

# **HINDU GODS AND GODDESSES DISHONoured**

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**Published by Santosh Kumar Behera at Smashwords**

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## **HINDU GODS AND GODDESSES DISHONoured**

Hinduism or the '*Sanatan Dharma*' is the oldest religion among all major religions of the world. India is the home of Hinduism. The characteristic of Hinduism is that it is not founded by any prophet. As the name '*Sanatan Dharma*' signifies, it is an eternal religion. It has neither a beginning nor an end. The followers of Hinduism or the Hindus believe in God. The powers or qualities of the Almighty, who is invisible, are visualized through different idols, to which the Hindus worship. As such the Hindus worship many Gods & Goddesses. The appearances of the deities are based on the mentions in the ancient Hindu religious texts. The deities are also depicted in paintings. However, the traditional art forms, which are treated with the idols and paintings of the deities, exist along with the realistic art forms of today.

In the olden days the idols were prepared mainly in stone, brass, bronze and wood whereas nowadays the idols are prepared in cement, plaster, plastic, fibre, ceramic, ivory, glass and alloys of different metals along with the traditional materials. The idols are generally worshipped inside temples whereas relatively smaller idols and pictures of the deities are worshipped at homes by millions of Hindus. However, during specific occasions idols of different deities, made up of clay, are worshipped by the people at decorated pandals which are later on immersed in flowing water.

The Hindus worship different Gods & Goddesses on specific days in a year and observe many religious ceremonies and festivals based on the Hindu calendar. As such the Hindus have the reputation of being very religious people. But it is a matter of great regret that the most revered Gods and Goddesses of Hinduism are being dishonoured at every moment in India, the country where majority of Hindus live. Of course, at times we come to know about some incidents of Hindu deities being deliberately treated in insulting manners in the West. All these unfortunate and undesirable incidents must stop. Unless the dignity and honour of the Hindu Gods & Goddesses are protected, Hinduism may not survive. The Hindu deities are dishonoured in various ways in India. Mostly the deities are dishonoured when printed pictures of the deities are discarded or left neglected and when the deities are treated as mere playthings. This article is an attempt to throw light on these sorrowful incidents.

### **Printed Pictures of the Deities Discarded or Neglected**

Recently there has been remarkable advancement in the fields of photography and printing technology. People are benefitted in many ways. But thoughtless use and misuse of the technology have brought untold misery to the Hindu deities. Although fifty years back the pictures of the deities were mostly used for worshipping and a few were used in other areas, at present quite a large number of pictures of the deities are lavishly used in many areas.

Given below are the areas where pictures of Hindu Gods & Goddesses are used today: -

1. Packing materials - labels, wrappers, cardboard packets, plastic pouches, cardboard boxes, bottles, jars, tins and gunny bags etc.
2. Advertising materials - carry bags, pamphlets, posters, signboards, banners and hoardings etc.
3. Reading, Writing & Printing materials - receipts, cash memos, vouchers, tickets

- (lottery and transport), envelopes, marriage invitation cards, new year greeting cards, visiting cards, notebooks, registers, books, magazines and newspapers etc.
4. Decoration materials - ornaments, flags, headbands, stickers, posters (pictures), calendars, glazed tiles and wall/roof/door hangings etc.
  5. Others - ladies' hand bags, gents' side bags, T-shirts, trucks and buses, etc.

As such we shall discuss about the areas where the deities are neglected and dishonoured. Today the pictures of the most revered Hindu deities such as Krishna, Ganesh, Shiva, Durga, Laxmi, Hanuman, Kali, Rama, Vishnu, Saraswati, Kartikeya, Venkateshwara, Jagannath, Tara, Brahma and the incarnations of different deities are printed on the **packing materials** of a variety of consumer products as mentioned below:

1. Puja articles - Incense sticks, Vermilion, Sandal wood powder, Camphor, Holy water of Ganga, Cotton wicks, Oil & *Ghee* for lamps, Coloured powder for *Rangoli* and *Hawan* items etc.
2. Food items - Rice, Wheat/Rice/Gram flour, Pulses, Mixed grains flour, Oil, *Ghee*, Cumin, Turmeric powder, Cardamom, Milk, Butter milk, *Paneer*, Candy, Sweets, Snacks, *Papad*, Vermicelli, Chowmin, Dates, Tamarind, Dried Amla, Betel nuts, *Betel masala* and Ayurvedic medicine etc.
3. Intoxicants - *Zarda*, *Khaini*, *Gudakhu*, *Gundi*, Bidis and *Bhang* (in the guise of Ayurvedic medicine) etc.
4. Cloth - Dhoti, Gamchha, Towel, Lungi and Blouse etc.
5. Other Products - Bangles, Candles, *Rakhis*, Fireworks, Silver leaves for sweets, Naphthalene, Lime, Red oxide, Terpene, Digital Toner, Chalk, Pencil, Pen, Lock, CD, Signal Light, Plastic Ropes, Necklace for children, Steel utensils and Brooms etc.

In fact, there may be more items which can be added to the above list and each item is being produced by quite a lot of companies. However, people purchase these products, utilize them and throw away their empty packets, bearing sacred pictures of the deities, just as they do with other empty packets. As a result pictures of the deities are found lying here and there on the road, in the garbage and in the open drains. People walk on them and vehicles run over them on the road, while the passersby spit and urinate on them at the garbage, though unknowingly. Dirty water flows over the beautiful faces of the deities in the drains. The empty bottles, tins and gunny bags, bearing the sacred pictures, are used in various ways unsuitable to the dignity of the deities. This is how Hindu deities, decorating the packing materials, are dishonoured. It was indeed shocking to find the label, pasted on the liquor bottle, contained the picture of Lord Jagannath, as telecasted in an Odia TV channel. It may be mentioned here that some Indian products, packed and sold abroad, also contain pictures of Hindu deities on their packets and bags.

DEITIES ON DISCARDED PACKING MATERIALS







DEITIES ON GUNNY BAGS



The pictures of Hindu deities are very often used by business establishments, socio-religious organizations and Governmental agencies on **advertising materials**. During festive occasions or even on normal days some shopkeepers use to handover plastic **carry bags** to customers, keeping the purchased articles inside them, on which the names and addresses of the shops along with pictures of deities are printed. After removing the purchased articles from the carry bags at home the customers either throw away these carry bags or reuse them till they are torn and then they are discarded. Some people even collect waste materials in them and throw them at the garbage or in the drains.

During different times of the year, one may come across torn and faded pictures of Hindu deities, placed on variety of **posters**, pasted on the walls of the towns. Some of these posters are advertisements, promoting commercial products while the others are advertisements, giving information about activities like spiritual discourses, devotional song programmes, *yajnas*, *kirtan*, *vigraha pratishtha*, exhibitions and fairs etc. After these posters are being pasted on the walls, the deities depicted on the posters are left to the mercy of their fate. The posters in general are exposed to weather while some are torn by street urchins. It is found that without giving any consideration to the pictures of the deities, many of the above mentioned posters are ruthlessly torn to pieces in order to give place to the new posters or new posters are pasted carelessly overlapping the pictures of the deities on old posters. It is indeed shocking to find at times dismembered figures of the deities on torn posters shivering in the wind and clinging desperately to the walls, being on the verge of falling down in the open drains just below the walls.

#### DEITIES ON POSTERS







It is a common sight to find unclean and faded pictures of different Hindu deities on the **signboards** of number of shops at the roadside. These deities are not so lucky like those deities who are staying inside temples and homes, where proper care is taken of them and they are worshipped time to time. The deities placed on the signboards are indeed a neglected lot who are left exposed to dust, smoke, sun, wind, rain and cold round the year. Hence they wear a pathetic look. Same is the condition of those deities placed on the flex **banners** and **hoardings**, hung at strategic places of the roadside and left uncared. They face the wrath of the nature and sometimes they are torn to pieces.

#### DEITIES ON SIGNBOARDS



## DEITIES ON BANNERS



## DEITIES ON HOARDINGS



During festive occasions some business establishments distribute **pamphlets**, bearing pictures of the deities, announcing 'Lucky draws' and attractive rebate on purchases, to the passersby. It appears as if the deities placed on the pamphlets are approving the offers of the shopkeepers. However the people after going through the pamphlets mostly throw them away as a result of which one can see a lot of discarded pamphlets lying scattered on the road and people walking on them. Similarly, during +2 examinations one may find pamphlets with pictures of deities like Ganesh and Saraswati lying scattered on the road near the school gates, which are distributed by different Coaching Centers, persuading students to join their tutorial classes to become successful in the Medical and Engineering Entrance Tests etc. Of course pamphlets of some religious, cultural and social institutions, distributed to people, also possess pictures of the deities. These pamphlets are also discarded after a few days, if not immediately.



