

['Isle Be Seeing You'](#)

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## 'Isle Be Seeing You'

How does he do it, reaching everyone from the middle of nowhere?

From his verdant Polynesian ashram on the Wailua River near the foot of an extinct volcano, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami and his monks live their cherished vision, following a simple, contemplative, joyous existence, building a jewel-like white granite Siva temple, meditating together in the hours before dawn, then working, as rainbows fill the sky, to promote the dharma together through Saiva Siddhanta Church, Himalayan Academy, Hinduism Today and Hindu Heritage Endowment. Gurudeva's life has been one of extraordinary accomplishments, but what's most special about him is his incredible power to inspire others toward God, to change their lives in ways that are otherwise impossible, to be a light on their path, a mother and father to all who draw near. On the occasion of his fiftieth year of ministry, Hinduism Today asked Gurudeva about San Marga Iraivan Temple and why he chose the remote island of Kauai for his international headquarters. His response:

Everyone is looking for peace, for love, for goodness. The island we live on has as its motto aloha. Love is its spirit. There are no other words to describe the feeling of welcome better than aloha. The island people hold a vision of its future,

working in togetherness to build the community for the next generation. Years and years ago, over 30, we came to Kauai and finally never left. I chose Kauai, the world's most remote land mass, because I wanted to be close to my devotees in the East (Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, India and Mauritius) and close to my devotees in the West (Australia, Fiji, North America and Europe), while at the same time cloistered from the world at large. Yes, our inner life is more important than our outer life. If we were in San Francisco, New York, Singapore or New Delhi, we could not do this same work as a contemplative order of meditators and teachers, outreaching primarily through publications and the Internet. How remote is Kauai? The nearest land mass to the west is Japan, 3,800 miles; it's 2,200 miles north to Alaska; 4,800 miles south to Australia and 2,750 miles east to California. Kauai is a spiritual place, a vortex of healing energies emanating from its sacred Mt. Waialeale, pristine air and ocean.

On his order of monks: It has been a blessing to have been able to raise two generations of spiritual leaders, my monks, who have made a difference and are continuing to make a difference in today's world--a difference that is lasting because a new paradigm has evolved, that of establishing the traditional culture of the Far East in the West. Yes, the best of the East and the best of the West have come together on the famed Garden Island of Kauai. What makes Iraivan so special and so powerful is that it sits in the center of a cloistered monastery and theological seminary.

On peace at home: Entering into the world of religious and political fervor when invited to international conferences as a spiritual representative over the past 20 years made a deep

impression upon my mind. It seems that so little is understood by the leaders of religions and nations. Because of the conflict, in-fighting, there is no time for them to reflect. This has led to the rule at our peaceful ashram that disharmony must be settled before sleep, never carried into the next day, a discipline all my monks follow.

Iraivan, being a kaivalya temple, giving the boon of freedom from past burdens, will welcome all who are on the path to perfection, giving up hurt and suppressed memories that keep them hurting, giving up worldly longing and redirecting their desire to higher realms, throwing down the personal ego as not important to inner life. Why protect it through argument, justification and dominance? Let it go so that the soul may soar in the glory of its naturalness. This is surrender to the Divine.

On Iraivan: As I look into the future, I see Iraivan, fully completed, as a center where devotees will come to find the center of themselves. We will preserve it and maintain it so that it is the way Rishikesh used to be, a proper, pure, quiet place where devotees can go within themselves through the practice of yoga. There are very few such places left on the Earth now. Kauai's Hindu monastery is one of them. I see Iraivan as a yoga citadel, a place of pilgrimage for the devout, sincere and dedicated. I see Iraivan as India's message to the world on visitors' day, when Hindus and non-Hindus alike come to admire the great artistry of the silpi stone carving tradition. I see Iraivan as a fulfillment of our lineage, our scriptures and our monastery. This is a place where you do not have to invoke God, for God is here, for this is where heaven meets the Earth. So, come to our aloha island soon. Isle be seeing you.

## One Master's Odyssey

Once in a while on this Earth there arises a soul who, by living his tradition rightly and wholly, becomes a light to the world. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami is such a being, a living example of awakening and wisdom, recognized worldwide as one of Hinduism's foremost leaders. Gurudeva began this life on January 5, 1927, in Oakland, California, and grew up near Lake Tahoe. As a youth, he was trained in classical Eastern and Western dance and in the disciplines of yoga, becoming the premier danseur of the San Francisco Ballet by age 19. Renouncing the world at the height of his career, he traveled to India and Sri Lanka in quest of Absolute Truth. In the caves of Jalani in 1948, he fasted and meditated until he burst into enlightenment. Soon after, he met his satguru, Sage Yogaswami, who initiated him into the holy orders of sannyasa, and ordained him into his lineage with a tremendous slap on the back, saying, "This will be heard in America! Now go 'round the world and roar like a lion. You will build palaces (temples) and feed thousands." In Sri Lanka he founded Saiva Siddhanta Church, the world's first Hindu church, now active in many nations. He returned to America, where his ardent yoga bore fruit in the aphorisms of Raja Yoga, the core of his profound teachings. Seven years of meditation to follow brought forth faculties of clairvoyance and clairaudience. In '57 he founded Himalayan Academy, now with thousands of students, and opened America's first Hindu temple, in San Francisco. He formed his monastic order in 1960. In Switzerland, '68, he revealed Shum, the mystical language of meditation. From '67 to '83 he led 14 Innersearch pilgrimages, guiding hundreds of devotees to the world's sacred temples and illumined sages. In 1970 Gurudeva established his monastery-temple on Kauai. Five years later he founded San Marga Iraivan Temple. In '79 he founded Hinduism Today magazine, to unite Hindus of the

world and inspire seekers everywhere.

In the '70s he gave blessings to dozens of groups to build temples in America and Europe, gifting images of Lord Ganesha to begin the worship, and he provided tools to convey the ancient heritage to the youth.

His international Hindu renaissance tours in the '80s brought him face to face with hundreds of thousands of Hindus, to whom he spread a powerful message of courage, regenerating pride of heritage. In '82 he founded a branch monastery in Mauritius, whose government had invited him to revive a languishing Hindu faith. In '85 Gurudeva adopted Apple's desktop publishing to supercharge his prolific outreach through scriptures, books, pamphlets, art, lessons and later through CDs and the world's foremost Hindu web sites. In '86, he was honored by Delhi's World Religious Parliament as one of five leaders outside India promoting Sanatana Dharma. In historic gatherings of spiritual and parliamentary leaders, Gurudeva represented Hinduism to discuss mankind's future at the Global Forum--at Oxford in '88, Moscow in '90, and Brazil in '91. In '93 he was elected one of three Presidents of Hinduism at the 100th anniversary of the Parliament of World's Religions in Chicago. In the mid '90s he founded Hindu Heritage Endowment to provide permanent income for Hindu swamis, temples and orphanages worldwide and created a stunning 3,700-page illustrated trilogy of sourcebooks on Saivism. This coming year, 1999, marks the fiftieth anniversary of Gurudeva's ministry, a year to rejoice and reflect.