

Representation of Indian Spirituality in The United States: Contributions of Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda

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The nineteenth century America witnessed an unprecedented growth in philology, while Indian philosophy had found its place in American Academia. For almost a century, American scholars such as Ralph W. Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, Wilt Wiltman had read, debated, and interpreted Hinduism, the ancient texts and the religious practices of India. But the actual representation of ancient Indian spirituality and its meaning became possible only when spiritual leaders from India reached America. To understand the foundation of Indian spirituality and practices in the United States, the place of two important figures must be examined—Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda. These two personalities were the pioneers in sowing the seeds of Indian spirituality in the American soil. They presented a unique way to explain religion and the spirituality of ancient India that the West had never encountered before. Both monks had charisma and brilliant minds that enabled them to gather thousands of people to their presentations in America. They were not only well educated but were also formally trained for the monastic order of the Hindu tradition under two great masters of India at that point in time and had broad views of all the world's religions.

Swami Vivekananda had been trained under Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a renowned spiritual teacher, and mystic in Dakshineswar, Calcutta (now Kolkata). Sri Ramakrishna was also an admirer of Islam and Christianity and considered them also as different paths that can lead one to God.¹ Paramahansa Yogananda was trained under Swami Sri Yukteswar, a monk possessed of a great wisdom and intelligence and also a profound astrologer in Serampore, near Kolkata. He had a keen interest in the scientific innovations that were happening in the West. Sri Yukteswar had, in fact, already written a book in 1895, *The Holy Science*, in which

he drew a parallel between the teachings in the Vedas and the teachings of the Holy Bible.²

Trained under these renowned Masters, Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda were well-equipped to represent ancient Indian spirituality in the United States. People in the West, particularly in America, had witnessed huge material advancement, even though religion and economic growth had always moved side by side in America. Because of their charisma and profound understanding of spirituality, these two spiritual giants initially drew thousands of Americans who belonged to various Evangelical Christian sects.

This paper focuses on the first encounter of America with these spiritual gurus from India. It explains why people in America were receptive to these leaders from the very beginning of their stay in America. There will also be an emphasis on the insight they provided to the West, their interest in explaining a 5000-year-old continuous spiritual tradition. The paper also spells out some of the peculiar features of America which compelled these spiritual masters to choose America as the platform to introduce their worldwide mission. Instead of dealing in depth about the message that yoga had for Americans, it will examine the speeches, writings, and the organizations that they established. A section will discuss the importance of the World Parliament of Religions in introducing Hindu philosophy and yoga to the United States. The objective of this paper is to show how the approach of these gurus and their organizations was ecumenical, not evangelical. While Swami Vivekananda focused on the introduction of Hinduism through a Vedantic approach, Paramahansa Yogananda introduced a full-fledged yogic philosophy, along with spiritual practices and meditation techniques which were derived from Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Why America?

It is also important to understand that the early spiritual leaders from India found America to be the most fertile

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ground in the world to disseminate their teachings. This in a way portrays the uniqueness of the United States in contrast to other nations of the occidental world. The receptivity in nineteenth century America towards Indian philosophy was one such important development. Since its foundation as a beacon of freedom for the modern world, once it broke off from the imperialist power of Britain and declared itself independent in 1776, America became an inspiration for other colonies, including India, which longed to throw off its British oppressors.

The first amendment of the American Constitution gave respect to all religious denominations, giving them space, legality, and the right environment to grow without the interference of the State.³ This model of "faith neutrality" was one of the milestones for freedom of religion and democracy in the modern world.⁴ This faith neutrality also gave all religious denominations an opportunity to develop, but it was attached to a condition of performance. If a denomination was unable to satisfy the spiritual needs of certain people, then they were free to move to other denominations or religious practices. But if a religious or spiritual practice was capable enough to deliver "the spiritual goods" and people were happy, then it was welcomed and had a good future in the United States.