Some **documents** are also found bearing pictures of the deities. The **cash memos** and **vouchers** of some business establishments bear pictures of the deities on them. So also **money receipts** of some socio-religious organizations, collecting donations, bear pictures of the deities. Generally people preserve such documents for a few days but later on they consider them as unwanted and discard them or tear and throw them ignoring the pictures of the deities on them.

The Durga Puja Committees in many places conduct Lotteries in order to raise their fund for gorgeous celebrations of Durga Puja. They sell **lottery tickets**, bearing beautiful pictures of the deities and promising fabulous prizes for the winners. On the day of the draw of the lottery, majority of losers use to tear their lottery tickets out of frustration, ignoring the pictures of the deities on them. As a result, one can see torn pieces of lottery tickets lying scattered on the spot where the result was announced. There are other lotteries, announcing big money in return of a small amount, which bear pictures of deities on them. Except the few winning tickets the rest are generally torn to pieces. Some **bus** and **ferry tickets** also contain pictures of the deities. These are torn and thrown at the end of the journey.

Another very serious matter is that most of the people throw away the **Marriage Invitation Cards**, prominently decorated with pictures of Lord Ganesh and other deities, once the ceremonies are over. As a result the pictures of the deities can be found lying here and there and the deities are dishonoured in the same way as those placed on packing materials. Indeed it is very unfortunate to see people discarding the same deity, Ganesh, whom they invoke before commencement of any auspicious event in order to ward off all the obstacles on the way. Incidentally the **Gift Envelopes**, bearing pictures of the deities, presented to the newlyweds, are also discarded carelessly after the cash gift is removed carefully from the envelopes. Sometimes one comes across discarded Invitation Cards for other auspicious occasions, **Diwali & New Year Greeting Cards** and **Visiting Cards**, bearing pictures of the deities, lying in the garbage or on the road.

#### DEITIES ON DISCARDED MARRIAGE INVITATION CARDS



It is not a surprise to find discarded old **Calendars**, having soiled or shabby pictures of the Hindu deities, in the garbage or on the road. Perhaps this is the simplest way chosen by some people to get rid of old calendars, which are of no use at the end of a year.

### DEITIES ON DISCARDED CALENDARS



One may not believe, but this is true that the area where maximum number of pictures of Hindu Gods & Goddesses are printed and later on discarded is the **Indian Newspaper**. The Daily Newspapers, published in various languages of India including English, print uncountable number of pictures of the deities while performing the following activities:-

- a) Covering day-to-day incidents and giving extensive photographic coverage to religious ceremonies taking place round the year in the news reports
- b) Publishing literary and informative articles on Spiritualism, Tourism and Art & Culture
- c) Publishing commercial advertisements for promotion of consumer products and greetings of business establishments & political personalities

The gravity of the situation can be realized if we go into details of the above activities. As such each of the above mentioned activities is analyzed below separately.

### News with Pictures of the Deities

The pictures of the deities, published along with the news, are either deliberate or accidental in nature. Given below are some circumstances under which pictures of the deities are placed on the pages of the newspapers:-

1. Placing pictures of the famous deities of different areas/districts on the strips, placed at the top of Local News pages of the newspapers as regular features
2. Placing pictures of the deities, worshipped on the day of publication of the newspapers, at the top of the front page beside/along with the name of the newspapers
3. Placing pictures of the deities on the strips, placed at the top of special pages during festive occasions



4. Placing pictures of the deities in news articles, related to festive occasions
5. Photographs of deities inside temples, along with news of theft of valuable ornaments of the deities from the temples or other incidents related to the deities
6. Idols of temples attacked, broken or burnt by antisocial
7. Discovery of idols from below the ground, from the river or from other places
8. Lighting the lamps before the idols or pictures of the deities, placed on the stage, by the chief guests during inauguration of cultural programmes
9. Dancers performing before the idols placed on the stage
10. Dance programmes on the stage before the deities, depicted on the banners, fixed at the backdrops
11. Distinguished guests seated at the daises on the stage before banners, depicting the deities
12. Renowned personalities being presented with idols or pictures of the deities as souvenirs or with certificates/citations, decorated with pictures of the deities on behalf of the organizers on the stage
13. Publishing paintings of the deities, prepared by the children
14. Publishing pictures of the deities as characters of cartoon films
15. Introducing new books, having pictures of the deities on their cover pages
16. Photographs of sights where *yajna* is performed or religious discourses are delivered on the stage, having banners at the back decorated with pictures of the deities
17. Photographs of indoor and outdoor art exhibitions, depicting the deities as subject matters of paintings and sculptures
18. Artists busy in painting traditional pictures of the deities or painting the idols during festive occasions
19. Artists giving demonstrations to students on idol-making or artists painting pictures of the deities in workshops
20. Construction of the idols of different deities in progress at the workshops of artists during festive occasions
21. Artists giving finishing touches to the idols at the workshops during festive occasions
22. Transportation of the idols from the workshops to home or to pandals by carrying physically or by vehicles during festive occasions
23. Worshipping of the idols on decorated pandals at different cities and towns
24. Reports on the largest idols and on idols, prepared using various materials
25. Politicians and film stars visiting the puja pandals
26. Devotional song programmes at the puja pandals
27. Members of Puja Committees, posing for group photographs, at the puja pandals with the deities at the background
28. Coverage of immersion ceremonies of the idols at different places
29. Idols being worshipped inside the temples on special occasions
30. Idols being taken out of the temples performing rituals, idols being taken in processions
31. Idols riding palkis/chariots/elephants/boats during festive occasions
32. Ceremonial decorations of the deities in the temples during specific religious occasions
33. Selling of idols at the shops/footpath during different pujas
34. Indoor photographs of persons in news, having pictures of the deities hung at the walls or idols kept at the corner of living rooms
35. Outdoor photographs, having idols in view in the surroundings etc.

### **Articles with Pictures of the Deities**

There are several religious occasions of the Hindus when the pictures of different deities are published along with essays, stories and poems, written on the significance of the occasions, in the newspapers. The important religious occasions taking place during the year are given below:-

- |                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Saraswati Puja           | 10. Ganesh Puja      |
| 2. Maha Shiva Ratri         | 11. Vishwakarma Puja |
| 3. Holi                     | 12. Durga Puja       |
| 4. Rama Navami              | 13. Laxmi Puja       |
| 5. Hanuman Jayanti          | 14. Dhanwantari Puja |
| 6. Shiva-Parvati Vivah      | 15. Kali Puja        |
| 7. Sri Jagannath Rathayatra | 16. Deepawali        |
| 8. Jhoolan Yatra            | 17. Govardhan Puja   |
| 9. Sri Krishna Janamastami  | 18. Kartik Purnima   |

There are many other religious occasions which are observed by the people and articles are published on them. Also informative articles are published, highlighting places of tourist interest, situated at different districts of the states, along with photographs of important temples and deities. Nevertheless, articles on artistic heritage of India appear time to time in newspapers along with pictures of paintings and sculptures, depicting various Hindu deities.

### **Advertisements & Greetings with Pictures of the Deities**

During and prior to festive occasions of Durga puja, Diwali, Ganeshotsava, Maha Shiva Ratri, Janamastami and many other festivals, celebrated at national and regional levels, commercial advertisements and greetings accompanied by pictures/symbols of concerned deities overflow the pages of the newspapers for many days. Given below are the list of consumer products along with the list of the institutions and departments for the promotion of which the advertisements are given:-

1. Ornaments, Gold & Silver Coins, Watches, Clothes, *Sarees*, Dresses, Perfumes, Shoes and *Chappals*
2. Motorbikes, Cars, Jeeps, Tractors and Trucks
3. Pressure Cookers, Grinders, Refrigerators, Washing Machines, Air Conditioners, Generator sets and Auto clean Chimneys
4. CDs, Cameras, Cassettes, TVs, Mobile Phones, Computers, DVDs and Electronic Balances
5. Lands, Flats, Furniture, Ply wood and Cement
6. Films, Operas, FM Radios, TV Channels, Animation Films and Shopping Malls
7. *Rudrakshas*, Jewels, *Kavach*, *Yantra*, Miraculous Rings and Incense Sticks (These advertisements appear round the year)
8. Greeting Cards, *Panchangs*, Books, Magazines and Newspapers

9. *Zarda* and Food Products
10. Consultation with Astrologers, Lotteries and Stock Exchange
11. Private Colleges, Tutorial classes and Tour Operators
12. Indian Railways, Nationalized Banks, Information and Public Relation Department, Commissioner for Handicraft and Handloom Dept., Co-operative Societies and Electricity Distribution companies etc.

