



The Sambodh Society, Inc.

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

Swami Bodhananda Saraswati, *Spiritual Director and Founder*

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Annual Sambodh Society Letter

Dear Devotees of Swami Bodhananda and Friends of Sambodh,

We are grateful to you for helping us complete another successful year at the Sambodh ashram and other U.S. locations where Swamiji teaches. Aside from our Vedantic studies and retreats, Guru Purnima, Mantra Sadhana weekend, bi-monthly Sunday Services and ongoing programs in yoga and meditation, in 2009 we expanded our offerings to include vegetarian and Indian vegetarian cooking classes which have been very popular. Sambodh also published a **second revised edition of *Seven Hindu Spiritual Laws*** in 2009, and in 2010 you can look forward to a new book title, ***From Crises to Confidence***, available this coming Spring.

In 2009 **Sambodh also opened its doors to interfaith**, making our facility available for various other wisdom traditions including Taoism (Tai Chi), Zen Buddhist meditation, Native American Shamanism and the spiritually-based wellness practices which include, Interplay, which combines story-telling, music, psychology, and movement, and a program for teenage girls, Red Tent, a rites of passage program whose mission is to inform and empower adolescent girls and assist in mother-daughter bonding. We also held our **first wedding at SCHE**, outdoors in the July sunshine under a *mandap* generously donated last year by Neena and David Marion of Kalamazoo, MI.

Sambodh's **Annual Maha-yajna, Rudrabhishekam and Chandi Homa** took place early this past year, on May 17-18, 2009. Participation was good, and we enjoyed the Spring sunshine and warm weather. I am particularly and personally grateful for that timing as Richard, my husband, (who originally suggested the date) was able to briefly attend the function. We appreciate all those who generously supported the *yajna* with their involvement and participation in the various rituals. Your donations go a long way in assisting Sambodh and Swamiji's work in the U.S. May all of your good intentions and worthy desires become manifest.

In early September, with the help of many devotees and friends, we completed the **Memorial Walkway** in memory of my husband, Richard. The walkway is handicap accessible and extends from the SCHE driveway to the patio and back entrance to SCHE. We are grateful to all those who so generously assisted in completing this project in memory of Richard, who has done so much to forward both Swamiji's mission in American and the creation of SCHE.

2009 was also the year of Sambodh's first major, and wonderfully successful, **seminar at SCHE on Hindu Dharma for the 21st Century**. Swami Bodhananda envisioned the 8 themes, which served as the focus of our guest speakers' presentations: *Sanatana Dharma; Varnashrama Dharma; Karma Siddhanta and Reincarnation; Hindu Ritual and Temple Worship; Gurus, Teachings and Ashrams; Scriptures and their Interpretation; Caste Conflict and Coalition in Hindu Society and the Specter of Conversion; and A Hindu Framework for Interfaith and Science Spirituality Dialogues*. Participants benefited from listening to, **Dr. Arvind Sharma, Ph.D.**, an eminent scholar Birks Professor of Comparative Religion, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, who gave the Inaugural lecture, and to **Dr. Nancy Falk, Ph.D.**, Professor Emeriti of Comparative Religion and Women's Studies, Western Michigan University, who both presented and delivered the Seminar's Closing Comments. Nancy was among the first set of individuals to invite Swamiji to the

U.S. Several highly regarded and knowledgeable guest speakers and panelists, including our **Seminar Chair, Gopal Singh, Ph.D.**, came from our own Sambodh membership. We are grateful for their involvement along with the preparation and the effort it took to develop their talks and, in many cases, create Power Point Presentations to accompany and enhance their presentation. As an **outcome** of the Hindu Dharma Seminar, Sambodh has made available **DVDs and CDs** for purchase through our website or by contacting me directly with your order.

None of these events and wonderful programs would, or could, have taken place without the generous help of Swamiji's devotees, people like you. Our deep gratitude for your kind thoughts, volunteer efforts, supportive donations, and your continued involvement and participation in Sambodh programs during 2009.

Prospects for 2010

Foremost in this year's projects – and, finally - after 12 years of Swamiji's first visit to America, his establishing the Sambodh Society, Inc., we are working to obtain Swamiji's ministerial visa. Consequently, the arrival date of Swamiji's return to the U.S. as yet remains unknown. Please offer your kind thoughts, prayers, and mantras such that this process unfolds speedily and successfully so that we can enjoy Swamiji's usual spring arrival in mid-May or early June.

