Letters
Category : January/February 2001
Published by Anonymous on Jan. 02, 2001

Letters

Happy Dipavali

Warm greetings to indian americans across our country as you observe the festival of Diwali. This ancient and joyous holiday, with origins in the Hindu faith, reflects both the unity and the rich diversity of the people and culture of India. It is truly a "festival of lights," marked by lighting candles and lamps, setting off firecrackers, and dressing in vibrant colors. During Diwali, Indians of all ages and backgrounds come together to celebrate life, the triumph of good over evil, and the hope for happiness and prosperity that we all share. America has become home to men and women from countries across the globe, whose skills and perspective have enriched our culture, enhanced our economy, and broadened our vision of the world. Diwali presents all of us with an opportunity to reflect on the many ways the talents, history and traditions of the Indian people have contributed to our national life and cultural heritage, and to give thanks for the extraordinary diversity that is one of our nation's greatest strengths. Hillary and I extend best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.
William J. Clinton(former)

President of the United States of America

A Time for Knowledge

Apart from being the most widely celebrated, Diwali is perhaps the most pretty Indian festival. It is a festival of joy, splendor, and brightness and happiness. Thousands of lamps

are lit in every home. But if the lamp within us is not glowing, then all the others will lose their meaning. Lamp or deep is the symbol of knowledge. Lighting the lamp of knowledge within us means to understand and reflect upon the significant purpose of the festivities and to bring those thoughts into our day-to-day lives. It is a day to remember the Vedic mantra, Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya, "Lead us from darkness to light." It is time to take account of one's life, to reflect upon life and remove anger, hatred, jealousy and callousness from life and have renewed hope for the New Year.

Pankaj Jain
pankajjain@hotmail.com

Marriage Made in Heaven

I thought that My Marriage Was Made in Heaven (November/December 2000). Fred and I were two soul mates who discovered each other quite by accident. I lived in Bombay, India, and he lived in Connecticut in America. We had corresponded as penpals for six months, exchanging our views on religion, culture, society, and began to realize how alike we were, yet so different. After four months of correspondence, Fred asked me to marry him. Courageously, I accepted, defying my culture and tradition, giving up my country, family and friends. That was in 1971. We met at Kennedy Airport, recognizing each other through pictures we had exchanged.

Ten days later, we were married. We had a wonderful, blissful marriage. We felt we had known each other for life. Our relationship was heavenly. We were one body, one soul. If Fred and I could make our marriage work, why can't others? I wonder. Fred passed on in 1995, but I still "talk" to him. I believe we'll meet again. I looked back at the letters we had exchanged, and was amazed to find a real coincidence: we had both felt similar emotions of wanting and wishing to be together. Our wish came true! Glad that there are more such marriages.
Nirmala Baker
nbaker02@home.com

I found "Marriage Made in Heaven" very interesting. If all of us found such perfect mates, I think the world would be a peaceful place. A perfect relationship is the cornerstone of a happy life. Such couples create a harmonious environment around them and this translates into a happy society. I wish all our children

would read that article and take cues from it.

Chitra Karnani
ckarnani@aol.com

Sanskrit Village

I am a regular reader and admirer of your esteemed magazine. I very much enjoy your main articles. Your article with reference to Pope's visit to India (February, 2000) was extremely relevant and necessary. Many of us admire all your extraordinary efforts for the renaissance of Sanatana Dharma and Hinduism globally. There is a small village near Bangalore, India, where

everybody speaks only Sanskrit. I wonder whether somebody could write an article about it in your magazine sometime.
Deepak B. Bakane
New Lenox, Illinois

Future of the Priesthood

Words cannot express the feelings of our Sivachariars for informing to the world the true conditions of the Sivachariars. My father Sri Sivachariar asked me to express his special thanks to Hinduism Today for publishing an article about the Adisaivas (September/October 2000). At this point of time, I would like to

express on behalf of all the Sivachariars that we will be with you for all your great activities. We sincerely pray for the successful completion of the Iraivan temple. We were very happy to meet Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami at the United Nation's hall, and I also thank Your Holiness for suggesting Sri Sivachariar's name for the meeting. It was not for a single personality but it was for the whole Adisaivas. The article is the beginning. I would sincerely request your guidance for many activities that are to be taken for the upliftment of the Adisaivas and thereby for the whole society. The retirement age for the Sivachariars

as set by the government needs to be corrected to 60 instead of 80, as was given in the article. Sri Sivachariar wants the retirement age to be 80. Sri Sivachariar's youngest son's name is Sivachariar Shanmugam, not Shanmugasundaram.

