasranama declares Vishnu as Paramatman (supreme soul) and Parameshwara (supreme God). It describes Vishnu as the all-pervading essence of all beings, the master of—and beyond—the past, present and future, the creator and destroyer of all existences, one who supports, preserves, sustains and governs the universe and originates and develops all elements within.



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### Related Glossary Terms

Yoga

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## Viveka

Viveka means discrimination. This is the ability to discriminate, or between the real and the unreal. Vedanta defines the real as being eternal and the unreal as being temporary.

Some say this is an intellectual ability while the others say the true Viveka is that state of consciousness when one is established in the Self and is only the witness of the the world.

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## Walden

The great American classic written by Henry David Thoreau.

Walden Pond:

“I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.”

Conclusion of Walden Pond:

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away," By doing so, men may find happiness and self-fulfillment.

I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.”

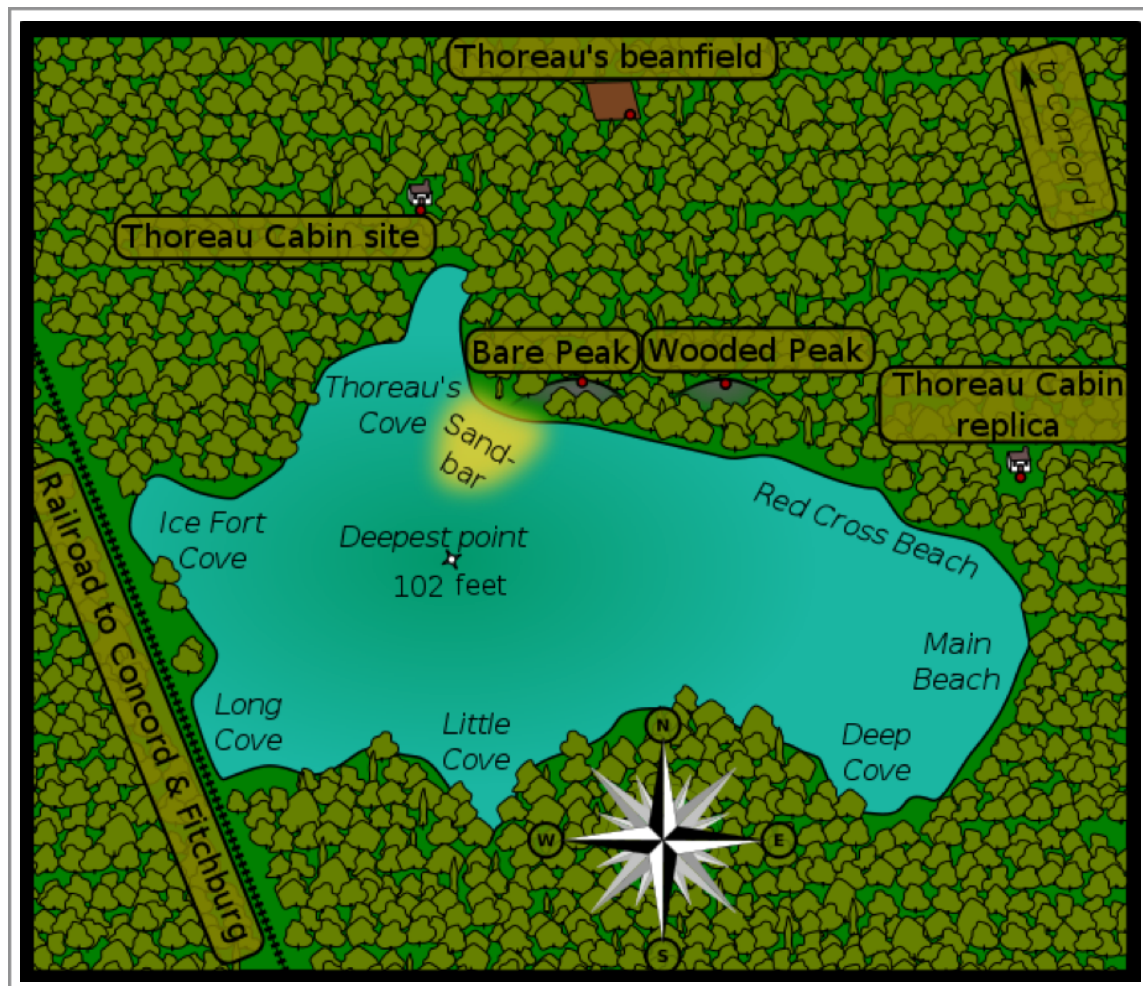
— Henry David Thoreau

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## Walden Pond

“The writer, transcendentalist, and philosopher Henry David Thoreau lived on the northern shore of the pond for two years starting in the summer of 1845. His account of the experience was recorded in *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, and made the pond famous. The land at northern end of the pond was owned by Thoreau's friend and mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who let Thoreau use it for his experiment.

