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Published by Anonymous on May. 02, 1999

Letters

More Than Polytheistic Culture

IN YOUR BALI ARTICLES YOU CONCENTRATED on dance, local cultural practices and tourist attractions (Bali: Island of the Gods, Oct. 1999), just as the British used to write about India, e.g., about untouchability, snake charmers, maharajas on elephants, many Gods, etc. Hindus should understand the higher concepts practiced by Hindus anywhere, including Bali, and express them so that people will know and not merely express the local culture. Do Balinese use Sanskrit as a religious language? Do we get gurus and swamis there? Is yoga practiced there? How are the concepts of Upanishads taken? It is a mistake to only look at Hindu culture and say that it is polytheistic, like the Greek and the Roman gods. Even Hindus don't respect it, but feel shy about it. Hence the compulsion for the slogan, "Proudly say you are a Hindu." Hinduism is not a polytheistic religion. It is a monotheistic polydeitic religion, and the study of its monotheism by its ancient seers and teachers is unparalleled in any religion. So far, Hindus have failed to make the West understand this, hence the stigma. However, I must say your magazine is very good and is doing extremely good work. It is sad that we Hindus are only able to boast of one global magazine, while other religions have many.

Dr. Krishna Bastola

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No Veggie Car Available

UNFORTUNATELY I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH LUCK finding a veggie-friendly car (Digital Dharma, Vegetarians, Car Crisis, Mar, 1999). I sacrificed gadgets for cloth seats. I couldn't find any "luxury packages" that didn't have leather. I was surprised that none of the car companies was willing to be flexible, even if I was willing to spend more money.

Graham Spencer

Founding Member, Excite.Com

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Neglecting Our Own Culture

IN MY FAMILY, THE NEW GENERATIONS ARE quickly becoming distanced from their heritage. Have Hindus the world over failed to realize that our religion is the most beautiful and most spectacular religion in the world? Our culture is diverse and rich in spirituality, sciences, art, philosophy and history. Hindus are alienated in America. We must unite and preserve our culture for future

generations. Teenagers are being lulled into a destructive life, neglecting their own culture to participate in a spiritually bankrupt Western culture. Today Indian music sounds more Western than East Indian. The tabla and dholak are being replaced by drum machines and guitars. The arts that have been passed on from one generation to the next over ten thousand years are being replaced. Indian movies resemble bad MTV videos, competing with the West for the most vulgar and morally bankrupt screenplays.

Navin Soomair

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Worst Fears Unfounded

LET ME ASSURE J. S. KUMAR NOT TO WORRY (Letters, Dec. 1999, "Composer Fears the Worst"). The

only foe is weak Vedic understanding and realization, not strong foreign cults. The strength of Christianity, which you seem to fear, does not come from just gathering on Sunday and chanting together. They simply have more money (in the past centuries, they had also more guns to prove their point). They can spend much more on organizational matters, because they are directed from the West. But we should not out of "desperation" start to drag Vedic culture, the real Indian culture, down to the same shallow level of Christianity--mere singing or gathering--a shallow level of faith. Of course, faith is very important

and it has its own place in the grand design of Sanatana Dharma. But Sanatana Dharma, the eternal way of life, is unique for teaching how to live in the wholeness of life, both relative and absolute, outer and inner, material and spiritual, at the same time.

Alexandr Ruzicka

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Valuable University Tool

YOUR FINE MAGAZINE IS
DOING EXCELLENT work.
Here at California State

University Long Beach, I am responsible for teaching classes on introductory Asian religion, Southeast Asian religions and Hinduism. I want to convey not only the religions' pasts and philosophical richness, but also their contemporary vibrancy. Hinduism Today, with its wide variety of articles and colorful pictorials, never fails to catch the students' eyes and generate discussion on contemporary and historical Hinduism.

Professor Brad Hawkins

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I Can't Believe We
Murdered!

I AM OUTRAGED BY THE
MURDERERS of Australian
missionary, Graham Staines
and his young sons. I am a
Hindu Indian belonging to
the Coorg "tribe" of
Karnataka state, India. I
used to be so proud of my

religion, but not anymore!
Who are these people
trying to kid when they say
they are the saviors of our
religion? Have Hindus done
anything for their
unfortunate 'brother'
Hindus? It is the
missionaries who have
given us a good education.
They went to our
inaccessible villages to do
humanitarian deeds. There
may be conversions, but
that is because our rigid

caste system has ostracized so many of our fellow human beings. The pity is, we still have states, like UP, Bihar, Orissa and MP, that are so backward they are dragging down our entire country with them! India does not deserve this!

Lovely Devaya

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Hindus Should Unite
to Survive

WHY ARE HINDUS BEING TARGETED BY Christian missionaries in India?

The targets are the poor and rural areas. We need to stop just thinking and start doing something....There is a need for overseas Hindus to help out the poor in India, not only Hindus, but those of other religions as well.

No one should have to choose between a child, food, well-being, medical attention and religious education. That is exactly what is going on in India's poor and isolated areas.

Janak Parekh

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Who Is the Real

Culprit?

LATELY THERE IS LOTS OF NEWS ABOUT the attacks on Christians in India, like the rape of nuns in Jhabua, burning of churches in Gujarat, immolating of the Australian priest, Graham Staines and

his two sons in Orissa. For all these incidents Hindu organizations are blamed, while facts are not made clear. In Jhabua, of the two dozen thugs who had attacked the nuns, half were Christians and the rest were local tribal people. In America,

Black African churches
are being burned by
Christians themselves,
but no voice of protest
is raised.

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Let's Learn to

Wear a Dhoti

A READER (K.
THURUVAN, FEB.
1999) LIKES to see
Indians wear dhoti. I
want the same and
request you to
publish an article on
the methods of

wearing dhoti. I have seen many articles on wearing a sari but never on dhoti.

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Letters may be edited for space and clarity and may appear in electronic versions of Hinduism Today.