

[Happy 20th Birthday, Hinduism Today!](#)

Category : [January 1999](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jan. 02, 1999

INSIGHT

## Happy 20th Birthday, Hinduism Today!

A family album of the major events we reported on

IN JANUARY 5, 1979, SATGURU SIVAYA SUBRAMUNIASWAMI, returning from a world tour, envisioned a way to unite millions of Hindus estranged by geography--by providing news of their common heritage, activities and concerns. The magazine you hold was founded that day. It started humbly, but today boasts a complex information network poised at the forefront of print technology. This month's Insight reviews key stories published over the years. But first, Indian intellectual architect Ram Swarup offers an overview.

By Ram Swarup, New Delhi

Hindu communities are found in many countries today, but with the exception of Hinduism Today, there's no journal dealing with their problems and opportunities. In this respect, this journal is unique. It reveals the international face of Hinduism. Picking up a copy, one becomes aware of Hindus not only in India but also Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, South Africa, Southeast Asia and increasingly in Europe and North America. Its pages bring them together so often under the same roof that they begin to feel and live together.

This face tended to be neglected by Hindus in India in the past. For centuries they were under great pressure and could not spare much thought for anything beyond the problem of survival. But things are changing now and there is awareness of a larger Hindu world, Hindu Vishva. The old resistances are still at work, however, and there is a strong tendency to make Hindus into purely an Indian phenomenon (though we know that not all Indians are Hindus). But Hinduism Today (HT) makes us aware of Hindus beyond India and does it in its own way, not as NRIs, but as part of a family, as brothers and sisters united in a common spiritual perception and feeling.

HT tells us of Hindus and Hinduism abroad not only at present but also in the past. It finds Hinduism an old phenomenon, not a seventeenth-century construct as some would-be orientalists would have it, but an ancient and great civilization whose influence had travelled far and wide. But in succeeding centuries, India fell on evil days. The Hindu mind and psyche began to shrink and Hindus tended to forget this side of their history. HT is helping them revive those lost memories.

As it travels back in time, it finds no Aryan invasion of India but reports of Hindu presence in Europe and the Americas. From its scholarly special articles on Plotinus and the Druids, we learn of intimate spiritual contact between India and Europe at an early date. Its recent article on old Inca and Mayan buildings reveals remarkable similarities with old Indian architecture, which points to an early, pre-Columbus contact between Hindus and the peoples of South and Central America.

The journal stands for peace among followers of all religious persuasions without being called upon to preach an artificial and indiscriminate ideology of "harmony of all religions." It avoids politics and politicians, in itself quite a relief. On the other hand, it reports what is happening in the Hindu religious world; it tells us of Hindu philosophy, doctrines, modes of worship, rites; it tells us of Hindu festivals, places of pilgrimage, of temples and educational centers that are being built by Hindu communities in different corners of the world; it tells us about the great Hindu personalities and about non-Hindu friends of Hinduism and it gives prominence to Hindu sannyasins.

HT represents a new force. While consolidating Hindus, it also projects the great ideas and ideals of Sanatana Dharma.

Ram Swarup, New Delhi, is a leading thinker and write, a spokesman for Indian spirituality. Find his works at:  
[www.hindu.org/publications/ramswarup/](http://www.hindu.org/publications/ramswarup/)

**1979:** Hinduism Today is founded in Hawaii as "a bridge between East and West." The First English translation of the Hindu scripture, Tirumantiram, is published in the US by Saiva Siddhanta Church. US Hindu communities in Houston, Texas, and Malibu, California, purchase the properties for the Meenakshi and Venkateswara temples, which by 1998 rank among the most successful traditional temples outside India.

**1980:** Sri la Sri Arunagirinatha Sri Gnanasambanda Desikar is inaugurated as the successor and spiritual head of South India's Madurai Aadheenam. India's Chidambaram temple begins comprehensive, <sup>us</sup>\$35-million, 10-year renovation project. Swami Satchidananda's LOTUS temple is begun in Virginia.

**1981:** Hinduism Today adopts newspaper size. Manifestations of Siva exhibition, a stunning collection of Siva art and iconography, attracts hundreds of thousands during its US museum tour. The Sri Ganapathy Temple of London is consecrated in Wimbledon.

**1982:** Bali celebrates the Eka Dasa Rudra festival, held only once each century. Mauritius elects the honorable Anerood Jugnauth, a

Hindu, as Prime Minister.

**1983:** Riots in Colombo flare, heralding the beginning of the still active Sri Lankan civil war.

**1984:** Actress Shirley MacLain publicly professes her beliefs in karma, reincarnation and Hindu metaphysics, giving added credence to the New Age

movement. Nepal's King Birendra visits the US, meets president Ronald Reagan.