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia



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### Related Glossary Terms

Bhagavad-Gita, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Transcendentalists, Walden

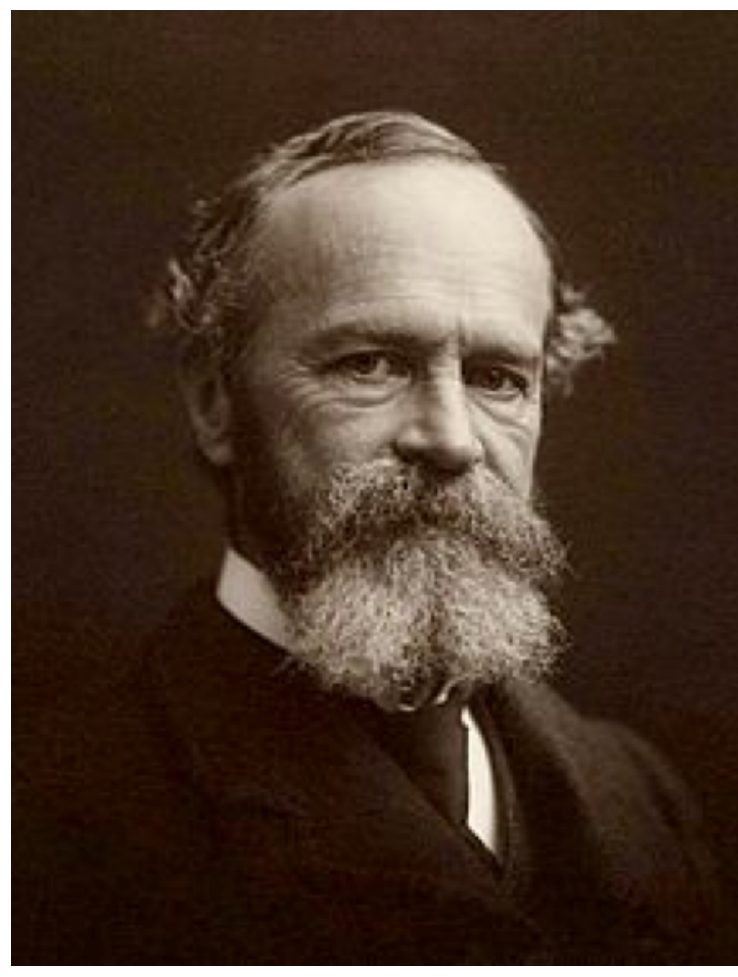
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## William James



William James (January 11, 1842 – August 26, 1902) was an American philosopher and psychologist. He was also trained as a physician. The first edition of his book *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) was the first to offer a psychology course in the United States. James was one of the leading thinkers of the late nineteenth century and is believed by many to be one of the most influential philosophers the United States has ever produced, while others have labeled him the "Father of American psychology"

“Religious genius (experience) should be the central topic in the study of religion, rather than religious institutions—since institutions are merely the social

scendant of genius.”

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Yagya

Yajna literally means "sacrifice, devotion, worship, offering", and refers in Hinduism to any ritual done in front of a sacred fire, often with mantras. Yajna has been a Vedic tradition, described in a layer of Vedic literature called Brahmanas, as well as Yajurveda. The tradition has evolved from offering oblations and libations into sacred fire to symbolic offerings in the presence of sacred fire.

- Wikipedia



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**Related Glossary Terms**

## Yoga

Classically, “Yoga” referred to one of the six-systems of Indian Philosophy. Developed by the Rishi, Patanjali, the Yoga Sutras are also called, Ashtanga Yoga, or “Eight-limbed” yoga. Those eight limbs or “angas” divide all of life into eight spheres going from gross to subtle to causal.” The limbs (angas) are interconnected like the legs of a chair. If you pull one leg the others come along with it.

“The removal of ignorance and manifestation of inner divinity leading to God realization are achieved through Yoga. There are four main Yogas: Jnana Yoga (Yoga of Knowledge); Bhakti Yoga (Yoga of Devotion); Raja Yoga (Yoga of Meditation); Karma Yoga (Yoga of Work). Each Yoga is an independent means of realizing God. But since each Yoga involves the cultivation of one of the faculties such as reason, feeling or will, a combination of all the four Yogas is necessary for the development of a balanced, 'fully functioning' personality.”