Also greetings by Business Establishments, Social Activists, Panchayat Presidents, MLAs, MPs and Political Activists appear in the newspapers along with pictures/symbols of the concerned deities of the religious occasions.

So after analyzing the activities of the newspapers in India, we can safely conclude that quite a large number of pictures of Hindu Gods & Goddesses are printed on the pages of the newspapers in a year. As per a statistical report published in Wikipedia, nearly 330 million newspapers were circulated daily in India in 2011, which is the largest in the world. It is almost impossible to keep a record of total number of pictures of the deities which are printed in all the newspapers of India in just one year. It is difficult to imagine the amount of pictures of the deities already printed in the newspapers of India till today. It appears, newspapers in India print more pictures of the deities than the packing materials of consumer products do in India.

Now let us see as to what exactly happens to the sacred pictures of the deities, printed in Indian newspapers. It is observed that people, without considering the pictures of the deities on the pages of newspapers, use old newspapers, even a day old, in the following manners :-

1. They are taken as a whole or torn into pieces in order to wrap and pack big or small objects in shops and other places
2. They are used to cover areas or objects in order to hide something on them
3. They are used like bed sheets to be spread on the ground or floor in order to sit or sleep on them
4. They are torn into pieces and used as plates to keep dry food on them to be eaten
5. They are used like wipers to clean dirty areas
6. They are used in collecting waste and are thrown at the garbage along with the waste
7. The rest of the newspapers left after use are sold as *raddi* which are further converted into paper packets to be used at the shops to pack things.

It is possible that a small portion of the old newspapers are used as raw materials for industries, but it does not mean honourable treatment to the deities, placed on the pages of newspapers. In fact, most of the old newspapers are discarded as waste after various uses. As a result the deities, once decorating the newspapers, find themselves lying helplessly on the road, at the garbage and in the drains and they face the same humiliating treatments as the deities, placed on the packing materials of consumer products, face at the end. It is true that the deities, placed on the pages of newspapers, are honoured just for one day. No one can give guarantee if the honour of these deities can remain intact the very next day of publication of the newspapers.

## DEITIES ON DISCARDED NEWSPAPER PIECES



### Deities Treated as Playthings

The Hindu Gods & Goddesses are not only dishonoured when their pictures are discarded or neglected, but also they are dishonoured when they are treated as playthings. Very often the idols and pictures of the deities are used in the way one likes as if they are playthings, causing irreparable damage to the dignity of the deities and making a mockery of their divinity.

- (1) It is common to find Lord Ganesh being portrayed in different characters in some of the puja pandals during **Ganeshotsava**. In the past Lord Ganesh has been depicted in his idols as a soldier holding a machine-gun, as a cricketer waving the bat, as a judge listening a case in the court, as a film star riding a motorbike and as a traffic police controlling the traffic - all complete with the required characteristic dress, uniform or costume suitable for the roles. Not only this, in order to make unique Ganesh idols various odd materials are used such as pieces of mirrors, matchsticks, shells, *rudrakshas*, pulses, seeds, coconuts, coins, buttons, bells, utensils, baskets, rice, *laddus* and *panipuris* etc. It seems people are taking Lord Ganesh in a casual manner and are playing with the dignity of the deity by representing him in distorted manner in the name of creativity, even overlooking the mentions in the Hindu religious texts. These distorted idols, being highlighted in the media, become crowd-pullers. As such the spiritual environment of the Ganeshotsava is diluted and an atmosphere of entertainment is created.
- (2) It is funny but serious that the workers of some political parties of India have



crossed all the limits of flattery as it appears from the **posters** prepared by them. In order to please their leaders they have gone to the extent of depicting them as all-powerful Hindu Gods & Goddesses in their posters. The workers of a particular political party have depicted their supreme leader as Goddess Durga, while their counterparts of another political party have depicted their top ranking leaders as Annapurna, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar. These posters invited lots of reactions from the public. However, their leaders expressed their displeasure over these incidents. Actually the pictures of the deities, used in these posters, have their faces replaced by the faces of political leaders along with some additions and modifications by using modern techniques. This is a clear case of distortion of the pictures of Hindu Gods & Goddesses. It seems, these people do not have any fear or hesitation in doing whatever they like with the deities

- (3) There have been cases of disgraceful representations of Hindu deities in some **advertisements** and **greetings**. In an advertisement, which appeared in newspapers, a renowned watch company depicted Goddess Durga as holding ten pieces of wrist watches in her ten hands in place of her divine weapons, thus making a mockery of the deity. In a Diwali greeting, published by a leading English newspaper, the message 'The Triumph of Good over Evil' was depicted as Lord Rama, placed on the label of a half-opened match- box, was shooting a burning matchstick from his bow at demon Ravana, placed on the label of a firework. Here the dignity of Lord Rama has been lowered down by placing him on the label of a matchbox and by replacing his divine arrow with a mere matchstick. Also the very placing of Lord Rama on the label of a matchbox indirectly encourages the evil practice of placing Hindu deities on packing materials of consumer products. Yet in another advertisement, published on the cover page of a leading fortnightly, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the captain of Indian Cricket Team, has been depicted in the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, holding eight commercial products in his eight hands out of which one is a shoe. Below him are the words 'God of Big Deals'. It is a clear case of insulting Lord Vishnu and this has hurt the sentiments of the Hindus. There have been protests in many places against this advertisement. A Hindu organization has filed a suit against Mr. Dhoni, the publisher, the printer and the editor of this fortnightly in a court at New Delhi. This is how people are playing with the dignity of Hindu Gods & Goddesses and are using the technical expertise in an irresponsible manner.
- (4) There is nothing new in taking Gods & Goddesses as subject matter of art. In the past the Hindu deities have been glorified in the traditional sculptures and paintings of India. But in the **modern paintings** of India, Hindu deities are very often represented in a disgraceful manner. Some modern artists in India deliberately distort the deities in their paintings in the name of freedom of expression, ignoring the religious sentiments of the Hindus. For these artists, mentions about the deities in the Hindu religious texts have little meaning. In the recent past there have been protests from Hindu organizations against obscene and distorted representations of Hindu deities by a renowned artist. In fact, nobody should be allowed to play with the dignity of Hindu deities in paintings. It should be remembered that enjoying freedom, without accepting social responsibilities, is nothing but autocracy.

- (5) It is unfortunate that the idols and pictures of Hindu deities on glazed tiles are being installed and fixed at the **turns of staircases** leading to upstairs of many Government offices and Nationalized Banks, not as an expression of devotion to God, but as a shrewd technique to scare the betel-chewers from spitting on the walls. The Government officers have not only placed the Hindu deities alone at unsuitable places, but also have treated the deities in an undignified manner by employing them as watchmen to keep a vigil on wrong-doers. The said officers, instead of making people aware of the law or taking action against the offenders, have preferred to create fear in the minds of the people of committing sin if they spit on or near the deities, which is not only wrong but also is an anti-secular act. May be inspired by this arrangement in the offices and banks, some people keep pictures of the deities at the turns of the staircases of multi-storeyed apartments to check the betel-chewing residents and guests from spitting on the walls. What is more disturbing is the fact that some people fix glazed tiles, bearing pictures of different deities, on the lower portion of the outer walls of their houses in order to discourage the passersby from urinating against their walls.

#### DEITIES POSTED AT THE TURNS OF STAIRCASES



- (6) Far away from calm, clean and beautiful surroundings amidst noisy, polluted and unpleasant surroundings are numerous **small temples**, situated at the sides of busy roads beside open drains in the towns and cities. These temples are tactfully built on Government land in order to protect a group of temporary shops, built afterwards beside the temples on encroached land, from being demolished by the authority. Mostly the idols of Lord Hanuman and Mother Goddesses are placed inside these temples, which are not at all suitable to them. In fact, all ancient temples were built in excellent natural surroundings, which incidentally turned into congested areas after centuries. But at present, the idols of the deities are treated as mere dolls and are placed wherever one likes without considering the dignity of deities.