During this same period, India was undergoing a religious and a spiritual transformation. Movements like Brahmo Samaj had initiated the Hindu Renaissance, which was consolidating Hinduism into one unified form. It was also bringing reforms to eradicate orthodox and superstitious elements from Hinduism that had sprouted over the course of time and degraded religion to a very low level. In 1861, Kriya Yoga, the highest form of Yoga was revived in India by two saints, Sri Mahavatar Babaji and Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, for its worldwide dispensation.⁵ Teachers like Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri were very enthusiastic about the spiritual and material progress of the West and envisioned a bridge between the material development of the United States and the spiritual development of India. The writings of Indian reformists such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy had gained acceptance and appreciation among the Unitarians and the Transcendentalists in 19th century America. All these factors combined to make the United States the first choice among spiritual leaders as a testing ground for the teachings and spiritual practices of ancient India.

The World Parliament of Religions and Breaking of Stereotypes

As a result of the growth of philology and comparative studies of various religions in America, curiosity about

the world's major religions increased exponentially. The modernization of transportation, especially ships and ocean liners, made travel to foreign lands much more convenient. These advancements had set the platform in America to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America in 1893 in a very unique and magnificent manner.⁶ Under the administration of John Henry Barrows, the General Committee of the Congress of Religion, later named the World's Parliament of Religions, was organized for the World's Columbian Exposition. More than three thousand invitations were sent to various religious leaders across the world in 1891. Few responded.⁷ It was to be a one of a kind of religious event in the history of mankind. Some of the major objectives of organizing this event were:

1. To bring together in conference, for the first time in history, the leading representatives of the great historic religions of the world.
2. To show to men, in the most impressive way, what and how many important truths the various religions hold and teach in common.
3. To promote and deepen the spirit of human brotherhood among religious men of diverse faiths, through friendly conference and mutual good understanding, while not seeking to foster the temper of indifferentism, and not striving to achieve any formal and outward unity.
4. To set forth, by those most competent to speak, what are deemed the important distinctive truths held and taught by each religion, and by the various chief branches of Christendom."⁸

These objectives demonstrated the impact of the advancement of comparative religious studies in America in the nineteenth century. This was due to a great extent to the works of various scholars, including the Unitarians and the Transcendentalists, who advocated a universal form of religion. They had studied oriental religions to get a holistic understanding of the world's major religions. The parliament gave formal recognition to the existence of other religions, other than Christianity.

There were a number of issues that emerged during the organization of this event. As the points of view among intellectuals about these religions were divided, so were the reactions to the invitation of the World's Parliament of Religions. Many Evangelical churches, including the Presbyterian church to which the chief architect of this event, John Henry Barrows, belonged, boycotted the event. The Archbishop of Canterbury also rejected this idea by making claims of Christianity being the only true religion.⁹ But overall, the invitation, various scholars and religious teachers of various countries welcomed the invitation for this event. Scholars like Max

Muller expressed their enthusiasm for the organization of such a spectacular event. Although Christian leaders got the maximum representation in the Parliament, nine other great religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Judaism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Zoroastrianism—got a global platform to speak about their religions. The event was organized to find out the commonalities among these religions of the world, but at the same time the deeper agenda was to reaffirm Christian Supremacy over others.¹⁰

This event proved remarkable as the outcomes were not completely in accordance with what the organizers had thought. The Asian religious leaders presented their religion in a way that rejected Christian supremacy. The Asian ways of looking towards the religions were as different paths leading to the same Supreme God. This surprised the primarily Christian audience. These religious leaders made a deep impression not only in the mindset of America but on the whole West. One such prominent personality was Swami Vivekananda. He lauded Hinduism for being the most ancient religion, as well as for being very progressive.

Swami Vivekananda's address to the "Sisters and Brothers of America"

Swami Vivekananda made a very strong impression on America and all of the Western world through his first introductory speech at the World Parliament of Religions. There were certain qualities of Swami Vivekananda that made the audience driven towards Indian spirituality. On 11 September 1893, with his first sentence, in which he addressed the audience as the "sisters and brothers of America," he got a huge round of applause from the audience. His opening remarks had enough impact to make the audience attentive towards this Hindu monk. He was one of the fascinating speakers of the event, possessing deep spiritual insight, fervent eloquence, and a colorful personality as he elucidated Vedantic interpretations of India's spiritual culture.¹¹ The people of America and the rest of the modern world were astonished by this narrative. His speeches made a significant impact on many American minds.

