

IN GOD WE TRUST

-Radhika Basavaraju.

IN GOD WE TRUST is what we find if we look at any dollar bill of the United States of America. Is it possible to have the same statement in India, on Indian currency?

India is the number one nation in the world with the richest heritage coming down the ages unfathomable in times behind, and culture sparkling in its mantle.

United States of America on the other hand formed a couple of hundred years ago, proudly and courageously declares that they trust in God.

One who follows Christianity is a Christian. One who follows Islam is a Muslim. However, there is no need of any word for one who follows the Vedic religion because from our Puranic history that runs to millions of years, we know that all are from Vedic tradition. Our history says that Man has more than 2000 Million years of existence on this Earth. All other religions came recently during past 2000 - 3000 years. Origin of these religions took place to confront the existing worst situations of ego power and lead people on the road of Peace. As some of the later followers craved supremacy over the world, started to establish their colonies, extracted the wealth, lured people with easy benefits, taking advantage of human weaknesses. To do so they scrupulously suppressed the local culture and traditions with their wicked tricks and rules. Bharat is one example of such victims.

The word Bharath floating in the sea of time, has shrunk to represent the current topographical region of India and dispensed away with its ancient historical, religious significance. So hereafter, one who follows the Vedas is a Vedian. He has faith in God.

There are nations for the Muslims, following Koran; there are nations for the

Christians, following the Bible. But India, the country of the greatest Vedic history is "not" declared as the nation of the Vedians, those who follow the Vedas. It respects other religions and non-religions equally important, perhaps more important, hence secular. A Christian can propagate Christianity in India, a Muslim can spread Islam in India, and they will have full support of their communities all over. It is good, admirable, that's what it is supposed to be. Communities should work united. One finger is thin, vulnerable, five fingers together is thick and commanding. However, a Vedian spreading the message of the Vedas is not sufficiently encouraged, even at par with others, under the mask of 'secular'.

We all know that there is an underlying power behind this creation. Some would like to see Lord Narayana as the Supreme power some may like to believe Devi Narayani, some somebody else. There are Protestants and there are Catholics. They are not protesting one another directly or indirectly. There are Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims. They are always united, not just when they need to fight an outsider. Then why is the case with those in India like this? Why can't we respect our tradition and follow it, ourselves? Aren't we disrespecting our great scholars and sages who practiced them sincerely and blessed divine wealth on us?

While my grand mother cooked, nobody could touch her, not even the saree she was wearing, or even a plate or a glass that she would touch. She did all the cooking in a sacred way (nobody was allowed to touch any of the dishes or cooking utensils or even her, until she offered them to God). That is our tradition, we didn't question it or violate it, owing to the respect we had in our hearts.

Our life style has been rapidly changing owing to the "openness" or the "exposure" we have gained in the past few decades, also owing



to the aggressiveness that came along with these changes. The daily traditional rituals we used to observe for cooking, making offerings to the Gods have almost vanished. We might get a glimpse of them here and there in some households and of course in some temples giving an air of sacredness.

Those who constructed the temples those days believed that the Deity was literally residing in the temple. And that we should revere the Deity by providing services that we ourselves would need viz., bathing, taking food, going to sleep etc. If we question the latter, we are questioning the very existence of the former.

However it is regrettable and pathetic to note that our perverted sense of modernization has not failed to adulterate even our temples including the divine abode of Lord Narayana on earth, Tirumala.

Any temple has a Devasthanam with the intent of protecting the presiding Deity's systems and customs. We do believe, or at least those who constructed the temple around the Deity believed that the Deity is residing there. TTD is the office that manages all the activities in the Divine shrine of Lord Venkateswara, established to work in accordance with the history of the Divine shrine of Lord Venkateswara. The Devasthanam is only the care taker and protector of the ancient tradition of that shrine but not the owner of His properties or the ancient structures instituted there. TTD has no right to interfere and change the original traditional procedures, for whatever reason it be. Every devotee has right to question this and TTD has responsibility to stand for it. If somebody cannot obey to the age old traditional procedure, it is better they leave if not they can adapt themselves, for which act, God may forgive them. No one can question why and how regarding traditions and there are scholars like Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji who are following that tradition uncompromisingly even today, who knows the reason and history behind, though the working officials or those in the supposedly knowledgeable priest positions do not know !