- (7) In the urban areas the idols of different deities are very often found being kept in the open, on the outer portion of attractive **temples, gates and buildings** as an act of beautification. Sometimes very tall idols of deities are found inside parks in the cities. These deities are not only exposed to noise, but also are exposed to sun, rain, wind and cold like the deities, placed on the signboards and banners. Unlike the idols inside the temples, these idols in the open are not worshipped. In fact, once in a year they are cleaned and washed by the rain only. May be once in a few years these idols are coloured. The idols of Hindu deities should be taken seriously and they should be well- attended and worshipped wherever they are. They should not be used for pleasure and beautification only
- (8) Some men and even boys are found moving in the market place, bus stands and railway stations etc. holding plates in their hands and begging. They are no ordinary beggars but are self-styled devotees as they use to carry the idols, pictures of deities or their representations on the **begging plates** with some flowers and a couple of burning incense sticks. They walk from person to person, keep the deities facing them and wait till they give some coins on the plate or refuse to give. Generally people offer some coins out of fear for the deities. This is an old practice, adopted by some people to earn money without much effort. In fact, people go to temples to pay their obeisance to the deities. It is not the other way round when deities are made to come to the people to receive their obeisance. By keeping the deities on the begging plates and approaching people for alms the dignity of the deities is damaged.
- (9) It is a common sight during the holy month of *Shravana* to see groups of saffron-clad young devotees, with pictures of Lord Shiva printed on their **T-shirts**, marching towards distant Shiva temples, shouting slogans in praise of Lord Shiva, carrying holy water from rivers. It is quite obvious that due to long distant march the pictures of Lord Shiva on the T-shirts take a bath with the sweat of the devotees much before the Shiva Lingam at the temples take a bath with holy water, poured by these devotees, better known as *kavadias*. Though there is no hard and fast rule that a devotee, pouring holy water on Shiva Lingam during *Shravana*, has to wear saffron dresses, these days it has become a fashion among the young devotees to wear saffron dress, complete with pictures of Lord Shiva on the T-shirts along with other accessories, as an outward display of their devotion to Lord Shiva, thanks to the innovative ideas of some opportunistic businessmen. Nowadays **fashionable T-shirts** with colourful pictures of different Hindu deities are available in the market. Popular TV stars are found wearing such shirts in TV serials. It is felt that the sanctity of the deities cannot be maintained if they are depicted on dress materials. In fact, the deities do not get dignified if their pictures are used as fashionable motifs on dress materials or on ladies' handbags and gents' side bags, which are available nowadays. These are how people play with the Hindu deities in India.

## Hindu Deities Insulted in the West

It is no secret that Hindu Gods & Goddesses in India are dishonoured when their pictures, placed on packing & advertising materials, newspapers and many other objects, are later on discarded, neglected or ignored. It is well-known that the Hindu deities are often represented in undignified manners at puja pandals during Ganeshotave, in political posters, in advertisements and in modern paintings. Nevertheless, it is also known that the Hindu deities are dishonoured when they are placed at unsuitable places without proper consideration.

It appears, some notorious elements in the West, being encouraged by the above incidents in India, have ventured to play with the honour and dignity of the Hindu deities but with an intention to insult Hindu deities and hurt the Hindu sentiments. Some newspaper reports on such incidents, which took place in the West, are giving below:-

- (1) The Times of India (11-06-2004) - Roberto Cavalli, an Italian designer depicted **Lord Rama** at strategic places of **bikinis**. Later on, the designer apologized due to protest by National Council of Hindu Temples of Britain.  
x x x Cavalli was just the latest of a long line of European and American commercial enterprises to fall foul of Hindu sentiments. Till now, toilet seat covers, boxes of tissues, shoes, sandals and finger puppets have all been tracked down as bearing "offensive" images, variously Lord Krishna, Ram, Saraswati and so on. x x x
- (2) Sambad 'Odia' (20-05-2005) - Very often it is observed that different companies and business establishments of Western countries are making their products branded in the names of Hindu Gods & Goddesses. Products such as slippers, shocks, petticoats, blouses, dustbins and even toilet basins are depicted with Hindu deities and are sent to the market with the names of Hindu deities only with an aim to create demand by increasing interest of the customers. x x x  
Lost Coast Breweries, a liquor producing company of California, USA, had placed the picture of **Lord Ganesh** on the label of 'Indica Ganesh' brand of **beer bottle**. In this picture Lord Ganesh was depicted as holding a bottle of beer in one hand and another bottle in his trunk. Due to the protest of local Hindus the company withdrew this brand of beer from the wine shops and bars.
- (3) Sambad 'Odia' (16-02-2006) - Very often strange things are seen in the world of advertisements. If sometimes the picture of Lord Rama placed on toilet papers enrage the devotees, then at times the tricolor placed on the dress of a model hurts the sentiments of the countrymen. x x x  
Balon Oriental Disco Bar of Athens, Greece has depicted **Goddess Durga** as holding eight bottles of liquor in her eight hands on the **poster**, while advertising for a brand of **whisky**. The Hindus, the world over, particularly the General Secretary, National Council of Hindu Temples, USA have condemned this act.
- (4) Sambad 'Odia' (30-10-2006) - The Hindu Gods & Goddesses have to face a lot of humiliation in the Western countries. If sometimes the picture of Hindu deities are placed on liquor bottles, than at times on undergarments. There is no double



opinion on the fact that Hindu deities are attractive. But it is natural for the Hindus to be angered when the deities are used for decoration of houses rather than for faith. The picture and idol of **Goddess Laxmi** and **Lord Ganesh** have been used for interior decoration of a **night club** in London. After knowing this the Hindu organizations of entire London protested against the night club. In spite of all these, the idol and picture of the deities were not removed from the place. The owner of the club Mr. P...B... wants to have a talk with the Hindu organizations. x x x

- (5) Dharitri 'Odia' (10-12-2006) - A liquor company named "Absolute Vodka" has released the **advertisement** for its **Vodka** in its website, [www.absoluad.com](http://www.absoluad.com), where **Lord Ganesh** was depicted holding a bottle of liquor in place of a *Laddu* (Sweet) in his hand. This has hurt the sentiments of the Hindus. They have expressed grave concern over this advertisement.
- (6) Dhartri 'Odia' (15-12-2007) - A dress company of USA has released in its website, [www.cafepress.com](http://www.cafepress.com), pictures of **undergarments** on which **Hindu deities** such as Jagannath, Balabhadra & Subhadra, Rama, Ganesh and Durga etc were depicted.
- (7) Sakal Times (16-05-2012) - An American brewery company placed **Goddess Kali** in the **advertisement** for launching '**Kali-Ma**' brand of beer. The Rajya Sabha members protested on this issue at the Indian Parliament. The concerned company apologized for naming the beer after Goddess Kali and postponed launching the beer.  
x x x Earlier also picture of Goddess Laxmi was displayed in a toilet, picture of God was put on bra, Lord Ganesh was displayed as a sex object in a talk show x x x  
x a store in US had pictures of Ganesh on slippers x x x

(1)

# Hindus win, holy bikinis come off

By Rashmee Z Ahmed/TNN

London: In an unexpectedly quick and decisive victory for Britain's half-a-million strong Hindu community, one of Italy's leading designers has apologised for the launch of swimwear and lingerie emblazoned with Hindu deities at strategic places.

The bikinis, with an image of what looks like Lord Ram as the main motif, were designed by Roberto Cavalli, often described as "the self-proclaimed king of Italian excess".

The bikinis are now being hastily withdrawn from Cavalli's sprawling, sensuously-designed headquarters in Milan and the posh London stores stocking his wares.

The protest against the use of Hindu deities to cover skimpy apparel meant for the typical summer's day across Europe, was led by Bimal



Krisna Das of the UK's umbrella body for Hindu temples.

Das's National Council of Hindu Temples officially claims to speak for more than half of Britain's 140 temples.

On Wednesday, Cavalli's spokeswoman in Milan issued a craven apology, insisting the designer had wanted to "celebrate Hindu culture, and not to denigrate it".

The swiftly-concluded campaign, somewhat blasphemously dubbed by some commentators as the "holy bikinis row", came just months after Britain's increasingly-vocal Hindus protested against a Merchant-Ivory film's plans to cast "sex icon" rock star Tina Turner in the role of Kali.

Cavalli was just the latest of a long line of European and American commercial enterprises to fall foul of Hindu sentiment. Till now, toilet seat covers, boxes of tissues, shoes, sandals and finger puppets have all been tracked down as bearing "offensive" images, variously of Lord Krishna, Ram, Saraswati and so on.

But, there are signs that Cavalli's excesses with deities Lord Ram may have pushed Hindu sentiment over the edge. In a new warning note of exasperation about the risk of repeated and blase re-offending, Das declared Western companies no longer had the right to offer a lame apology and the excuse that they don't know anything about Indian culture and Hinduism. "The world is quite small these days", he says.

Das, a veteran of 15 years of protest against the alleged offensive portrayal of Hinduism in the West, denies the overseas Hindu is protesting too much about too little.

"Hindus are naturally tolerant, but there has to be a limit if the line is crossed," he says. "These deities are deemed holy and worshipped by millions of Hindus all across the globe."

