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LETTERS

Be Proud, Informed Americans

I always enjoy your magazine. the articles on parenting, vegetarianism, yoga, allied traditions and Hinduism are fantastic. As a Hindu, I have faced some harrassment after the September 11 attack. I believe that Americans need to be informed about the discrimination and suffering we have undergone and continue to go through in Fiji, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Every public library should have a copy of Lajja (Shame) by Taslima Nasrin, to expose some of what was done. Since September 11, I have been wearing a tikka (tilak forehead mark) and have gotten a lot of interest and questions. I use such queries as an opportunity to explain Vedic culture and Hinduism. We should give pictures of the Gods and books to libraries and friends. We should proudly wear the tikka, both men and women, and explain it to those who don't understand. We should display Hindu items and offer these items along with magazines for sale in their businesses and make gifts to friends to help demystify Sanatana Dharma.

Do this for the children, if not for yourself.

Shiva Sookhai shivasookhai_2000@yahoo.com

Thank God for Siva's Descent

Om Gam Ganapataye Namaha. Hinduism Today is such an exquisite magazine. Exactly what we needed! Who else will stand up to "one-way" religions proselytizing violence? Thank God for Lord Siva's descent as Gurudeva and his sacred, prolific genius.

Nataraja Baba Sivamandir@aol.com

Heavenly Journeys to God

I was spellbound by Lavina Melwani's

expression of her childhood feelings and thoughts (The Joys of Pilgrimage, Nov/Dec, 2001). Being a devout Hindu, (not a vegetarian yet), I see and share the same. I am a complete devotee of Lord Ayyappa. For many years I made my yearly yatra (pilgrimage) to Sabarimala during the Makarajothi festival, but unfortunately, due to a death in the family, I had to miss this year's yatra. Believe me—the feelings during the yatra are completely beyond words, where you seclude yourself for the 48 days, observe complete vegetarianism and take the yatra from the river Pampa and walk for 72 km over two-and-a-half days. I am married and now have two beautiful children. When we had lost all hope of having our first child, the Lord Himself came in my dreams and assured that we will have our first child that very year. And when

my wife had to undergo an operation after the second child, the doctor informed me that the chances of survival for the mother and child will be 50-50, the Lord came again. Like the song goes: "Kallum mullum kaluku mathai, Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa." ("Stones and thorns form a mattress for my feet. Take refuge in Lord Ayyappa.")

Mohan Poduval keyestrاد@yahoo.com

Vegetarianism Is Evolution

I appreciate your article on vegetarianism which is so much in tune with the need to usher in this

new age of sensitivity and to give out our path of light. I draw my argument for vegetarianism from our quest to being more civilized. The more civilized we humans get, the more sensitive we become! All civilizations must have decided to change from being nomadic to settling down the moment agriculture provided a more secure source of food. And with settling down, man must have actually taken his first step as a civilized being capable of growing and choosing his food for the day. As we grew into a more civilized society, humans must have begun expressing more sensitivity to life around due to surplus of

agricultural produce and divine insight to life. This force of sensitivity must have pervaded into extremes, as in Jainism which goes beyond vegetarism to extend sensitivity to roots of plants forbidden to be eaten. As civilization grows, divine insight would most naturally bring out the Godly attributes of mankind as subtle intellectual inputs over time. This statement of mine is a wish for optimism at the time of Kali Yuga!

Adhipen Bose adhipen@aol.com

Gurudeva's Spirit. Send More.

Thank you very much for the great issue (Apr/May/Jun, 2002, Gurudeva Memorial Issue) capturing the incomparable contributions and accomplishments of Gurudeva, to help the world better understand Hinduism. The issue presents the spirit and persona of our beloved Gurudeva in a most befitting manner. We shall not only treasure this issue, but also refer to it for inspiration, peace of mind and to invoke

Gurudeva's spiritual presence in our individual, family and community lives. Now, I need 10 additional copies to share with our away-from-home children, friends, neighbors, visitors to our Shiva Vishnu Temple in Livermore, California. Gurudeva helped us start the temple and encouraged us to complete it. We always remember him with gratitude and fond memories of his precious visits to the temple which is prospering beyond our dreams and shining as Gurudeva wished it would.

