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Hard to Be Hindu

The article, "It's Easier To Be A Hindu in Ireland than in India," (My Turn, January '97), deserves my vote of thanks. In my own case, I was born outside India to devout Vaishnava parents but received very scant teachings. I was lost as to how to learn to be a practicing Sanatani rather than just roaming about with a "Hindu" label. I picked up superficial knowledge from reading life biographies of great saints which gave me food for thought and a thirst for deeper understanding.

H.J. PREMJEI, RUE DE LA GARE, SWITZERLAND

"It's Easier To Be Hindu In Ireland than in India" gives a clear message that something is ailing India. By invading the social infrastructure through the route of health care, social care, education and job possibilities, foreign religions in India have outsmarted the native Hindu religion. Hinduism is not offering any practical solution to the present-day problems of education, health, economics and social order. In today's world Hinduism, too, needs to acquire effective strategies, image-building and salesmanship. Then people can realize it is not only a great philosophy but can also bring solutions to the day-to-day misery to which nine hundred million Hindus are subjected in the land of their birth.

DR. VATSALA SPERLING ROCHESTER, VT, USA

vs@gotoit.com

Let's Move On

Since independence, lots of changes have forced the break-up of the joint family system ("Joint families, a Venerable Tradition in Jeopardy," SPECIAL REPORT, January '97). The total lifestyle in India has changed. Economic conditions, decline in education and upbringing, political corruption, disregard of religion, blind following of the West, etc., are some of the major causes. In North America we have to find better solutions. Innovative ideas have to be searched for by our social thinkers and philosophers. The earlier we do this, the better it will be for us.

PRAKASH MODY NORTH YORK, ONTARIO, CANADA

prakash_Mody@tvo.org

The joint family system, discussed in your January issue, sounds good on paper, but there are several factors that make it unworkable in contemporary society. The joint family system was an economic necessity and an arrangement of convenience when the economy was agriculture-based. With the advent of industrial growth and a service-based economy, it is no longer possible for family members to stay in the same place and still survive economically. People have to move where the jobs are.

PRADEEP SRIVASTAVA, DETROIT, MICHIGAN, USA

srivasta@mms.water.ci.detroit.mi.us

Ah, Shucks

I have nothing but superlatives of the new manifestation of Hinduism Today. Extraordinary! Distinctive--no, unique! Beautiful! Soulful! Inspiring! Encouraging! Educational! Up to the minute! Global! Mystical! Supernatural! The new look transmits a spiritual and also earthly beauty wide awake that

was sleeping in the previous format. You have risen to new heights, while keeping all that was important and precious about the previous Hinduism Today. Congratulations millions of koti-s of times to you all. A triumph! I feel as if I did it myself; I am taught this is real "oneness."

DR. KUSUMITA P. PEDERSEN, JAMAICA, NEW YORK, USA

Food for Thought

I am enclosing an article on genetic engineering of food. You should address this issue in one of your future publications. As your articles are characterized by careful research, intelligent arguments and the support of scripture, any word from you lends greater impact on the international readership.

MARION ZOBOSKI, TOKYO, JAPAN

Given the fact that the cure to many cancers and infectious diseases may eventually be from changes in genetic structure, it may not be wise to use religion to stop such progress. The major caveat is that in the manner ultrasound was used to detect fetal sex and induce abortions (as is done indiscriminately in India), genetic engineering may be used to manipulate the very core of our beings in a commercial manner.

RAJA BHATT, MD rajabhat@wilmington.net

Know Your Religion

Most young Hindus in Malaysia have converted easily simply because they are blindly following rituals without knowing the meanings behind them. Some of our Hindu practices are scorned at, and most of us feel apologetic for

them. I find Hinduism Today attractive because it brings together the different views that make up Hinduism.

SUSILA DEVI BALAKRISHNAN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

I don't agree with DR. Ashok K. Jain (LETTERS, December, 1996) that we should tolerate Christian missionary activity because their money benefits the economy. In Somalia, Africa, Christian missionaries tried to spread Christianity among local Somalies by offering food, shelter and education. But the Somalia people were ready to die of hunger rather than to convert. They chased the Western missionaries away at gunpoint. Every Muslim child is taught Islam when they reach age six. If every Hindu could learn and understand the greatness of Hinduism, I'm sure the problem of conversion would be less. I don't ask Hindus to die in hunger, but don't exchange your religion for food or a luxurious life.

K. KUMAR SHARMA, JOHOR BAHRU, MALAYSIA

Just Happened to Be a Hindu

To say Sai Baba's Mission is to spread Hindu culture is not right. His mission is to bring back the Vedic knowledge to its original value. The misconception is to reckon the Vedas with only Hinduism. The Vedic culture just happened to be Hindu culture.

SABAPATHY SIVA M.D., COQUITLAM, CANADA

Sabapathy_Siva@mindlink.bc.ca

Self Perpetuating

Your response provided to DR. Mukunda Rao--to give a proportional voice to every Hindu lineage--is commendable (LETTERS, January '97). Hinduism is not personality based. It is

well founded on the Vedas and Upanishads. For a serious seeker, the journey from paroksha jnana (perceptive knowledge and physics) to aparoksha jnana (metaphysics) happens to be a tortuous one. Fortunately, the tools of hypothesis, logic, induction, validity and self-disputation were used by different system builders to establish and propagate the Hindu lineages.

RANJI RAO DESHISTA SAN DEIGO, CALIFORNIA, USA,
raosr@gat.com

Corrections

The Hindu Students Council's (USA) correct e-mail address is hsc-can@hindunet.org. Visit their informative cultural and religious home page at www.hindunet.org/hsc-can/

Letters, with writer's name, address and daytime phone number, should be sent to:

Letters, Hinduism Today

107 Kaholalele Road

Kapaa, HI 96746-9304 USA

or faxed to: (808) 822-4351

or e-mailed to: letters@HinduismToday.kauai.hi.us

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