Quotes and Quips
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Whoever knows It as 'I am Brahman' becomes the universe. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1.4.10)

Truthfulness alone constitutes the spiritual discipline of the kali yuga. If a man clings tenaciously to Truth, he ultimately realizes God. Without this regard for Truth, one gradually loses everything. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886)

Himself will create, Himself will protect, Himself will annihilate, Himself will obscure. Having done these, He will bestow liberation, pervading and ruling all. Tirumular, Saiva rishi, author of the Tirumantiram

No one outside us can harm us. It is only we who have the power to harm ourselves by our choices. Dada Vaswani, leader of Sadhu Vaswani Mission

All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark. Swami Vivekananda, (1863-1902) founder Ramakrishna Mission

The mind cannot know what is beyond itself; but the mind is known by what is beyond, that essence of timelessness and spacelessness which makes everything perceivable, yet itself is beyond perception. Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897-1981), Hindu sage

I shall not make my body a tomb for other animals. Leonardo da Vinci (1452--1519), Italian polimath, renaissance luminary, a vegetarian

A mountain is composed of tiny grains of earth. The ocean is made up of tiny drops of water. Even so, life is but an endless series of little details, actions, speeches and thoughts, the consequences of even the least of them is far-reaching. Swami Sivananda, (1887-1963) founder of the Divine Life Society

The outer worship is approaching God properly, presenting ourselves acceptably. It is to offer our love, our adoration and then to speak out our prayer, our petition. The inner worship is to enjoy God's presence and not rush away, to stay, to sit, to meditate awhile and bask in the shakti, endeavoring to realize the Self within. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001), founder of Hinduism Today

Did You Know?

A Plant-Based Diet

Perhaps they want to reduce their risk of heart disease, cancer and a long list of malaises, or just feel better. Perhaps they have read the recent U.N. study which said eating less meat is better for the planet; or maybe all those yoga poses have led to awareness of an all-pervasive God and the sacred concept of ahimsa. More and more people are finding excellent, and numerous, reasons to start eating their vegetables.

The newly named "plant-based diet" emphasizes the eating of vegetables of all kinds, specially over refined grains, making for meals that are colorful, healthy and fresh. In the US, though the population is trending toward vegetarianism, many are not using the v-word. It makes sense for purists--after all, if you are eating chickens once a week, you are not technically a vegetarian, and many Americans are choosing to take steps toward vegetarianism without fully committing to it. Hence, terms like flexitarian, for those who are vegetarians most of the time, or pescatarian for people who eat plants, dairy and fish. The vegetarian epithet is known to often evoke a negative reaction among meat eaters, making some new labels more acceptable alternatives. Actually, the English word vegetarian is a relatively modern, dating from the mid-1800s. Those who abstained from dead animals used to call their diet "Pythagorean," after the Greek philosopher who first advocated the practice in the Western world.

In some cases there is good reason for another name. When told by their doctors how much they could prolong their life expectancy by becoming vegetarians, patients--including open-heart surgery survivors--would stop eating animals and

dramatically increase the intake of white flour, white rice and bad fat. That diet is a recipe for further ill health.

Famous chefs like Alice Waters have embraced flexitarianism. Meatless Mondays have caught on in influential, trendy circles. Mark Bittman, the New York Times celebrated food critic, wrote about how reducing your meat intake equates to swapping your gas-guzzling SUV for a Prius. The most influential and articulate advocate of this nutritional shift may be author Michael Pollan, whose motto is: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."

America is in love with the idea. From there to delicious vegetable curries is just a small step.

Steve Jobs
A Genius Who Discovered His Intuition in India

When different cultures meet, a creative spark emerges, ready to be captured by those flexible enough to bring together the best of two worlds, geniuses like Steve Jobs, Apple's founder who passed away in 2011. Though Jobs was loosely affiliated with Zen Buddhism later in life, Hinduism and India were fundamental in forging his views of the world.

A nonconformist influenced by the romantic 1960s, wearing long hair, Jobs' dream was to visit India, inspired by his friend Robert Friedland who had just studied with Neem Karoli Baba. Arriving in Delhi in April 1974, he fell sick for days. After recovering Jobs headed to Haridwar, where a Kumbha Mela took him by surprise: "There were holy men all around, people riding elephants, you name it." But when Jobs arrived at Neem Karoli Baba's ashram, the guru had just passed away. Jobs stayed in a room, sleeping on the floor, where he found a forgotten copy of Paramhansa Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi--a book he would reread every year, the only one Jobs ever downloaded to his iPad 2.

Having missed the chance to see Neem Karoli Baba, Steve wandered. A peculiar incident, perhaps an initiation, marked his trip: "I was walking around in the Himalayas and I stumbled onto this religious festival. There was a baba who was the holy man of this particular festival, with his large group of followers. I could smell

good food. I hadn't been fortunate enough to smell good food for a long time, so I wandered up to pay my respects and eat some lunch. For some reason, this baba, upon seeing me sitting there eating, immediately walked over to me, sat down and burst out laughing. He didn't speak much English and I spoke a little Hindi, but he tried to carry on a conversation. Then he grabbed my arm and took me up this mountain trail. Here were hundreds of Indians who had traveled for thousands of miles to hang out with this guy for ten seconds and I stumble in for something to eat and he's dragging me up this mountain path. He laughed and laughed. We get to the top of this mountain and there's this little well and pond at the top of this mountain up in the Himalayas, and he dunks my head in the water and pulls out a razor from his pocket and starts to shave my head. I'm completely stunned. I'm still not sure why he did it."

Steve discovered intuition in India. "The most important thing that had struck me was that Western rational thought is not an innate human characteristic. The people in the Indian countryside don't use their intellect like we do, they use their intuition instead, and their intuition is far more developed than in the rest of the world. Intuition is a very powerful thing, more powerful than intellect, in my opinion. That's had a big impact on my work," Jobs later recalled to his biographer. "If you just sit and observe, you will see how restless your mind is. But over time it does calm, and when it does, there's room to hear more subtle things--that's when your intuition starts to blossom," he said.

After returning from India, Jobs and his friend Steve Wozniak founded Apple computer in his parents' garage. From there on, he changed the world.

Steve had two pictures of Neem Karoli Baba in his room when he died, 35 years after his India trip. His sister Mona Simpson wrote of his last conscious moments: "Before embarking, Steve looked at his sister Patty, then for a long time at his children, then at his life's partner, Laurene, and then over their shoulders past them. Then he spoke his final words:

"OH WOW. OH WOW. OH WOW."