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Letters

Kudos

We are very fortunate to have from you a free supply of the precious magazine Hinduism Today. All of us read the magazine with great fervor. It is the voice of Sanatana Dharma and the cultural bridge between East and West and South and North, making the world a truly global village. Hinduism Today has come into the lives of millions of people across countries and continents, informing and entertaining, educating and enlightening, lifting readers' spirits, changing and transforming nations. You present open, clear, honest answers to questions in and on life, making the magazine endearing to all. Hinduism Today is heralding the renaissance of this millennium for universal peace, progress and prosperity.

Bhattu Ganesh Sharma
Vice President, Maruthi Vidyalaya

Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Keep up the good work. I thoroughly enjoy reading Hinduism Today every three months. The information given in this magazine is thoroughly researched and succinctly written so that anyone can read, easily understand and learn about Hinduism.

Vyju Subramanian
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I enjoy reading your wonderful magazine which has provided much needed insight into the supreme faith which is Hinduism. I would like to suggest an article on the current excavations of the cities of ancient India to provide insight into the legacy left by the ancient people of our spiritual homeland.

Dinesh Nair
Malaysia

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Thank you, thank you, thank you! I always marvel at the meticulous care in the presentations of Hinduism Today. It is as if the small group of monastics produce the content value of two to three bestselling books each issue, each with an obviously wonderful impact. I also sense the receptivity and interest of the reader is unfolding beautifully, making it possible for the words of Hinduism Today to benefit one and all.

Kumar Natarajan
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I am happy to let you know that your site has been included in an article I just posted on my blog entitled "50 Inspiring Religious Leaders You Should Follow on Twitter" (onlinechristiancolleges.net/50-inspiring-religious-leaders-you-should-follow-on-twitter/).

Karen L. Anderson
USA

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The Great Yoga Debate

Hats off to Dr. Aseem Shukla and Sheetal Shah of the Hindu American Foundation for writing about the miscommunication about the origin of yoga (p. 64 of this issue, "Hindu American Foundation Launches 'Take Back Yoga' Campaign," Hindu Press International, May 16, 2010, and others). Efforts by HAF and others have made logical and professional arguments to show that the origin of yoga is in Vedic Hindu culture.

Ram Sidhaye
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Sacred Time and Space

I have returned recently to England from Haridwar, India, having attended the amazing Kumbha Mela festivities. The Kumbha Mela convinced me of the validity of the concept of sacred time and space. Before immersing myself in the Ganga, I made reverential prostrations to Ganga Devi and Surya Dev. The moment I emerged after taking my dip, I felt recharged and spiritually uplifted. I felt as though the Ganga was the living Goddess who had just blessed me. Hinduism is very much alive and well, notwithstanding the relentless march of materialism and the assaults from other religions.

Subrata Dey
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Yummy Festival Recipes

Your Apr/May/Jun 2010 issue was delightful to read, featuring appetizing and attractive vegetarian recipes. After reading them, I felt that I had to try them out, which I did with great success. Apart from providing food for the soul, you have ventured on providing food for the body! Great idea and a refreshing change. New,

innovative ideas like this are always welcome. Please continue the great work you are doing. Congratulations.

Sarojini Theiventhiran

Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada

Catholic Ashrams

I'd like to point out a major factual inaccuracy in your article "Catholic Ashrams" (Dec 1986). You write that the Catholic Church teaches that the Church is the only way to salvation. In fact, the official position of the Catholic Church since Vatican II is that members of any religious tradition (including Hinduism) can attain salvation. You can find this in the Vatican II document "Lumen Gentium" (<http://bit.ly/lumgen>): "Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel." This is a very significant oversight. I think most documents from the Vatican are written to be read by Jesuits and canon lawyers. I know that interpretations of that particular passage differ widely. I think the most mainstream interpretation is that for anyone to be responsible for not accepting Christianity, it has to have been socially, psychologically, intellectually plausible for them to have accepted it--not a question of whether they have merely heard someone preach Christianity at some point in their lives, but whether there was any real chance that someone of their background might accept it. Most overt missionaries will think that's too liberal an interpretation, but most priests involved in inter-religious dialogue go to the opposite extreme and interpret that passage even more generously than the mainstream. This is significant in the context of your article, because most of the Catholic ashram movement is of the liberal, pro-inter-religious-dialogue persuasion.