*The Times of India June 11, 2004*

(2)

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## ଗଣେଶ ବ୍ରାଣ୍ଡ ବିୟର୍ ବିକି ଆମେରିକାୟ କମ୍ପାନୀ

### ୧୦୦ କୋଟି ଡଲାର କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ମାମଲାର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ

୨୫୫୮

ଓଡ଼ିଶା, ୧୯/୫: ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ ଦେଶବାସୀ ମିଳିଥାଏ, ପାଣ୍ଡାବ୍ୟ ଦେଶଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କମ୍ପାନୀ ଓ ବ୍ୟାବସାୟିକ ସଂସ୍ଥା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ପାଦକୁ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଦେବାଦେବୀଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ବ୍ରାଣ୍ଡିଂ କରାଉଛନ୍ତି । ଚକ୍ରି, ଚପଲ, ମୋକା, ଶାୟ, ବ୍ଲାଉଜ, ଆବର୍ତ୍ତନା କୁଣ୍ଡ ଏପରିକି ଶୈତାଳୟ ବେସିନରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଦେବତାଙ୍କ ଫଟୋ ଲଗାଇ ଏବଂ ସେଇକି ଉତ୍ପାଦକୁ ଦେବାଦେବୀ ନାମ ଦେଇ ବଜାରକୁ ଛଡ଼ାଯାଏ କେବଳ ଗ୍ରାହକଙ୍କ ଆଗ୍ରହ ବଢ଼ାଇ ଚାହିଁବା ପୃଷ୍ଠକରିବା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟରେ । ଏଭଳି ତୁଳ୍ୟାତ୍ୟା କରୁଥିବା କମ୍ପାନୀ ଦୁର୍ଲଭାଲଥାଏ ବା ଖାତିରକରିନ ଥାଏ ଯେ ଏହି ଧରଣର ଅସମ୍ଭବ, ହାନି ବ୍ୟାବସାୟିକ କୌଶଳକୁ ହିନ୍ଦୁଙ୍କ ଦେବାଦେବୀ ଓ ଧର୍ମ-ଭାବନା ପ୍ରତି ବିଦ୍ରବ ବୋଲି ଅର୍ଥ ବରାଯିବ ଏବଂ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମବିତ୍ତମାନେ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରପୁରୁ ଲାବେ ଚା'ର ବିରୋଧ କରିବାକୁ ଆଗେଇଆସିବେ । ଏବେ କାରିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ (ଆମେରିକା)ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ କୋଫ୍ ବିୟର୍ ଉତ୍ପାଦକ ନାମକ ଏକ ମଦ୍ୟ



ଉତ୍ପାଦକବାଣୀ କମ୍ପାନୀ 'ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମିକା ଗଣେଶ' ବ୍ରାଣ୍ଡ ବିୟର୍ ବଜାରକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ବୋତଲର ଲେବଲରେ ଗଣେଶ ଦ୍ୱାରରେ ଘୋଡ଼ିଏ ଏବଂ ଶୁଣ୍ଢରେ ଆଉ ଘୋଡ଼ିଏ ବିୟର୍ ଗୋଟିଏ ଧରିଥିବା ଫଟୋ ଥିଲା । ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନେ ଚା'କୁ ବିରୋଧ କରିବାରୁ କମ୍ପାନୀ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ମଦ ବୋତଲ ଓ ବାଲୁକ୍ରିକରୁ ଗଣେଶ ବ୍ରାଣ୍ଡ ବିୟର୍ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାହାର କରି ନେଇଥିଲା । କ୍ରୋଧିତ ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେତିକିରେ ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ମଦ୍ୟ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତକାରୀ କମ୍ପାନୀଟି ଗଣେଶଙ୍କ ବିଦ୍ରବ ତଥା ଅସମ୍ଭବିତ କରିଥିବାରୁ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମବିତ୍ତମାନେ ଦାରୁଣ ମାନସିକ ଆଘାତ ପାଇଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ଦର୍ଶାଇ କମ୍ପାନୀଟି ବିରୋଧରେ ୧୦୦ କୋଟି ଡଲାର (ଲାର୍ଡାୟ ମୁଦ୍ରାରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ୪୫୦୦ କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କା)ର କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ମାମଲା ଦାଏର କରିଛନ୍ତି । କାରିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆର ଏକ ଅଦାଲତରେ ମାମଲାଟିର ଶୁଣାଣି ଆସନ୍ତା ଜୁନ୍ ୨୮ ତାରିଖରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବ ।

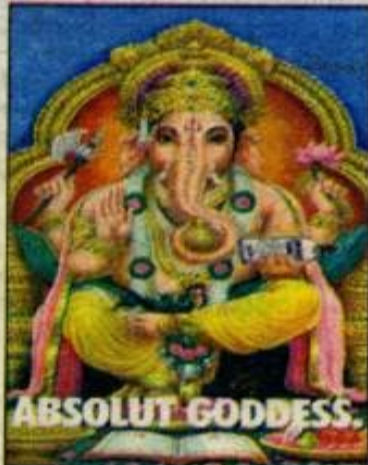




(5)

ଧାର୍ମିକ ଭାବନା ପ୍ରତି ଅପମାନ ଗଣେଶଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ମଦ ବୋତଲ

ପୁରୀ ଅଫିସ, ୯।୧.୨ - ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମର ଆଦ୍ୟ ଦେବତା ଗଣେଶଙ୍କୁ ବିଦେଶୀ କମ୍ପାନୀ ମଦ ବିଜ୍ଞାପନ ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବା ପତଙ୍ଗ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମାବରମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ତୀବ୍ର ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଛି । ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ରୋଡ୍‌କା ନାମକ ଏକ ମଦ କମ୍ପାନୀ ଓ'ର ରୋଡ୍‌କା ମଦର ବିଜ୍ଞାପନ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ଗଣେଶଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ମଦ ବୋତଲ ଧରାଇ ଡ୍ରେସିଂ‌ଗରେ ଛବିଟି । ଉଣା ଛତୁ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଏହି ମଦ ବୋତଲ ଧରିବା ଦୃଶ୍ୟ



ଡ୍ରେସିଂ‌ଗରେ ଥିବା ଗଣେଶଙ୍କ ପତଙ୍ଗିତ ।

ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନଙ୍କର ଧାର୍ମିକ ମାନସିକତାକୁ ଆଘାତ କରିଛି । ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ରୋଡ୍‌କା ଡ୍ରେସିଂ‌ଗର [www.absolutad.com](http://www.absolutad.com)ରୁ ଯିବା ପରେ [absolutly.cool/original](http://absolutly.cool/original)ରୁ ଗଣେଶଙ୍କର [absolutgoddess.com](http://absolutgoddess.com)ରେ ଥିବା ଗଣେଶ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ରୋଡ୍‌କା ଧରି ବସିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି କମ୍ପାନୀ ଓ'ର ମଦର ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ହିନ୍ଦୁଧର୍ମର ଆଦ୍ୟ ଦେବତାଙ୍କୁ ଅପମାନିତ କରିଥିବାରୁ ଏବେ ହିନ୍ଦୁଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଉଦ୍‌ବେଗ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଛି ।

PHARITRI - 10-12-06

(7)

*Sakal Times 16-5-12*

# 'Kali-Ma' beer sparks objections in RS

**New Delhi:** Strongly objecting to a US company launching a beer brand after Goddess Kali, a demand was made in Rajya Sabha today that US Ambassador to India should be summoned and asked to apologise for it.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Ravi Shankar Prasad (BJP) said it is a serious and sensitive issue that a Portland-based company Burnside Brewing has launched a product titled Kali-Ma beer, hurting the sentiments of Indians.

"The advertisement for the beer read 'Come worship the black one Kali as the ultimate reality or Brahman' ... with a picture of the Goddess. Earlier also a picture of Goddess Laxmi was displayed in a toilet...picture of God was put on bra...Lord

Ganesha was displayed as a sex object in a talk show," he said demanding India to take up the issue with US.

Prasad said the UPA government maintains that it enjoys good relations with the US but there is no advertisement code and questioned whether they could have dared to mock the God or Goddess of any other religion. As BJP and other members supported the issue, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Rajeev Shukla intervened saying, "I will convey the concerns to External Affairs Ministry.

"...but I would like to point out that some years back when I had raised the issue of a store in US having pictures of Ganesha on slippers and you (Ravi Shankar Prasad) were sitting in my place, no step was taken." #77

**US BREWERY SAYS SORRY**

■ An American brewery company has apologised for naming a beer after Hindu goddess "Kali" and said it is currently scrambling to rename the product, amidst protest in the Indian parliament. The "Kali Ma" beer which was scheduled for launch on Tuesday has now been postponed till the Portland-based company Burnside Brewing Co finds a new name to it.

