NOVEMBER 14, 2010 THESKEPTICARENA.COM

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND THE RIGHTS OF THE MAJORITY

BY STEVE PEARCE

WE RECENTLY SAW THE COURTS TRY TO DECLARE THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

(WAKE UP CALL STEVE, THEY DID DECLARE IT UNCONSTITUTIONAL).

IT IS TIME FOR US, THE MAJORITY, TO STAND UP.

(NO STEVE, SIT DOWN).

THIS PIECE IS GOING AROUND ON THE INTERNET. I WANTED TO POST IT SO YOU CAN CIRCULATE IT FROM OUR WEBSITE TO YOUR EMAIL LIST. I'M NOT SURE WHO WROTE IT, BUT IT IS CERTAINLY RELEVANT. THE FOLLOWING IS TEXT FROM THE EMAIL:

I DON'T BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO SUE SOMEBODY FOR SINGING A HO-HO-HO SONG IN DECEMBER.

(DUDE, YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN A JOLLY OLD IMAGINARY MAN, BUT YOU DO BELIEVE IN AN INVISIBLE GHOST WHO MURDERS AND TORTURES PEOPLE. MAYBE YOU SHOULD CONSIDER SUING SOMEBODY - FOR STEALING YOUR CEREBELLUM).

I DON'T AGREE WITH DARWIN , BUT I DIDN'T GO OUT AND HIRE A LAWYER WHEN MY HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER TAUGHT HIS THEORY OF EVOLUTION.

(DUDE, IT WASN'T FOR LACK OF EFFORT. YOU PEOPLE DID, IN FACT, GO OUT AND HIRE LAWYERS TO FIGHT EVOLUTION AND THE CASE HAS WOUND UP IN THE SUPREME COURT SEVERAL TIMES ... AND GUESS WHAT?

YOUR SIDE LOST - EVERY TIME).

LIFE, LIBERTY OR YOUR PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS WILL NOT BE ENDANGERED BECAUSE SOMEONE SAYS A 30-SECOND PRAYER BEFORE A FOOTBALL GAME.

(DUDE, WHO SAID IT WOULD?

NO ONE DID. THAT WAS A CLASSICAL STRAW MAN ARGUMENT).

SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

(DUDE, THE BIG DEAL ISN'T PRAYING BEFORE FOOTBALL GAMES; ANYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO DO THAT. THAT IS NOT WHAT YOU WANT. YOU WANT THE RIGHT TO FORCE EVERYONE TO PRAY, AND TO PRAY SPECIFICALLY TO YOUR GOD).

IT'S NOT LIKE SOMEBODY IS UP THERE READING THE ENTIRE BOOK OF ACTS.

(DUDE, A RECENT POLL PROVED THAT THE PEOPLE MOST FAMILIAR WITH THE BIBLE WERE ... ATHEISTS. SO IF SOMEONE DID READ FROM ACTS, THE LAST PEOPLE IN THE CROWD WHO WOULD RECOGNIZE IT WOULD BE THE CHRISTIANS).

THEY'RE JUST TALKING TO A GOD THEY BELIEVE IN AND ASKING HIM TO GRANT SAFETY TO THE PLAYERS ON THE FIELD AND THE FANS GOING HOME FROM THE GAME.

BUT IT'S A CHRISTIAN PRAYER, SOME WILL ARGUE.

(WELL DUDE, I'VE YET TO SEE ANY SPORTING EVENT WHERE THEY SAID A HINDU OR MUSLIM PRAYER. SO IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY MAY HAVE A POINT).

YES, AND THIS IS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA, COUNTRIES FOUNDED ON CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES.

(DUDE, NAME ONE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE THAT AMERICA WAS FOUNDED ON:

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME? THAT'S ODD SINCE THE FIRST AMENDMENT IS BASED ON EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE PRINCIPLE.

BURN WITCHES, HOMOSEXUALS, ADULTERERS, AND ASTROLOGERS? TRY FOLLOWING THOSE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES AND YOU'LL WIND UP BEHIND BARS.

DON'T WORK ON THE SABBATH? I DON'T REMEMBER THAT BEING IN ANY OF THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS.

EXACTLY WHICH CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES ARE YOU CLAIMING THAT OUR COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED ON?

