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Letters

Enchanted by Dharma

I am enchanted by the Publisher's, H. H. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami's, words. I cannot describe how deeply and powerfully they enter my heart. His words and instructions are so true that they carry power and vigor to those who wish to be spiritually enlightened. Your magazine's information can enter all levels of human beings, if they read with sincerity and true love for their progress.

Dr. Sankara Subramaniam
Durban, South Africa

Appalled and Disgusted

Your article "Why do Hindus say, 'I'm Not a Hindu?'" (October '98) needs to be highlighted and expanded. I, like many other Hindus, supported the Hare Krishna movement in its hour of need. I was fully involved in demonstrations, public meetings and in the forming of its agenda. This was all in the aid of preventing the government closure of the Hare Krishna Temple here in England. After our great Hindu victory of keeping the temple open, ISKCON now openly states in the UK that they have no real connection with Hinduism, even blatantly insulting other swamis and gurus. I am appalled and disgusted, like many other Hindus, that groups like ISKCON, Brahma Kumaris, Transcendental Meditation, etc., use and abuse Hindu philosophy when it benefits them, but then have the audacity to deny they have anything to do with Hinduism. There should

be constant scrutiny of these pseudo-Hindu groups who promote sectarian trends.

Kavita Verma
The Vedic Shakti Society,
London, U.K.

I want to congratulate your magazine on once again having the courage and insight to deal with crucial issues facing the Hindu world. Your article very correctly pointed out that ISKCON considers itself strictly non-Hindu. This is clearly evident in the writings and lectures of Srila Prabhupada, ISKCON's founder, as well as in the day-to-day preaching statements of its members and current-day leaders. What is especially troubling is that ISKCON periodically does claim to be a Hindu organization. Unfortunately, these claims on the part of ISKCON occur when, and only when, it serves the legal and financial interests of the sect. Thousands of unsuspecting Indian Hindus have been persuaded to contribute funds to the group with the reassurance that they were supporting "Hinduism," "Hindu" temples and the printing of "Hindu" books. As one of hundreds of examples, when ISKCON started a (now defunct) students' ashram at the University of Illinois-Urbana, they sent out a letter to thousands of Chicago-area Hindus appealing for funds. In this letter, they claimed that the center's purpose was to help "Hindu youth" remain faithful to their religious upbringing. Unfortunately, once the center was operational, the few "Hindu youth" who visited the ashram were told that ISKCON actually had nothing to do with Hinduism. The occasional ambiguity Hindus have determining the bases of the terms "Hindu" and "Hinduism" should not be exploited by such organizations as ISKCON for any unethical or dishonest end.

Frank Morales

Madison, Wisconsin

Vital Global Awareness Dawns

I enjoy reading about Hindu communities living in different countries. We are united in our faith, and by reporting these vital pieces of information Hinduism Today enables us to be aware that there are, unexpectedly, Hindu communities in such places as Martinique. Perhaps there could be attempts to forge links between Hindu communities around the world. Hinduism Today can play a vital and decisive role in bringing together Hindus regardless of citizenship, race, caste, etc. acknowledging the uniqueness of each community without exacerbating differences.

Narayana Menon

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Hinduism May Provide Answers

I have been quite impressed with the balance of your reporting of highly complex issues within Hinduism, both as a social structure and as a philosophical system. Your reporters do not shy away from some of the ambiguities that attend public forms of worship, even while affirming the wisdom of this vast tradition. As my thought matures I am becoming increasingly persuaded that the three Western monotheisms are at an impasse and that Hinduism may provide the answers we need to further develop our religious

consciousness.

Dr. Robert S. Corrington

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Super Sanatana Dharma Seva

Thank you a 1000 times for Hinduism Today. What a fabulous job you are doing! What a super Sanatana Dharma Seva!

Srimata Swami Atmananda
Trinidad and Tobago

Oops! Millenium Starts 2001

I just looked at the Nov. 1998 issue. Inside the front cover is a foldout drawing of where the planets will be on the morning of 1, January 2000, which you call the first morning of the next millenium. I have some news for you:

technically, the next millenium doesn't begin until 1, January 2001!

Panta Rhei

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* Panta, you are absolutely right!

Treating Ram with Disrespect

Namaste! Jaya Sri-Sri Sita-Rama. You are not doing your job. That rubbish article (Women of Vision, November '98) by Madhu Kishwar should have gone straight into the garbage. She has no understanding of the divine Lila of Lord Rama and His eternal consort Mother Sita

Devi.

Mrs. Indira Bannerji
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A Eurocentric education is anathema to interpreting Eastern texts, especially when they are as profound as the Rayamayana. Madhu took the very literal interpretation of a book that is essentially a journey to the Self. Ram's action, even if taken literally should also be viewed in the context of a king's dharma. As for objecting to a Krishna-like

husband while yet wishing for a "Krishna-like son," someone's son will eventually be someone's husband. So be careful what you wish for

Omar Singh

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* Madhu Kishwar cited a nationwide reaction to the Ramayana on television, and a rural campaign to protect women from Sita's fate. A voice for many loyal

Hindus, she reported general perceptions that the Ramayana's finale is a paradigm for problematic Hindu male attitudes toward women, not merely her own opinion. As Madhu herself has said, for Hinduism to progress an open forum to deal with difficult issues is essential. We welcome her opinions and the other side as well. Others readers cited this "secular" treatment of a

sacred text as breaking our policy "to protect the Vedas." But the Ithihasas (epic poems,) Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas, (ancient religious tales of all denominations) are part of smriti--man made literature--not sruti, revealed Vedas.

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