Letters
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A Dream Come True!

In today's atmosphere where people are trading in the name of religion and some are forced and bribed to do so, I found your magazine very interesting and encouraging to the new generation to preserve and safeguard our culture, heritage and religion. It also motivates us to unite together to help our poor and downtrodden Hindu families all over the world. Many people will definitely subscribe and also extend their help in achieving "our" goal.
Hermant Sharma, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

Cultivating Cult Culture

I was so sad to hear that Hinduism Today's cult status application has been so unjustly denied ["Cult Status Denied," editorial, July '97]. I had such high hopes to see it listed way up among the top twenty (just above the Vatican). Particularly upsetting was the fact that TM has yet made no claims of being Hindu, and that scholars consider Osho as non-Hindu. This reminds me of a recent debate in Hinduism Today regarding the "Beyond Hinduism" Sai Baba issue. What did Rajneesh do to totally exclude himself that others have yet failed to discover? Many neo-Hindu organizations disclaim from time to time being Hindu, as the need arises. Is it to avoid being lumped-in with everyone else's cult(ure)? Even Hinduism Today displays rather subtle (at best of times) leanings toward Saivism over other "cults."
Nistuladasa Bramachari, Sri Pundarik Dham, Chittagong, Bangladesh

* We're glad you saw the wit in our editor's satire on cults. Other readers took the piece seriously, believing the US government really does have a cult licensing office. They don't. Our editor promises never again to jest like that. (No one here believes that either.)

Let's Find the Real Cause

An article "let joint families forge a Better Future" was read with great astonishment [my turn, August '97]. Mr. Bharat J. Gajjar has blamed and is trying to convict Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru of breaking the joint family system in India by imposing more taxes on joint families and giving incentive to smaller families. Nehru might have made some mistakes, but we cannot forget the sacrifices he had made for the nation and the common good. If India was not industrialized, we would not have been able to grow food and manufacture other things for the population we now have. I do agree that united we grow and divided we fall, but how many of us cared to know the real cause of division of the joint family system.
R.L. Sarin, Waterloo, Iowa, USA

Malicious Media

I feel it is so wrong how the media is blaming Eastern religions, especially Hinduism, for the Heaven's Gate mass suicide ["The Spaceship Suicide," cult, July '97]. Hinduism is not to blame. The reason why people turn to cults are myriad--the lack of love and compassion in our society, the breakdown of the family, the loss of community, the alienation felt by people in a technological age devoid of a spiritual heart and focus. It is an embarrassment for me as an American woman to see media display ignorant and hurtful attitudes toward other faiths. The enemy is not some outside agency. The enemy comes from within. It is our own inhumanity toward each other. I believe our nation can cure itself. But to do so takes awareness and emotional maturity. Blaming Hinduism for our problems is maintaining the same escapist mentality as those who believed Mr. Applegate was the next savior.
Wendy Schuljan, Coram, New York, USA

Casteing Blame

I enjoyed reading the article "50 Years of Freedom" (celebration, August '97). But I differ with you when you say, "these communal problems are inherited from Britain's divide and rule policy." Good excuse to blame everything on Britain. Communal problems were created by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty and its successive governments by giving special privileges to minorities and promoting casteism by labeling Hindus by schedule castes, backward castes, forward castes, tribal castes, and the latest one is mandal caste just to make sure that their phony secularism rules Delhi by appeasing them, and in result disintegrating Hindu society. Unfortunately, they are very successful due to ignorance and illiteracy.
Kanti B. Patel, Alhambra, California, USA

Not a Trivial Matter

Your article about Krishna's birthplace was the third or fourth article I've seen describing an anti-Muslim hate group with little or no criticism thereof ["Sights on Krishna's Birthplace," india, August '97]. What disturbed me even more deeply was the last paragraph of your defense of the Jain peoples' use of the swastika ["The Twist of Fate," media, August '97], where you claim that people in India "are not aware of the potent emotional associations of the swastika, nor of the Jews' collective oath to 'never forget'...but the Nazis are dead and gone." My father narrowly escaped execution by a Nazi death squad in the Netherlands at the age of five. I can find no polite way to express how Hinduism Today's trivialization of fascism makes me feel.
Ryan Amptmeyer, Monticello, Indiana, USA

Jains Say Jai!

Thank you very much for the well done story on Swastika ["The Twist of Fate," media, August '97]. I faxed a copy of the article to Time, but so far I have not heard from them. But the copy I sent to The Toronto Star was republished. Also, there was an annual picnic of the Jain Society here and many Jains had gathered and this article was well received.
Prakash Mody, North York, Ontario, Canada, Prakash_Mody@tvo.org

Kundalini: Let's Be Circumspect

For the past few years, an increasing number of people seem to be interested in kundalini--a sacred and secret science of India. A casual browse through religious sites on the World Wide Web yields a morass of information which seems to be growing exponentially. I believe in addition to Hindus, the non-Hindus can also enrich their knowledge from such a database. On the other hand, it also has potential for bad implications. I think people who document such literature should observe some kind of self-imposed restrictions. The information should be comprehensive enough to evoke interest in the reader, but there must be some threshold beyond which it may prove to be counterproductive. If we keep on parroting kundalini over and over again, it will only tend to lose an aura of mysteriousness at the end of the day. While writing books on kundalini, it would be logical to avoid specific details on its mechanism, which the reader should be encouraged to work out with his guru. All authentic religious groups should jointly agree to some kind

of restriction on what and how much to publish.
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