OH, I'M SORRY, YOU ARE CORRECT. OUR COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED ON CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. SILLY ME, I FORGOT ALL ABOUT SLAVERY).

ACCORDING TO OUR VERY OWN PHONE BOOK, CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OUTNUMBER ALL OTHERS BETTER THAN 200-TO-1. SO WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT -- SOMEBODY CHANTING HARE KRISHNA?

IF I WENT TO A FOOTBALL GAME IN JERUSALEM , I WOULD EXPECT TO HEAR A JEWISH PRAYER.

IF I WENT TO A SOCCER GAME IN BAGHDAD , I WOULD EXPECT TO HEAR A MUSLIM PRAYER.

IF I WENT TO A PING PONG MATCH IN CHINA , I WOULD EXPECT TO HEAR SOMEONE PRAY TO BUDDHA.

(DUDE, BUDDHA IS NOT A GOD YOU IGNORANT BUFFOON).

AND I WOULDN'T BE OFFENDED. IT WOULDN'T BOTHER ME ONE BIT.

WHEN IN ROME .....

BUT WHAT "ABOUT THE ATHEISTS?" IS ANOTHER ARGUMENT.

WHAT ABOUT THEM? NOBODY IS ASKING THEM TO BE BAPTIZED. WE'RE NOT GOING TO PASS THE COLLECTION PLATE. JUST HUMOUR US FOR 30 SECONDS. IF THAT'S ASKING TOO MUCH, BRING A WALKMAN OR A PAIR OF EAR PLUGS. GO TO THE BATHROOM. VISIT THE CONCESSION STAND. CALL YOUR LAWYER!

UNFORTUNATELY, ONE OR TWO WILL MAKE THAT CALL. ONE OR TWO WILL TELL THOUSANDS WHAT THEY CAN AND CANNOT DO. I DON'T THINK A SHORT PRAYER AT A FOOTBALL GAME IS GOING TO SHAKE THE WORLD'S FOUNDATIONS.

(DUDE, IF IT WERE A MUSLIM PRAYER, YOU WOULD BE THE ONE ON YOUR CELLPHONE TO YOUR LAWYERS. THIS EMAIL PROVES THAT, LIKE ALL GHOST WORSHIPPERS, THERE ISN'T AN HONEST BONE IN YOUR BODY).

CHRISTIANS ARE JUST SICK AND TIRED OF TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK WHILE OUR COURTS STRIP US OF ALL OUR RIGHTS.

(DUDE, COURTS CANNOT STRIP YOU OF YOUR RIGHTS. OUR CONSTITUTION WILL NOT ALLOW IT. WHAT THE COURTS CAN DO, IS ENFORCE THE RIGHTS GRANTED IN THE CONSTITUTION. THAT IS WHAT HAS YOUR PANTIES ALL KNOTTED UP IN A BUNCH).

OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS TAUGHT US TO PRAY BEFORE EATING, TO PRAY BEFORE WE GO TO SLEEP. OUR BIBLE TELLS US TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.

(DUDE, YOUR BIBLE ALSO TOLD YOU TO STONE ADULTERERS. SO WHAT?

YOU OBVIOUSLY DON'T OBEY EVERYTHING IN YOUR BIBLE).

NOW A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE AND THEIR LAWYERS ARE TELLING US TO CEASE PRAYING.

(DUDE, A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE AND THEIR LAWYERS ARE NOT TELLING YOU TO CEASE PRAYING - THE SUPREME COURT IS TELLING YOU TO CEASE FORCING YOUR PRAYERS ON OTHERS IN PUBLIC).

GOD, HELP US. AND IF THAT LAST SENTENCE OFFENDS YOU, WELL, JUST SUE ME.

(DUDE, SUE YOU FOR WHAT? IGNORANCE? THERE'S NO LAW AGAINST BELIEVING IN MAGICAL, INVISIBLE GHOSTS. TO OFFEND ME, YOU WOULD FIRST HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE AN INTELLIGENCE CAPABLE OF BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THIS EMAIL HAS YET TO ACCOMPLISH THAT).

THE SILENT MAJORITY HAS BEEN SILENT TOO LONG. IT'S TIME WE TELL THAT ONE OR TWO WHO SCREAM LOUD ENOUGH TO BE HEARD THAT THE VAST MAJORITY DOESN'T CARE WHAT THEY WANT.

