

[Quotes and Quips](#)

Category : [April/May/June 2010](#)

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Quotes and Quips

Speak little. Speak sweetly. Speak the truth at all costs.
Swami Sivananda (1887-1963), founder of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh

A Swiss devotee visited Ramana Maharishi (1879-1950), the sage of Arunachala. She was disturbed from having a vision of Siva. "Is He not the Destroyer?" she asked. The mystic replied:

"Yes, He is the destroyer of sorrows. Siva is the embodiment of auspiciousness. Have you got a form? That is why you think of Siva's form. The Self is bodiless. If you are with body, then Siva is with body. If you are not, He also is not."

The end of ego is the mystic death of the meditator. Swami Chinmayananda (1916-1993), founder of the Chinmaya Mission

The fragrance of the flower is never borne against the breeze, but the fragrance of human virtues diffuses itself everywhere. Ramayana

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened. Anonymous

As long as someone cries out "O God! O God!" be sure that he has not found God, for whoever has found Him becomes still. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)

In the house of the seer there are five cows (the five senses), which without a cowherd wander everywhere. If they were controlled and their thirst quenched, they would give milk. Tirumantiram, a sacred mystical treatise by Rishi Tirumular (10th century ce).

We who have come from the East here have been told day after day in a patronizing way that we ought to accept Christianity because Christian nations are the most prosperous. We look about us and see England as the most prosperous nation in the world, with her foot on the neck of 250 million Asiatics. We look back in history and see Christian Spain's wealth beginning with the invasion of Mexico. Such prosperity comes from cutting the throats of fellow men. At such a price the Hindu will not have prosperity. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, at the Parliament of the World's Religions, 1893

It is nauseating to see a seditious middle temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well-known in the Middle East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Vice-regal palace to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor! Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965), British leader, referring to Mohandas K. Gandhi

When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they seem invincible, but in the end they always fall--think of it, always. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. Ian Fleming (1908-1964), English writer

Today is the tomorrow you never thought about yesterday. Anonymous

Our prayers should be for blessings in general, for God knows best what is good for us. Socrates, (470-399 bce) Greek philosopher

It is not wise to live in water and make an enemy of the crocodile. Indian proverb

See yourself everywhere. You are the whole world. Satguru Yogaswami (1872-1964), Sri Lankan mystic

Nature cares nothing for logic, our human logic; she has her own, which we do not recognize and do not acknowledge until we are crushed under its wheel. Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883), Russian writer

All the world's a stage, but we have missed the rehearsal. Anonymous

A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), scientist, philosopher and US founding father

The people I distrust most are those who want to improve our lives, but will accept only one course of action. Frank Herbert (1920-1986), American writer

Well, sir, I couldn't repair your brakes, so I just made your horn louder. Anonymous

The practice of yoga is not for ourselves alone, but for the Divine; its aim is to work out the will of the Divine in the world, to effect a spiritual transformation and to bring down a divine nature into the life of humanity. It is not personal ananda, but the bringing down of the divine ananda, the Satya Yuga, upon the Earth. Sri Aurobindo, (1872-1950), Indian philosopher and reformer

Everyone has willpower. It is inherent to the makeup of the physical-astral-mental-emotional body. The center of willpower is the manipura chakra, located at the solar plexus. Unlike other energies, the more willpower we use, the more willpower we have to use. This happens when we work a little harder

than we think we can, do a little more than we think we can do. By putting forth that extra effort, we build up a great willpower that we will always have with us, even in our next life, the next and the next. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

Did You Know?

A Temporary Vessel for Divinity

Akalasha is a metal pot with a large base and small neck, made of brass, copper, silver or gold, its mouth large enough to cradle a coconut. Ritually adorned, filled with water, topped with a coronet of mango leaves and a coconut, it is used as a temporary vessel for divinity. It holds the energy of the God or Goddess during puja, much as does a statue. In modern Hinduism, the kumbha can be used to represent any Deity.

The entire ritual arrangement, as illustrated, is called Purna-Kalasha or Purna-Kumbha. The kalasha is sometimes filled with coins, grain, gems or even gold. The mango-leaf coronet, with 5, 7, or 11 leaves, touches the water inside. A sacred thread is tied around the metal pot and incantations are intoned.

Worship with Purna-Kumbha dates from the time of Rigveda. Mythologically, the kalasha temporarily contain amrita, the elixir of life, bringing abundance, wisdom and immortality.

Rich in mysticism and symbolism, the Purna-Kalasha is associated with the five elements in sacred scriptures; with elements of the human body, such as the head, hair, the nerve system and the subtle energy centers, or chakras.

Basics of Hinduism

Vegetarianism, a Lifestyle of Reverence & Respect

Vegetarianism is a natural consequence of the principle of ahimsa, doing no harm. Plants, lacking nervous systems, do not endure the pain and terror that mortifies animals at slaughter. Hindus know that by injuring nature's other creatures we become a source of pain and sorrow. Through a harmless life, we can be a source of healing and joy.

Hindu scripture speaks clearly and forcefully on vegetarianism. The Yajur Veda (36.18) calls for kindness toward all creatures living on the Earth, in the air and in the water. The Tirukural, a 2,200-year-old masterpiece of ethics, says, "When a man realizes that meat is the butchered flesh of another creature, he will abstain from eating it." The Manu Samhita advises, "Having well considered the origin of flesh and the cruelty of fettering and slaying corporeal beings, let one entirely abstain from eating flesh." The yoga-infused verses of the Tirumantiram warn us, "The ignoble ones who eat flesh, death's agents bind them fast and push them quick into the fiery jaws of the lower worlds." Man's appetite for meat inflicts devastating harm on the Earth itself, stripping its precious forests to make way for pastures.

India's saints confirm that one cannot eat meat and live a peaceful, harmonious life. Sattvic eating, a diet composed mostly of fruits, nuts and milk, is the most conducive to meditation, bringing happiness and paving the road to the realization of one's Self.

The opposite of causing injury to others is to express compassion and love for all beings. Vegetarians, wielding noninjury as a principle of peace, are living reminders that humans should respect, and protect, every living being.