Letters to the Editor
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Language Problem

I would like to bring up a point as to why Hinduism is losing touch with today's Indian youth. It does not have anything to do with the religion itself, but with the language of the religion. Very few of us can understand Sanskrit. I do not doubt Hinduism's beauty and majesty for one second. But when we go to community functions and have to sit through three hours of Sanskrit prayer, I ask, for what? Because of our parents wishes? Or because we know what the prayers are relating and advocating? If an effort was made to make all Indian American children learn Hindi or at least have a brief English summation or abstract of what the prayers are relating during the ceremony, then the religion would catch on. There is nothing to be ashamed of when talking about tales of Ganesha or Krishna, let alone when espousing their values. Indian children do not think badly of their religion, they just have difficulty communicating with it.

Nanagella, Nanagella@davidson.edu, St. Petersburg, Florida, USA

Don't Wreck Our Aum

You should write an article discussing ways in which people can distinguish between good cults and bad cults. I am thinking of that Aum cult which is causing trouble in Japan. Now, they are going to wreck the Aum, taking away its good connotations in public opinion, in the way that Hitler wrecked the symbolism of the Swastika. I wish you could start a lot of counter-propaganda for the good, before the publicity for the bad becomes established.

Mrs. Jean Sampson. St. Petersburg, Florida, USA

Conversion to Hinduism

Many people in the world believe that Hinduism does not accept conversion, and that one can only be Hindu by birth.

It is true that Hinduism is not a proselytizing religion, but it is wrong to say that Hindus do not accept converts. Hindus do not use fraud or offer any kind of reward or allurement for conversion, but if anybody wants to accept Hinduism due to their free will, then that person is accepted with open arms into Hinduism.

Like other religions, for conversion to Hinduism a ceremony is performed. It is called Shudi ceremony, which literally means "becoming pure." For the people of Hindu origin who were converted to semitic religions, but now want to come back to Hinduism, there is a ceremony called "Reconversion" or simply "Home Coming."

In early 1950, Swami Masukar converted about one thousand and five hundred people to Hinduism in one day in Goa Province. The impact made by this incident was just like a minor earthquake.

If someone wants to adopt Hinduism, Shudi ceremony can be arranged anywhere in the world by Arya Samaj, Vishva Hindu Parishad and even by individual priests.

Mohan Lal Gupta, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada

Angered by Attack

On March 23, 1995, at about 8am while scanning the TV, I noticed a program showing Indian cities. Out of curiosity I stopped on that channel to see what it was about. I realized that it was a program of the Christian Broadcasting Network by the "700 Club" of Pat Robertson.

The contents of the program were horrifying. They presented a foul and distorted image of Hinduism. The commentators not only passed perverted, obscene and distorted remarks about Hinduism and Lord Siva, but also giggled to make fun of Hindu beliefs. For example, they stated that people go to the Ganges to take a bath because they believe that the river has been purified by the sperm of Lord Siva.

They stated that out there in India a huge population is waiting to be liberated from Hindu beliefs and in the future TV, media should be used for the purpose of converting poverty-stricken people to Christianity and liberating them from the idol worship of Hinduism.

In the program not only did they make sickening statements about Hindu beliefs but they also ridiculed and made fun of our sacred beliefs. Freedom of expression does not give anyone the right to insult the feelings of another religious community.

I plead to Hindu organizations to take recourse to proper legal action against such propaganda and insults to our religion. Not only the people who presented the program should be punished, but such activities should not be allowed to occur in the future. The organizers of that program can be called upon to produce the transcript of the program for proper evaluation and appropriate action.

Inder Kumar Sharma, San Jose, California, USA

RK Missions Temple

I just saw your paper's April issue on the building of a Ramakrishna temple in Madras.

This mission is now before the Supreme Court of India, pleading to grant the Ramakrishna Mission non-Hindu minority organization status and also to include both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda among non-Hindus since they went "beyond Hinduism." Obviously, the motive is to avoid pressure put on them by the Marxists in Bengal and at the same time garner the advantages accorded to minority institutions. If this is their stand, why build structures mimicking Hindu temples, that too designed by Hindu architects? I was once an ardent member of this mission before they came up with the arguments to be included among minorities.

Jai Somanath, Los Angeles, California, USA

Joy to All Creatures

Greetings and many thanks for the wonderful words that you have published about me in Hinduism Today! [A Kinder Vision, Dec., 1994] I hope I shall remain worthy of them. My husband is presently producing a film in Telegu called Sisindri in which my ten-month-old son is starring. The proceeds of the film will go to build our new veterinary hospital and animal shelter. I thought Akhil (my son) would be very proud when he grew up to know he was instrumental in this.

It seems that awareness is fast awakening towards the turn of the century. Every day for me is a marvelous opportunity for something of great wonder and significance to happen, to which I look forward to with joy. And I wish the same joy to all beings.

Amala Akkineni, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, India.

Graphic Gratitude

I enjoy the newspaper so much and think your graphics are so beautiful. Each issue is a visual and mental treat.

Dianne Boons, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

True Vedas

I would like to praise Gurudeva's efforts for putting together a marvelous, informative and positive newspaper.

I would like to see more information on the true contents of the Vedas, not the myths and Europeanized versions. I have written an article, published in the International Journal of Educational Management, comparing a Vedic mantra on how to educate students with the modern practices in the United Kingdom. It reveals that much of the so-called modern practice is in the Vedas, and much else in it is not yet practiced by modern educationalists.

If I can be of assistance to you, please let me know.

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Editor's note: Please visit the Hinduism Today Home Page on World Wide Web. The latest issue (without the pictures!) is available shortly after the first of the month. To reach us go to http://hoohana.aloha.net/~htoday/htoday.html.

Also, If you send us your letters via e-mail (which we welcome), please also include your postal, i.e. "snail-mail," address. Thank you. (Letters can be sent via e-mail to: Internet: hinduism@mcimail.com; MCI: 292-8827 and from our World Wide Web home page.)