Letters
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Hello! What About Hindus?

IN THE YOUR OCTOBER '97 LETTERS, MR. Ryan Amptmeyer was upset at what he considers trivialization of a horrendous historical event of the holocaust of the European Jews. However, he does not grant the same courtesy to the Hindus who lived through a holocaust of much bigger proportion and cruelty at the hands of the invading marauders and ruling Islamic kings and despots. Mr. Amptmeyer very rightly wants to perpetuate the memory of the Jewish holocaust so that it never happens again. Hindus who want to do the same and also want some symbolic retribution of that, he terms as Muslim hate groups. I think he is being very unfair. The temples at Mathura, Kashi and Ayodhya, converted to mosques, are the three most holy places for the Hindus. These temples are a constant reminder of the acts of barbarism perpetrated by conquering armies. It is only just and right, for the sake of amity and goodwill, that these three temples be returned to Hindus. This demand is not an act of hate but a demand for dignity and self-respect.

Yashpal Lakra, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, USA, YLakra@aol.com

Womanly Protocol Issues

IF THE ARTICLE "CUES AND CLUES," [insights, September, 1997] were a summation of antiquated traditions, I might begin to understand the necessity or the intent of the

paragraph entitled "Womanly Protocol." However, if, as the author states, "Tradition is the best of the past that has been carried forward for the future," I beg to disagree, as an Indian woman, and on behalf of my female family, to this section. I find the suggestions to the Indian woman's exalted position at best hopeful. The majority of Indian women are very oppressed. If the opposite were true, there would be no need for a woman's movement. Indian woman are and have been encouraged to live under the rule of men, whether their rules are beneficial or not. How does it behoove a woman to eat after a man? Walk behind a man? Be shy, self-effacing and afraid to even walk outside on her own? What do these things teach a woman, but to devalue her own self in favor of any masculine presence? These rules do not contribute to a woman's drive to learn, invent, achieve or succeed. I hope I am wrong in interpreting your article. I pray that your publication will do anything it can to support the emancipation of Indian women.

Amrita Raman

THE TRADITIONAL HINDU EXPRESSIONS OF respect, including the husband and wife protocol, have protected the Indian couple and family from the difficulties that are so common in the West. However, I wonder if there are cases of Westerners who have adopted these rules, and how successful they have been in avoiding or solving marital issues. Such case stories would be most useful to those spiritual seekers who have to face the hardships of misunderstanding in their homes. Indian folks tempted to go the Western way would also be encouraged to cherish and preserve their traditional heritage in the area of family customs.

J.S. Sahai, Guadeloupe, France, sharad@outremer.com

I WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE ARTICLE "Womanly Protocol," which requires the wife to walk a step or two behind her husband, always giving him the lead. This is in direct conflict with the claim made earlier that "women in Hindu society are held in the highest regard, far more respected and protected, in truth, than in the West." I don't see anything respectful and protective about compelling women to be subordinate to their husbands. Sanatana Dharma mandates us to treat everyone equally, including women, for there is a spark of divinity in every being and every object.

Pradeep Srivastava, Detroit, Michigan, USA, srivasta@dwsd.org

* The men-women protocols which we surveyed are in many places old-fashioned and ignored, if not totally disdained. I want to affirm, if you have not been reading our magazine for long, that we at Hinduism Today are 108% in support of Asian women's issues, and children's too. I agree with your assessment of today's terrible, inexcusable conditions, and our team worldwide is committed to be a voice of change in these matters. We will never abandon that vision or the work involved in seeing it come to pass. Still, the "Womanly Protocols" that we presented serve a purpose, reminding us of ways of life evolved over long eras, ways of life that still are followed in many refined, traditional homes. Quite the opposite, really. But, if men take it in egotistical or power games ways, yes, these are then bigoted rules, useless and belittling. Women, it is felt by many, are the bastions of our dharmic values, our refinements, our cultural heritage. Their example does much to soften the man's boorish ways, and to give style and purity to society. Humility, in our view, is not a lesser position in life, but the spiritual maturity of every soul, man or woman. To most Hindus, the protections (you may see

them as limitations) offered women are based not on some notion that men are more deserving of freedoms, but that women are more capable of living the higher ideal.
The Editor

Thanks for the Honor

I AM A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF Texas at Austin. I am also the president of the Hindu Student's Council chapter here at University of Texas. I would like to thank you for profiling our organization in your beautiful publication ["Searching for Our Roots," youth, October '97]. It was an honor to see our organization graced in the pages of your exciting and informative magazine.

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YOU HAVE GIVEN THE WORLD a gift that cannot be fully comprehended or measured. Lately, the publisher's desks have been speaking straight to me. You all are phenomenal. I cannot thank you enough.

Spencer, Englewood, Colorado, USA plantluv@juno.com

Exposing Dharma

THANK YOU, HINDUISM TODAY, FOR YOUR assistance in helping us to provide our local newspaper, the Anchorage Daily News, with the Hindu calendar of festivals and events. Through your referral we were able to provide him with all the dates for 1997 for publishing in his newspaper. What a wonderful boon it is to see our Hindu festivals listed. We pray that this letter will inspire others to contact local newspapers in their communities and do the same in the name of Sanatana

Dharma.

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Corrections

In November's Briefly we incorrectly attributed the photo of the Pundit from Trinidad to Anil Mahabir. The story and photo were submitted by Parasram Ramoutar.

Our October article on the Hindu Student's Council gave an incorrect Web address. The HSC may be found at www.hindunet.org

Letters, with writer's name, address and daytime phone number, should be sent to:

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Letters may be edited for space and clarity and may appear in electronic versions of Hinduism Today.