



National Hindu Students Forum (UK)

Preserve, Protect, Practice & Promote Hindu Dharma

Mr. John W. Chidsey, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Russ Klein, President of Global Marketing, Strategy and Innovation
Burger King Corporation
5505 Blue Lagoon Drive
Miami, Florida 33126

14th July 2009

Dear Mr. Chidsey and Mr. Klein,

We at National Hindu Students Forum (UK) are shocked and saddened that Burger King, the world's second largest fast-food burger chain, has displayed an image of the Hindu Goddess Lakshmi (the Goddess of Prosperity) on an advertisement for a beef burger.

It is simply unacceptable to advertise any product using sacred images from a particular faith for purely commercial purposes, but compounding this insult is the use of an image of a Hindu Goddess for the sale of a meat product – this is clearly highly disrespectful and offensive to Hindus worldwide. We are disappointed that such an erroneous decision was made, especially by a company of your stature and global presence.

Ahimsa, the principle of non-violence to any living being, is central to Hindu Dharma (righteous living action) hence the consumption of meat products is not recommended. Indeed, it is common knowledge that eating beef is forbidden in Hindu culture making it all the more absurd to depict a Hindu Goddess promoting the 'Texican Whopper' burger.

We understand and appreciate the apology given by Burger King. However, as a pro-active Hindu forum, we strongly believe you should further your apology with these two gestures:

1. Transfer any profits generated from the derogatory campaign into a charity of popular Hindu choice
2. Re-educate the mass general public by publishing and distributing a leaflet through your chain of outlets outlining the divine significance of the Goddess Lakshmi

These two actions would certainly regain some of the respect lost from the Hindu community and we trust that in its own interest, Burger King will respond positively.

We would hope the corporate leaders of Burger King more pro-actively exercise multicultural respect in their advertisement campaigns, both domestically and abroad, and that nothing of this nature ever occurs again.

Kajal Valani

President

National Hindu Students Forum (UK)

t: +44 7931 149 985

e: kajal@nhsf.org.uk

w: <http://www.nhsf.org.uk>

P.O. Box 46016, London, W9 1WS

T: 07092 377 304 | F: 07092 869726

E: info@nhsf.org.uk | W: www.nhsf.org.uk