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Saint of the Century

We were extremely pleased to receive the September 1995 issue of Hinduism Today. In the "Publishers Desk column you have done an excellent job in presenting the new Hindu Mandir built by H.D.H. Pramukh Swami Maharaj in London. You have very graciously awarded Swamishri with the "Hindu of the Year" award for 1995 and you even mentioned that some might say "Hindu of the Century." I think many people from all over the world would agree. Swamiji has done a great service to Hinduism by building such a temple on foreign lands. Through such intricately carved structures, he has shown that Hindu culture is absolutely "exportable" material. Through his life he has shown that Hinduism is not just to be talked about, but to be lived. Truly, saints of such caliber, piety and humility are rare in this world. That is why our holy scriptures endlessly offer praise to such devout saints.

H.D.H. Pramukh Swami Maharaj also has a magnificent ashram and temple in the village of Sarangpur. Although a village, Sarangpur is the main training center for the saints of the Swaminarayan sampradaya. Here Swamiji has set a complete five-year course in which newly initiated saints receive well-rounded knowledge of the Hindu scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, as well as the main scripture of the Swaminarayan faith--the Vachnamrutam. Saints here are also taught Sanskrit and English in a formal way. You will be

glad to know that Hinduism Today is very helpful in teaching Hindu concepts.

Sadhu Chaitanyamurtidas Sarangpur, Ahmedabad Gujarat, India

Believe It!

The event contradicting the known scientific laws, due to supernatural cause by the act of God, is the 20th century occurrence of milk drinking idols reported from all over the world. There appears to be no hocus-pocus, trickery or deception in this phenomenon. There is also no logical explanation for the event that happened as a "two-day special" on the 21st and 22nd Sept. 95. Still, many Hindus refuse to accept it, as they subscribe to the theory of "seeing is believing." Although I did not see it personally, I still believe in the miracle with no explanation, as there are many around us with no evidence. We also know that in few years the majority of us will forget this event, others will spread wild rumors about this event, and the truth will be buried forever.

So action has to be taken now to preserve this unusual event as it happened, explaining only the truth, whole truth and nothing but the truth for the sake of non-believers, for the future generations and to safeguard from future wild rumors. Eyewitness accounts, video tape deposition, worldwide discussion and authentic recordings by scholars, leaders of various faiths and the apex body of Hindu religious organization will help in understanding and preservation of this unusual phenomenon that happened in our lifetime.

A. Bala-Subramaniam Auburn, Alabama, USA

Many of Bharat's children watched in amusement as those proud of their "scientific" expertise explained away the bhava of their less sophisticated siblings as nothing more than the physical laws of capillarity, surface tension and the syphon effect. Just because we have a name for something doesn't

mean we understand it.

The wise ones say that the murti can be marble or it can be Chaitanya. It's authenticity depends upon nothing out there but rather upon the consciousness of the worshippers. If you see stone, you see an idol; if you see a manifestation of Divinity, He will not only drink, He will talk, too. Remember Ramakrishna and Mother Kali.

Omar Singh Ozone Park, New York, USA

Speak Out!

A lot of North American newspapers carry a religion section on Saturday. Hindus should write short articles or letters about Hinduism in the religion section of North American newspapers. I sometimes get my articles published in small Canadian newspapers.

M. L. Gupta Cambridge, Ontario, Canada

It's a Challenge

In your last issue, Ms. Valli Sendan predicts that there will not be a Hindu society if mothers worked in the world. It would not be fair if we will not let a Hindu woman pursue her career just because she is also a mother. Let me explain my humble instance.

I have a four and a half-year-old son, Gautam. I am a software engineer and my husband is a physician, which means that we both have high stressed jobs. We have been constantly trying to balance the culture and lifestyle, and I will explain how we tend to approach this.

When we chose Gautam's pre-school-cum-day-care, the first thing we made sure was that they are not religiously affiliated with any organizations, and I affirmed that they promote

cultural as well as racial diversity. Since he is a vegetarian, the second thing we looked for was that they have an in-house cook, who is willing to try out vegetarian dishes even if it is just for him, and I can talk to her every day. I would not generalize all day-care centers as "imparting their belief on children." There are very good day-care centers. You just have to look harder. Rather than choosing a day-care center that is convenient to you because it is on your way to work, you have to do a lot of research on the day-care centers and talk to all the teachers. You also should have regularly scheduled meetings with their curriculum developer to know how he/she is accommodating inter-cultural harmony into their program. Whenever there is a teacher turn over, which is inevitable, you would have to talk to him/her as well. I can state without any hesitation that the pre-school is giving much more food for his brain than I ever could if I were tending him all day. I usually explain to him why we (Hindus) are in a certain way rather than just ask him not to question our differences.

Subha Pathial, subha_pathial@ccm.jf.intel.com, On the Web

As a result of some comments I made in a newsgroup, one of the subscribers e-mailed to me to tell me that he had neglected to study Hinduism and would like to learn more. He asked me if I could point him in the right direction. Without hesitation, I gave him the World Wide Web home page of Hinduism Today. I am confident that he can find many of the answers he is seeking. I do have one request. Many Sanskrit and Tamil words are used without translation and will pose a problem to newcomers. Perhaps you will be able to rectify this in the future.

S. V. Singam, vijia@pop.jaring, Minden, Penang, Malaysia

Many Thanks

I came back yesterday from a lecture-tour from Slovenia and with great pleasure I read the very comprehensive article in the last edition [October 1995 issue] of Hinduism Today about Yoga in Daily Life and my birthday's celebrations in Europe. I would like to express my thankfulness to you and your editing team for this excellent work and nice report.

Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda Vienna, Austria, Europe

In response to your article in your esteemed Hinduism Today [June 1995 issue] published voluntarily, we received a contribution of three thousand Sri Lankan rupees from a Hindu lady residing in Washington.

S. Kumarasamy Tevaram Panisai Mantram Colombo, Sri Lanka

Corrections

* On page 4 of our October issue, the WWW home page address for Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies was incorrect. Visit them now at <http://www.shore.net/~india/ejvs/>

* If you send us your letters via e-mail (which we welcome), please also include your postal, i.e. "snail-mail," address. Thank you.