Let's Enter Our Magazine's Futrue Let's Remember Our Newspaper's Past
Category : August/September/October/November 1996
Published by Anonymous on Dec. 31, 1969

Let's Enter Our Magazine's Futrue Let's Remember Our Newspaper's Past

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami and Acharya Palaniswami

Gurudeva: Good morning, Acharya Palaniswami. Come join me here under the mango tree. I want to share some ideas with you. So, sit down and take a few notes. Remember way back in 1966, when you were a very, very young mathavasi just getting started in life at the age of 21? In those days, we were printing our monthly ashram newsletter just like all the ashrams in the world were doing, telling only news about ourselves, our yoga and prison programs and pilgrimages to India. Then, in 1979, after a world tour at the invitation of many sangams who became fascinated with our approach, we made our first quantum leap and created The New Saivite World. I appointed you the editor, and that black-and-white paper flourished for a few years until one day I read the current issue and said, "This is not a paper about the new Saivite world. This is about all the lineages, all the sampradayas.This should be called Hinduism Today." We had branched out in our knowledge of the other three sects and their many denominations. So, we changed our name to Hinduism Today in 1985, making another quantum leap into a new marketplace among all Hindus of the world, and then another in November of 1992 when we started printing in full

color. Do you remember those days?

Acharya Palaniswami: Who could forget, Gurudeva? Back in the 60s we hand-set our type and then in the 70s we set type on what the team dubbed Photosaurus REX, the now extinct phototypesetting system, processed the galleys through noxious chemical tanks here in the monastery and pasted it all up by hand, using wax and glue. What a mess! Then the monks would put it all on our ten-ton German Heidelberg presses, and a mere two weeks later we had a paper (well, not counting another week of folding and trimming and mailing mountains of newsprint). I remember how important our captions were in those days, since the printed photos were so bad no one had any idea what they were supposed to be except by reading the description below. Then one day you bought a Macintosh computer, brought it to the monastery and everything changed forever from that day forward. We sold the presses and let professionals do the printing and mailing. Forget all that? Not in this life.

Gurudeva: Well now, Palaniswami, it's 1996, and I want us to make another quantum leap with our global publication, our biggest jump ever. We always tell the youth to obey their elders, but those same elders have been telling us for many years that "The tabloid format just does not satisfy us. It deserves better. Turn Hinduism Today into a magazine and have it on newsstands in every country." All our youthful readers can now see that we are obeying and that is just what you will see in the December issue. A magazine that is not unlike Timeor Newsweek,except that its heart is spiritual. Well, Palaniswami, let's gather the team together this morning and tell the wonderful staff of mathavasisyou have trained through

the years and set them firmly on the path in this new direction.

Acharya Palaniswami: I have to admit there is a certain amount of attachment here, to a style and an identity we have had for so many years. Change is wonderful and soul-enhancing. But that doesn't mean that change is easy! If it were, people would change their jobs more, change their house, change their habits. Such things stay static for good reasons. Change is tough. I know, no one said it was our purpose on earth to take the easy path, and you, Gurudeva, have never been one to suggest we might better go through life on roller blades. As hard as it is, striving for greater things improves our lot, tempers our weaknesses, compels us to grow. Climbers scale Everest precisely because it's so remarkably challenging and requires severe exertion. You're right. Our team is ready. They've worked together on the newspaper creatively and harmoniously for 18 years, and our young sadhakas and yogis are extremely enthusiastic. Can Hinduism Today become a magazine overnight? Can we double the amount of graphics and color pages, add new features on spiritual leaders and Hindu events, increase our letters to the editor and humor sections? You've envisioned it, Gurudeva. Let's do it.

Gurudeva: You might remember too, Palaniswami, that "stress will make you strong.'' You and all my swamis have had your share of it. For the swami it is called tapas.OK then, here's the plan. This last tabloid issue will be called the August/September edition. Not printing in September will give the staff extra time to develop the new, improved magazine edition that will be seen on many, many newsstands throughout the world. It will be our International Edition, as the

new printing costs allow us to supply most countries with copies less expensively than they can print themselves. This is our quantum leap, one that elders have been waiting for.