—Ramakrishna Vivekananda Math

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi suggests that the common ground between all these different “Yogas” is the transcendence of every aspect of mind, body and attention. This transcendence and unity is what “Yoga” means in Maharishi’s teachings. The development of mind, emotions, actions and worldly success are the result of transcendence, not its cause. This is the reason that Maharishi always taught Transcendence (Transcendental Meditation) as the basis of everything else.

Every aspect of life, from the outer world of morality to the grosser world of the physical body to the subtler realm of the pranas to the subtlest level of the mind in dharana and dhyana, is connected. The easiest and most comprehensive way to affect them all is through Transcendence or Samadhi. Samadhi is the ultimate form of Yoga and there are different levels of samadhi. (see samadhi).

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### Related Glossary Terms

Asanas, Consideration, Samadhi, Vedic literature of India, Vishnu, Yogendra Mastamani, Yogis

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Chapter 2 - The Kashi Yatra, the Spiritual Master and the Living Water of Life

## Yogendra Mastamani

“The pioneer teacher of hathayoga in the West.

Sri Yogendra(1897-1989) was one of the important figures in the modern revival of hathayoga, both in India and in the United States. He founded the Yoga Institute and helped provide a scientific basis for the practice of yoga . . .

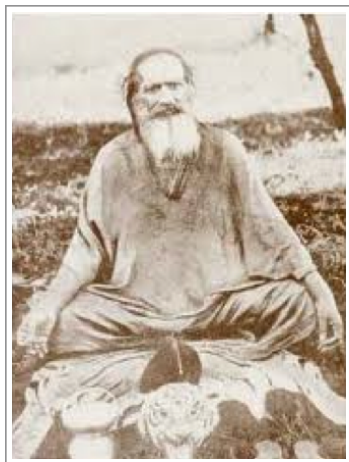
Yogendra was born on November 18, 1897, as Manibhai Harihai Desai in rural Gujarat, India. As a student at St. Xavier’s College in Bombay (Mumbai), he met his GURU, Paramahansa Madha-vadasaji.

After several years, however, he ceased to be a disciple. Desai did not wish to lead a celibate life; instead, he wished to find out whether there could be a scientific underpinning for the practice of hathayoga. In 1918 he founded the Yoga Institute of India.

In 1919, Desai, who had by this time assumed the name, Yogendra, moved to the United States to work with several medical doctors who shared his interest in the yogic arts. Among the people he met were Benedict LUST (1872–1945), founder of the new medical system called naturopathy. Lust saw the value of hatha yoga for his work and studied it with Yogendra.”

– Encyclopedia of Hinduism

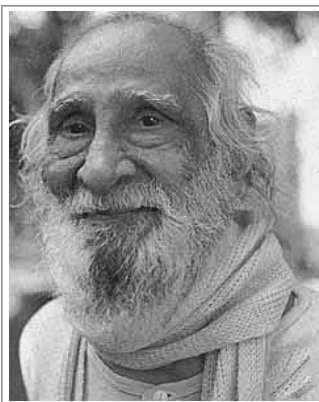
“He renounced his social life when he was still an adolescent to follow his guru, Paramahansa Madhavadasaji (picture below) a 119-year-old yogi from Bengal.



Since he was such a devout disciple, he was asked by the guru to initiate the process of teaching yoga to one and all. So he strove to prove the scientific benefits of yoga and the specificity of its philosophy to whoever came his way. He was also the one responsible for the revival of the ideals of classical yoga.

In 1918, Shri Yogendra established the Yoga Institute at Versova, Mumbai. A year later, he went to USA where he founded one more Yoga Institute in New York. The following year, his ailing father summoned Shri Yogendra back to India.

He did the most unusual thing for a yogi - he got married to Sitadevi. He was following the footsteps of ancient seers like Vasishtha and Yagnavalkya. His wife, Sitadevi was introduced to yoga soon after her marriage in 1927. After two years of rigorous study, she became the Secretary of the Institute, and later, in charge of the Ladies' section. She contributed articles to the Journal of Yoga and also authored a book entitled 'Yoga Simplified for Women'. This book is ground breaking because it is the first authoritative book on yoga for women written by a woman. It paved the way for women to practice yoga, something that was prohibited until then.”



– Householder Yogi – the Life of Shri Yogendra, by Santan Rodrigues

Picture: Yogendra Masatamani

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### Related Glossary Terms

Asanas, Benard McFadden, Benedict Lust, Hatha Yoga, John Kellogg, Sanitarium, Yoga

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# Yogis

Practitioners of Yoga (classically meaning Raja Yoga or Ashtanga Yoga) or those who have attained to a state of Yoga or “union” with t

– Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

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## Related Glossary Terms

Hatha Yoga, Sadhu, Sannyasi, Yoga

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