

# An Electronic Temple for All

Veda Vedanta Mandiram, in cooperation with some cultural organizations and residents of Indian origin, is proposing to create and maintain a Universal Prayer Hall.

The Universal Prayer Hall will be a unique reservoir of India's cultural heritage embodied in sound and sight.

The Prayer Hall will facilitate every devotee to freely worship his or her object of faith and devotion. It will not be limited to any specific religion, cult, creed or faith. It will

belong to everyone, and everyone will belong to it. It will be an ideal Sanctum Sanctorum of the 21st Century.

As soon as a devotee steps into the Prayer Hall, he or she will be greeted by the Omkārahmanāda and its anuranana--the recital of the mystic universal syllable Om, followed by its reverberations. The basic scriptures of all the major religions of the world will be stored there as recorded sound and can be played back just by pressing a key. The representations (images or icons) of the chosen gods and goddesses can be stored as 3-D pictures and displayed at will by just clicking the respective icon.

Bhagavan Buddha, Shri Mahavira, Jesus Christ and Shri Guru Nanak Deva could all be there. There would be recitations of the Vedas, the Bhagavadgita, Ramayana, Bible, Guru Grantha Sahib and other holy books. The limit will be the ingenuity and skill of devotees to store what they want to retrieve and their ability to fund and maintain the project.

This electronic reservoir will not only feature incarnations of the past, but also figures and voices of the pre-

sent, including: builders of modern India such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru; and prophets and saints such as Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Vishvabandhu Svami Shri Vivekananda.

An Om Mandir was proposed in a sutra form by Svami Shri Tirtha more than 100 years ago. His proposal was based on his fundamental faith in the unity and universality of all the religions of the world. His Mandir was intended to be a place for meditation

and prayer generating a holy environment where a devotee could have a direct communion with God.

This may sound like

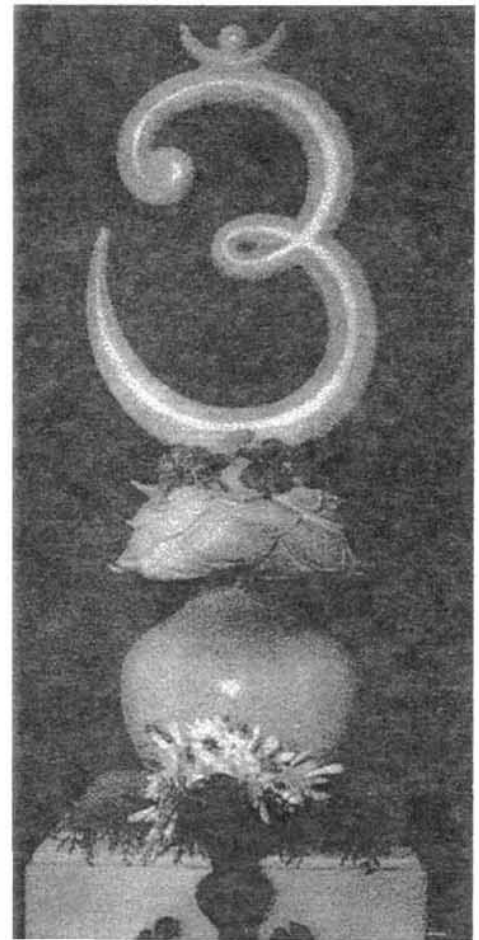
Utopia, but yesterday's utopias become today's realities. The light of the dawn (Ushas) comes long before the Sun shines. People with vision start thinking of things long before they are realized. It all depends upon the nature of their dreams and their power to make them real.

Universities like Harvard and Chicago; Depositories of books (the embodiments of knowledge) like the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago; and America's national institutions like the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. have been receiving millions of dollars from the government and philanthropic foundations to preserve India's cultural heritage in book form. However, our project extends past the printed word and strives to preserve the spoken words.

It is our duty to use the technology we now have to capture the sight and sound of yesterday and today for a peaceful tomorrow. ©

-Dr. Murarilal Nagar

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*The holy symbol Om in the Temple of Universal Prayer (Mahāsamādhi Mandira) of Svāmi Śrī Vivekānda*

A dedicated devotee delivers his divine prayer:

O Merciful Lord Shiva Shankara Mahādeva,  
Shining with the crest-gem of the crescent moon !

Be kind and grant me soon my coveted boon—  
Let it be the bank of the holy river Gangā.

Let there be a pious bilva tree to make me free.

And may the time be nearly the dawn of dawn.

Then alone let my Prāṇa leave this mortal body.

-Rendered into English from Hindi by Dr. Murarilal Nagar