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Category : [October 1987](#)

Published by Anonymous on Oct. 02, 1987

PUBLISHER'S DESK

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Subramuniaswami, Sivaya H.H. We have had a very busy month listening to the trends of Hinduism today. It is important to listen and, as you know, communication is a two-way conversation. Excuse me for a moment - the telephone is ringing. Ring: Ring: Good morning! Yes! This is Publishers Desk. Yes! This is Hinduism Today. Yes! This is he. Yes! We do have time to talk...listening...You like the newspaper! Well, we are all happy about that. What impresses you the most?...listening...Oh! The articles on Hindu religion, My Turn and the Briefly section-but is there anything that you do not like about the paper?...listening...still listening...Well, that's a rather long list. Let's discuss the points one at a time...listening...So, there are only a few points, right? And the first one is that we should not make Hinduism look bad. Well, we don't - people do. We only report the news because it is a newspaper...listening...Oh! you want us to suppress the news that is uncomplimentary to Hinduism and print only the good news. What country do you come from?...listening...Well, we have freedom of the press here in America, you know, and that is why people think for themselves. They are kept well informed...listening...Yes! We are aware that some people are saying that we are making a bad image for Hinduism, but being one of the largest religions in the world, we can't expect everyone to always be doing the right thing can we?...listening...We are happy that you do now agree with us and that you do not feel that we should censor any news that comes to us. And, yes, we do check our sources most carefully. But, let me tell you that there are really many items of interest both good and bad that we do not print because there is simply not enough room, or it does not appear wise to do so at the time...listening...Oh! You don't mind the bad news about the "white" swamis but we should print good news about swamis of Indian origin. Well! Isn't it a little strange to draw that kind of line between them?...listening...I said, "draw that kind of line." This means make such a strong distinction between skin color...listening...Oh! I see. You are a brahmin and you are feeling that you have the right to make these kinds of judgements. Well! In that case maybe you can help us. We are doing a study of the caste system that is emerging in America. Would you help us when the time comes?...listening...Thank you! We will be calling you then. But now, tell us more about what you were saying regarding our publication policies and exactly what these other people are saying.

Who are these other people anyway?...listening...Yes! We can understand that you do not want to mention any names. Oh, by the way, what is your name?...listening...Is that an "M" or an "N." I see, "M" as in Madras...listening...No! We will not mention your name if you do not want us to and, yes, we will print your suggestions. Thank you for calling. Goodbye. Ring: Ring: Good morning. Publisher's Desk. Yes! This is he. Yes! I can hear you. Please speak more softly, you do not have to yell. We have a good connection...listening...Oh! I understand you just arrived from Bombay and you have a message for me. What is the message...listening...listening...still listening...That is very, very interesting. A boycott on our little newspaper. Who would do a thing like that?...listening...Well yes! We have heard rumblings that we should shape up and conform, and we have received messages to that effect from different people from various pans of the world-all saying about the same thing. But what are you trying to tell me?...listening...This is getting very interesting. Please go on...listening...Oh! I see, you are telling us that all the messages that we are getting from people telling us to curb the news, and/or censor some of it, are coming from one source only and that they are telling people that we are CIA...listening...Have you ever seen my picture?...listening...I see!

That is why you are calling, because you have seen my picture with the two editors in the last issue and we do not look like a CIA agents. Well, frankly, we are not. We are just a small group of swamis trying to do something that no one else is doing to serve our religion and keep everyone within it informed. We are glad that you appreciate our service enough to pass along the very important news. We will look into this some more. We hope that you enjoy your visit to the United States of America. Namaste! Ring: Ring: Good morning. Publisher's Desk. Yes, this is he. No, I am not busy and do have time to talk with you. What is on your divine mind...listening...(I'm getting scolded)...and still listening...May I say something now? No! No! Just a moment. It's my turn to talk. Oh! You want me to call you back so I will pay for my share of the call if I want to continue,...listening...Yes! I do understand that you are calling all the way from New York to Hawaii. Yes! Give me your phone number and I'll call right back. Dial: Dial: Hello! Yes! Here we are again. Now, it's my turn. Really, you have been so kind to share everything that you have on your mind with me in such an open way. Let us first say thank you. We understand your concern that we may not continue to be the voice of "the Hindu conscience, the watch dog and the controversial force that makes people think," as you put it. But really we do not look at ourselves in this way...listening...Yes! You are right. What group do you represent?...listening...Yes! We can understand that you do not want to mention the names of the groups who have asked you to call us. But, please give me a hint?...listening...Fine! We are happy that you will tell me if we do not print them. Do the trustees of the groups feel the same way?...listening...Yes! We always respect our sources. And No! We are not giving up and becoming another "bhakti rag." And Yes! I am a vegetarian. Thank you for calling,...listening...No! We are not making any money on the newspaper-just

making ends meet. The editorial staff here donate their time. It is our seva to Siva, our public service. We want to give back a little to our wonderful Hindu religion for all that it has given to us. We do other things, as well, in various parts of the world. So, this is a part time service for a few of the swamis. Thank you for calling,...listening...Yes! We will keep up our courage-we promise. And please do call again. Namaste. Goodbye. Ring: Ring: Good Afternoon: Publishers Desk. Yes! This is he...listening...Well! Thank you. We are happy that you liked the article on conversation to Hinduism in Mauritius and that you feel as we do that the Catholics have overstepped their boundaries. Do you have anything more to tell us? How long have you been one of our subscribers?...listening...Five years. That is a long time. We are happy that you are happy that we are a monthly newspaper now...listening...That is wonderful news. We do want to reach out to the teenagers, and to hear that your daughter reads every word is very encouraging...listening...Well, thank you for calling. We hope that you will call again. And, please give us some news about your bhajan group. Yes! Send us some pictures, too...listening...Thank you. Namaste. Ring: Ring: Good Evening. Publisher's Desk. Yes! This is he.

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