T.S. Shanmugam
adisaiva@hotmail.com

"What Future the Priesthood?" in the latest issue of Hinduism Today is a thought-provoking article full of information not easily available otherwise. You

could not have chosen a more worthy person to interview than Sri Sambamurthy Sivachariar. I have had the privilege of meeting him and being blessed by him during the Kumbhabishekam and other extensive ceremonies performed by Sri Sivachariar at the Murugan temple and Siva Vishnu temple in Maryland. It is therefore painful to note that in many places in the article reference is made to Sivachariar simply as "Sambamurthy" without the traditional Hindu honorific "Sri"

or his respected title, "Sivachariar." This is an avoidable lapse that should not occur in the future.

R. V. Subramanian
Palo Alto, California

World Hindu Youth Conference

I read your July/August month magazine and something attracted me--it was the World Hindu Conference 2000. I, as a teenager, was thinking about a World Hindu Youth Conference, a

conference just for us, the youth. Why doesn't Hinduism Today organize this conference (or maybe a camp)? There are programs around the globe that involve teenagers. By organizing this program, Hindu teenagers from all over the world can meet at one country--maybe India. We could discuss many topics that concern our religion. Maybe later we could stay with one adopted family so that we can learn how our religion is practiced in a different family. This program should be fully

sponsored so that each country that has a Hindu population can send maybe four representatives. I hope you will consider my suggestion. If there is any program similar to this that is going to be held, please do inform me, because I would like to join.
Premalata
bugsbunny_p@hotmail.com

Chanting

After reading the

article "Smitten by Sanskrit" in the youth column of Hinduism Today (February 1998), out of curiosity I got the CD, "Shanti Shanti" by the Forman sisters. After listening to it a couple of times, I put it aside mainly because the scripts (including Bhagavat Gita chantings) were mispronounced repeatedly. In recent times, it has become a fashion for

several Western singers to take the beautiful Hindu prayers and hymns and turn them into pop and jazz style music. After more than two-and-a-half years, the Shanti people sent me information about their second CD named "Walking With the Devas." Again out of mere curiosity, I purchased that one also and found the same problem. Even though the intentions of the Forman

family are noble, I totally disagree with their idea of popularizing the Sanskrit language through pop and jazz style music by improperly pronouncing the Vedic hymns and the most commonly recited Sanskrit verses. The words had been split inappropriately in several places and distorted to give them either wrong or no meaning for the theme. Through the availability of Sanskrit

scholars throughout the Western world, Sanskrit language will get its true and genuine importance in due course. It is my true feeling that the Hindus around USA should not tolerate the immature attempt of a group of Westerners to spoil the divine language of our scriptures in a commercial way.

Mrs. Shyamala Nair
pnair@vvm.com

Northeast India Problems

Hindus living in Northeast India are facing severe problems because of their religion (November/December 2000). In the state of Tripura, even the Communist chief minister of that state has acknowledged that Hindu tribals were being forced to become

Christians at gunpoint. The Baptist Church-backed insurgents have prohibited Hindu tribals from celebrating Durga Puja and other festivals and have insisted their children go to missionary-run schools. In fact, a senior member of the Baptist Church has been captured with

illegal weapons. To make matters worse, a leading Hindu tribal saint was killed recently because he refused to be converted to Christianity. In neighboring Mizoram state, minority Hindu and Buddhist Reang tribals were kicked out of the state by the majority Christian Mizo tribals. In Arunachala Pradesh, the

Christian population has increased from a mere 5% in 1981 to nearly 25% today, and nefarious methods used for conversion activities continue to surge their numbers. The situation for Hindus living in Northeast India is very grim and makes one feel as they were not living in India but in Pakistan or

Bangladesh. As usual, the secular national media has mostly ignored these incidents.