Towards the end of 2009 and in early 2010, due to the help of many of Swamiji's devotees and friends of Sambodh, we have quickly **raised \$19,574.00 towards our Mortgage Reduction** and the \$50K needed in order to match the very generous offer of \$150K from one of Swamiji's devotees. We've come a long way in just two months time, and we are most appreciative of everyone's generous support of this effort. We obviously have another \$30.5K to be raised before we can complete our goal, reducing our \$600K mortgage by \$200K. This promises to bring our monthly payments down quite substantially, as well as a reduced interest rate, if we are able to respond within a reasonable time frame. It also reduces the stresses of the \$4300 monthly mortgage and allows for other kinds of expansion. **If you would like to help us reach this goal**, you may either respond to this appeal, using the **attached form** to accompany your donation, or visit the Home page of our website, www.sambodh.us, and scroll down that page to make a **donation via PayPal**. All donations, great and small, are gratefully accepted.

Starting in March, we also plan to **expand our offerings at SCHE** with several yoga workshops organized by Diana Wilson, a dedicated yoga instructor and Swamiji's devotee. In the tradition of Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga*, Diana plans **three yoga workshops**. The first is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, **March 12-13, 2010** with a focus on the *yamas and niyamas*. The second workshop is planned for **Saturday, May 1st**, and explores the *chakras*. And the final workshop will take place on **September 11, 2010** with a focus on the *koshas*, or sheaths. All the workshops combine informative presentations, based upon these 3 themes, along with yoga practice.

During 2010, we have a number of **special programs developing around Ayurveda**, India's holistic health practices. On **April 17, 2010**, SCHE plans a **1-day seminar** focusing upon **Nutrition, Food, and Ayurveda**. Dr. Aparna Bapat, an **Ayurvedic doctor** trained in Gujarat and practicing in New York and Miami, visited SCHE twice last year. Due to member's interest and enthusiasm, **Dr. Bapat plans to return to Kalamazoo** during the last week and weekend in **April, from the 22nd to the 26th** and in **October 2010**. We plan special programs during both of her visits, so watch for announcements. If you are interested in scheduling an appointment with her, please contact me by email or phone. On **October 1-3, 2010** we are organizing a seminar on **Advaita Vedanta, Ayurveda and Ashtanga Yoga**, inviting scholars, holistic health practitioners, and innovative thinkers to explore the commonalities between these fields. Further information about these special programs will be communicated via email or via our website: www.sambodh.us.

We are **looking for capable assistance** with two **internet related projects**: 1) we have begun some preliminary work on a **shopping cart for our website**, thanks to John Webber and Pradip Sagdeo. We have a good stock of Swamiji's invaluable Vedantic teachings and presentations in audio format, as well as articles and written publications that we would like to make available via our website, perhaps using our former URL, www.sambodh.com for this purpose. Both Paul Janson and John Webber have been helpful in preparing some of the audio files for this purpose. The assistance we require is in **completing the design** compatible with our current server and with **uploading the content**. 2) Our **second wish** is to have someone **design an email newsletter** format that I can use to announce Sambodh events and programs as they unfold. If you have the skills to help with either of this project, please be in touch with me and we'll see how this can evolve into a useful tool for Swamiji's audience of devotees and others interested in Vedanta.

Although we plan to continue publishing printed books, disseminating publications in an electronic format via the internet would offer Sambodh the ability to upload many other materials, render considerable savings in both time and production costs, reduce the prices of downloadable over printed material, while still providing additional donations to Sambodh to support future publications. We hope that someone(s) out there can take this project and complete it efficiently and effectively within a fairly short time span.

We also extend an advance invitation to you to attend our annual **Maha Rudrabhishekam and Chandi Homa**, scheduled to take place on the weekend of **August 7-8, 2010**. And, to find out more about Sambodh programs as they unfold, see our (relatively) **new website URL**: www.sambodh.us

Our best wishes to you and your family, and our gratitude for your involvement in this worthy endeavor. Blessings to all.

Sincerely,

Ruth Haring, Ph.D., Trustee
The Sambodh Society, Inc.