

## Responses to Manushi

### Unfair and Dangerous

I appreciate Madhu Kishwar taking the time to reply to my letter. You have raised some good points, which I address here. I may be wrong in clubbing you with Nehruvian socialists, who created this grotesque poverty in India, and I am sorry for that. But your editorial *BJP's Wargasm* has a very repugnant title with silly cartoons, and showed very little understanding of this dreadful world. I had to apologise to my friend (one of the four gift subscribers) who I introduced MANUSHI to.

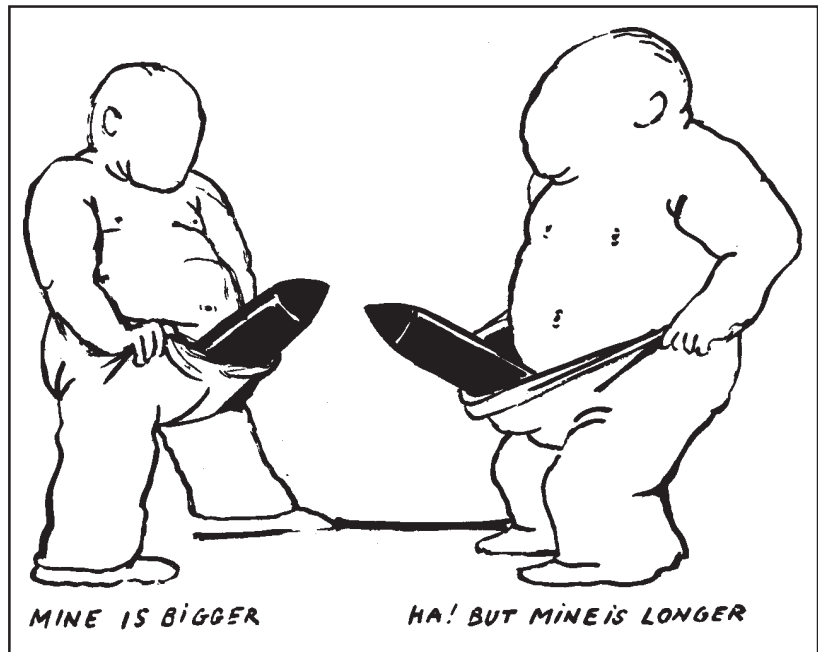
You raised the question, "Do I believe in reading the writings of only those with whom I agree one hundred per cent?" My answer is an emphatic "no". I like people having different opinions and I respect their views. I read regularly a digest of Pakistani news publications, which are totally on a different wavelength from mine. But I hate to subscribe for four years and also pay for gift subscriptions for a magazine that editorialised views that I consider extremely dangerous to the security interests of my country. At a time when the P-5 and G-8 countries are trying to maim India with punitive sanctions and our selfish, partisan politicians are attacking our government, here comes a magazine trying to make fun with its stupid title and repugnant cartoons ("Mine is bigger and mine is longer"). Your anti-nuke

views, in my very humble opinion, are unworthy in understanding the nuclear blackmail that India is being subjected to by its two menacing neighbours. Again, in my humble opinion, there are many pacifists in India who have no idea of how wretched this world is and has always been. They remain ignorant of the history of the destruction of the civilisations of the Mayans and Seminole Indians, or for that matter they have no understanding of our terrible history in India of the last thousand years.

Miss Kishwar, may I ask you to read about the history of the Afghans of the pre-Muslim era and compare it with the history of the 20th century? Again, I request you to read Yossef Bodansky on

Pak-nukes and brinkmanship, which I truly believe every Indian should read if they want to comment on India's nuclear policy.

