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Macaulay's "Minute"

Your sub-title for the above article says, "[Macaulay's] 1835 document did more damage to the Hindu legacy than a thousand years of invasions" (Sep/Oct 2000). This is too sweeping, unwarranted and untrue a statement that is unsubstantiated by anything in the text that follows. P.R. Dasgupta in your extract says that the objective of the Minute was to form a small Western-educated class. But even before Macaulay, there was a strong Hindu public opinion led by people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy that preferred English-medium Western education to traditional Sanskrit or Persian learning. A new language is a new window to the world. It blew in new, fresh winds which invigorated tired, old priest-ridden, ritual-riddled, enervated, caste-ridden shambles of pseudo-Hinduism. If anything, Macaulay's Minute gave a fresh lease of life to our old religion. It enabled people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan to proudly declare our legacy and to attract many new adherents from

far flung lands.

The Hindu customs that are desirable such as birth, marriage, death ceremonies are all flourishing as before. Temple worship has gained in importance and not only old but many new temples are flourishing. In view of all this, how can you make such a statement as "the Hindu legacy was destroyed" ? We expect more responsible statements from a magazine of your calibre.

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Misinterpreting the Gita

With reference to the letter by Mr. Sankar-Rao Mopidevi: "Purusha Sukta All One Person....There is nothing wrong in modifying the scriptures to make the spirit of Hinduism more explicit"...and one of the reasons for it is the oft-misquoted chatur varnyam maya

srustam from the holy Gita.

But, if the scriptures are interpreted properly, there is no need to modify anything. Scholars conveniently ignore another sentence in the same sloka. Swami Chinmayanandaji Maharaj interpreted this sloka as "the four-fold caste was created by me on the basis of gunas and karma guna karma vibhagashaha." The four castes are not accidents of birth but are based upon the quality of vasanas (gunas) [character] and the texture of the work undertaken (karma)." The idea that the Gita supports birth distinctions is a misunderstanding.

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Ahimsa Applies to All animals

Regarding the protest by hindus against McDonalds for using beef in their fries why should Hindus only be concerned about not eating beef? Since Hindu religion teaches us ahimsa "noninjury" this principle should be equally applied to every human being and animal. Ideally we should not eat any animal and be perfect vegetarians. We have no right to only defend cows and let pigs and hens and goats die.

I have no problem worshiping the cow as sacred in Hindu culture. But only stopping the massacre of cows and not other animals is injustice. Jainism and Buddhism, offshoots of Hinduism, don't have an affinity for just one animal. Hindus should modify their belief and not only consider beef eating, but treat

nonvegetarianism in toto as against the tenets of Hinduism.

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Misunderstanding Patents

"In recent times rice has been the subject of nasty international disputes over 'patents' as if anyone could lay claim to this ancient and essential foodstuff," says the writer of "Blessed Rice" (May/June 2001). I believe the writer misunderstands the nature and function of patents. Patents don't bestow ownership of

a product or process. The discoverer or inventor is given the right to reap the profits from his discovery for a period of 20 years in exchange for publicly disclosing his findings and methods. After that, anyone in the world is allowed to use his knowledge and techniques. The patent system does two things: it adds incentive to inventors to engage in long term research knowing that their efforts will not go unrewarded. And it keeps the discovery process open to the public. Without patents, scientific discovery would be in the hands of a small cabal with the rewards limited to the few and powerful.

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The use of patents to protect innovative research and truly new inventions or discoveries is not in dispute. The issue is using the modern Western patent system to privatize biological entities and their names comprising resources already in the public domain or which, by the standards of "long usage," sometimes for 1000's of years, should be deemed as the legal property of the countries or regions of their origin.

Sivalinga, the Formless Form

Regarding Thirumathi Renuka Adiraju's understanding of the Linga symbol ("Speaking of Siva" Jul/Aug, 2001), it seems she has partly accepted the "missionary" interpretation when she connects, within a maybe, the Linga with the phallic symbol. Like the Aryan invasion myth, this misinterpretation has been well planned by foreigners to hit the Hindus where it hurts. Even fifty years after these foreigners left Bharat, their ghosts carry on their agenda. That agenda aside,

it baffles me that we are not able to use our God-given buddhi to reason that an ancient civilization comprising one-sixth of humanity— which gave the world yoga, Sanatana Dharma, innumerable paths to Self-realisation and the four Vedas, especially Upanishads, etc.— would never, ever choose a phallic symbol as one of its foremost icons for worship and contemplation. A curious, passionate, impure foreigner of little understanding or intelligence cannot understand this but says sarcastically: "Oh! The Hindus worship the phallus."

They are ignorant people. They have no philosophy."

Let me explain the true meaning; God, to us is not the creator who lives apart from the Universe but has manifested Himself as the Universe and pervades everything within. Thus, He is the indweller in all beings, material and energy. He has no form but at the same time, all forms are His. Linga Purana states, 'The foremost Linga which is devoid of smell, color, taste, hearing, touch, etc, is spoken of as prakriti (nature). Linga means a

"mark" in Sanskrit. It is a symbol that points to an inference. When one sees a big flood in a river, one infers that there had been heavy rain earlier. When one sees smoke, one infers that there is fire. This vast Universe of countless forms is a Linga of the omnipotent Lord. When a Hindu looks at the Linga, his mind is at once elevated and he thinks of the Lord, especially Lord Siva. A Hindu knows that Lord Siva is formless. Lord Siva has no form of his own; and yet, all forms are His forms. Lord Siva pervades all forms. Every form is the form or Linga of Lord Siva. The Linga is

only the outward symbol of the formless being, Lord Siva— Lord Siva incarnate, who is the indivisible, all-pervading, eternal, auspicious, ever-pure, immortal essence of this vast universe, who is the undying soul seated in the chambers of one's heart, who is one's Indweller, innermost Self or Atman and who is identical with the Supreme Brahman.

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