

# About Me

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I was born and raised in Northern India by my parents who inculcated in me a deep love for the Sacred, service to the people and the community through social reform and justice. My maternal grandfather is a recognized freedom fighter who walked alongside Mahatma Gandhi to struggle peacefully against British rule in Colonial India. He influenced my father to give up his land in East Champaran, the very land where Mahatma Gandhi began his freedom struggle against the British. At age ten and the eldest born son, my father gave up his rights to his ancestral land to free hundreds of bonded laborers and indentured servants in the 1940s. The formative examples of justice for the oppressed set by my maternal grandfather and my father became the framework for my own spiritual journey in the following years. I started a school for poor children in my neighborhood at age nine, under the guidance of my school teacher, providing weekend classes to them since these children helped their parents at home while they worked outside during the week. I taught Reading, Writing, Math and Hygiene classes. I also worked with my parents in several of their social work projects in the Community for the poor at Mother Teresa's home for the widow and the orphans as a teenager. I also organized several humanitarian aid missions for the displaced tribals and Latur earthquake victims in India in the 1990s.

I migrated to the United States in 2000 and felt called into ministry after working for an inner city African American school near Boston in 2003. I subsequently, graduated from Ashland Theological Seminary in 2005 with a Master's degree in Theology. After working for a few years as a Youth Minister, a Women's Minister and completing 1 Unit of CPE, I was commissioned as an Army Chaplain in 2006. I served for the first five years of active duty service as an ordained Pentecostal Minister. During this time, I organized 10 Humanitarian Aid Mission for the poor Iraqi women and children including the persecuted Yezidi population, while deployed to Iraq. However, upon my return from Iraq in 2008 I found myself embracing an all-inclusive theology of God's Universal Love. And so, I returned to my Hindu roots and became the first Hindu Chaplain in the history of the Department of Defense and the entire armed forces in 2011. I served a predominantly Christian (which also included the Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, Pagan, Atheist and many others) population at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD. I provided leadership in Suicide Prevention and Awareness, Resiliency programs, Strong Bonds Relationship workshops, retreats and seminars for couples and families, pastoral counseling, organized cultural and religious events, pastored 4 separate congregations (Protestant and Hindu), performed various sacraments besides accomplishing the daily duties as an Army Staff Officer. I also strongly championed and advocated for the rights of the minority Soldiers, improving the morale & ethics of the units I served, and also helped bring diversity and multiculturalism in the US Military.

However, it was not until, grieving my mother's sudden death in 2013, that I discovered my maternal grandfather was influenced by Unitarians in India during India's struggle for

independence. To discover Unitarian Universalism for myself, I began attending Cedar Lane UU Church in the Fall of 2013. For the first time in my life's journey, I felt that I belonged theologically and found my spiritual home in Unitarian Universalism. After my retirement from the US Army in March 2015, I completed a Masters of Divinity Degree from Ashland Theological Seminary, graduating in Dec 2016. I also completed a yearlong internship at the Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church in Virginia from 2015-2016, where I sharpened my ministry tools of Preaching, Church Administration, History, Polity and Religious Education within a Unitarian Universalist setting. I also successfully cleared the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in September 2016 and was ordained as Unitarian Universalist Minister at Cedar Lane UU Church in March 2017. Today, I look forward to bringing my strengths of pluralistic ministry shaped and formed in a religiously and culturally diverse India, the US military and the larger civilian arena into Unitarian Universalism. I integrate my past as a cultural Hindu with Christian, Jewish and Sufi influences as an Unitarian Universalist Minister.

I have served as an On-Call Chaplain at Johns Hopkins Bayview Hospital in Baltimore, MD from May 2016 to Dec 2017. I am currently serving the Goodloe Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Bowie, MD as their part time Minister since, September 2017. My awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and Overseas Service Ribbon. I also, introduced President Obama at the White House Diwali in 2011 and received the Special Achievement India Abroad Award in New York city the same year. I have been honored by the Government of Trinidad as the first Hindu Chaplain at the annual Diwali Nagar Celebrations as their Chief Guest in Trinidad in 2013. Besides ministry, I love being a mother to my two girls, enjoy reading, travelling and cooking.