



Namaste

We welcome you to the Generation OM Inaugural Dinner & Dance Fundraiser. Generation OM's stated aim is to provide scholarships to American Hindu undergraduate students while providing them with tools and activities that support their education and understanding of Hinduism and its values. College scholarships will be awarded initially to students based in Central Florida.

Tonight we will be awarding a scholarship to an American Hindu student, based in Central Florida, who is about to commence the quest for an undergraduate degree at The University of Florida. The successful applicant had achieved a very strong GPA and has been involved in numerous community volunteer projects. Reading the Generation OM scholarship application and responses to being a Hindu in America along with the answers to the summary points of view was indeed a pleasure. Once the Board of Directors had a chance to interview the candidate, they all knew that they were on the right mission. They had found the first recipient of the Generation OM scholarship award.



You will soon meet the successful American Hindu student who has been awarded Generation OM's 2009 academic scholarship amounting to \$6,000.00. Generation OM's aim will be to provide scholarships and support to such students.

We do need your help in meeting this goal. With your help, we can build a better tomorrow, a better life and a better society. Your donations will be used to provide scholarships to American Hindu students who are undertaking undergraduate degrees and help them gain a better understanding of Hinduism and its far reaching effects on all aspects of life.

American Hindu students who receive scholarship grants will also be expected to adhere to the Generation OM Mission statement and become Youth Ambassadors for the organization, taking an active part in our events. They will exemplify a life of peace and harmony with all communities in America and become role models for the Hindu community; they will show how to function in "America's Society," and retain their ethnic Hindu identity and culture.

Donate generously and help us educate our American Hindu students, preparing them for the changes and challenges of the 21st century and the quest to make our world a better and peaceful place.

Thank you.

Mission Statement

**We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give.**

Sir Winston Churchill

I came across the above quote many years ago while reading the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Recent research has revealed that this quote was in fact by Sir Winston Churchill (British politician 1874 - 1965). This quote has significantly influenced my thoughts and outlook on life, hence the choice for it being the Mission Statement for Generation OM.

We each have our own interpretation of what message the quote conveys. John Maxwell in his book *Your Roadmap to Success* summarizes his understanding as:

Helping others is something you can start doing today, whether it's spending more time with your family, developing an employee who shows potential, helping people in the community, or putting your own desires on hold to benefit your team.

The key is to find your purpose and help others while you're pursuing it. As entertainer Danny Thomas said: "All of us are born for a reason, but all of us don't discover why. Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others."

Issue # 1 August 9th 2009

As per Hindu custom, we begin any task by first invoking God. Invocations are chants and prayers by which we "invoke" the presence of the Deity (representing a form of the Supreme Power God). By such invocation, God and the devotees are being brought together, in touch. Prayers of invocation often sing out the greatness of the Deity, their known attributes and qualities.

Lord Ganesha is one of the most prominent deities in Hinduism. Ganesha has the unique distinction that his name is always invoked before any other God's name in any prayer service. Legend has it that Lord Ganesha received this distinction as a blessing from his parents, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Ganesha is designated as the chief (-eesha) of all of Lord Shiva's ganas (servers) - hence his name, Ganesha.

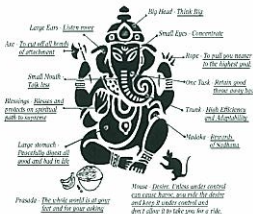
Prayer to Lord Ganesha

**Vakratunda Mahakaya
Suryakoti Samaprabha,
Nirvighnam Kuru Me Deva
Sarvakaryeshhu Sarvada**

*"O Ganesha - Ganapati, One
with a curved trunk, a large
body, and a brilliance equal to a
million suns!"*

*O God, please always make all
my undertakings free from
obstacles"*

Ganesha Symbolism



GAYATRI MANTRA

Gayatri Mantra (the mother of the vedas) is the foremost mantra in Hinduism and Hindu beliefs. It inspires wisdom and its basic meaning is that "May the Almighty God illuminate our intellect to lead us along the righteous path". The mantra is also a prayer to the "giver of light and life" - the sun (savitur). Gayatri Mantra is from Rigveda.

**Aum Bhur Bhuvah Swah
Tat Savitur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi
Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat**

The following are two basic translations:

Oh God! Thou art the Giver of Life, Remover of pain and sorrow, The Bestower of happiness, Oh Creator of the Universe, May we receive thy supreme sin-destroying light, May Thou guide our intellect in the right direction.

Oh God, the Protector, the basis of all life, Who is self-existent, Who is free from all pains and Whose contact frees the soul from all troubles, Who pervades the Universe and sustains all, the Creator and Energizer of the whole Universe, the Giver of happiness, Who is worthy of acceptance, the most excellent, Who is Pure and the Purifier of all, let us embrace that very God, so that He may direct our mental faculties in the right direction.

Origin, Benefits and Chanting of the Gayatri Mantra

The Vedas are widely considered to be the source of all true knowledge, the word "Veda" itself meaning "Knowledge". Gayatri Devi, the five-faced Goddess, is said to have domain over the five senses or pranas, and

protects these five life-forces of those who chant the Gayatri Mantra. In her role as the protector, Gayatri is referred to as Savitri.