G. S. and Katyayini
Satyanarayanaa
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We printed 1,000's of extra
copies of the Gurudeva
Memorial Issue. These are
available at cost. Contact
jothi@hindu.org

I received the recent issue of

Hinduism Today and I am very impressed with the information on Gurudeva. I really admire how much he has done for the Hindu religion. He is really great. Looking at him brings tears to my eyes. I am so lucky to have seen him at Ceylon Temple in Singapore to get his blessing. My wish and dream was to see Gurudeva at Kauai. Now I still want to visit the ashram and hope Gurudeva will help me to make my dream come true.

"Dewie" Dewie@jel.com.sg

It Is "Deepavali," Not "Diwali"

Why is the Hindu festival of lights spelled "Diwali"? Should it not be "Deepavali," which reflects the description of the essence of this celebration. The word deepa means "light" and avala means "rows." The observance of this festival is

to celebrate the significance of Hinduism. Lighting of lamps has the meaning of eliminating the darkness in the literal sense, and metaphorically it means to overcome and gain the knowledge of Enlightenment. So, it seems that "Deepavali" would be the appropriate spelling.

Jumuna Vittal
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I live in Tampa, Florida. i am not a hindu but a Catholic. However, I love to read Hinduism Today and I found Mrs. Rama Devagupta's article (Sep-Oct, 2001, The Inner Light) most helpful. For me, this was my first year learning about Deepavali, and I have received cards from my friends. I also have sent many cards to them. I was mainly aware of the association of Rama and

Lakshmi with Deepavali.
Your article helped me to
better understand just what
my friends are observing
this time of year. I applaud
Hinduism Today for being
one of the best resources
for learning about one of
the world's greatest
religions.

Bill Rogers

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HPI - Tell It Like It Is!

Your daily e-mail news, hpi, is getting better and better with an ever-widening range of topics, <http://www.hinduismtoday.com/hpi> and I find myself reading every story that you write. I am very grateful that you

also write about the shameful things that some Hindus do, as when you wrote about some Hindus who attacked a priest and disrupted a Mass. I want to know both the bad and good that we are capable of, so that we can praise the good, and support those who worked for it to work more to create more good; and I want to know

about the bad so that we can condemn it as behavior not worthy of our religion and of our people.

Mira S. Ghoshal

mirasghoshal@aol.com

I am indeed grateful to you for including my

e-mail address on the Hindu Press International list. Without doubt, you are providing a unique and incredible service to Hindus all around the World. Please keep it up despite difficulties. I hope myself and others should be able to contribute in due course towards sharing the financial costs involved in this invaluable service.

Vinod Prakash, PhD,
President, India
Development and Relief
Fund vinodsarla@aol.com

More Souls Come from
Where?

I am taking a religion
course at the University

of Toledo and one of my classmates asked the following about reincarnation. How does population increase? If there are X amount of souls at any given time, then a soul would be reincarnated when it dies someone/thing would only be born if

someone/thing dies.
Then how do we
explain steady
population increase?
Can new souls be
created?

Thomas Drewyour
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God continually
creates new souls.