The Native Version

Until Swami Vivekananda introduced Hinduism and its spiritual legacy to America, whatever was known about India was known only through secondary sources that were mixed with a lot of assumptions. All the scholarly works that were done in order to study Hinduism in the nineteenth century were very much segregated. Every scholar was in a way picking and choosing from Hindu

and Buddhist texts as per their understanding or their convenience. The reforms that took place in India in the nineteenth century in order to revive Hinduism had to a great extent unified the ideas of Hindu philosophy.

Taking charge as the spokesperson of ancient Indian spirituality and the wisdom of the *Vedanta* and *Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Vivekananda gave a detailed explanation of the legacy of Hinduism, calling it "the most ancient order of monks" and the "mother of all religions."¹² The past few centuries had witnessed a Christian dominated world that was functional through various missionary activities and colonization. In this scenario, hardly anybody in the Western world had heard the voices of ancient Indian wisdom. They had never thought that the religion and spirituality of a colony could be so powerful and have such a rich legacy. Vivekananda explained how Hinduism had emerged from revelation in the form of Vedas and despite the emergence of so many sects in due course of time, it had retained its relevance by assimilating them.¹³ He thoroughly explained the concept behind the idol worship in India and also rejected the idea of Hinduism being a polytheistic religion.

Inclusivity

Tolerance and acceptance were the underlying themes of the World Parliament of Religions. Swami Vivekananda emphasized them in order to explain Hinduism. In fact, he did not hesitate in designating Hinduism as the harbinger of these concepts. He said: "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth."¹⁴ This was still the nineteenth century and there were still exclusionary laws existing in the United States that did not treat people of different faiths equally. Vivekananda took exception to them: "As the different streams having their sources in different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."¹⁵

A Non-Proselytizing Stand with Strength:

In his concluding speech at the World Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda took a firm stand against the practice of religious conversion. He directly targeted the missionaries who were proselytizing people around the globe. He questioned their lack of understanding about the real goal of a religion and their lack of sensitivity toward the other great religions of the world. He said, "But if anyone here hopes that this unity will come by the

triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say, "Brother, yours is an impossible hope." Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid."¹⁶ He advocated that real progress in this regard can be done by assimilating each other's religious spirits while maintaining one's own religious individuality.¹⁷

Vedanta Society and the Epistemology of Vedanta

Swami Vivekananda established the first organization in the United States that was based on Vedantic teachings and meditation. This was the first formal set-up in America about the teachings and practices of ancient Indian spirituality based on Vedanta.¹⁸ The first branch opened in the New York City in 1894 and was known as the Vedanta Society of New York.¹⁹ The title of his Vedanta society enshrines a verse from Rig Veda: "*Ekam sad, vipra bahudha vadanti,*" which means, "Truth is One, sages call it variously."²⁰ Swami Vivekananda also wrote a number of books which explained the practicality of Vedanta. He explained the four different forms of Yoga, namely, *Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Raja Yoga*. Swami Vivekananda accepted the importance of Hatha yoga, but he said it was important primarily in making one's body fit so that it can aid in one's spiritual progress. He put more emphasis on the meditational aspect of yoga.²¹ Although Swami Vivekananda's stay in America was very short and he passed away in 1902, his work had a deep influence in broadening America's mindset in understanding India's ancient legacy.

Swami Rama Tirtha and Shri Yogendra

Swami Rama Tirtha, another advanced yogi from India and an expert on Vedanta, visited America in 1902 during his world tour from Tokyo to Toronto. Although his stay in the US was limited to just one-and-a-half year, he had a deep influence on those with whom he came into contact.²² Like Swami Vivekananda, he envisioned the benefit that both East and West could harness from each other. He advocated the practicality of Vedantic teachings. He explained the concepts of perfect morality and total abstinence. He described how by "... keeping the body in active struggle and the mind in rest and loving abstinence means salvation from sin and sorrow, right here in this very life."²³

While Swami Rama Tirtha stressed the actual practice of Vedantic teachings, Shri Yogendra, a Hatha yoga expert who visited America in 1919, laid primary importance on spreading awareness about Hatha Yoga, which he felt could help people in the West keep physically fit.