(DUDE, "APPEAL TO MAJORITY" IS A LOGICAL FALLACY. A LOGICAL FALLACY INVALIDATES ANY CONCLUSION WHICH FOLLOWS IT. SURELY YOU HAVE SOMETHING MORE TO OFFER THAN AN ARGUMENT BASED ON "THE MAJORITY RULES?").

IT IS TIME THAT THE MAJORITY RULES! IT'S TIME WE TELL THEM, "YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRAY; YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE;

(DUDE, WE DON'T MIND RECITING THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM. IT IS YOU WHO REFUSE TO RECITE THE ORIGINAL PLEDGE AND INSIST ON USING THE ONE WHICH ADDED "UNDER GOD" IN 1954 ... ALMOST 200 YEARS AFTER THE FOUNDING OF OUR NATION).

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE IN GOD OR ATTEND SERVICES THAT HONOUR HIM. THAT IS YOUR RIGHT, AND WE WILL HONOUR YOUR RIGHT;

(GEE THANKS DUDE, THAT IS REALLY NICE OF YOU NOT TO FORCE US TO ATTEND YOUR SERVICES).

BUT BY GOLLY, YOU ARE NO LONGER GOING TO TAKE OUR RIGHTS AWAY. WE ARE FIGHTING BACK, AND WE WILL WIN!"

(DUDE, NAME ONE RIGHT THAT YOU HAVE HAD TAKEN AWAY. YOU CAN'T, BECAUSE NONE OF YOUR RIGHTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY. YOU ARE "PLAYING THE VICTIM").

GOD BLESS US ONE AND ALL...ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO DENOUNCE HIM, GOD BLESS AMERICA AND CANADA, DESPITE ALL OUR FAULTS WE ARE STILL THE GREATEST NATIONS OF ALL.

(DUDE, THAT IS SO TYPICAL. YOUR SNOBBISH, SUPERIOR CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE IS REPUGNANT TO THE REST OF THE WORLD - THAT WOULD BE THE OTHER 4.5 BILLION OF US WHO MAKE UP 2/3 OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION. NOW THAT IS WHAT I CALL AN 'APPEAL TO MAJORITY' - AND YOU AREN'T IN IT).

GOD BLESS OUR SERVICE MEN WHO ARE FIGHTING TO PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO PRAY AND WORSHIP GOD.

(DUDE, NOW THAT IS JUST WRONG. YOU COULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN THAT PART WHILE YOU WERE SOBER).

LET'S MAKE 2010 THE YEAR THE SILENT MAJORITY IS HEARD AND WE PUT GOD BACK AS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAMILIES AND INSTITUTIONS.

(DUDE, YOU JUST SHOWED YOUR TRUE COLORS. YOU SPENT THIS ENTIRE EMAIL TRYING TO CONVINCE EVERYONE HOW FAIR AND TOLERANT OF OTHERS YOU ARE, AND THEN AT THE 1-YARD LINE ... YOU FUMBLED.

YOUR LAST STATEMENT MAKES YOUR TRUE FEELINGS CLEAR: TO FORCE EVERYONE TO BE SUBJECTED TO YOUR "CHRISTIAN NATION."

WHEN YOU ARE BEING DISHONEST, AS YOU WERE IN THIS EMAIL, THE TRUTH WILL EVENTUALLY PEEK THROUGH; AND AS HAPPENED IN THIS EMAIL - IT IS USUALLY BY ... YOUR OWN WORDS).

AND OUR MILITARY FORCES COME HOME FROM ALL THE WARS.

KEEP LOOKING UP.

(DUDE, AFTER SEEING THE LEVEL OF DISHONESTY DEMONSTRATED IN THIS EMAIL, YOU SHOULD KEEP LOOKING UP - BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE THE REST OF HUMANITY IS ... ABOVE YOU).

