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Many Religions Use Prayer Beads

Mata Amritanandamayi Ma, India's Kerala-based hugging saint

Upon attaining enlightenment, a sage who lived in austere simplicity was asked by the devas what he would like as a boon. "Nothing, " he replied, "I aspire for nothing at all." But the devas would not accept the refusal. They insisted that he choose something. The solitaire, however, was unyielding. "What can I ask for? I have no desire. I have everything I sought." But after much angelic insistence, he relented. "Grant me whatever you feel like, " he said. With the ball firmly in their court, the divine agents pronounced, "Whomsoever you touch will be cured. The dead will regain life, and wilted plants will bloom forth in full health wherever you walk." "All right, " the solitaire said, "if you are so generous, be a little kind. Let all that happen with the touch of my shadow instead. I should not be aware of the good I do, lest it make me proud, turning this boon into a curse."

Only when we remain equipoised in praises and persecutions shall we be able to fulfill our objectives. His Divine Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, spiritual head of Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us. Helen Keller

(1880-1968), famous deaf, blind and mute author, lecturer and poet

Go to God. Whatever name, whatever form you worship is no problem. Just go to Him. He accepts all names and all forms. If God can be worshiped in only one way then He is not God! Swami Chidanand Saraswati (Muniji), president of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh

A zealous Christian who was trying to convert a Hindu found himself getting nowhere. "The thing is, " argued the frustrated Christian, "you have to be born again!" "But I have been born again!" insisted the Hindu. "And again and again and again & "

War doesn't determine who's right. War determines who's left! Swami Anubhavananda, humorous author and lecturer

The mind alone is man's cause of bondage or release: it leads to bondage when attached to the sense objects, and to release when freed from them. Krishna Yajur Veda, Maitri Upanishad

God is with us. It is He only who gives us the strength to work. If we live with this inspiration in our heart, we will surely experience Divinity in our life. Our work will become our devotion, and means of our spiritual progress. Rameshbhai Oza, inspired performer of Vaishnava kathas

The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.
Chinese proverb

Four types of people quickly perish: the shy courtesan, the immodest housewife, the contented kshatriya, and the discontented brahmin. Chanakya Shloka

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle. Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Well, I tell you, if I have been wrong in my agnosticism, when I die I'll walk up to God in a manly way and say, "Sir, I made an honest mistake." H. L. Mencken (1880-1956), American journalist, satirist and critic

Actions are the louder expression of thought. The quality of thought is ordered by the nature of our inner belief and faith. Swami Chinmayananda (1916-1993), founder of Chinmaya Mission

India is the oldest civilization, the largest democracy and the youngest population. Almost 70 percent are below age 35 and almost 50 percent are 25 and under.

When the fundamentalists of any religion teach an unrelenting duality based on good and evil, man and nature or God and Devil, this creates friends and enemies. This belief is a sacrilege to Hindus, because they know that the attitudes which are the by-product are totally dualistic, and for good to triumph over that which is alien

or evil, it must kill out that which is considered to be evil. The Hindu looks at nothing as intrinsically evil. To him the ground is sacred. The sky is sacred. The sun is sacred. His wife is a Goddess. Her husband is a God. Their children are devas. Their home is a shrine. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

Writing about popular hatha yoga as practiced in country clubs and gyms: Yoga's good. It gets you lithe and firm without looking like you're on parole. And it has a touch of spirituality without the inconvenience or embarrassment of having to believe in anything. But it's like playing bridge--everybody who does it has been at it for years. It's difficult to just jump in, and in modern gym terms it has one fundamental flaw: you can't fake it. And gyms are all about cheating. Cheating age, cheating death. But you can't pretend to be standing on your head. A. A. Gill, London Sunday Times columnist

Did You Know?

They were one of the first sources of human artistic expression, emotional comfort and spiritual mystery. Carved from seashells, wood, precious stone or other materials, beads were cherished by stone-age societies as talismans of good fortune. Tens of thousands of years later, beads are still found in many major religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity.

The earliest recorded use of prayer beads comes from the Hindu faiths in India as far back as the eighth century bce. Called mala, the beads are still used in prayer in India. Those who worship Siva use the rough, brown seeds of the rudraksha tree. Hindus who worship Vishnu make their beads from the wood of the tulsi, or "holy basil tree."

As Buddhism spread in India, around 500 bce, the tradition of using strings of beads to keep count of prayers followed. Buddhist monks carry strands of 108 beads while lay persons carry smaller strands of 30 to 40. Among Tibetan monks, the most

cherished of such beads are made from the bones of revered deceased lamas. The use of prayer beads spread to China, Tibet and eventually Japan.

It is believed that Muslim traders brought prayer beads west, eventually adopting them into Islamic tradition. The subha consists of 33 beads with usually two leader beads. Because Islam grew alongside Christianity in the Middle East, the tradition was eventually taken up by Christians as well. Among the Greek Orthodox faithful, the use of the komboskini, or knotted rope, is common, and Catholics use a string of beads called the rosary.

Excerpted from an article by Geoffrey Fattah in the Deseret Morning News