Letters to the Editor
Category : January 1995
Published by Anonymous on Jan. 02, 1995

Letters to the Editor

Living to Serve

What a wonderful surprise to receive the November issue of Hinduism Today with the beautiful articles and to learn of the honor you have bestowed upon me. I am so deeply touched by the kindness, love, and generosity you have showered upon me.

I am honored and grateful that God has given me the opportunity and blessing to serve humanity in whatever humble way that I can. I believe in living to serve. A tree gives its fruit; it knows only to give. There is no other purpose, and as human beings we are also here to serve and there is no higher purpose. To be honored by great souls as you for only doing what it is I have been given to do is really overwhelming.

I pray that all may realize the peace, joy and happiness that comes from leading a dedicated life. May the blessed Lord continue to bless you with the strength, inspiration and guidance to continue in your noble service to Hindus worldwide.

Sri Swami Satchidananda, Satchidananda Ashram, Yogaville, Virginia, USA

Suffering and Sacrifice

Certain facts and updates should be added th the report by Rajni Bakshi on the Narmada Dam [October, 1994]. Between all the proposed projects, 200,000 acres of land will be submerged, nearly half of it prime forest. India today has much less than the desirable third of the land under forest cover and even this reduced proportion is dwindling in the name of development and electricity. A series of smaller dams could adequately meet the water and energy needs of the people without degrading the environment.

There is a more poignant aspect to these projects. The forests they will submerge are the homeland of tribal people. The tribal people along with millions of trees will be uprooted. Removing them from their natural habitat would be cultural ethnocide apart from destroying the many endangered species of rare and precious animals.

Baba Amte, the winner of many humanitarian awards, took a desperate 'over my dead body' stand in 1990. He moved to the middle of the proposed dam site and built himself a hut. That is where he lives now. The local government(s) tried to harass him with every trick in the book short of physically removing him, including 24-hour a day sleep-deprivation tactics with loud speakers and glaring flood lights. At one point, Baba lost his consciousness and was declared dead for about fifteen minutes. Baba is 83 and in poor health. I want to point out these facts to your readers because no story on the Narmada Dam could be complete without knowing of Baba's suffering and sacrifice.

D.V. Gokhale, Los Angeles, California, USA

Hindus Do Eat Meat

I was turned off by Dr. S. Jayaraman's My Turn [October, 1994]. Particularly by his "holier than thou" attitude toward non-vegetarians. While I respect the preferences of vegetarians, it is well to remember that a vast majority of Hindus are not vegetarians. Fortunately, our religion permits a variety of food choices for people. Lord Rama and Sri Krishna were both meat eaters and their greatness is in no way diminished by that fact.

Dr. Mukunda Rao, Buckhannon, West Virginia, USA

Beyond Time and Space

I would like to point out a serious omission in the Timeline [December, 1994], namely not referring to the birth of Sadguru Sri Mata Amritanandamayi. I am also not very happy that you have included a birth date for Rama and Krishna and dates for other miscellaneous undatable events like the Mahabharata war. Leaving aside the fact that these two lived in different yugas, and not 500 years apart, remember that they are divine beings worshipped as major incarnations of Lord Vishnu and as such are considered to be beyond space and time. To present them as if they are just ordinary kings is a serious misrepresentation. Finally, there are too many entries on the harassment of Hindus by Muslim invaders and kings. Were the Hindus so pure and holy over the whole period of your chronology?

H. Mahadeva Iyer, Menlo Park, California, USA

- Editor's note: Mataji was in our Timeline, though not her date of birth. We will add it.

Danger in Bangladesh

Hinduism Today should give attention to the thirty-million Hindus and huge temples in Bangladesh. We are in danger now! We need international support both financially and politically!

I am a student of Dhaka University. I need more news. I eagerly want friends worldwide to exchange our views on how we can help each other. I am a member of the Natha Sampradaya, but I don't know about this much. I wish more information.

Shyamal Chandra Debnath, 33 DIT Plot, Gandaria, Dhaka 1204, Bangladesh

- Editor's note: Our sources indicate 11-million Hindus in Bangladesh.

Differences Are Real

My pranams to Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami for his wonderful and lucid editorials on Hinduism! The one given in the October issue was extraordinary and should be thoroughly studied by all Hindus and all students of Hinduism.

All religions are not merely the same and equally good. Nor do the other religions simply say what Hinduism states but in different words. Hinduism's metaphysics of karma and rebirth is quite unlike the heaven-hell doctrines of Christianity and Islam. Hinduism views liberation, Self-realisation or communion with God as the highest goal, not merely salvation from sin which is the Christian view. While it is true that there have been Christian and Islamic mystics who have views or practices akin to the Hindu, these individuals have been exceptions, were generally persecuted and rejected, and represent very little of what goes on in the name of these religions today, particularly in India.

To say that the Bible teaches karma and rebirth under the statement "As you sow so shall you reap" is a Hindu interpretation of the Bible and almost every single Christian church of every denomination in the United States would throw you out if you tried to teach such things to their congregations.

David Frawley, American Inst. of Vedic Studies, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

A Brahmin's Bias?

My observation is that the brahmin community prefers to embrace fellow

brahmins and looks down on Hindus from Sri Lanka, Fiji and US-born converts. When Hindus migrate from the East and take advantage of the education and career opportunities available here, it is disheartening that they can carry their old habits to the new world. It seems like they try to blend in, but don't fully accept or embrace those of us who love and practise orthodox Saivism. In the long-run, I don't really care because I have my daily puja, my sadhana and my growing ability to meditate which all brings me the greatest fulfillment and happiness.

Isani Alahan, Kapaa, Hawaii, USA

Links to Lithuania

I truly enjoy Hinduism Today and have a suggestion. Do an article on the eerie similarities between the Sanskrit language and modern Lithuanian. Or, a general study vis-a-vis ancient Lithuania and its similarities to Hinduism. I am half Lithuanian myself and think that this would definitely be worth investigating. There are Lithuanian groups in the Chicago area who would be happy to work on this with you.

Claire Advani, Vancouver, Washington, USA

- Editor's note: If you send us your letters via e-mail (which we welcome), please also include your postal, i.e. "snail-mail," address. Thank you.

We have received many requests for a pen-pal column. Unfortunately, we are unable to incorporate such a feature in Hinduism Today. If any of our readers would be willing and able to run an independent Hindu pen-pal club (ideally encompassing e-mail too), please send your proposal to the Hawaiian editorial office (address below). If approved, we will announce it in future issues.