

DEBATE COMPETITION

In the beginning (about 4000 years ago), God was only one supreme power known as EL, and King Solomon built the first temple of God in present day Israel (in 9th century BCE). God could not exist on this earth without the influence of an all powerful king! Another king, Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, destroyed the first temple of God around 586 BCE. He certainly had different ideas about God! Over this period, Judaism, with its idea of one Supreme God, started spreading all across the Asia Minor, West Asia, and Western Europe. Then during the hay days of Roman Empire there were many pagan Gods with human characteristics. Idols were worshipped and the politics of majority drove religious thoughts.

Then came Jesus Christ with his idea of monotheism but it was not before 3rd Century AD that Christianity spread widely across European continent. Almost three hundred years after Jesus Christ's death, roman emperor Constantine embraced Christianity and announced it as the State religion. His work continued by other Byzantine rulers like Theodosius I who closed all the temples and forbade worship of idols. So, once again the kings dictated which religion the masses should follow! Then the all powerful Catholic Church burned down (or hid) what is famously known as Gnostic scriptures which basically tells that God exists everywhere and one does not necessarily has to go to a Church to worship God. Of course, if these scriptures were spread to the masses, the very foundation of Catholic Church would have been shaken.

Today, in contemporary India, in spite of having an all pervasive idea of Brahma or one supreme power rooted in Upanisads, a particular political party attempts to flare up emotions by stirring up religious sentiments of the majority. In other countries, religion of the majority is thrust upon the minority. It goes on. It has been going on over the last four thousand years or more.

If religion is not driven by political motives, then what else?

On the other hand, religion is our super-ego or according to certain literature, it gives strengths to our ego. Religion holds us in a cell of ethical boundaries. It lets us live in peace and harmony. Essentially, religious scriptures preach ways of life. It tells us what to do when we are faced with ethical dilemma. Religion gives us direction towards what is proverbially called 'Moksha' or liberation. This moksha means freedom from all our prejudices and desires which lead to disharmony. Moksha means attaining a perfect harmony.

All these and more were discussed in the debate competition which saw some of the best students of IIPM Ahmedabad fighting fiercely among themselves in front of an interesting panel of jury. The jury comprised of Swami Adhyatmananda, President of Sivananda Ashram, Vinod Ninama, State Secretary of the youth wing of Samata Party, and Diti Vyas, an academician with profound interest in Religion.

The students who participated in the debate competition were chosen through an elimination round. The winners were awarded with a Trophy.

Snapshots of the Debate:



“Winners of the Debate with Swami Adhyatmanandaji”



“Bala, one of the participant expressing his views & opinions”



“Audience cheering & appreciating the views of participants by applauding them”