Unlike Swami Vivekananda, he did not focus much on the spiritual aspect of Yoga. Instead, he laid more emphasis on its physical healing dimensions.²⁴ Invited by certain New York socialites who were enthusiastic about the natural cure, he demonstrated many *asanas, pranayamas, and siddhis* as a part of yogic purification of the body, which completely astonished them. His demonstrations—like the swelling of the lungs, control of body temperature, and the generation of electric stream from his fingers—got coverage in the *World Magazine*.²⁵ Shri Yogendra was able to form the 'Yoga Institute of America' in 1920 in New York. His experience in America was not very satisfactory, for he found it very difficult to make Americans understand this new philosophy. After teaching and explaining Hatha Yoga for almost three years on the East Coast, he returned to India in 1922.²⁶

Paramahansa Yogananda's Arrival and the Formal Establishment of Yoga-Meditation in America

Swami Vivekananda successfully planted the seeds of Vedanta and meditation in the American minds. Swami Rama Tirtha complemented the works of Swami Vivekananda and Shri Yogendra made an attempt to introduce Hatha Yoga in America. But yoga in its full-fledged form had yet not been established in the United States. In 1920, Paramahansa Yogananda arrived in Boston to participate in the International Congress of Religious Liberals. Paramahansa Yogananda's arrival was a landmark in the establishment of Yoga meditation in America. For he brought the teachings and practices of Raja-Yoga, the "royal" science of Yoga to America. He not only brought the yogic teachings from India, he also picked out key yogic principles underlying the scriptures of other religions, particularly the *Holy Bible*. His teachings were a complete package of the eightfold path of yogic science, including the highest form of Yoga meditation, known as the *Kriya Yoga*. The seeds of yoga that Paramahansa Yogananda planted in America were a combination of the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of Yoga. What Swami Vivekananda did for the first-hand introduction of Vedantic philosophy and overall Hinduism, Paramahansa Yogananda did for Yoga meditation.

His first lecture at the International Congress of Religious Liberals was published in the form of a book called *The Science of Religion*. His lectures drew a large number of Americans who later became his lifelong followers. There were various elements in his maiden speech and his following lecture tours across the United States that were unique and impactful. His teachings helped Americans understand the Yogic philosophy and its practices.

A Universal Definition of Religion

Paramahansa Yogananda also provided a psychological definition of religion, describing it as an inward experience and not merely the objective definition generally given for religion which is based on theology.²⁷ This was not a conventional explanation of religion. Separating the notion of religion from dogmas, he reduced the differences among various religions as the result of different geographical locations and other extraneous circumstances.²⁸ These factors affected intellectualism and mentality of the various nations which in turn determined the formation of various religions of the world.²⁹ He explained that it was not possible to have the same religious customs and traditions from country to country. He described sectarianism as the result of man's limited understanding of the deeper esoteric meaning of religious doctrines and the tendency to stick rigidly just to their exoteric meaning.³⁰ Connecting religion with the goal of life, which was bliss and this bliss was nothing but God, he defined it as "the permanent removal of pain and the realization of Bliss, or God."³¹ This was a very unusual definition of religion. Religion to him was not a divisive force which was based on certain dogmas; rather it was something that could be experienced and was the ultimate goal of every human being.

The Religious Methods

Paramahansa Yogananda not only defined these terms but he also explained the various religious methods through which these concepts could be realized. First, he explained the evolution of the spiritual self through the enhanced development of the thought process. In India, the highest form of this intellectual method, known as *Jnana yoga*, was practiced in order to attain self-realization and to reach the tranquility of the spirit beyond thought and bodily sensation.³² Secondly, he explained the devotional method which includes all forms of prayers and worship. He said that this method depends upon the depth of the prayer. Thirdly, he explained the scientific method of meditation, describing it as a state of conscious sleep in which one is practically able to control the sensory organs and interiorize oneself. Finally, he shared the most important aspect of his teachings, which was the scientific method or the yogic method. Instead of using a Sanskrit verse, he quoted Saint Paul's words in Corinthians, 15: 31, "I die daily." In his yogic interpretation, he described St. Paul as having attained a high spiritual level where he was able to control his body and mind.³³ This was very exotic way to explain an Eastern spiritual practice by correlating it with the Bible.