Nirmal Laungani
Hong Kong
jaibhthk@netvigator.com

I read about missionary activities in

Northeast India. How do we stop this stupidity? Only by raising the literacy rate and thus improving the standard of living. While I was vacationing in India this summer, I found a lot of NRI's and locals opening up software

companies creating jobs and prosperity. But these are not really helping the uneducated, the really poor. This is increasing the gap between haves and have nots. This gap creates the opportunities for the likes of Popes, Robertsons, Hinns and

Southern Baptist crowds. Here in the US, we always hear how good the Indian community is doing and how the dot-com era has made many Indian entrepreneurs millions. I hope all of us living in US make a commitment to adopt a poor student, a

family or a village and provide education to them. We can all choose according to our means and financial resources. An educated Hindu will never convert. She/He will not find anything in other religions that is not found in Hinduism. An

educated Hindu will keep the missionaries and the jihads at bay. India has given all of us a lot in providing a great educational system at free or very low cost. This I think is the very least we can do to protect our culture, our great religion and our loving

Bharat Mata.

Anand Parvathaneni

apneni@hotmail.com

Cheap Hindu Life

One hundred innocent people, mostly Hindu

pilgrims, were murdered while going on an arduous pilgrimage to the ice cave at Amarnath. Yet, the Indian media did not see fit to dwell on them. I don't remember seeing anywhere a full list of the people

killed, their family backgrounds, or any details about them. I know nothing about who these unfortunate people were. They have already been forgotten. Can you imagine the fuss if 50 Muslim or

Christian pilgrims were slaughtered in India? Do you remember the breast-beating about attacks on Christians? The international issue made? The manhunt for the perpetrators was most energetic.

The interviews with relatives? Where are the interviews with the wives of the Hindu laborers and the pilgrims? Are they even getting any compensation money? I suppose not. They have already been

forgotten. They were only Hindus.

Haresh Vyas
Haresh.Vyas@uk.sun.com

Caption Mistake

We love receiving Hinduism

Today.It is real yogic skill in action. Your artists are superb and the printing is top world class. Dr. Ananda, my son, discovered one mistake which occurred in your

September/October 2000 issue on page 46 in the otherwise splendid article on Silpi Perumal. The caption reads "Perumal works his magic on a standing Hanuman

deity with a five hooded cobra arching above his head." If you look closely, you will see that he is working on Lord Narasimha, who is sitting, and the actual chipping is

being done on the conch.

Meenakshi Devi Bavanani

Pondicherry, India

Sri Lanka Problem

Thailand's supreme patriarch Buddhist monk, Somdet Phra Yanasangvorn, has refused to heed pleas by Sri Lankan monks urging him to get involved in uncovering

suspected Tiger rebel bases in Thailand. He has stated that he has no intention of getting involved in political, nonmonastic issues, reminding Sri Lanka's clergy,

Sobhita Maha Thera, that involvement in secular issues were against all Thai Buddhist religious regulations. As I write this, the Sri Lankan

government is appealing to the Sinhalese youth to join the military for recruitment of 10,000 troops to continue the war in North Sri Lanka. It is my fervent hope that sanity will

prevail in Sri Lanka soon, as the heavy loss of innocent human lives is creating a deep rift amongst the multi-ethnic society of that country comprising Buddhists, Hindus,

Catholics, Christians, Muslims, Methodists, Malays, Pentecostals and Jehovah's witnesses.

Thiru Satkunendran

thiru.satkunendran@sympatico.ca

Corrections

* The author of "What Future the Priesthood?" (September/Octo

ber 2000), Sivakamasundari Shanmugasundar am is employed in the Information Technology department of an automotive company and

resides in the state of Michigan. She no longer owns her own business as stated in her biographic information.

* The aum on the cover of September/October 2000 issue was created by Nemo (www.nemo.org). We are sorry that the credit did not appear in that

issue.

Letters, with writer's name, address and daytime phone number, should

be sent to:
Letters,
Hinduism Today
107
Kaholalele Road
Kapaa, HI
96746-9304 USA
or faxed to:
808.822.4351

or e-mailed to: letters@hindu.org

Letters may be edited for space

and clarity and may appear in electronic versions of Hinduism Today.