(Sl. No. 6 on next page)



(6)

# ଅନ୍ଧବସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ରାମ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ

ସୁରା

ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମର ଦେବଦେବୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଅପମାନିତ କରାଯାଇଛି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଡ୍ରେସ୍‌ସ୍‌ସାଉରରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଦେବଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଚିତ୍ରକୁ ମତ କମ୍ପାନୀଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷେ ଏବେ ଅନ୍ଧବସ୍ତ୍ର କମ୍ପାନୀମାନେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ଚିତ୍ର ଦେବଦେବୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଅପମାନନା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଦେବତା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରା କମଳର ନାଥ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ସୁଦର୍ଶନୀଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ଧବସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ସ୍ଥାନୀତ କରି ବିଦେଶୀ କମ୍ପାନୀ ଅପମାନିତ କରିଥିବା ଜଣାପଡ଼ିଛି ।

ଉତ୍ତରମାନେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମୟରେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରାକାନ୍ତା କରି ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ପରମ୍ପରାକୁ ଅପମାନ କରିଥିବା ବେଳେ ଏବେ ବିଦେଶର ଏକ ଡ୍ରେସ୍ କମ୍ପାନୀ ସୁଦର୍ଶନୀଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ଧବସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ, ଶ୍ରୀକମଳରୁ ଓ ଦେବୀ ସୁରାପ୍ରାୟ ଚିତ୍ର ଦେବା ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମ ଭାବନାକୁ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳିତ କରିଛି । ଦେବଦେବୀ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଚିତ୍ର ଏହି କମ୍ପାନୀ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଶ୍ରୀରାମ, ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ, ଦେବୀ ଦୁର୍ଗା, ଭାଇତର ଜାତୀୟ ପତାକା ପ୍ରିଣ୍ଟିଂ, ଓ ସମେତ ବସ୍ତ୍ର ଛବି ରଖାଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ଅନ୍ଧବସ୍ତ୍ରର ଦାମ୍ ୧୧ ରୁ ୨୫ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ଡଲାର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରହିଛି । ଏସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ବହୁ ଫଟୋ କମ୍ପାନୀର ଡ୍ରେସ୍‌ସାଉରରେ ରହିଅଛି ।

## ଅପମାନ



WWW.CAFEPRESS.COM ରେ ଉଭୟ ଅନୁ କରିବା ପରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ସମେତ ଦେବଦେବୀଙ୍କ ନାମ ଲେଖାଯିବା ଏକ ଚାଲିକା ଆଣିବା । ସେଥିରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଉପରେ ଭଲ ଭଳେ Religious T-shirt & gift ବାହାରିବ । ଏହା ଉପରେ ଭଲ ଭଳିରେ Women's T-shirt & Appreals ସମେତ ଅନ୍ୟ ଦେବଦେବୀଙ୍କ ନାମ ଲେଖାଯିବା ଚାଲିକା ଆଣିବ । ସେଥିରେ ଲେଖାଯିବା Under garments କୁ ଭଲ କରିବା

ପରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଦେବଦେବୀଙ୍କୁ ଚାଲିକା ଅନ୍ଧବସ୍ତ୍ରର ଫଟୋ ମିଳିବ । ଏହା ପ୍ରଥମ ନୁହେଁ, ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଗଣେଶଙ୍କ ଚାତୁରେ ମତ ବୋତଲ ଦେଇ କମ୍ପାନୀମାନେ ବିଭାଗର ଦେଉଥିବା ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଧରିତ୍ରୀରେ ଖବର ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଉଛି । ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଦେବଦେବୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଏପରି ଅପମାନ ହେଉଥିବା ବେଳେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଥିବା ସଂଗଠନମାନେ କ'ଣ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାର୍ତ୍ତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଛି ।

୨୫/୧୨/୧୫-୧୨-୦୭

### Hindu Deities Dishonoured by Western Models in India

It is indeed painful and unfortunate as Hindu deities are often humiliated and insulted in the West when their pictures were placed on objects like toilet seat covers, toilet papers, shoes, bras, underwear, wine bottles and dustbins etc. and when they were depicted on labels and posters in an undignified manner, such as holding bottles of liquor. But it is indeed surprising when Western models in India are promoting dresses, depicting Hindu deities.

There are reports in the newspapers regarding such incidents.

- (1) Sambad 'Odia' (25-02-2005) - A British model was found wearing a **ghaghra** (a dress worn from waist to feet by ladies) on which **Lord Ganesh** was prominently depicted. As a result there was protest against this incident at Bhopal.
- (2) Samaj 'Odia' (11-05-2011) - On the eve of Australian Fashion Week celebration at Rourkela, model Lisa Blue exhibited a **bikini** (swim suit) on which **Goddess Laxmi** was prominently depicted. As a reaction to this incident, many religious and social organizations expressed their displeasure on this incident and threatened of demonstrations against this show.

(1)



ବିଚିତ୍ର ମଡେଲ୍‌ଙ୍କ ପୋଷାକରେ ଦିନ ଦେବତାଙ୍କ ଚିତ୍ର: ଏହି ପ୍ରତିବାଦରେ ଆଜି ଲୋପାଳରେ ବିଶୋଭ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା

(2)

**ବିକିନିରେ ମହାଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କ ଛବି ରାଉରକେଲାରେ ଉଭେଜନା, ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସଙ୍ଗଠନର ନିନ୍ଦା**

ରାଉରକେଲା, ୦୮୧ ୦୫ (ବି.ପୁ.)- ରତ୍ନ ସପ୍ତାହରେ ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଲିଆର ଫେସଲ ବି ମଡେଲ ଲିଆ ରୁକ୍ ଲୁକା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶିତ ବିକିନିରେ ମହାଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କ ଛବିକୁ ନେଇ ଲସାଡ଼ ସହରରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅସବୋଷ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶିତ ପାଇଛି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଧାର୍ମିକ ସଙ୍ଗଠନ ସହ ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଏହା ବିରୋଧରେ ଅସବୋଷ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶିତ କରିବା ଏହା ବିରୋଧରେ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଧମକ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ମହାଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କୁ ଭାଗ୍ୟାୟତନେ ଧନର ଦେବୀ ଭାବରେ ବେଦନ ପୂଜା କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, ଭାଗ୍ୟାୟତନ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିରେ ମହାଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କ ପୂଜା ପଡ଼େନା ଉଚିତ । ଏହି ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ବିକିନିରେ ମହାଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କ ଛବିକୁ ପୂଜା ଦେବା ଲିଆ ରାଉରକେଲା ଧର୍ମ ଉଦ୍ଧାର ପ୍ରତି ଲଠାଉ ଆସାତ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ସଙ୍ଗଠନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଲିଆ, ଅସବୋଷ ସମ୍ପର୍କୀୟ ଗ୍ରାହଣା କରିବା ସହ ଏହି ବିକିନିକୁ ପୂର୍ବଦିଗ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଯୋଗା, ବ୍ୟବହାର ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଆଦିରେ ଭାଗ୍ୟାୟତନ ଦେବାଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଛବି ବିବେଚନା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶିତ ନୋହୁଏର ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ରାଉର ସହରର ଏଥିନେଇ ନାଉରତା ଅବରମନ ବର୍ତ୍ତୁ ପୁନର୍ବାର ଏପରି ଦୁର୍ଘଟ ପୁନଃ ଘଟଣା ହେଲେ ସଙ୍ଗଠନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

**Observations on the Issue**

As such what is happening with the Hindu deities is most unfortunate and undesirable. Unless the people of India, particularly the Hindus, are conscious of the happenings and are determined to protect the dignity and honour of Hindu deities at any cost, Hinduism will face its worst days ahead. This is to be realized that the way, the pictures of Hindu deities are used on packing and advertising materials in India; it is something unique in the world. Perhaps nowhere in the world the pictures of the deities, prophets or saints of any religion are misused as it happens with the Hindu deities in India. So we have to be careful in our attitude and treatment towards our own deities. At present it appears as if double standard is maintained for the pictures of Hindu deities, particularly when some pictures of the deities are worshipped at home and at the same time a large number of pictures of the deities are discarded by the people as waste without feeling guilty or sad. In fact, the pictures of the deities, small or big, kept at home or at temples, placed on the packets or on the pages of newspapers, whatever their size may be and wherever they are, they should be respected. But the opposite is happening in India. It seems, as if the deities are feeling helpless being under the mercy of human beings. The people have so much got used to seeing the pictures of the deities being discarded or left uncared that they have almost lost the sensitiveness to feel that actually too much injustice is being done to the deities. They neither react nor protest. If some sensible persons protest, it has little impact on the mass. Even some persons console themselves saying that the dishonouring treatments are done unknowingly. So God will excuse them. But committing such an act again and again, that too for years together, cannot be acceptable.