Yoga as Universal

Paramahansa Yogananda took on the task of proving how Yoga was for all human beings, irrespective of their place of origin. He did not simply take the system of Yoga and describe it only through Hindu philosophy. Rather he explained the elements of Yoga that were present in all religions, even if those religions originated in different times and places. He took a step-by-step approach in order to make people understand the roots of all religions, which was nothing but finding God. He elucidated that Yoga had the ability to make man perceive the truth behind all religions.³⁴ He made people in America understand that the techniques of Yoga were for all. It was not limited to the people of the East or to a particular religion. Instead, it was for all mankind, whether they were Easterners or Westerners.³⁵ In his lectures, he consistently showed the commonalities that lie behind all religions. He showed how the teachings in the Bible and in the Hindu scriptures, like the *Bhagavad Gita* and Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, had the same deep meaning, even if outwardly they seemed completely distinct from each other. This was his key to make Western minds receptive towards his teachings.

Another important element of his teachings were the Yogic and meditation techniques which he taught. They drew large numbers of people towards him who wanted a direct experience of God. He also emphasized that Hatha Yoga was an essential prerequisite to keeping the body and mind healthy and preparing it to practice the meditation techniques of Raja Yoga, which allowed followers to attain the highest goal of Yoga science, which was God-Realization. As he said, "Anyone who has established God in his soul temple is a yogi. He can say, with me, that Yoga is for the East, North, South, and West—for all people, that they may follow the byways of theology to join the highway of Yoga. The right road leads to the palace of God's bliss. He who once reaches there shall go no more out."³⁶

Yoga Needed for a Balanced Modern Life

Paramahansa Yogananda emphasized the need of Yoga in the modern life. He stressed the need of complete development of body, mind, and soul that was possible through a balanced life. He explained that it was important for Americans to simplify their lives. He cited the example of Henry Ford's proposal of a five-day work-week, arguing that this was needed for people to relax and get out of the city environment so that they could devote that time to their personal development.³⁷ This personal development could be achieved by knowing the 'art of living.' This 'art of living' could be nurtured especially

on children by giving equal attention to learning the skills to earn money and on learning the methods of spiritual growth. Americans knew how to make money and they were also religious for most of them attended sermons and masses. The difference that Paramahansa Yogananda made was his emphasis on the methods that could practically enhance the spiritual progress of a person. And this method was Yoga meditation. He said that sermons can temporarily inspire the minds of children, but concentrating the mind through meditation can give everlasting results.³⁸

Lecture Series across the US and the Foundation of Self-Realization Fellowship

Paramahansa Yogananda received huge ovations from the audiences wherever he spoke. He got invitations to deliver lectures at different parts of the country. In the midst of it, the first centre of Self-Realization Fellowship was established in Waltham, Massachusetts, near Boston, in 1922. Finally, in 1925, the international headquarters of SRF was founded in Los Angeles.³⁹ This was the first organization in America that was fully dedicated to the dissemination of Yogic teachings and practices. Some of the 'aims and ideals' of this organization were as follows:

1. To disseminate among the nations a knowledge of definite scientific techniques for attaining direct personal experience of God.
2. To reveal the complete harmony and basic oneness of original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ and original Yoga as taught by Bhagavan Krishna; and to show that these principles of truth are the common scientific foundation of all true religions.
3. To point out the one divine highway to which all paths of true religious beliefs eventually lead: the highway of daily, scientific, devotional meditation on God.
4. To liberate man from his threefold suffering: physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual ignorance.
5. To unite science and religion through realization of the unity of their underlying principles.
6. To advocate cultural and spiritual understanding between East and West, and the exchange of their finest distinctive features.⁴⁰