It is, of course, fanciful to talk about peace and brotherhood and forget about the dreadful history (of ethnic cleansing) that is going on in Kashmir today. You can sell lots of magazines to westerners and pseudo-secularists of India by becoming a crusader against "BJP's nuclear Wargasm". But you have shown total blindness to the treachery of Pakistani (and Chinese) nuclear blackmail. India cannot afford to be blind to these monsters, who are carrying forward the same doctrine (jihad) of their ancestors Ghazni, Ghouri, Babur, Khilji and Aurangzeb. All these are glorified in Pakistani



history books. I am quite aware that anyone who dares to recall the truth about our history, would be labeled a Hindu fundamentalist, a fascist, a Hindu-Taliban or whatever. We have a media run by bogus secularists, which label anyone taking an oath on the Gita a Hindu fundamentalist and anyone who recites *Vande Mataram* an idolator. But an intellectual should not be afraid of Truth, however terrible that truth maybe.

We believe in 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava' and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.' We pray 'Loka-samastah sukhino bhyavanthu'. True to our Dharma, we try to see the divine spark in all beings. We do not try to convert anybody to our thinking or to our Dharma. We intellectuals and Hindu Swamijis abhor politics and stay away from them, which leaves a vacuum that is filled in by the *adharmic*. There is hope only when *dharmic* intellectuals arise and fight for truth.

Finally, it is not about money, it is the principle. I respect your rights to present your views. I will not support anyone who, I think, is harming my country's interest. I can wait to see a few more issues of MANUSHI before I ask for a refund of unsent issues.

**T.R.N. Rao,  
Lafayette, USA**

### **Lesbianism As a Choice**

This Refers to Ms Madhu Kishwar's article *Women, Sex and Marriage* on Sawnet. There is hardly anything new in her interpretation of women's responses to male infidelity by adjusting to low levels of sexual gratification and situational celibacy. Of course these are effective though costly strateg-

ies. They have helped women survive—nobody said otherwise. Who said that women choose this strategy for the sheer masochistic pleasure of it ?

The point is how long will women need to use sex, having sex to please men and not having sex to please families, as a survival strategy. The other problem is that, speaking specifically of sexual gratification, Ms Kishwar seems to place a good hetero-sexual relationship on one end and celibacy on the other. Out of an abusive marriage, I would consider lesbian relationships and also masturbation as valid choices. This is not to say that same sex or extra-marital sexual relationships are merely a fallout of bad marriages. Simply an acknowledged-ment of the fact that some women move towards lesbian relationships after dissatisfying relationships with men. And their choices should be respected. The other question is regarding choices for the young women. Having taught young girls Ms Kishwar cannot be unaware of the trauma women go through flitting from one man to another in search of a good man. For the young this often is little more than a search for sexual gratification. At least some pain, loss of valuable time during formative years, and unwanted pregnancies would be avoided not by talking about chastity but about masturbation. I do agree though that sermons on chastity are respectable and masturbation is not.

Moreover I suppose her article is less about sexuality and more about women and marriage and even more about what good Indian women should do. But if Ms Kishwar needs to inform—and I say this more emphatically

because her voice is heard—I wish it was a more considered opinion.

**Shreya, received via e-mail**

### **Making a Difference**

I only started subscribing to MANUSHI this year, though I had read earlier issues off and on. Now I really look forward to it. The story of the Muslim girl caught in the train accident sent tremors down my spine. The story *Five Women* and the National Commission's Report on Prostitution in Issue 105 make one feel so helpless, sad and disgusted.

I work with adolescent girls here in Dewas. But sometimes I wonder what difference our small-scale effort can make? For how long will women suffer injustices and disrespect? How do we improve male-female relations? Sometimes I wish I could find a magic wand or gain a miraculous strength to improve these relations. Talking like this seems childish, doesn't it?

I get worked up and to some extent helpless. Time and again I find friends, neighbours, colleagues experiencing violence in the family. Things move—but too slowly. My effort sometimes can bring a bit of confidence to some women, even if shortlived. The thought that there is somebody who cares or that there is a shoulder to cry on, brings some happiness to me. You will probably find it odd that I am sharing these feelings with you. But reading MANUSHI made me feel that I can talk to you. Sorry what I have written is a bit disjointed. Hope you can understand.

**Anu, EKLAVYA  
Dewas, Madhya Pradesh**

