

Dear Organizers,

we are great admirers of the TED initiative, which, through the combination of intellectual and visual acuity has become, deservedly, a trusted source of information and inspiration for thousands of people. This is why we were shocked and disappointed to see that *István Tasi*, one of the speakers of the “TEDx Danubia” event taking place in Budapest, Hungary, on January 21, 2010, intends to give a presentation titled “A természet IQ-ja” (“Nature’s IQ”).

The TEDx homepage (<http://www.ted.com/pages/view?id=344>) promises a “bias-free programming: lack of any *commercial*, *religious* or *political* agenda”. In our opinion, this principle will be violated by the presentation of *Mr. Tasi (Isvara Krishna dasa)*, a vocal proponent of Vedic Creationism and the face of the Hungarian Intelligent Design Movement (ÉRTEM).

According to his own account, *Mr. Tasi* intends to give a presentation on the subject of animal behavior (http://hvg.hu/videok/20091216_ted.aspx). This is perplexing, as he received no education in the field of animal behavior, has never conducted any research in this field, and never contributed to peer-reviewed publications related to ethology or biology in general (nor to any field of scientific inquiry, for that matter).

Furthermore, the title of his presentation is identical to that of the book he co-authored in 2002 (which has been published in English in 2009), where he argues that certain aspects of animal behavior are so complex that they are unlikely to be the products of evolution by natural selection. The book goes on to offer the Hare Krishna creation story as an “acceptable and logical” explanation wherever *Mr. Tasi* perceives gaps in the scientific knowledge^[1]. *Mr. Tasi* is entitled to believe in such ideas, but we want to emphasize that these views are not being considered by the scientific community, as they hold no scientific value. Most major scientific organizations have been unequivocal in their rejection of all forms of creationism (including intelligent design) as a scientific alternative to evolution^[2]. (It is also worth noting that *Mr. Tasi* sees his lectures about intelligent design as an “introduction” to “deeper preaching subjects”^[3], therefore, in our opinion, his interest in the subject is far from being purely scientific.)

Considering his complete lack of competence and his record of forefronting pseudoscientific ideas, it is clear that *Mr. Tasi* is not qualified to give a lecture on the scientific study of animal behavior. He is below the standard set by previous TED speakers on *any* topic in biological sciences.

We want to emphasize that we do not object the fact that *Mr. Tasi* has been invited to the event. We would welcome to hear his views on religion or cultural anthropology, where his expertise are.

But we also think that by accepting his aforementioned presentation, the organizers of the TEDxDanubia event are doing a great disservice to the audience as well as to the respected TED brand. Therefore, we would urge the organizers to ask *Mr. Tasi* to change the subject of his talk to a topic better suited to his field of expertise, and do not let TED become just another talking-shop for pseudoscientific nonsense.

Best regards,

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(corrected on 31/08/2010)

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[1] Hornyánszky Balázs, Tasi István (2002). A természet IQ-ja. Budapest: Kornétás Kiadó. p 138-139. ISBN 9639353094

[2] List of scientific societies explicitly rejecting intelligent design - Wikipedia

URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_scientific_societies_explicitly_rejecting_intelligent_design

[3] István Tasi (Isvara Krishna dasa) What if there is no evolution? dandavats.com, 2008.

URL: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=5305>