

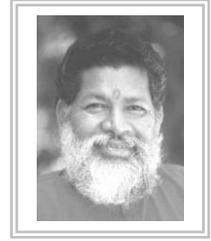


## The Sambodh Society, Inc.

A Non-Profit Organization for the teaching of Vedanta and Meditation

*Swami Bodhananda Saraswati, Spiritual Director and Founder*

6363 N. 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49004



March 25, 2008

*Dear Friends of The Sambodh Society, Inc. and Devotees of Swami Bodhananda,*

Through the ages Hindu culture has honored the older generation in many different ways. Our parents and grandparents represent a treasure trove of knowledge and experience from which we, their progeny, can and do benefit. In fact, the Hindu tradition designates the 60<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> years of one's life as two of the most important milestones.

By the age of 60, most of the common responsibilities of a householder are completed: the children are grown up and relatively independent of the need for their parents' protective umbrella; and the family's financial circumstance are fairly predictable. The householder feels ready to pass on life's day-to-day responsibilities to the younger generation, re-orienting one's own life as an elder, that is, one who observes and advises only when called upon, intervening only when necessary. In ancient India, this was known as *Vanaprastha-ashrama*, or dwelling in the forests away from the daily humdrum of life.

By the age of 75, in the twilight of one's life, after all responsibilities have been addressed, one becomes aware of the need to prepare for the hereafter and begins to withdraw from this material world and prepare for the eventual merger with the infinite universal spirit. This life-stage is called *Sannyasa-ashrama*.

These two significant milestones in our life have been recognized by Hindu tradition with very special prescribed religious ceremonies for these occasions. The Sambodh Society for Human Excellence, under the guidance of our founder and spiritual director Swami Bodhananda Saraswati, has decided to bring these religious traditions to the United States.

On May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Sambodh Center for Human Excellence (SCHE) will celebrate these milestones by conducting two ceremonies, *Ayush Homa*, and *Viraj Homa*, to honor people who have reached the age groups of 60-74, and 75 and above.

The four-fold purpose of the program is:

- To introduce the community to certain basic rituals, rites and ceremonies that we perform to respect age, to cope with major points of passage in the cycle of life, and to strengthen connectivity to the Higher Spirit
- To instill the spirit of selfless work/service and to highlight its importance in spiritual progress
- Uphold virtues and integrity of character in the preservation of family and community values.
- To respect and sanctify old age in two stages: *Vanaprastha* (above 60 years of age), and *Sannyastha* (above 75 years of age) leading to mental peace (*chitta shuddhi*) which is a requisite for moksha or spiritual liberation.

*We invite you and your family (elders, parents, children and grandchildren) to participate in a day of recognition and appreciation for parents and family life.*

In addition to the Ayush and Viraj Homas, we have planned a weekend program in which family members from all ages and stages can participate. Honored parents and elders will have the opportunity to share their reflections and wisdom garnered from life experiences, offering the benefit of their experience to their children and the community of guests.

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*We invite you and your family  
to participate in this unique and very special program  
being held on May 17-18, 2008  
at the Sambodh Center for Human Excellence  
6363 N. 24<sup>th</sup> St., Kalamazoo, MI 49004*



The Sambodh Society, Inc, is providing these rituals to honor anyone who has come to either of these milestones:

- Individuals, single, married or widowed, who have recently turned 60 or 75;
- Those who are within 6 months of turning 60 or 75; or,
- Those who have surpassed the age of 60 or 75 who have not yet had this ritual performed for either their own or their spouse's benefit.

NOTE: If you are married and your spouse is living, the ritual is generally performed with the spouse present. Family members are welcome to sponsor the puja for their parent(s).

In the coming weeks, we will be contacting you and others by mail and/or phone to share additional information about the program and to answer any further questions you may have. Please feel free to call Pradip Sagdeo (269) 327-7641, or Ruth Harring (269) 327-3774 with your questions.

-----✂-----Copy/Clip and Mail to The Sambodh Society, Inc. - See Address Provided Above-----

To indicate your interest, please fill out and return the form below with information about yourself or the elders in your family whom you would like to honor and benefit by sponsoring this religious ritual and attending the May 17 - 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 program at SCHE.

Yes, I/we have a parent or parents whom I/we would like to honor by sponsoring the Ayush and/or the Viraja Homa(s) who have reached age of 60+ or 75+

Parent's name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Age(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I am at least 59 ½ years old, and I would like to participate in and sponsor the Ayush Homa.

**OR...**

Yes, I am at least 74 ½ years old and I would like to participate in and sponsor the Viraj Homa

My name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_

*In addition...*

Please let us know how to reach you: Email \_\_\_\_\_  
*please print*

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you very much. We look forward to seeing you on May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Sincerely, Sambodh Trustees and SCHE Board*