Letters to the Editor
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Swami Chinmayananda used the Bhagavad Gita just to uplift man; he didn't expect you to go and pray to Krishna. He only used Krishna as an example of a human mortal, as an example of what man should do in life. He was not the type of swami to tell you to do this and that, while himself living another sort of life. He always wanted us to know that whatever is achieved here in this world is only temporary and not to believe too much in it. He was not the type of swami who would do magic or invite people to touch his feet. That's why he did not attract big crowds. He had a selective crowd. A great human, full of love and compassion, but strict, he was a disciplined aristocrat, who, through his behavior, his comportment, wanted Hindus to be proud of themselves. As Swami Arjun Puri said one day, "After Swami Vivekananda, Swami Chinmayananda was the only colossus walking the soil of India!"

Moorthy Nagalingum

Mauritius

Keep Hindutva!

The following three responses are to Mr. Narendra Kumar's letter of July 1993.

Mr. Kumar would like to give up Hindutva in favor of Indianness. In Indian languages the name of the country is Bharat; in Urdu, Hindustan; westerners gave it the name India. Thus, Indianness in English is the same as Hindutva and Bharatiyata in other languages, the difference being that of language and not of idea. As far as women and untouchables are concerned, it was not exclusive to Hindus. Denigration of women and slave trade were prevalent in all faiths the world over. With enlightenment, some people have learned to respect the dignity of women and the downtrodden. Therefore, there is no cause for fear that only Hindus

will continue with old practices.

S.D. Laghate

New Delhi, India

Mr. Narendra Kumar pleads for giving up Hindutva. Has he ever pondered why a Hindu like him trembles while uttering the word Hindu? A Christian or a Muslim remains composed and does not feel uneasy when he discusses something about his religion. Should the acknowledgment of the fact of one being a Hindu or discussion of social or political problems or observance of the religious rites be a matter of shame? Hindutva does not mean elimination of other religions or hatred towards others. It stands for positive attitudes. Hindus are tolerant by nature. A true Hindu is both Indian and Hindu (or Hindu and Indian) simultaneously and not one after the other. Rising feelings of Hindutva, without rancor against other communities, will strengthen the nation. The country is suffering because its Putraroop Samaj has strayed from attuning to its inborn genius.

Hari Babu Kansal

New Delhi, Bharat (India)

His letter betrays fears and notions caused by the rumors and false propaganda of anti-Hindu forces, parading in the name of secularism. The realities here are very different. The problem in Bharat is the survival of Hindu society and Hinduism in the face of the expansionist alien religion and the continuous shrinking borders. The problem is that of anti-Hindu secularism which joins hands with any and every anti-Hindu force. The problem is one of passing on the message of Hinduism to future generations. If giving up of Hinduism is an essential for secularism and national integration, one has to ask as to what remains of Bharat then. Brahm Dev

Delhi, India

Bharat, USA Partners

I want to complement you on the last two issues. They are positive in outlook without hurting any individual or group and comprehensive enough to provide Hindu news around the world. Kindly keep this good tradition. May the Hindus around this blessed land get inspiration from your good deeds. May Bharat and USA become great partners in the creation of world peace and tranquility.

Dr. Shiva Subramanya

California, USA

India Is Closer Now

I want to give my gratitude for Hinduism Today in the Dutch Language. India is now closer in Holland. The texts out of Vedic scriptures are beautiful. I agree with a revival of the pure Vedic concepts, in India as well as all over the world, but without violence.

Bharathi Devi

Kerkwerve/Holland

Suffering in Nepal

Thank you very much for keeping us aware of the pristine glory of Hinduism, although dwelling across the seven seas. At present [August, 1993] many regions of Nepal are facing unprecedented disasters like landslides and floods. Over one thousand were killed and land and property worth billions are either affected or damaged. Kathmandu Valley itself is virtually cut off in road links from the rest of the kingdom for nearly one month. Victims meanwhile, are demonstrating true Hindu sentiment to reconcile their fate with God's will. Donations for relief and rehabilitation are also flowing in from around the world.

Rameshwar Baral

Secretary, World Hindu Federation

Kathmandu, Nepal

Nepal Is Not India!

In "Planning a Sacred Journey" [Sep. 1993] you wrote "the map below is derived from a plot of Indian holy sites...." Your map portrayed not only India but also Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. These countries are independent. While Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are identified, Nepal is left nameless, making it look like another Indian state. If you keep ignoring its existence as an independent country, Nepal may soon lose its status as "world's only Hindu kingdom."

Deepak Shimkhada

California, USA

Shocked by Animal Sacrifice

I am a vegan, eat no dairy, eggs, meat, poultry or fish. In addition, I wear no leather. I write to express my shock and disappointment at your defense of animal sacrifice, a barbaric and inhumane practice. [Sept. 1993] You claim that if other religions do not support Santeria sacrifices, the government may oppress these other religions at some later time. Animal sacrifice violates the principles of ahimsa and should be rejected. It is irrelevant whether this ultimately encourages the government to regulate practices that are not immoral. The logical extension of your argument is that a Hindu ought to support human sacrifice as well, lest Hinduism risk subsequent governmental oppression. Clifford Goldstein's argument is that Santeria sacrifices should be protected because our society is legally free to abuse animals for non-religious reasons. That is a bad argument to make; it is appalling for a Hindu to sanction. Gary L. Francione, Professor of Law

Rutgers Law School, NJ, USA

I Protest

I would like to protest your handling of the U.S. Supreme Court decision to make animal sacrifices legal in the U.S.!!!!!!! I have to assume from this article that you strongly favor both human and animal sacrifices. The real issue was not "freedom of religion," but, "Does a person have a right to practice a religion which infringes on the rights of others?" Since sacrifices infringe on the rights of the animals who are cruelly and unjustly murdered, such sacrifices should be stopped. This decision is a blow to the animal rights movement, all U.S. citizens who are not Christians, and to Hindus, Buddhists and others whom your article claimed were benefitted. We all believe in freedom of religion, but how far can we take it?

Douglas Remington

California, USA

We ran the story because of its freedom of religion impact. The critical issue was that the state of Florida had made a law prohibiting the killing of animals in any religious context, while legally permitting non-religious killing for sport and food. The Supreme Court struck down the law as an unfair constraint on religious freedom. The moral issue of animal rights was not part of the Court's deliberation, though many readers strongly thought it should have been. One unspoken message the High Court sent out was: "Laws apply to everyone. If the American people wish to outlaw animal sacrifice, they must also outlaw slaughterhouses and killing for sport." Be assured, the publisher and editorial staff of Hinduism Today remain strong advocates for harmlessness to all forms of life and do not condone killing animals even for food, let alone animal sacrifice.

Corrections

The page one September story and interview of Uma Bharti was written by Archana Dongre of Los Angeles.

The September poster was missing the last line of the description of the Kumbha Mela in Ujjain. It should have read:"The next Kumbha Mela here will be in April-May of 2004 when Jupiter enters Leo with the sun in Aries."