

[Letters to the Editor](#)

Category : [May 1996](#)

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Letters to the Editor

SPIRITUALITY & FAMILY

Your March '96 issue on religion and the family is both timely and poignant. Throughout humankind's religious history, the family has served as the primary institution of spiritual life. The Vedas encourage us to revere our mother and father as the very embodiments of God, the worldly agents of His Boundless Love. In turn, parents must foster in their children a deep love for the Infinite and a mature zeal for dharmic action. In fact, we attribute birth in a family as a deliberate act of God, a divinely ordained opportunity to collectively discover the secrets of life.

Navin Girishankar, Washington, D.C. , USA,

ngirishankar@dlcpipi.org

RETAINING HINDU NAMES

It is a matter of great concern that in certain countries there is a tendency to abandon Hindu names just because the neighbors or school authorities or the employers are not able to pronounce those names easily or because they do not like those names. Many Hindus facing such a situation have a sincere desire not to bow down before these external pressures. Hindu names are very much associated with our culture. If the names are so chosen that they are short, easy to pronounce and also meaningful, our youth will not have to face this situation. Hindu organizations should select such names

with their meanings and publish their lists. It will then be easier for Hindu families to choose appropriate names.
Hari Babu Kansal, Visva Hindu Parishad, New Delhi, India.

FALLACIOUS FACT

Hinduism Today appears to have been taken in by the public pronouncements of the late Max Mueller. Perhaps the readers should know what Max Mueller really thought. These are a few other quotations from him: "Large numbers of Vedic hymns are childish in the extreme; tedious, low, common place" in Chips From a German Workshop, pg. 27, 1866. "Nay, they contain, by the side of simple, natural, childish thoughts, many ideas which to us sound modern, or secondary and tertiary," in India, What It Can Teach Us, pg. 118, 1882. His real intention in translating the Vedas, he writes to his wife, "This edition of mine and the translation of the Vedawill hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India....It is the root of their religion and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last three thousand years." Life And Letters of Max Mueller, Vol. I, Ch. XV, pg. 346. He was the one largely responsible for fixing the date of the Vedas arbitrarily at 1500 bc. It has taken so much effort to try to undo what he has done by inventing the theory of Aryan invasion. Hinduism Today should not deify Max Mueller especially when he wrote to Duke of Argyl on Dec. 16, 1868 "The ancient religion of India is doomed, and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?"

B. N. Narahari Achar Memphis, Tennessee, USA,
acharb@msuvx2.memphis.edu

ERRORS ON KERALA

The unique system followed by the Nairs of Kerala [Feb. '96]

is not so much matriarchal as matrilineal. The author used the two words almost interchangeably. In a true matriarchy, women headed the household and made all decisions pertaining to it. It is true that among Nairs, wealth, property and lineage were passed on through the female, but she was by no means the head of the family, as Choodie describes. The karavan was the undisputed head. Women within the taravad (extended family) were subject to his rulings. In some cases, the karavan would favor his wife's taravad above his own, gifting land, jewelry and money (that were not his technically) to them. Nair women were coerced out of their property rights, forced to marry men they did not approve of and subject to other abuses, just the same as their sisters from other, more patriarchal, cultures. An enlightened ruling class and a democratic land ownership pattern did more for the status of Hindu women in Kerala than the matrilineal taravad. Shobha Menon-Hiatt, SHOFRE@aol.com

THE WWW

I searched the advertising pages of Hinduism Today seeking some tiruvadi (holy sandals) for our shrine room. I wanted to fax or e-mail a vendor with a picture. Only one vendor in your pages had a fax number (not an 800 fax number.) None mentioned their World Wide Web home page or their e-mail address. Already millions of shoppers are traversing the Web in search of products. One day this will be as commonplace as having a phone. May we Hindus be in the forefront of this revolution!

Sadhunathan Nadesan, San Diego, California, USA,
pslvax!siva!sadhu@UCSD.EDU

I was surprised to see the most welcome "Click here to become

a Hindu" on your Web page. You need to expand on this, covering how this aspect is practiced--if at all--in India through the ages and especially now.

Vijaya Kumar, Province of Quebec, Canada,
Kumarv@johnabbott.qc.ca

ONE PIONEERING SCHOOL

I read with great interest the article on Pioneering Schools [Feb. '96] and the interview with Mrs. Rajalakshmi Parthasarathy. I am a product of Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan (PSBB) and did most of my schooling there. I can say with certainty today that I owe a lot to PSBB. It has not only made me competent and successful but more importantly helped me imbibe the great values of Hinduism.

Manoj Chandran, manoj.chandran@tempe.vlsi.com, Mahalo Nui Loa!

I was so impressed with your organization's efforts that some dedicated devotees and myself have formed a new organization called Hindu Varni Inc. We publish a monthly newsletter with religious information.

Anil Bedasie, Hindu Varni Inc., 32-22 103rd Street, East Elmhurst New York, 11369 USA

I wanted to write a note of thanks, for allowing my family to become lifetime members of your most beautiful and informative newspaper. My wife and I have been Vedantic followers of Sri Ramakrishna for many years. Finding your newspaper was a refreshing burst of sunshine in our often cloudy and cold city of North Prairie.

Mark J. Brown, North Prairie, Wisconsin, USA,

sonographer@msn.com

I am a regular reader of Hinduism Today and I like it very much. I am indeed grateful to you for providing me with such a wonderful magazine and for your spiritual guidance. I hope you will continue to show me the right path.

Sanjay Veerabathina, veerabat@sunflash.eng.usf.edu

I like the whole attitude which permeates the text in your newspaper and my wish is that many other magazines throughout the world pick up on the great work that you are doing and perhaps learn to humbly model themselves. As a Macintosh user, it is also interests me how nicely the whole paper is put together from the graphic angle.

Paul Castagna, Iron Belt, Wisconsin, USA,
castagnp@up.lib.mi.us

I want to thank you for the complementary subscription to Hinduism Today. I have all my life had a passionate interest and fascination with religion and the spiritual impulse, and am delighted to receive your publication.

Tim Cambell, Santa Rosa, California, USA

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