**1985:** HT adds spot color and starts publishing every two months. Indira Gandhi assassinated in India, Hindu-Sikh tensions flare. Ex-Jain cult guru Bhagawan

Shree Rajneesh is arrested on US immigration fraud charges and deported. Nine-hundred Hindu leaders meet in Udupi to discuss the future of the religion and current events.

**1986:** HT goes digital

with Macintosh computers. The LOTUS Temple at Swami Satchidananda's Integral Yoga Institute, Virginia, is inaugurated.

Controversy rocks the Siddha Yoga Dham movement as co-successor Swami Nityananda abdicates.



**1987:** HT publishes monthly, adds new features, more color. A New Jersey Hindu man is murdered by prejudiced "Dot Busters," causing deep reflection within Hindu communities abroad. Andhra Pradesh

passes a bill ending hereditary rights of Tirupati's temple priests, a 10-year court struggle begins.

**1988:** Nine just-invented Mac

Its enhance  
Hinduism Today's  
publishing  
network. Oxford  
hosts the first  
Global Forum on  
Human Survival  
with strong Hindu  
participation.  
Bangladesh

declares Islam the  
state religion.

Thousands attend  
the largest  
Ganesha Visarjana  
festival outside  
India, in San  
Francisco,  
California.

**1989:** England  
hosts the Bharat  
Hindu Sammelan,  
the largest-ever  
Hindu gathering  
outside of India,  
100,000 visit.  
Hindus flee  
Bangladesh

claiming  
persecution by  
Muslim  
fundamentalists.  
The Kumbha Mela  
festival held at  
Haridwar is  
recorded as the  
largest single

assembly of  
humanity ever, at  
45 million.

**1990:** Hindus  
flee Kashmir,  
giving up hope

of an end to  
violence in their  
homeland.

Moscow hosts  
the second

Global Forum on  
Human Survival.

Swami

Paramananda



Bharati leads all participants in chanting "Om" together in the Kremlin. Nepal becomes a democracy and remains the world's only

# Hindu nation.

**1991:** Germany  
celebrates a  
year-long  
Festival of

# India, and the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha holds a Festival of India in Edison, New Jersey, which

introduces  
Hinduism to  
hundreds of  
thousands. US  
Restaurant  
Association  
urges members  
to offer

vegetarian  
menus.

1992: Full  
color explodes  
on the

Hinduism  
Today  
desktop.  
Militant Hindu  
fanatics storm  
and raze the  
Babri Masjid in  
Ayodhya,

causing  
widespread  
riots  
throughout  
India which  
leave  
thousands  
dead. Brazil

hosts the  
Parliamentary  
Earth Summit  
in Rio. Hindus  
offer Vedic  
insights into  
the  
environment.



**1993:** Hindu,  
Sikh and Jain  
spiritual  
leaders are a  
prevalent  
force at the  
centenary

Parliament of  
the World's  
Religions in  
Chicago. The  
VHP of  
America  
presents the

# Global Vision 2000 conference in honor of Swami Vivekananda; 10,000

attend.

1994: HT  
(and the  
Vedas)

published  
electronically  
on the Web.  
Nelson  
Mandela  
becomes  
president of

South Africa.  
He publicly  
hails  
Mahatma  
Gandhi's  
nonviolent  
example. Fiji

Hindus  
inaugurate  
their largest  
new Agamic  
temple in  
Nadi.  
Sankarachar

ya of Kanchi,  
Sri  
Chandrasekh  
arendra  
Saraswati,  
attains his  
mahasamad



hi, at 99.

1995: HT

acquires

blazing-fast

(they were  
then) 9500  
Macintoshes  
. Lord  
Ganesha  
drinks milk

around the  
world in the  
most  
miraculous  
religious  
event of the

century.

India's

Supreme

Court

declares the

Ramakrishn

a Mission  
officially  
and legally  
"Hindu"  
after nearly  
15 years of

effort by the  
RK mission  
to gain  
non-Hindu  
status.

# 1996: Newspaper transforms into Hinduism Today

international  
magazine.  
New  
journalists  
and



photograph  
ers come  
forward.  
India's  
Supreme  
Court

concludes  
its 10-year  
case and  
terminates  
Tirupati  
temple's

# hereditary priests.

1997:

Pandurang  
Shastri  
Athavale  
wins the <sup>us</sup>  
\$1.21-milli  
on

Templeton  
Prize for  
Progress in  
Religion.  
Tragic fire  
tears

through  
festive  
kumbhabhi  
shekam  
rites at the  
Tanjavur

temple in  
South  
India; over  
39 die and  
hundreds  
are injured.

1998: HT  
pioneers  
direct  
computer-  
to-plate  
printing



process.  
Network  
upgrades  
to Power  
Macintosh  
G3

# computers . The Kumbha Mela in Haridwar draws 25

million  
faithful.  
Severe  
methods  
of child  
discipline

within  
Hindu  
household  
s and  
public  
schools

worldwide  
are  
revealed.  
Children  
speak out.