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Letters

Kudos for Courage

I want to congratulate you. Any journal that can publish articles like the one by Madhu Kishwar (Women of Vision, Nov. '98) addressing such issues as Lord Rama, Lord Siva and the ideal husband has a great future. The article on Lal (History, Nov. '98) was also excellent, though I would hope in the future you can provide more references, postal or email addresses, for readers who would like to pursue the subject in depth.

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Peeved by Men in Suits

At any Indian function, most women wear Indian dress, while the men invariably come in Western garb. But when it comes to preaching about traditional dress (Letters, Dec. '98, Dr. Murthy V.S. Andavolu, Bindi On!), some men seem to hold

women responsible for "losing" traditions. I don't understand why these "men" are writing pep talks for women to "wake up and smell the tradition" while they have been asleep a much longer time than women! When someone writes "be different, wear bindi, wear sari"--invariably, it is a man. How come they feel that it is important for women to wear the sari or bindi or both, while they are very comfortable in "Western" clothes? Also, we know from religious classes that some kids feel embarrassed when their moms come to school wearing Indian dress. So, please be considerate of your kids while going out with them. After all, they are growing up here, and they have their peers to deal with.

Subha Varma Pathial

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Wonderstruck by Nakshatras

The information and issues presented monthly in your magazine take one to a different plane of thought. I offer my deep appreciation to the whole editorial team and pray to the Lord to grant you all the

strength and wisdom to carry on spreading the message of the Sanatana Dharma. I was truly wonderstuck at the November issue's nakshatra artforms. Salutations to the artist (A. Manivel of Chennai).

N. Karthikeyan
Singapore

What about Sikhs and Jains?

We observe that you give a lot of exposure to Buddhism, who do not class themselves as Hindus. However, Jainism and Sikhism, also born of Hinduism, are very rarely given any exposure. For unity's sake, we feel it necessary to give exposure to all three: Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs. This will remind them of their roots. If it were not for the great sacrifices of the Sikh Gurus, Bharat would no longer be Bharat. Sikhs, even now play a vital role

in the Indian army.

Suresh M. Rajpura

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Shocked by the Swastika?

I was shocked to see the swastika mistaken for the sudharshana in your article (Symbol of God and Evil , Nov. '98). The swastika is anti-sudharshana--the sudharshana is spinning anti-clockwise and the swastika--clockwise. So this makes it something like the opposite of the "benevolent sudharshana." This was pointed out during World War II, that for the Nazis, just going against the sudharshana alone

would destroy them. Why is the author of the article repeating this mistake?

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* Ancient cultures across the globe used both clockwise and counter-clockwise forms, and both forms are auspicious. Stitched into a Navaho blanket or a Nazi flag, the same swastika appears both ways from different sides. Only the recent moral imperative to

denounce Nazi atrocities and stigmatize Hitler's use of the swastika, while simultaneously trying to "save" its original auspicious symbolism, has led to a "good" and "evil" polarization of the two forms, a modern myth. The Nazis did standardize their usage at a 45 degree angle, with arms counter-clockwise. Association with Nazi genocide and its symbolism cannot and should not be lightly dismissed. The current proposal (by Jains) is a "global policy" to use only the 45° form in Nazi related

imagery and label it "Nazi Swastika." Never would the square forms be used in such contexts, allowing the swastika to retain its ancient place as a symbol of Divine auspiciousness.

Karnataka not Kerala

"In the Lap of the Mother" by Nikki Lastreto (Dec. '98) mentioned the Mukambika Temple, in Kollur, "a typical South Indian village in Kerala State." It is actually in

Kundapur Taluk, Udipi District, Karnataka State, 140 kilometers north of India's famous west coast port city, Mangalore. The detailed account of this temple is given in Skanda Puranam under the title "Kolapura Mahatmyam." Maharshi Vedavyasa reveals the greatness of this temple, and the original name Kolapuram is attributed to the great yogi Kola Maharshi who found a swayambhu (self-manifested lingam) and did intense puja here and was blessed by Lord Siva. The

overwhelming majority of the devotees come from Kerala by bus and thus the author thought that Kollur is in Kerala.

Sunanda and Uppunda V.
Bhat

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Resources Needed

First I must say that your magazine is absolutely beautiful. The amount of information in its pages is

surprising. I would like to suggest including more for those interested in Hinduism. I recently started studying Hinduism and find poor resources for anything other than basic Hindu beliefs. I wish to know about why and how holidays are celebrated. Which holidays are celebrated in which areas? What courses are good to learn how to say the mantras? I realize this is

asking a lot, but I do not expect all these things would be covered at once. Clues as to where to start and research would be very helpful.

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Malaysia Hindus
Need Upgrade

As a regular Temple

goer, I feel sad and disgusted to see all sorts of dress other than the dhoti. If a Chinese man can get used to wearing a dhoti (Letters, Nov. '98) Hindu men have no excuses. Another sore spot for me was the recent Deepavali celebration which here was a day for feasting on meat and liquor. In

Malaysia Deepavali has
become a holiday
instead of a holy day.

K. Thuruvan

Seremban, Malaysia

Shocking Unlawful
Conversions

I would like to draw your
readers' attention to an
old article in India Today,
March 30, 1998, entitled

"Change of Faith," reporting on 12 Christian missionaries who used unlawful means to spread hatred and violence while converting tribals in the Krishnapur area. Though arrested, no subsequent action was taken and the tribals are left unprotected. Hindus must unite to fight for

their rights and protect
their culture.

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