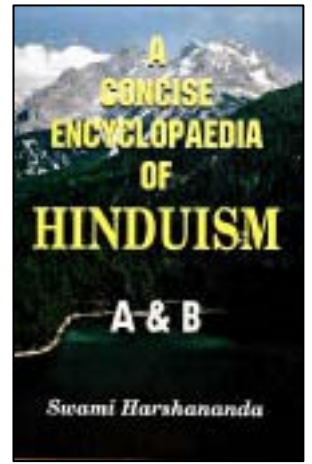


Address of Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, during the receiving of First copy of the Encyclopedia on Hinduism, Ramakrishna Math, Bangalore on 31/May/2008



Life Time Mission

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"
--- Swami Vivekananda

I am inspired to participate in the launch of Encyclopedia on Hinduism at Ramakrishna Math, Bangalore. My Pranams to Swamijis and greetings to all the distinguished guests. Evolution of three volumes of 'A Concise Encyclopedia of Hinduism' is indeed a remarkable lifelong contribution by Swami Harshanandaji. It symbolizes the thought that the past meets the present and creates the future through the Encyclopedia.



Evolution of Hinduism is said to be more than 7000 years ago and four Vedas have continuously enriched the religion in all aspects of human life: philosophy, religion, ethics, culture, arts, sciences and literature. I am sure, the encyclopedia will become authentic and researched reference material to the scholars, learners and practitioners alike which can further enhance the understanding of Hinduism for enriching the society.

God: personification of justice, love and mercy

I was reading in the first volume of encyclopedia under the caption 'God', where the author says 'the Hindu scriptures are eloquent while describing the qualities of God. He is all knowing and all powerful. He is the very personification of justice, love and beauty. In fact, He is the personification of all the blessed qualities that man can ever conceive of. He is ever ready to shower His grace, mercy and blessings on His creation. Really speaking, the very purpose of His creating this world is to shower His blessings on the creatures, to lead them gradually from less perfect states to more perfect ones. He is easily pleased by the prayers and supplication of His devotees. However, His response to these prayers is guided by the principle, that it should not be in conflict with cosmic law concerning the general welfare of the world and the law of Karma concerning the welfare of the particular individual'. The way Swamiji has personified God, is unique. I remember in my everyday Namaz, I start with Allah, the most benevolent, the most merciful and the most glorious.

Dharma

When I looked at the definition of Hinduism, I found that it is Dharma which upholds this created universe, supports it and sustains it, without which the universe will just fall apart. For each phase of life, Dharma prescribes different types of action. When I think about Dharma, I am reminded of a divine hymn on righteousness.

Righteousness

"Where there is righteousness in the heart
There is beauty in the character.
When there is beauty in the character,
There is harmony in the home.
When there is harmony in the home,
There is order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There is peace in the world."

It is a beautiful connectivity between heart, character, nation and the world. In a society we have to build righteousness among all its constituents. For the society as a whole to be righteous we need creation of righteousness in family, righteousness in education, righteousness in service, righteousness in career, righteousness in business and industry, righteousness in civil administration, righteousness in politics, righteousness in government, righteousness in law and order, righteousness in justice. In this context, I would like to narrate my experience of being in the divine environment in the company of a joint family in Meerut radiating happiness and smiles.

In the service of God

In Meerut, I have come to know about a functional joint family system model called Grihastha Ashram having over 60 to 70 members. This system is working on three important principles. (a) Treating everyone as a manifestation of God. (b) Implicit faith in the mercy of God. (c) Steadfast dependence on the chanting of his name.

Since I had studied so much of this Meerut spiritual family, I visited the family during my recent trip to Meerut. I saw the family consisting of grand-parents to grand-children and extended family had come from many parts of Meerut starting from young and experienced. All of them explained how their life got transformed after coming into contact with this family. I was observing how they had achieved this transformation. When I observed during their Bhajan, I found that they all enjoyed every verse and were bubbling with enthusiasm. In short during the prayer period the whole family was in a new state of cheerfulness. When I interacted with the members, there was a revelation; whatever they do, they did for the God. Their work is highly interlinked with divinity. For example, gardener feels, he is gardening to get the flowers for worshipping of the God. The decorator of the divine place is doing the mission of beautifying the divine place. The Keertan group of the family composed the vocal music and used the musical instruments to generate appropriate tunes to suit the divine environment. The divine rhythm emanates because they are singing the glories of God with passion. For the family head, all the family members and who assembled there, were all image of the God. Regarding their profession, each member whether undergoing education or a career, everyone felt that the divine family environment had enhanced their performance capacity in every activity and made them happy and contented.

This type of divine environment of joint family system definitely may be existing in many places in the country in many religious environments. Definitely harmony in the homes will bring order in the nation and thereby peace in the world.

