Quotes and Quips
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Quotes and Quips

True beauty consists in purity of heart. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

To drink pure water from a shallow pond, one should gently take the water from the surface without disturbing the mud at the bottom. If you desire to be pure, have firm faith and slowly go on with your devotional practices without wasting your energy in useless scriptural discussions and arguments. Keep your mind like clear water, for God is above all arguments. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)

Look at your mind dispassionately; this is enough to calm it. Only when it is quiet can you go beyond it. Do not keep the mind busy all the time, stop it and just be. If you give it a rest, it will settle down and recover its purity and strength. Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897-1981), Hindu sage

Transformation is more important than information. Sri Sakthi Amma, head of the Narayani Peedam of Malaikodi, Tamil Nadu, India

God defined is God denied. To define is to limit. Yet, the deepest of my consciousness calls on Him as pure love. Sadhu Vaswani, (1879-1966) founder of Sadhu Vaswani Mission

The caste system is opposed to the religion described in Vedanta. Caste is a social custom, and all our great preachers have tried to break it down. Every sect has preached against caste, and every time it has only riveted the chains. Caste is simply the outgrowth of the political institutions of India; it is a hereditary trade guild. Interaction with the West has broken caste more than any teaching. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir? John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), British economist

Well, it's a pleasure to meet you. Now, tell me, are you a Sunni or a Shia Hindu? An American congressman upon being introduced to the directors of the Hindu American Foundation in 2004. HAF frequently uses this story to illustrate the importance of their work.

We can do whatever we want to the environment and no harm will come, because the Bible says God won't allow the earth to be destroyed. John Shimkus, Republican congressman from Illinois, member of the Energy and Commerce Committee

Why do people who know the least know it the loudest?

When we were young kids growing up in America, we were told to always finish dinner. Our mothers said, 'Think of the starving children in India.' But now I tell my children: 'Finish your homework. Think of the children in India who will make you starve if you don't.' Thomas Friedman, columnist for The New York Times

Being upset reflects the lack of a strategy. Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, publisher of Hinduism Today

Worry is like a rocking chair. It keeps the mind occupied, but doesn't get you very far.

We are all bubbles in the ocean. The bubble is in the ocean; the ocean is in the bubble. Satguru Siva Yogaswami, (1872-1964) Sri Lankan mystic

Silence is not the absence of communication. It is saying everything without words.

Offer oblations in love, light golden lamps. Spread incense of fragrant wood and lighted camphor in all directions. Forget your worldly worries and meditate. Worshiping thus, there is nothing that you cannot attain. Worshiping thus, you shall inherit the wealth of Indra, heaven's king. Worshiping thus, you shall gain miraculous powers. Worshiping thus, you shall attain moksha. Tirumantiram, verses 1005-1006

Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Indian poet

Siva's devotees know a society is only as free as the freedom enjoyed by its minorities. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

Did You Know?

Ardra, the Dancing Star

Ardra is the star that names one of the nakshatras, the 27 lunar mansions of Hindu astrology. It is known as Siva's star, a cosmic representation of His third eye, red and intense.

Called Betelgeuse in the West (a medieval Arabic name), it fascinates and consternates modern astronomers. Though it is one of the most studied of suns, it defies description, as it changes in brightness, size and even shape with rythmic gusto.

Scientists call Ardra "mysterious" and "elusive" in their published works, informally calling this massive orb "the dancing star." Hindus might find the name apt--after all, Siva is Nataraja, King of Dance.

Ardra is part of the constellation of Orion, shining as the brightest red star in the sky. Because of its blazing choreography, there is no certainty about how far it is

from Earth, but the latest calculations point to around 600 light-years. Siva's star is colossal. For sake of comparison, if it were the size a football stadium, Earth would be a spec of dust, and the Sun no larger than a mango.

Ardra is nearing a transitional point in its evolution. Tomorrow, perhaps, or several thousand years from now--it will enter a supernova stage. In that act, marking the height of this cosmic performance, Ardra will convert most of itself into light and cosmic rays, sending its energy out to the universe in a blinding flash. When that happens, it will outshine the full moon in our sky for months and be visible even during the day.

After that, Ardra will be a small neutron star, unimaginably dense, spinning incredibly fast. Just a cup of matter from a neutron star's core weighs more than all the mountains of the Himalayas combined.

Basics of Hinduism

The Esoterics of Hindu Worship

Ring the bell, light the arati, chant the mantra and there He is--a God subtly manifest, a Lord of the Cosmos heeding your call. The mystical nature of worship is a mighty aspect of Hinduism, though simple in its mechanism. By humble aratis or through the soaring complexity of week-long rituals, the result is always a connection between worlds. Veils lift, doors open: God comes to us.

Hindus do not worship stone images. Those who say such things do not understand the inner workings of the temple. When invoked, the Deities arrive in their subtle bodies of light. They hover in and above the stone image and bless devotees, cleansing auras and easing karmas. If your third eye is open, you can see the God or Goddess and enjoy personal darshan. Many of our ancient saints, as well as contemporary devotees, have had such visions. You may not be able to see these subtle beings, but you can feel their presence as a rarified holy atmosphere. After such an experience, we leave with our mind filled and thrilled with its shakti in every nerve current of our body. A sanctified Hindu temple is filled with hosts of devas. When we return home, lighting an oil lamp brings along the power of the temple. This simple action gives the devas a focal point, inviting them into the home shrine to bless and protect the family.