Between 1924 and 1935, Paramahansa Yogananda travelled across the length and breadth of the United States to address audiences, attracting thousands of people. For instance, one of his lectures at the Philharmonic auditorium in Los Angeles was attended by 3000 people, fully packing the auditorium.⁴¹ His popularity got him an official invitation to the White House by President Calvin Coolidge in 1927. This was a first—a Hindu spiritual guru being invited by the President of the United States

to the White House.⁴² Along with the lectures, Yogananda also wrote many books, including the spiritual classic, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and interpreted religious scriptures like *The Bhagavad Gita*, *The New Testament* and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, in a yogic way. Through his interpretations of these books, Paramahansa Yogananda explained the common elements contained in all these sacred books of various religions. He also compiled his teachings in the form of lessons that could be mailed to students who joined his organizations for home study.⁴³ This was a very innovative idea at the time and it made the followers more connected to his teachings and the practices, even if they were not able to come to the SRF temples. This was one of the important reasons behind the wider spreading of the teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship in America and worldwide. He was the first Hindu monk who spent his whole lifetime in the United States to promote yoga meditation. And even after his passing in 1952, his organization, Self-Realization Fellowship, continues to grow in numbers and strength.

Non-Evangelical Foundation of Yoga Meditation

The establishment of Yoga and meditation was accomplished with a very non-evangelical approach. What started with Swami Vivekananda's impeccable speech to introduce Hinduism and the spiritual legacy of India was sealed with a formal structure under Paramahansa Yogananda. But the success of these two spiritual leaders in establishing ancient Indian spirituality and yoga in the United States was largely based on their non-evangelical, all inclusive approach. They did not preach conversion from one religion to another. Instead they acknowledged all religions to be true and all leading to the same goal. The organizations that they formed were also based on same ideology. According to the Encyclopedia of America's Religious History, "Like the Vedanta Society, the SRF emphasizes commonalities rather than differences between Hinduism and Christianity. Its approach, however, is more practical and less philosophical emphasizing the therapeutic and material benefits of Hindu yoga."⁴⁴ Their explanations added to the works done by the scholars of the nineteenth century. They also fulfilled the lacunae that were hindering the Westerners to have an objective understanding of this philosophy and its practical aspects. They also pointed out the flaws that prevailed in the Christian Missionaries. Swami Vivekananda directly attacked the attempts that the Christian missionaries were doing in India by erecting huge Churches in India instead of helping the poor.⁴⁵ Similarly, Paramahansa Yogananda also mentioned the presence of a large number of prosperous and powerful congregations in the name of Jesus Christ that were more

focused on the outward physical worship of Christ, but not much on deep prayer and meditation. This he termed the 'indoctrination of Churchianity.'⁴⁶ But this does not mean that they were against Christianity. In fact, they were staunch believers of the teachings of the *Holy Bible* and both drew several parallels between Hinduism and Christianity. Thus, it can be inferred that the introduction of yoga meditation was not evangelical in nature. In fact, it's inclusivity and features like practicality, self-experience, and scientific methods attracted many Americans towards it.

Later Advancements

With the passage of time, a number of spiritual leaders arrived to the United States. Eventually, the norms for immigration were by the US government under the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson when he approved the Immigration and Naturalization Act, 1965. Also, known as the Hart-Celler Act, this law abolished the previously existing quota system based on national origin in the United States.⁴⁷ After the passing of this act, the influx of Yoga and other religious teachers from India increased tremendously. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of cultural revolution; America's youth were feeling the need of spiritual upliftment. This consisted of two groups that followed two opposite ways in order to achieve this goal. One of the groups, deviated towards psychedelic drugs, imagining that the hallucinations provided by these drugs led them to a different consciousness. The other group came into touch with the Eastern ways of spiritual techniques like yoga and meditation at that time. In fact, many from the former group later joined the latter. The prominent gurus who made their mark in the 1960s and 1970s and whose organizations have been successful include Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his Transcendental Meditation, Swami Muktananda and his Siddha Yoga Dham Associates (SYDA) foundation and Swami Satchidananda: Swami Satchidananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda and his Integral Yoga Institutes.

In the present times, there are many other influential gurus who have arrived in America to teach ancient Indian spirituality and Yoga and meditation. Some of them also formed their organizations or centres. Few of them include, Swami Kripalvanandji or Bapuji and his Kripalu Centre and Kripalvananda Yoga Institute, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma), Amma Sri Karunamayi, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and his Art of Living, and Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev and his Isha Foundation. In all these advancements, the contributions of Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda play a crucial role in the establishment of the roots of Indian spirituality in the

United States and turning thousands of Americans towards it.

Notes

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