LETTERS
Category : July/August/September 2003
Published by Anonymous on Jul. 02, 2003

OPINION FORUM

LETTERS

Sanskrit a Unifying Force

I agree with the two points that Mrs. Vittal made about the priests' decline in Hinduism ("Letters," Apr-Jun 2003). Any selfless, knowledgeable person should be allowed to become a priest. However, I disagree with her on using regional languages for services. Is Mrs. Vittal suggesting that Telugu people go to one temple, and Tamil or Marathi people go to another? Sanskrit has unified Hindus for millenniums. Why destroy that? There are plenty of opportunities to learn Sanskrit for those who do not know it. Let us not destroy the unity of Hinduism: the language the Gods have given us.

Shashisekhar Vishwanath, shashisekhar@sify.com

Protest on Behalf of Chickens

I am very happy with your daily e-mail news digests (HPI). However, I was disappointed over January 28's item, "A British Love Affair with Curry." Please don't publish news promoting such tamasic food products as "Chicken Tikka Masala." Hinduism is against killing animals for food. As an organization working for community religious upliftment, it is better that you not propagate this evil that has crept into the Hindu society. Many of your readers are devotees of Lord Kartikkeya, and seval (cocks and hens) is his vahana.

SeetharamanSeetharaman_m@hotmail.com

Searching for Vishnu

I am a long-time reader and admirer of Hinduism Today and rejoice in its many contributions, innovations, creativity, graphics and use of information technology. It is exhilarating to learn about the Hindus and their search for the Divine in various parts of the world and in its home, India. In particular, it has been very beneficial to learn about Saivism in depth, especially Tamil Saivism and its many manifestations, which are relatively unknown to non-Tamils. But I feel deep frustration and sadness for your neglect and even avoidance of Vaishnavism, Vishnu or His avatars. Rama and Krishna are conspicuously absent in your magazine, as are the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita and Vaishnava temples such as Tirupati, Mathura, etc. Finally, in the article on sacred symbols in the latest issue, there is not a single

Vaishnava symbol such as chakra, sankhu or namam. Why?

Most Hindus revere and adore the many manifestations of the Divine as Siva, Vishnu, Rama, Krishna or Durga even as they focus on an ishta devata, a favorite Deity. Tulsidas, the great 15th century saint and author of the immensely popular Sri Ram Charita Manas was a great devotee of Siva and, in fact, his Ramayana is couched in the form of a dialogue between Siva and Parvati. The majority of Hindus are very inclusive and truly global in relating to the many-splendored aspects of God. As long as Hinduism Today claims to represent all of us and our global religion, I strongly urge that its coverage be very much more

broadened and balanced.

Dr. Mukunda Rao, mvrao@sunline.net

Your point is well-taken that Hinduism Today tends toward the Saivite tradition, wherein lie both our personal commitments and our resource contacts. That said, we aren't purposely avoiding Vaishnavism, and in this issue you'll find long-planned stories on the Jagannatha temple in Orissa and the opening of a Balaji (Vishnu) temple in Kenya. We have commissioned revised art of the Vaishnava symbols you mentioned. The earlier version of the symbols, which appeared in the February, 1997, issue included the shikhara, tulsi, urdhvapundra and Lord

Krishna. Unfortunately, that revised art did not arrive in time. We need and welcome journalists and photographers with interest and knowledge of Vaishnavism to offer their services to Hinduism Today to cover the contemporary Vaishnava saints, the revered temples and pilgrimage destinations and the current issues within the denomination.

Hindus Should Take a Lead!

It is a Hindu quality to live without malice toward anyone. Hindu tolerance allowed Muslims, Christians,

Manchurians and others to settle in India and make mother India their home. Many Hindus live or would like to live a saint-like life compared to those driven by ego and the desire to subjugate others in the name of religion. All wars, including the Mahabharata war, have been the result of ego, aroused within the backbone of a desire to dominate. The egos of kings, presidents, or prime ministers drag nations into war without realizing what destruction it can bring. It is easy to come up with rationalizations and justifications to go into war. But desires do not cease after conquering the powerless. They only increase, like fire fed with oil. The glory of winning is short-lived. There will be a transfusion of enemy venom to the victors. It is a shame that some call themselves patriotic and protectors of their country

when their intention is material prosperity and not peace.

When we instill patriotism in our children, we must abstain from creating hatred toward other nations. It is not where we are born or reside that makes us superior, but our understanding of, and respect for, others. God created this diverse world, not the Americans, Germans, Indians or Chinese. However, God-given intelligence is being wasted in the creation of destructive instruments instead of channeling it to analyze the mysteries of this universe or to establish inner harmonyÃ technological advancement without spiritual evolution.

A legendary Urdu poet, Sahir Ludhianive, once said, God rendered humanity with one land, but selfish and narrow-mindedness made its people to cut it into pieces on the basis of religion, language, color or creed. When God allows us to breathe the air around us wherever we are, how can we claim ownership and possession of land? No territory separates the air we breathe.

Hindus have a responsibility to educate the souls that are entangled or blinded by their desires so that we all can breathe the air of freedom wherever we are, whether we are in America, Pakistan, India, Iraq or Angola. With so many afflictionsÃwars, incurable diseases, religious and civil strifeÃthere is a greater necessity for

realizing the Hindu Dharma now than ever before. It is the wisdom that was passed on to us for generations, for the entire world. It is the only wisdom and vision that can save lives in this new age of imperialism. Teach the young not just national anthems, but also the Veda's universal anthem: Lead me from untruth to Truth; from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality. May all the world's beings be happy. Om peace, peace, peace. Let us create an international family, let us call the Earth our country, and let us forget boundaries so that we all will breathe the air of truth and righteousness.

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