Acharya Palaniswami: Our team doesn't know the name of stress, as visitors to our Hawaiian editorial offices can attest. Still, it's no small thing for a mere 24 swamis, yogis and sadhakas to equal what 1,100 professionals at Newsweekdo. Even dividing by four (since they're a weekly and we're a monthly), that's 24 of us versus 275 of them. Good odds, I would say. Almost even, except we have the advantage of enjoying the full force of Sanatana Dharma behind us. Shall we then call this the Death of tabloid era? Shall we say, "Rest in peace"? Shall we mourn for a moment the incarnation we are leaving? Probably not enough time for that.

Gurudeva: A quick turn around, "the birth of a magazine.'' True, Newsweekmay have 1,100 editorial pros. They are paid to go to work each day, not truly dedicated to its cause. Our mathavasis are worth 11 of each of them. Though well taken care of by the tithing members of our worldwide congregation represented in 39 countries, our monks are not paid, but each one is committed wholeheartedly to our mission of educating Hindus, of preserving the traditions of India's diverse spiritual paths. We can tell our new readers that not one morsel of food from any profits (though, happily, we have been breaking even for a couple of years now) from this publication goes into their mouth, nor to buy the clothing on their back (they wear a simple hand-spun, hand-woven dhoti) nor on medical care. So, now, we are on our way into a leap into the future of Hinduism that will record the history of the world's most ancient religion, generation after generation.

Acharya Palaniswami: There are so many wonderful souls coming forward to follow the path of Sanatana Dharma and to give their life's energies to that vision. But you're right, we have an edge in that the monks are all a one force and fellowship, and they have the support of a multi-talented and committed family community in many nations. We shall accept the power of the guru and take the heavier staff of tapas with vigor, being grateful for this opportunity to serve. This week the team is sending a rare appeal out to all our lifetime subscribers who are our staunchest supporters, asking them to help us financially with the upgrades to a higher level of graphics exactitude and technological expertise. Maybe even our regular subscribers would like to help. Anyway, we'll make it work. After all, sacrifice is one of the great messages of the Vedas,isn't it? I can never forget your words to us as young monks facing the inevitable challenges of the spiritual path, urging us to remind ourselves from moment to moment: "I am the master of my destiny. I will be what I will to be. I will do what I will to do."

Gurudeva: Yes, and we will make this next step in our born evolution a success, whatever it takes, whatever we have to do to accomplish it. After all, all beginnings on this planet happen within the mind. Visualization is the little-known secret to achieving great things! This visualization of Hinduism Today as a magazine is what the elders--which include the grandfather, grandmother, senior swamis, heads of well-established sangams and more--have suggested to us for years. Palaniswami, our editorial policies will remain the same. We are not political, and we do not pit one Hindu sect, or religion, against another. We do remain open to suggestions for improvement and especially critical remarks. We take them very seriously. We are soft on praise, too. Love it, and know we

shouldn't, but helpful suggestions and critical remarks make Hinduism Today...well, Hinduism Today. Every Hindu order has its form of public service, be it a feeding center, school, eye clinic or orphanage. Hinduism Today is our chosen public service. So, Acharya Palaniswami, your next challenge in your prarabdha karmasis to mold Hinduism Today, the international monthly magazine, into a statement that elegantly befits the profound heritage of India's spiritual genius and portrays the worldwide Hindu community in its loftiest light, giving Sanatana Dharma equal recognition among all the other religions of the world as we claim Dharma's rightful place in the world community on every newsstand, in every airport and hotel magazine rack and within each family home. The past is but a prelude to the future. And the future of Hinduism Today begins with our next issue, off the presses in early October. We have received the blessings of Lord Ganesha. Proceed with confidence, Acharya. Aum.