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Letters

Impacting India

The Publisher's Desk articles are fantastic. Gurudeva is really bringing forward the pure teachings of Saivism. In India, child beating, child labor and child abuse are so common. Gurudeva is a rare soul who really upholds dharma. We hope religious institutions will read the article "Bad Money, Good Money" (May '97) and change their approach when collecting donations from the public. Such articles will have a good impact on the Hindus in India.

Jiva Rajashankar, Bangalore, India

Jai, Gurumayi!

I have been reading your magazine for some time now. It surely has been an enriching medium in my life. Often I have felt that Hinduism Today has been a kind of torch-bearer for me, shedding light on the aspects of my own being which I did not know existed within me. I have read quite a bit of the writings of the great Indian saint Swami Muktananda. Thereafter I was eager to read and learn more about his successor, Gurumayi Swami Chidvilasananda. The article by her ("Minister's Message," April '97) came as a wonderful surprise. Her article turned out to be like a revelation for me. Her message is like a key which unlocked for me the deeper meaning of Swami Muktananda's teachings, the most central teaching of which is, "God dwells within You as You." She has

so beautifully expounded further on the same. I have savored every bit of her extremely profound, yet amazingly simple message. I am so deeply convinced that even if I were to hold on to a tiny bit of her teachings and ponder over it constantly, her teachings would open up a whole new perspective of looking at and living life more purposefully. I want to thank you most sincerely for introducing your readers' to Swami Chidvilasananda and look forward to more in the future.

Nutan Gupta, Mumbai, India

Hare Krishna is Alive and Well

Despite the inaccurate claims of a paid advertisement in Hinduism Today ("Betrayal of the Spirit," page 46, May '97), the Hare Krishna movement is alive and well. When our founder-acarya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, passed away in 1977, ISKCON faced serious challenges. Most disciples were young converts and the institution was barely 11 years old. Mistakes were made, and unfortunately, some leaders went astray and caused the society much pain and embarrassment. This is not unexpected for a large international organization. I myself, as a twenty-two year member of the society, struggled with many of ISKCON's shortcomings. Like most members, I chose to continue to work with Prabhupada's society to advance the high ideals he taught us, while overcoming the impediments we faced. Despite all obstacles, ISKCON continues to grow and have a positive impact on the lives of our congregation and society at large. Last year, ISKCON celebrated its 30th anniversary with events at 400 temples worldwide. Each Janmastami, millions flock to ISKCON temples for darshan. 1997 will mark the opening of major temple complexes in Delhi and Bangalore, and the world's first Hare Krishna Hospital in Mumbai. Our Food for Life project has fed 85 million meals to the needy in

70 countries. Reporting from Chechnya about ISKCON's work during the war, the New York Times stated, "Here they have a reputation like the one Mother Theresa has in Calcutta." This April in South Africa, ISKCON organized and catered a one-day event for 40,000 school children to promote cultural diversity and tolerance. President Nelson Mandela gave the keynote address. The list goes on and on. Despite the protests of a few detractors, Srila Prabhupada's movement should be judged by its honest accomplishments, and the millions of people whose lives it helped change for the better.

Annutama Dasa, National Director of Communication,
ISKCON, Potomac, Maryland, USA

Correct Russian Lineage

The article on the Tantra Sangha of Russia ("Tantra Worship Catches Fire in Russia," RUSSIAN REVIVAL, April '97) inaccurately described the Sangha's tradition and practices. We are not in any way Pashupatas or Virasaivas, nor Kalamukhas [various Saivite lineages]. Unlike the Virasaivas, we do not perform pujas to personal Sivalingams. We carry them around the neck only as a symbol, not as an object of worship. We are Tantrikas belonging to the Vatulanatha Parampara of the Rahasya Kaula Sampradaya, a branch of the Shakta -oriented upasampradaya [sub lineage] also known as the Kali Kula Krama system in Kashmir Tantric Saivism.

The Rahasya Sampradaya, (secret tradition), teaches three ways (first, middle and highest levels of the same Tantric Path) to God: the path of Pashu (easy, not esoteric, Hindu tradition), also known as the "right-handed path;" the path of Vira, or heroic esoteric tantric "left-handed path;" and the path of Divya, path of highest level of Tantric sadhana. As tantrikas,

Swami Sadashivacharya and his disciples follow and teach this three-fold Tantric Path of Kula, not the path of Pashu alone.

There are only a few details of worship and practice that we share with Pashupatas, Kalamukhas and Lingayats. This influence is only upon the external ritual worship. The original esoteric teachings of this sampradaya, which are obviously more Kaula Shakta than Saivite, remain strong and distinct. Unlike Virasaivas, our followers recognize the Vedas and other brahmanic Hindu scriptures. But we recognize the Tantras [Shakta and Saiva Agamas] as more authoritative than Vedic scriptures. Thus, purely tantric ideas and practices predominate in this tradition, which is both Shakta (tantric) and Saivite.

The erroneous statements about Tantra Sangha were the result of Hinduism Today's editors misunderstanding our original information given to them because of incorrect translation and differences in language.

Stanislav A.Gorokhov, Tantra Sangha, Moscow, Russia
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Actively Engaged

In your article ("Manjul Bhargava: Chalks up the Morgan Prize," math-a-magician, May '97), it was erroneously printed, "His grandfather Dr. Purushottam Lal Bhargava was a renowned scholar of Sanskrit." which gives the impression that he is currently inactive in his field. We would like to emphasize the fact that Dr. P.L. Bhargava is actively engaged in writing books on Indology and delivering lectures.

Mrs. Mira Bhargava, New York,USA,

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Peace's Prayer

I really felt hurt for my fellow Tamilians after reading the article ("Sri Lankan Tamils Tell Tales of a Desperate Diaspora," cover story, April '97). If all the people are killed and the land destroyed, what will both parties have to rule? They have lost everything. Then there'll be no use of crying over spilled milk. I hope and pray to Lord Ganesha that both parties will sit down for peace talks, for the sake of the people.

Murugappan, Malaysia, u03134@kdupg.edu.my

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