

## Letters

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Letters The Universal Lamp The lamp signifies light. We all desire to be in light, not in darkness. We pray, "O, Lord, from darkness lead us unto light." The oil of the lamp burns itself drop by drop. In this process of self-sacrifice light is produced for the benefit of the world (not only Hindus). The lamp exhorts us to sacrifice ourselves by giving joy and light to others. The lamp shines while it burns, as if it were trying to say that one should not be overwhelmed by suffering, but should always make the greatest sacrifice with a smile. Lighting a lamp at the inauguration of a function is always auspicious and a tradition in many countries. Madan Lal Gupta, Pastor, Vedic Dharma Samaj, California Sex and Violence on Film One of the greatest threats India faces today is the obscene and violent movies and videos that are being produced and shown in India. Most represent anything but Indian culture. Even the actors and singers who come to enlighten the expatriate Indians exhibit similar poor culture and values. Unfortunately, some of these demoralized persons are being invited to inaugurate Indian cultural events. These films not only destroy India's five thousand years of civilization and ethics, but also render a very bad image of India. I wish all the swamis who are coming to the USA to preach would preach to the Indian censor board. If the present trend in movies continues, the spiritual capital of the world will become the trash can of Hollywood boulevard. Nirode C. Mohanty, Huntington Beach, California Proud Hindu My great, great grandfather migrated to Fiji more than a century ago. Eighteen years ago I migrated to Canada. In this changing world money propels the propagation of other religions. Now, Hinduism Today serves the cause of Hinduism worldwide. We all needed to know the true history of Bharat that is Hindustan and now I feel like a proud Hindu. It is said that there are only three civilizations intact in this world. They are India, China and Egypt. The rest are within the four corners of museums. Keep it up! Chandra Sen Singh, Edmonton, Canada Need US Hindu Directory It is hard to know where ashramas or Hindu temples are located in USA. For Buddhists, there is a fine book, attractively done: Buddhist American: Centers, Retreats, Practices. This 349-page book lists centers, their locations, a description, the name of the leaders, etc. and is divided according to the schools of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, etc. Would it be possible for your publication, Hinduism Today, to sponsor something similar for Hinduism? Could you put such information together and publish it in succeeding issues? Robert Hochwalt, North Canton, Ohio Mahabharata Abortions? Mahabharata relates how the great King Shantanu fell passionately in love with Ganga in the guise of a wondrous woman by the side of the river. Ganga bore the king eight sons, seven of whom she drowned in the river just after they

were born. Your spread on abortion [June 1993] retains a posture of neutrality in the introductory statement, "Hinduism makes no attempt to condone or condemn." But the seven savants of Hinduism you quote, along with the quotations from the scriptures, leave little doubt in a reader's mind that according to your interpretation of traditional Hinduism, abortion is adharmic. How would you and these sages evaluate Ganga's actions? Would you consider it divine action beyond the scope of human understanding, mere mythology or that Ganga also pays the price of her actions? Whatever judgment we pass on Ganga and women who abort their children is not the issue for me. I find the very effort to classify and judge abortion, or any other human action, from a Hindu point of view, limiting and theological. Hinduism is not judgmental, it evaluates. It encourages one to practice, and even go beyond, dharma. Actions are taken in a context. Who are we to condemn or condone in the name of Hinduism? Rather, we should succor our fellow travellers through this valley of death, the martyaloka. Anshuman Lath, Arcadia, California Western or Just Modern? I find myself agreeing almost entirely with the Publisher's Desk [June, 1993] entitled, "When It Is Too Late to Say, 'No.'" However, one paragraph seemed unnecessary and incorrect. "... when the children of Eastern families are raised up with western values, personal fulfillment overrides duty...." I think that you are confusing "western" with "modern." Having visited India for five weeks, and studied the development of 20th century societies, I find that the same sense of duty and religious ideals was prevalent not very long ago in most countries, East and West. Kenneth Stuart, Mount Shasta, California Great Ad Media Thanks for your continued excellent service. I receive at least one request per day for our catalog thanks to our ad in your newspaper. Wishing you and everyone in your organization a wonderful and successful year. Narayani, Haidakhandi Ashram, Crestone, Colorado What Jews Believe I read "Truth is One, Paths are Many," [April 1993] and found it quite good. I must comment on points concerning my religion. Although the Jewish people regard themselves as a "chosen people," this does not mean that we believe non-Jews are denied reward. One of our most important traditions is that, "the righteous of all nations have a place in the world to come." Note also that our views on the nature of the world to come are not as clearly defined as the article leads the reader to believe. This has been a subject of great debate among our scholars for many centuries. The Torah's only comment on this subject is "dust you were, dust you will become." Finally, the concept of Satan has only a minimal place in Jewish philosophy (and, in my opinion, it is probably the result of Persian influences.) The more important point is that we believe all human beings have two contradictory impulses--the will for good and the will for evil. Thank you. Fred Rafael Rednor, Arlington, Virginia Is "...abad" Bad? The front page article "3,000 Hindu leaders parley at Allahabad, an ancient holy town in Uttar Pradesh..." [April 1993] is a bit disconcerting. Was this ancient town named Allahabad? One would like to know the real original name of this town and other towns like Hyderabad, Aurangabad, etc., etc., and rename them accordingly. Niranjan Shah, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (check) The ancient name is Prayag. This Noble Task Indeed, your newspaper is very interesting, inspiring and informative. Many of our friends here are reading and deriving much benefit from it. Hence, we express our profound appreciation and admiration for the noble task you are engaged in so

enthusiastically. Mrs. K.M.P Mohamed Cassim, Perfect Peace Lodge, Sri Lanka  
Networking Vehicle The Indian Hindu community is scattered all over the world and  
in some ways disconnected and fragmented. Once you provide a vehicle for Indians  
in different countries to communicate and connect the community will be more than  
happy to volunteer. Greesh Sharing, Ph.D., Morrisville, Pennsylvania The Human  
Religion "To remember God and think" is man's thinking. One who does it all the  
time is alone a true human being. The use of big words is creating illusions and we  
think we are men. But we have not even made a determined start of living life as  
men. Religion is to be realized. Therefore we have to realize this human  
religion--raising the brute into a man and that man into God. Ganesh L. Bhirud,  
Ph.D., Orange, California The Only Outside Reading Your paper is very well written,  
and we enjoy reading it. Besides reading my spiritual master's books and books by  
our Vaishnava Acharyas, your paper is the only "outside" reading we do.  
Newspapers and magazines are useless "gramya-katha" (worldly discussions) and  
offer no spiritual benefit or value. Mahanidhi Swami ISKCON, New Delhi, India The  
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HI 96746-9304 USA or faxed to: (808) 822-4351 or e-mailed  
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