Gayatri Devi is said to have given to mankind the "Gayatri Mantra", also known as the "Guru Mantra" or the "Savitri Mantra". It is one of the oldest mantras, and generally thought of as being amongst the highest and most powerful. This mantra is therefore often referred to as "the Mother of the Vedas". ***In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna had proclaimed to Arjuna - "Among all the mantras, I am the Gayatri"***

Rishis selected the words of the Gayatri Mantra and arranged them so that they not only convey meaning but also create specific power of righteous wisdom through their utterance. The ideal times for chanting the mantra are three times a day - at dawn, mid-day, and at dusk. These times are known as the three sandhyas - morning, mid-day and evening. The maximum benefit of chanting the mantra is said to be obtained by chanting it 108 times. However, one may chant it for 3, 9, or 18 times when pressed for time. The syllables of the mantra are said to affect positively all the chakras or energy centers in the human body - hence, proper pronunciation and enunciation are very important.

Chanting of Gayatri Mantra removes all obstacles in our path to increased wisdom and spiritual growth and development. The teachings and powers incorporated in the Gayatri Mantra fulfill this purpose. Righteous wisdom starts emerging soon after Jap (recitation) of the Gayatri Mantra is performed. According to Chandogya Upanisad 3.12.1,2,5 (Qualities of Gayatri), this entire creation is Gayatri...and the Gayatri is speech - for speech sings (gayati) and protects (trayati) this entire creation. Gayatri indeed is all this, whatever being exists. Speech indeed is Gayatri; for speech indeed sings and removes fear of all this that exists.

Hence the Gayatri is unique in that it embodies the three concepts of stotra (singing the praise and glory of God), dhyana (meditation) and praarthana (prayer).



Namaste

Namaste is the most popular Hindu greeting, performed by pressing the two hands together and holding them near the heart with the head gently bowed as one says:

"Namaste"

What Does It Mean?

"I bow to you in reverential salutation".

The word is derived from Sanskrit (namas): to bow, obeisance, reverential salutation, and (te): "to you". Namaskar is considered a slightly more formal version than Namaste but both express deep respect. The whole act communicates, **"You and I are one. I salute, honor and worship the God within you."** It also means, **"I prostrate myself before you who is the mirror-image of me, with body, mind and soul".**

I like the following explanation of the meaning of the Hindu greeting of "Namaste":

"I honor that place in you where the universe resides, I honor that place in you of love, of light, of truth, of peace. I honor that place within you where, if you are in that place in you, and I am in that place in me, there is only one of us".

This greeting makes a Hindu remind himself that God is everywhere and in every human being we meet anywhere at any time.

Upon departure only the wordless hands-folded gesture is made.



What type of Scholarship Is Generation OM awarding?

Generation OM Scholarships are academic scholarships awarded to American Hindu undergraduate students (currently those based in Central Florida). Scholarships are "Merit" based and not "Needs" based. Our scholarships range from \$4,000 to \$6,000 and are paid annually (over 4 years). Recipients have to continue to qualify in order to continue to receive the scholarship. Once the Applicant has been selected based upon the submitted application, the Generation OM Board of Directors interviews recipients and determines whether the base scholarship needs to be increased depending upon the individual student's needs, although that is not the starting criteria.

During CY 2003/2004 I was questioned by my daughter as to why there were no scholarships for "American Indians". Her friends were getting such incentives from their various faith based organizations, where could she apply? There were scholarships for African-American students, for Jewish students, for Muslim students, for various Christian Faith based students, but none for American Indians like her. Upon research, I confirmed that this was indeed the case. The "American Indian" scholarships required that you be part (1/6th or 1/8th) Native Indian. There was nothing for American Hindu students. I felt strongly that there should be an incentive to encourage excellence in our American Hindu undergraduate students as well as tools and activities that support and

further their education and understanding of Hinduism and its values. The Generation OM scholarship's initial target group would be seven counties in Central Florida.

Why Hindu? Why not Sikhs, or Buddhists, or Jains or let's go regional, why not Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi etc.? This is perhaps best summarized by Dr. Babu Suseelan *"We have seen Hindus in America identifying themselves as Tamils, Telugus, Nair, Ezhavas, and Gujarati, Marathas, Punjabis and Brahmins. Why can't they identify themselves as Hindus? Compared to other ethnic immigrant groups, Hindus have significant history, culture and sacred tradition. Hindu culture and identity are interrelated. People who identify themselves as Hindus can negotiate life passages in this increasingly individualistic, complex and chaotic world."*

Who is a "Hindu"? Numerous authorities have attempted to answer this question. There really is no one correct answer. Koenraad Elst in his book "Voice of India confirms this "there is no simple solution for the complex question". We leave it up to the individual and their personal beliefs. The individual knows best!

There are numerous causes one can follow. We have chosen this and hope that our scholarships will provide the right incentive to American Hindu students and help guide them to a better tomorrow. If only one of them goes on to be tomorrow's leader, say a State Governor, Supreme Court Judge or why not even President of the USA, while maintaining the teachings and living a life broadly based around Hinduism, Generation OM would have played its role and hopefully achieved its aim and mission.

Pardeep K. Vedi, Co-Founder

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The Board of Directors of Generation OM, Inc. sincerely thank our Corporate Sponsors. We also take this opportunity to thank Hameant Raghubir, Specialty Events Manager, Orlando Marriott Lake Mary for working with us to host our Inaugural Dinner & Dance Fundraiser at this quality hotel.

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