The Jihad Lie

The whole planet
has become
intensely aware of

that aspect of the planet called jihad, whose leaders claim a special alliance with God and who are quick to declare a holy war and inspire their youth to become martyrs by blowing themselves up and

taking a few of the
"enemy" with them,
which they believe
earns them a place
in eternal heaven.
Last week I read
where an
18-year-old Muslim
girl did this to earn
a special place in
heaven. What a

tragic lie to buy
into. All of the
civilized world,
including Muslims,
who are a little bit
into the heart
chakra should
condemn martyrs as
murderers who will
suffer the fate of
murderers in this

world, in the astral plane and in their next birth. The leaders who inspire the youth and the youth themselves are the perpetrators of all the terrorism. I think it needs to be leaked into the higher

consciousness of
the mass mind what
really happens to
these leaders and
their misguided
youth. I suspect
they go back and
forth very quickly
from a murderous
life to a quick death
to a murderous life

in a long loop of many short, pain-filled lives until they have experienced enough pain to break that murderous cycle. But I know that if they really knew the consequences of their deeds and

what was really in store for them on the other side and in their next life, they would not be doing what they're doing, and their leaders wouldn't be motivating them to do it and glorifying it after it has been

done. It would further motivate higher conscious Muslims, Hindus and Christians to strongly train their children that this kind of behavior leads to nothing but pain for a lot of people, which

irrevocably comes back to the sender of that pain, the so-called martyr, the murderer, for more than just one or two lives, whether they be Muslim, Hindu, Christian, atheist or agnostic. If the real

consequences were known, it would help put a quicker end to this low-life behavior in the name of any God of any religion.

Brahmachari Diksha

Kandar

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Abolish

Misunderstandings

I would like to thank the staff of Hinduism Today for their quality work and dedication to the Hindu community. This magazine's devotion to its purpose and strong

commitment to
their community
has helped Hindus
and others around
the world
understand this
great religion.
There are so many
illusions and
misunderstandings

that your
publication helps
to abolish. Without
your commendable
works, our people
would be at a great
loss. Thanks!

Sanjay Goyal

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The Roots of
Euro-Americans

I hear that many
Hindus have
wondered why
many Americans
and Europeans
are rejecting
Christianity in
order to convert
to Hinduism.
"Why would

someone reject
their own culture
to embrace
someone else's?"
There are very
specific reasons
why this is the
case. At one time,
the people of the
European

countries did not practice Christianity. They practiced religions that were very similar to Hinduism. In fact, Hinduism and the various forms of Paganism that

were practiced in Europe have a common root, hence the terminology "Indo-European." In fact, if you were to compare the Elder Edda (the sacred text

of the ancient
Northern
Europeans) to the
Rig Veda, you
would find striking
similarities.

Christianity, on
the other hand, is
not really a
Western religion.

It was directly spawned from Judaism. Later on it was embraced by power hungry Ceasars and Popes of Rome who in turn used this religion as a means of

spiritual, mental,
and physical
domination. All
who did not agree
with their
veiwpoints were
murdered,
burned, raped,
and destroyed.
Missionaries were

sent to other countries outside of Rome as a means to spy on other religions as well as seduce leaders into giving up their native religions (usually with

bribes of gold and land) and to join the Ceaser/Pope in their unholy mission of destroying others cultures (which they perceived as helping).

I would like to
address a few
points made by
Sri Sri Bharati
Tirtha
Mahaswamigal
regarding
conversion to
Hinduism in his
interview for your

March/April, 2001,
article "On
Dharma, the
Pope, Kids, and
More..." He said,
"When foreigners
approach my
guru's guru, Sri
Chandrasekhara
Bharati, seeking

conversion to
Hinduism, he
advises them to
'become better
Christians. That is
the essence of
Hinduism. If you
cannot find solace
in your religion,
you will never be

able to find it in
any other
religion.' "

I agree with the
statement to a
certain extent.
True, folks should

seek out their
own roots first
and foremost.
However, Sri
Chandrasekhara
Bharati may not
realize that there
is no solace or
substance in
Christianity for

such seekers, as
it does not truly
resonate the soul
of the American
or European,
because it has
roots outside of
our blood and
soul. If
Euro-Americans

or Europeans are
ever to find
solace and
substance in
anything, it will be
found in the
pre-Christian
European
religions. The
reason for

foreigners being
attracted to
Hinduism is based
on the fact that it
is more in line
with their
blood/soul than
Christianity is
(which has
Semitic/Middle-Ea

stern roots).