PJ Johnston
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Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The document you reference is the very same promulgation we quoted in the 1986 article. Clearly there are multiple interpretations, even within the Catholic Church, of the document's conclusions about the salvific efficacy of other faiths. Re-reading it, we remain convinced that the spirit of the overall document is one of exclusivity. "Dominus Iesus" (<http://bit.ly/domiesus>), written in 2000 by then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, and ratified by Pope John Paul II, clarifies, "If it is true that the followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that objectively speaking they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation.... Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked that other rituals, insofar as they depend on superstitions or other errors (cf. 1 Cor 10:20-21), constitute an obstacle to salvation.... Inter-religious dialogue, therefore, as part of her evangelizing mission, is just one of the actions of the Church in her mission ad gentes."

The Dowry Tree

In response to "Trees Planted to Honor the Birth of a Daughter Change Lives" (Hindu Press International, July 14, 2010), it would be better if we as Hindus actually push for the elimination of dowry so that, instead of fathers and families using the proceeds from the trees for dowry, they can use them for the betterment of their families and reduction of poverty. We Hindus like to sound high-minded, but we have a lot of housecleaning to do in our own religion.

Chirag Bhatt
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Cross at War Memorial

Refer to the US Supreme Court's ruling blocking the removal of a Christian cross at a war memorial in the Mojave Desert ("Justices' Ruling Blocks Cross Removal," Hindu Press International, May 3, 2010). My view is that if the war memorial is for all soldiers following the Christian faith, then the decision to keep the cross may be appropriate, but if the military wishes to honor soldiers who were followers of Islam,

Judaism, Hinduism and other faiths, then it may not be fair. It may amount to discrimination! I recently attended a university medical department's annual service in memory of all who had donated their bodies, who belonged to several faiths, during which a cross was placed.

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Corrections

We unintentionally left out the prominent website www.parihara.com in "Web Streaming God's Grace from India to the World" (Apr/May/Jun 2010).

Publishing and the World's Vicissitudes How you can help protect Hinduism Today

The Washington Post Co. jolted the publishing world when it revealed plans to sell Newsweek magazine last May. Ad revenue had dropped and, with no means to cover losses, current owners had to abandon ship. A national institution that for 77 years was a smashing success, that projected smartness and solidity, suddenly showed deep and irreparable cracks. It sold August 1, 2010, for \$1.00.

Whereas commercial publications generally depend entirely on sales and advertising, a nonprofit such as Hinduism Today does have another option. It can build strong endowments to provide support and stability through turbulent times. Think of the well-endowed National Geographic magazine, which has been sailing smoothly since 1888.

A well-run endowment pays grants based on longer-term returns such as five years or more so that a drop in any one year or two or three does not impact revenues drastically. It provides a bridge over the storm. It was with this in mind that founder Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami wisely established the Hinduism Today Production Fund some 15 years ago. The fund has since grown steadily. Today it provides monies to enhance the magazine's content and reach--in the

digital realm, notably. But it is still a young fund and needs to grow much stronger to keep Hinduism Today seaworthy no matter what winds may come.

In 2009, we launched a project to increase the fund's principal by \$100,000. When the goal is realized, grants to the editors will be augmented by \$1,000 per quarter--a modest amount, but a good beginning, adequate to raise Hinduism Today to a new level of quality and effectiveness, and a step closer to financial independence.

Please consider helping us meet this goal soon. You will be helping create a secure and abundant future for Hinduism Today, wherein it dispenses our faith's life-giving information ever more generously. There can be no greater cause.

Ask to receive our Production Fund e-newsletter at:
www.gurudeva.org/email-news visit www.hheonline.org/productionfund or contact us at 1-808-634-5407 or hhe@hindu.org