Actually it is due to printing of excessive number of pictures of the deities, particularly on discardable objects, that the values of the deities have gone down. Their importance is reduced. So in order to restore their value, dignity and honour we have to reduce the number of prints of the pictures of the deities. At the same time awareness about these incidents is to be created among the people of India. So let us see as to what can be done to restore the dignity and honour of Hindu deities in different areas, where dishonouring treatments are done to the deities. Given below are some remedial measures which may be considered.

### **Remedial Measures to Restore the Honour and Dignity of Hindu Deities**

- (1) It is natural that all **packing materials**, from packets to gunny bags, **advertising materials** such as plastic carry bags & pamphlets and **newspapers** are treated as waste sooner or later and are discarded. As such, when divine pictures of Hindu deities are placed on such materials and these materials are discarded, the Hindu deities are automatically and unnecessarily subjected to humiliation and dishonour. Under these circumstances, the pictures of the deities should not be placed on such materials. So the practice of placing Hindu deities on the packing and advertising materials as mentioned above should be stopped. The remedial measures, which may be taken in case of newspapers, will be discussed separately later on.
- (2) It is also natural that the other **advertising materials** such as posters, signboards, banners and hoardings are generally pasted/ fixed/ hung in the open. As such when pictures of the deities are placed on such materials, the deities are left neglected and are exposed to air & noise pollution accompanied by the wrath of nature. So the deities, placed on these advertising materials, are not only treated unfairly but also are left unprotected from the adverse situations, which is undesirable. As such the pictures of the deities should not be printed on the advertising materials as mentioned above.
- (3) It is an old tradition to keep the pictures of Lord Ganesh, Shiva & Parvati, Rama & Sita and Krishna & Radha on the **marriage invitation cards**, which is considered auspicious. But most of the people discard them after the occasion is over in the same spirit, they do with packing materials, thus dishonouring the deities in all possible ways. This indicates the ungratefulness of the people. The people should be made aware of the result of this undesirable act. They should be advised to dispose of the cards in an honourable way, as it is done to the clay idols of the deities after worshipping them. Similarly, other invitation cards, old **calendars** and **Diwali & New Year Greeting cards**, bearing pictures of the deities, should be disposed of in the same manner. The people may be allowed to continue using pictures of the deities on these items with the hope that it will be easier for them to take care of the deities on these items in a new situation, when printing of holy pictures of the deities on discardable items like packing & advertising materials will be stopped and printing of holy pictures will be restricted in newspapers reducing the total number of holy pictures. However, the pictures of deities should not be printed on **envelopes, lottery tickets, bus tickets, ferry tickets, receipts, cash memos, vouchers** and **visiting cards** as these items are discarded sooner or later.
- (4) The Hindu deities should not be taken lightly at any time and be treated as mere

- playthings. Representations of the deities in disgraceful, distorted and undignified manners in **idols, posters, advertisements and paintings**, in the name of creativity or freedom of expression, should be stopped. Nobody should be allowed to make a mockery of Hindu deities, to deviate from the mentions of Hindu religious texts and to hurt the religious sentiments of the Hindus in any form of expressions such as visual arts, performing arts and literary works. Enjoying freedom without accepting social responsibilities is condemnable.
- (5) Before keeping or installing the idols or pictures of the deities at a particular place, one has to consider if the place is worthy for the deities or not. Also one should not have mala fide or selfish intention behind installing the deities on that place. As such, the practice of placing the idols and pictures of the deities on glazed tiles at the **corners of staircases** of office and bank buildings, not for religious ground but for checking the betel-chewers from spitting on the wall, is an undesirable act. In the same way placing of the idols at **small temples at roadside**, build on encroached Government land at noisy, smoky, dusty and dirty areas in the towns, only to protect the illegal shops built beside the temples, is equally undesirable. In fact, the deities are treated here as dolls and are misused. As such, both the practices should be stopped. The idols, placed in the open on the **temples, gates and buildings** of today for the purpose of beautification of these structures, are neglected and exposed to pollution and wrath of the nature just like the deities, placed on signboards and banners etc. The deities should not be left uncared and unworshipped anywhere. As such, the experts on Hindu architecture have a final say, whether the idols should be placed in the open or not. Some people place the idols, pictures or symbols of deities on **begging plates** and carry them from person to person to beg for money. Here the placing of the deities as well as the intention behind the act is devaluing the dignity of the deities. So this old practice should be stopped. Another new tradition of wearing **saffron T-shirts** with pictures of Lord Shiva by the *kavadias* or just wearing **fashionable T-shirts** with colourful pictures of different deities by the stylists, thus posing themselves as devotees, should be discouraged because, sanctity of the deities cannot be maintained when one eats, sleeps, works and goes to toilet wearing dresses, depicting the deities on them.
- (6) Of course there are some other areas where we have to pay some attention. They are **magazines, stickers and decoration materials** where pictures of the deities are used. Many people preserve the magazines like books for good articles and informations. Unlike newspapers very few pictures of the deities are placed on the pages of magazines. Still then care should be taken to print a limited number of pictures of the deities judiciously in the magazines. Whenever people feel to dispose of or sell the old magazines as *raddi*, they should at first remove the holy pictures of deities and preserve them or dispose of them in an honourable way. The stickers bearing pictures of the deities are also popularly used. However they should not be used outside the vehicles where they are exposed to dust, mud, smoke and rough weather. They should be used indoor and in limited numbers. When the old stickers are coming out, they should be carefully removed and disposed of in an honourable manner. The decoration materials, bearing pictures of the deities and used during festive occasions, should not be discarded as waste after the festivals are over. They should be disposed of in an honourable manner. In fact, the pictures of the deities should not be overused

on decoration materials, which are beautiful by themselves. So carefulness has to be maintained on every item bearing pictures of the deities if at all we love and respect them.

### **Suggestions for Newspapers of India**

It is observed that old newspapers are used in various ways before they are discarded by the people as waste causing too much dishonor to the Hindu deities, whose pictures are placed on the pages of the newspapers of India. Although the purpose behind placing the pictures of the deities in newspapers is different from the purpose behind placing such holy pictures on packing materials of consumer products, the ultimate consequence of the deities is the same, i.e. they are dishonoured in all possible ways. Moreover, it is humanly not possible to separate all the pictures of the deities from the pages of all the newspapers in order to protect them from being dishonoured. As such, it has become necessary to restrict printing of holy pictures of the deities in the newspapers. This should not be taken as an attempt to deprive the newspaper of its right to make people well informed or to deprive the people of their right to information. It should be accepted as a noble attempt to save the honour and dignity of the Hindu deities, placed in the newspapers. Protection of honour of these deities should be considered far more important than enjoying the so called right, while one is unaware of the actual situation arising after publication of hard copies of holy pictures of the deities on the newspapers, which are ignored and discarded later on. As such, the cooperation of the newspapers of India in this regard will be highly appreciated. If the newspapers of India bring a qualitative change on their pages by adopting a creative and self-disciplined alternative arrangement, it will set an example for the entire newspaper industries of the world.

Given below are some suggestions in this regard which may be considered:

- (1) The use of pictures and symbols of Hindu deities on commercial advertisements and greetings, published in the newspapers during festive occasions and on normal days, should be stopped completely as a matter of principle.
- (2) The responsibility of extensive photographic coverage of activities related to the deities during religious ceremonies and festivals, celebrated round the year, may be given to electronic media only, because by doing so the misuse and dishonouring of the deities, arising due to publication of numerous hard copies of their pictures in the newspapers, can be controlled to a great extent.
- (3) The photographs of activities and incidents such as idols under construction, finishing touches given to idols, idols being transported from artists' workshops to places of worship, idols being sold at shops and on the footpaths, painting and sculptures depicting deities in indoor or outdoor exhibitions, idols being worshipped inside temples, cases of theft inside temples, idols discovered from different places, idols being broken or burnt by antisocial, group photographs of members of puja committees posing before the idols at pandals, politicians and film stars visiting the deities at puja pandals etc. may be avoided for publication in the newspapers.
- (4) The placing of pictures of the deities can be avoided at the top of the first page with or near the names of the newspapers, on the strips at the top of pages indicating



regional and festive news and with reports related to festivals in newspapers.