If you wish to
direct non-Indians
away from
Hinduism towards
something that is
of their own blood

and soul, then
direct them
towards the elder
ways of Europe,
which capture the
same spirit of
polytheism,
animism,
mysticism, and
philosophical

thought that is
found in
Hinduism.

Grimulfr

Laugrsson

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Kashmir, the Pawn

Thank you for
your coverage on
Kashmir
(Jan/Feb/Mar,

2002, Kashmir's Crisis). Your team boldly shed light on the Kashmir crisis and talked about the plight of the Kashmiri Hindus suffering in the

refugee camps.
Four hundred
thousand
Kashmiri Hindus,
because of their
religion, have
faced systematic
removal, killing
and ethnic

cleansing at the hands of Islamic terrorists in the valley since 1989, resulting in a mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of Kashmiri Pandits

from their
homeland. I
would also like to
point out a
significant
happening
omitted in the
article on
Kashmir's saga,

namely that the
wills and wishes
of the people of
Jammu and
Kashmir were
lawfully
enshrined in the
Jammu and
Kashmir's

constitution of
1957 that
irrevocably
bound the state
to India. The map
of India in this
article incorrectly
labels the state
of Jammu and

Kashmir as
Kashmir (Map of
Jammu and
Kashmir ref:

http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/kashmir/kashmir_map.htm.

Your article

erroneously
mentioned that
the Indian
leaders were
interested in
retaining
Kashmir, while
the facts
mentioned below

prove otherwise.
In the book on
the Jammu and
Kashmir
constitution (
<http://ikashmir.org/LegalDocs/140.html>) by Justice
A. S. Anand,

ex-chief justice
of India records,
"According to Mr.
Mahajan, Mr.
Nehru was
interested not so
much in the
accession of the
state to India as

in the power
being given to
the popular
leaders." Mr.
Mahajan was a
former prime
minister of
Jammu and
Kashmir and

later became the
chief justice of
India. Alan
Cambell-Johnson
writes on page
223 of his
Mission with
Mountbatten
(Robert Hale Ltd,

1951): "...the State's Ministry, under Patel's direction, went out of its way to take no action which could be interpreted as forcing Kashmir's

hand and to give assurances that accession to Pakistan would not be taken amiss by India." The above quote refers to Sardar Patel, the

architect of free
India.

Mountbatten, the
Governor
General of India,
in his speech to
the members of
East India
Association on

June 29, 1948,
said "Had he,
[the Maharaja of
Jammu and
Kashmir]
acceded to
Pakistan before
August 14, the
future

Government of
India had
allowed me to
give His
Highness an
assurance that
no objection
whatever would
be raised by

them."

(Reproduced in

Lord

Mountbatten's

Time to Look

Forward, p. 269).

I hope you will

continue

publishing

articles that
affect Hindus
worldwide.

Irma Razdan

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[.com](mailto:irma_raz@yahoo.com)

Appologies to the
author, a bad
link was removd
from this letter

Keep the Flame!

I am a lifetime
subscriber to
your immensely
worthwhile
magazine and
also have
contributed
some articles. It
has made a

change in my
life. It made me
bolder and to
believe in my
religion,
Hinduism, more
fervently.
Gurudeva was a
true

ambassador of
our religion. He
has done more
for it in a
positive way
than a lot of
other spiritual
giants. Of
course, it

helped that he was a Westerner; he was fully aware of it and used it to the maximum advantage. His books are masterpieces.

We here in
Nashville give
them as gifts to
our chief guests
at the Sri
Ganesha
Temple. The
edition
remembering

him is written
up so lovingly.
His successor,
Satguru
Bodhinatha
Veylanswami
will, I am sure,
do full justice to
the Hindu

cause. We
welcome him
with open arms.
Keep the flame
of goodness and
truth and purity
burning through
your magazine.

Rita Frenchman
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