Dear Friends, I have a special connectivity with Ramakrishna Mission. I have visited number of Ramakrishna Mission Institutions like spiritual centers, schools, hospitals, orphanages and I have also participated number of times in the Youth Day celebrations in different parts of the country on Swami Vivekananda birthday. Ramakrishna Mission is also famous for bringing out multi-religious research publications. I was always inspired by the spirituals statements of Sri Ramakrishnaji and Swami Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishnaji says 'There are pearls in the deep sea, but one must hazard all to find them. If diving once does not bring you pearls, you need not therefore conclude that the sea is without them. Dive again and again. You are sure to be rewarded in the end. So is it with the finding of the Lord in this world. If your first attempt proves fruitless, do not lose heart. Persevere in your efforts. You are sure to realize Him at last. What a beautiful message for humanity to be perseverant in their tasks. Swami Vivekananda's message is unique and the world needs it. When he says, "My name should not be made prominent. It is my ideas that I want to be realized". Ramakrishna Mission centers in the country and the abroad are really radiating these messages.

As I am in this serene environment, let me recite my humble peace prayer.

Conclusion

MY PRAYER FOR PEACE

'Oh Almighty, create thoughts and actions
in the minds of the people of my nation
so that they live united.

Oh Almighty, bless my people
a path of life with righteousness
as righteousness gives the strength of character.

Help all religious leaders of my country to
give strength to the people to combat the divisive forces.

Guide my people to develop an attitude to appreciate different
ideologies and transform enmity among individuals,
organizations and nations, into friendliness and harmony.

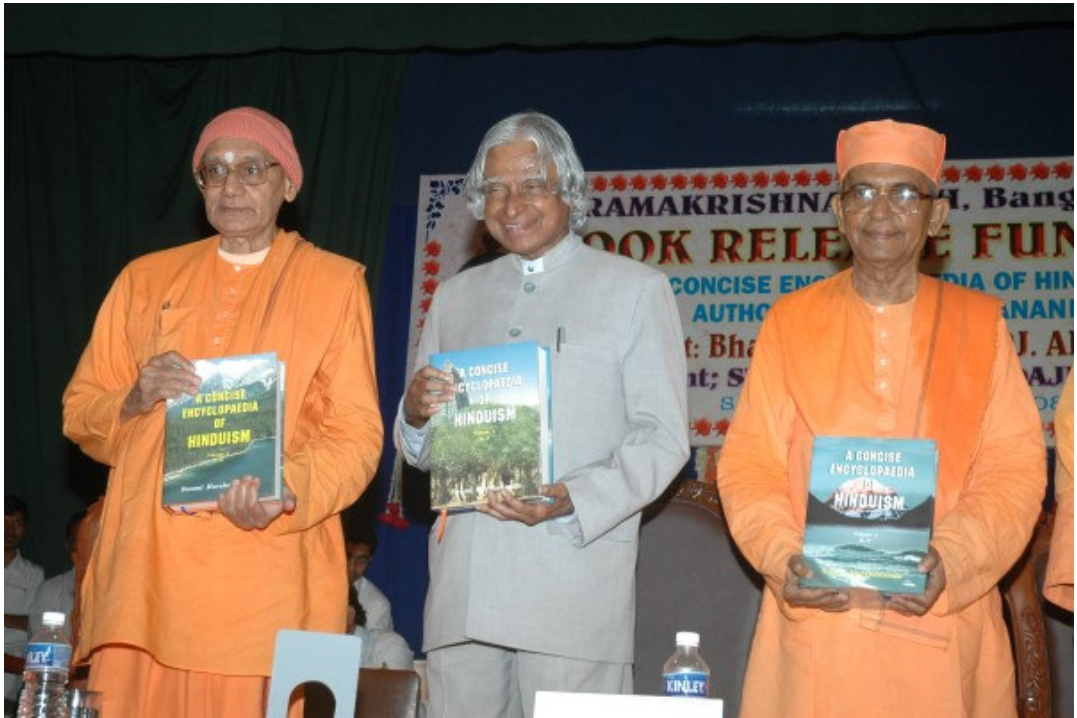
Oh almighty, terrorism is a curse to the humanity
And the people who remove innocent lives indeed are insane
Let the pain of the people transform the cruel minds.

Oh God, bless my people to work with perseverance to
transform the country into a peaceful and prosperous nation.'

With these words, I am very happy to receive the first copy of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism by Swami Harshanandaji. My best wishes to Ramakrishna Mission for success in the mission of promoting unity of minds through spirituality.

May God Bless you.

Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam,
31.05.2008



Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, former President of India, visited **Bangalore** Math on 31 May and released the book *A Concise Encyclopaedia of Hinduism* (in three volumes, by Swami Harshananda). Swami Prabhanandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, presided over the function.