- (5) While introducing newly published books in newspapers, the photographs of the front pages of the books may be avoided, in case they contained pictures of different deities and instead the names of those books only may be mentioned.
- (6) While publishing photographs of stage programmes, where the chief guests are lighting the lamps before the idols or pictures of the deities during inauguration of cultural programmes, while the artists are performing before the idols or banners, depicting the deities and while the organizers are presenting idols or certificates/citations, depicting the deities, to renowned personalities etc., the pictures of the deities in these photographs can be blurred completely using special techniques.
- (7) While taking outdoor or indoor photographs for the news, carefulness can be observed to avoid idols or pictures of deities in the surroundings from being recorded in the photographs and in case they cannot be avoided then the pictures of deities can be blurred before publishing them in the newspapers.
- (8) Limited, selected and dignified pictures of the Hindu deities may be printed on high quality papers along with names of the newspapers, which may be presented to the readers as supplementary gift pages along with the newspapers. For examples, pictures of the concerned deities which accompany the spiritual articles, the photographs of the best few idols prepared during festive occasions, photographs of traditional paintings & sculptures depicting different deities and photographs of the best artistic works by children and elders depicting different deities may be printed and presented to the readers. It is hoped and believed that people will be encouraged to preserve the rare holy pictures of the deities with love and respect.

If the newspaper industries of India realize the gravity of the situation and take fruitful steps to protect the deities from being dishonoured, then others will be inspired to take care of the deities as a moral duty.

## CONCLUSION

If the Indian Newspapers feel and decide to bring about some reformations in the existing mode of publication in a view to protect the Hindu deities, usually placed on their pages, from being dishonoured, it will be a great event in the history of journalism. The reformed **newspapers** of India can take a leading role in creating awareness among the people about the humiliation and dishonour faced by the Hindu deities in India and outside India. The newspapers can publish editorials, reports, articles, discussions and public opinion on this issue which can reach people living at the remotest areas of India. The **electronic media** can highlight the issue by visual coverage of incidents of dishonouring treatments to the deities, taking place in different areas and can arrange live discussions on this topic by involving eminent social workers, religious leaders, people's representatives and intellectuals. The **volunteers** of religious organizations can have direct contact with people in urban and rural areas and make them aware of the undesirable and unfortunate incidents of negligence and dishonouring of Hindu deities, which are happening in our day to day life out of ignorance and thoughtlessness, by arranging meetings, exhibitions of discarded materials, bearing pictures of the deities and video shows on such incidents.

The **people's representatives** can raise the issue in the **parliament** and try to bring amendments in the existing laws in order to protect the dignity and honour of the Hindu deities. There should be provisions in the law not only to check the misuse of pictures & symbols of the Hindu deities on discardable items like packing & advertising materials, tickets, cash memos, receipts and vouchers etc, but also to check distorted representations of Hindu deities in idols, pictures, posters, advertisements, paintings, dramas, dances and cinemas etc, which hurt the religious sentiments of the Hindus and never the less, there should be provisions to check placing of idols and pictures of the deities at improper places with mala fide intentions. (The newspaper is not included in the above list of discardable items with the hope that it will bring reformation in its publication to protect the honour of the Hindu deities, placed on its pages, before the issue is being raised in the parliament.)

The honour of the Hindu deities is affected by many insensible activities of the people. The younger generation emphasizes on the use of **loud music** during celebrations of religious festivals. Recorded devotional songs, film songs and the so called devotional songs in the tune of romantic film songs are played at such a high volume in the mikes, fitted at the temples and puja pandals, that people staying in the locality are very much disturbed and at the same time the deities worshipped in those places are disturbed to such an extent that most probably they might have left the areas in disgust. In fact, one cannot imprison the deities inside the temples or other places and force them to listen to such noisy music in the name of devotion.

At some places during celebration of religious occasions, **vulgar dance** programmes are arranged, hiring dancers of the same category as the bar girls, to entertain the public, overlooking the presence of children and ladies at the spot. The girls expose their limbs and dance to the tune of cheap film songs amidst loud cheers and whistles of the unruly crowd. Some young men behave strangely under the influence of alcohol while some shower currency notes on the dancing girls. The sensible persons, present on the spot, feel embarrassed for the indecent activities in public. The deities worshipped on the occasions are certainly offended.

Nowadays the festivals like Durga Puja, Ganesh Puja and Laxmi Puja etc are celebrated in an extravagant way in some states. Huge gates are erected and the puja pandals are lavishly decorated in order to attract the people and the media. The expenditure in **gorgeous decoration** of the gates and the pandals alone will be about 10- 20 times more than what is spent on idols and on puja, the very essence of the festivals. Even to raise a huge fund for these celebrations, people are almost compelled by the organizers to pay the demanded donations. In India millions of rupees are spent every year on lavish decoration and entertainment of the people during such festivals, which is an insult to millions of poor people, who do not possess a house of their own and cannot feed themselves twice a day. It will be a humanitarian act if some amount is spent for the poor, reducing the expenditure on decoration. But this will not happen. The proverb of 'Service to Humanity is service to God' is perhaps forgotten.

Another very important matter is that a very unpleasant situation is created at many *tirthas* or holy places of the Hindus, where the devotees are harassed, misbehaved and their money extracted by the *pandas* or priests in the name of religion. The *pandas* certainly do not fear the God and practice these activities from generation to generation as family business. Not only Hinduism earns a bad name for such attitude of the priests towards innocent devotees, but also the very presence of God is often questioned by the harassed devotees.

Hinduism is identified for its deities. But the deities are being neglected and dishonoured for the last few decades in India, without much resistance from any quarter of the majority Hindus. They are almost indifferent to these undesirable incidents. However, the few Hindus, staying abroad, appear to be prepared to protect the dignity and honour of their deities whenever required and they are in fact reacting sharply to any attempt to insult the Hindu deities on foreign soil, in the West, which is praiseworthy. The Hindus should be alert at this critical juncture, when Hinduism is already burdened with unsolved problems like blind-beliefs, evil-practices, anti-culture and exploitations. This is a period when the modern Hindus have little time to practice the religious activities as defined by the Hindu *Panchang* and the present generation is poorly informed about Hinduism and its texts. Not only this, being influenced by materialism, the people nowadays are distancing themselves from religious values and taking refuge in pretention, selfishness, greed and corruption etc. While observing religious occasions and festivals people emphasize on pomp & show and entertainments rather than simplicity, sanctity and devotion. It seems, the future generation will be a confused lot, if things are allowed to continue as they do.

So, it is high time our religion and our deities are protected. It is no use waiting indefinitely for a miracle to happen. We should be sincere and dutiful to our deities. At the same time we should be strict in our dealings with the incidents of dishonouring our deities, so that nobody will ever dare to insult our deities. It is true that all the problems faced by our religion cannot be solved within a few days. So the best thing is to try solving just one problem at a time. Then why not we start with protecting the dignity and honour of our deities?

**"Jay Maa Kali"**  
**"Jay Hanuman"**

SAMPLES FROM COLLECTION OF DISCARDED MATERIALS BEARING PICTURES  
OF HINDU GODS & GODDESSES PRESERVED

(Labels, Wrappers, Card board packets, Plastic pouches, Plastic carry bags, Pamphlets, Receipts, Cash memos, Vouchers, Lottery tickets, Bus/Ferry tickets, Envelopes, Marriage Invitation Cards, New Year Greeting Cards, Visiting Cards and Gunny Bags etc.)













































DISCARDED PIECES OF NEWSPAPERS BEARING PICTURES OF HINDU DEITIES















DISCARDED MATERIALS BEARING PICTURES OF HINDU DEITIES IN BULK























####

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Thanks!

**Santosh Kumar Behera**

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7. Activities:
  - (i) Collecting discarded materials bearing pictures of Hindu Gods & Goddesses since 2003 till this day
  - (ii) Collecting pictures of Hindu deities from newspapers delivered at my residence since 2004 till this day
  - (iii) In order to create awareness among the people about the dishonouring treatment done to the Hindu deities, I have arranged an exhibition with my collection of discarded materials, bearing pictures of Hindu deities, such as packing materials (labels, wrappers, cardboard packets, plastic pouches and gunny bags etc.), advertising materials (carry bags, pamphlets and posters) and reading, writing & printing materials (receipts, cash memos, tickets, envelopes, marriage invitation cards, visiting cards and torn pieces of newspapers) including discarded calendars from 05-12-08 to 16-12-08 in the 9th. Rajdhani Book Fair in stall No. 141 at Bhubaneswar. The public appreciated the effort and the media covered the event. May be this was for the first time in Odisha that an exhibition with this theme was arranged.
  - (iv) I have brought this matter to the notice of different authorities and have sent articles on this topic to different newspapers but nothing remarkable happened.
  - (v) I continue with my effort to create awareness among people about the dishonouring treatment to Hindu deities.



10<sup>th</sup> October 2013  
Richmond, Virginia, USA

Santosh Kumar Behera