If the employees of TTD find it difficult

to cook in the traditional way on wooden logs for the Lord, they are forgetting that it is their job to do so. Any job needs some effort to be put in. It is improper to violate tradition here in the presence of the Lord, using gas stoves. After all, they are cooking for Him ! They are there, to serve Him.

One more thing, they are not permanent in their positions, like the Lord watching over there. While they have been appointed to co-ordinate the activities of Lord, they need to think if not a thousand times, at least a hundred times before demolishing something like the ancient 1000 pillared Mantapam causing an irrevocable loss. What is our greatness if we cannot respect and preserve our own heritage? Tirumala is a pilgrimage, the abode of the Lord. In fact, it is the air of sacredness that makes it the most desired chosen spot too, offering celestial bliss. We need to respect every deed of our ancestors, the great kings, saints and religious leaders who made offerings to the Lord in their writings, in their constructions and in their preaching.

An endeavour to make the Tirumala hills a mundane picnic spot would only dilute the sacredness of the holy hills. The Devasthanam can very well put more efforts in keeping the sacred hills clean and tidy, find ways and means to enhance cleanliness in the temple surroundings and in the cottage rooms and in serving the Lord.

Our religion and traditional rituals coming down the ages have their roots in the Vedas. Vedas are the correspondence of God, divine messages to man to tread on the path of righteous.

The 10 commandments is the celestial message for the Christians. The former is forgotten thrown on the attic and those who are trying to help are being ignored. The latter is revered by the great, superior nations like the United States. We Vedians and the Devasthanams if not support, at least should not hinder the way of great religious leaders like Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji who are serving mankind as service to God. As Vedians, it



becomes our responsibility to support their endeavors to sustain the Vedas and propagate worldly peace.

TTD is a highly respectable organization, and certainly there have to be some individuals, who are responsible and work towards the interests and comforts of the Lord overcoming the monsters of jealousy, mistrust in the guise of modernization. They should take over the power from the misused hands and see to it that things happen in the interest of the Lord and for the comforts of the Lord. Any temple is primarily the Home of the God or Goddess, and it is His or Her interests, customs that matter more than anything else. If some people appointed to serve Lord Venkateswara question the very existence of the Lord there, saying "God is there

everywhere, not only here", they are right. However, they are forgetting that He is there too. So they can find Him elsewhere, for no one has a right to ignore or overlook Him, His interests, in His own abode. There is no need for them to serve Him there, without faith in what they are doing.

It's high time we Indians feel proud of our heritage, tradition and culture and try to preserve the same. It is the Vedic religion alone i.e., all inclusive. Vedic religion signifies unity in diversity. It includes all Dharmas within itself just like Lord Narayana includes the entire creation within Himself. Proudly speak up Vedian ! Respect yourself. Feel proud of being a Vedian !

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" I was impressed at the efficiency..." - MEDICAL CAMP

- Dr. Smitha Pabbathi M.D. Tallahassee, FL USA

In a country where there is so much need and such few resources, the medical clinic at Tenali , Guntur , Andhra Pradesh , India , seemed like a medical oasis in the middle of the desert. I visited the medical camps in the rural communities of Tenali for multiple reasons. One, to witness the act of kindness mankind has towards another. This act coming out of pure selflessness to help their fellow members of the community. It was a cherished moment. Healthcare is a basic human right which people must demand but is often unavailable in many areas of the world. Many people are without basic need but this sanctity is preserved by the religious organization JET, under the leadership of HH Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji. Under his astute guidance, these medical camps provide education on preventative measures of good health for the community in dispersing basic items such as toothbrushes and toothpaste further driving home the importance of healthcare.

I especially saw the emphasis placed on caring for women, children and the elderly in the medical camps. These individuals are the most vulnerable people in villages we don't realize and these camps will take the time to address. Moreover, I was impressed at the efficiency and the neatness with which these camps were carried out. There was an effect triage center that pinpointed the area of specialty and directed patients accordingly. The camp was staffed with generalist, cardiologist, ophthalmologist, ENT, obstetrics and GYN to care for the people.

My visit to the Tenali medical camp brought me hope that there are efforts being made to improve standard of living within our country even at the village or mandal level by the inspiration of people like HH Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji. It only makes me more motivated to get involved in the future in the JET organization in efforts to improve healthcare of our people who need the health care but cannot afford.