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

BRAIN TRAINING CAN HELP IMPROVE SPECIFIC ABILITIES IN OLDER PEOPLE

MANY BRAIN TRAINING PRODUCTS CLAIM TO BE ABLE TO KEEP US MENTALLY FIT. SOME PRODUCTS EVEN CLAIM THAT BRAIN TRAINING CAN PREVENT DEMENTIA IN OLD AGE. BUT THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC PROOF THAT GAMES OR OTHER BRAIN EXERCISES CAN HAVE THIS EFFECT. THAT IS WHAT THE GERMAN INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY IN HEALTH CARE HAS DISCOVERED.

BRAIN TRAINING CAN LEAD TO AN IMPROVEMENT, BUT ONLY IN THE SPECIFIC ABILITY IT IS AIMED AT

AS WE GET OLDER OUR THINKING GETS SLOWER AND IT IS HARDER FOR US TO LEARN NEW THINGS. MANY PEOPLE TRY TO STAY MENTALLY FIT BY, FOR EXAMPLE, LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE OR DOING CROSSWORD PUZZLES. COMPUTER GAMES THAT AIM TO KEEP THE BRAIN ACTIVE ARE ALSO BECOMING INCREASINGLY POPULAR. PROFESSOR PETER SAWICKI, THE INSTITUTE'S DIRECTOR, EXPLAINS, "DOING EXERCISES LIKE TRYING TO FIND SYMBOLS ON A COMPUTER SCREEN AS FAST AS POSSIBLE CAN ACTUALLY IMPROVE YOUR REACTION TIME, BUT SCIENTIFIC STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT BRAIN TRAINING ONLY LEADS TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE SPECIFIC ABILITY THAT IT IS AIMED AT. SO IF YOU LEARN TO FIND SYMBOLS QUICKLY, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO REMEMBER NAMES BETTER TOO."

THERE IS NO NEED FOR PEOPLE TO PUSH THEMSELVES TO DO BRAIN TRAINING IF THEY DO NOT ENJOY IT

RESEARCH HAS NOT SHOWN THAT BRAIN TRAINING CAN KEEP UP OR ENHANCE PEOPLE'S OVERALL MENTAL ABILITIES. SAWICKI SAYS "SO THERE IS NO NEED TO FEEL BAD IF YOU DO NOT ENJOY BRAIN TRAINING: THERE ARE NO HEALTH REASONS FOR DOING IT. BUT IF YOU THINK BRAIN TRAINING EXERCISES ARE FUN, YOU CAN TRY OUT DIFFERENT THINGS. FOR EXAMPLE, COMPLETING SEQUENCES OF LETTERS CAN IMPROVE YOUR LOGIC SKILLS; AND PRACTICING WORD ASSOCIATION TECHNIQUES CAN HELP YOU TO REMEMBER THINGS BETTER."

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

ABROAD

INDIAN COURT, IN COMPROMISE, RULES THAT HINDUS, MUSLIMS MUST SHARE DISPUTED HOLY SITE

BOTH SIDES SAID THEY WOULD APPEAL, AND THE MUTED REACTION TO THE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE VERDICT GENERATED HOPES THAT THE INCREASINGLY CONFIDENT COUNTRY, WITH ITS GROWING REGIONAL CLOUT AND SKYROCKETING ECONOMY, HAS MOVED BEYOND ITS DIVISIVE HISTORY.

IN ADVANCE OF THE RULING, THE GOVERNMENT SENT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF POLICE INTO THE STREETS, ARRESTED MORE THAN 10,000 PEOPLE TO KEEP THEM FROM INCITING VIOLENCE, AND PUSHED ANOTHER 100,000 TO SIGN AFFIDAVITS SAYING THEY WOULD NOT CAUSE TROUBLE.

THE DISPUTE OVER THE RELIGIOUS SITE IN THE CITY OF AYODHYA, 350 MILES EAST OF NEW DELHI, HAS BEEN ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST CONTENTIOUS ISSUES.

HINDUS ARGUED THAT THE BABRI MOSQUE ERECTED THERE BY MUSLIMS IN 1528 STOOD ON THE SITE OF THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE HINDU GOD RAMA, AND THEY FILED SUIT IN 1950.

IN 1992, WHILE THE LEGAL CASE LINGERED, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HINDU EXTREMISTS RIPPED APART THE MOSQUE WITH SPADES, CROWBARS AND THEIR BARE HANDS AS SECURITY FORCES WATCHED. A SMALL TENTED SHRINE TO RAMA NOW STANDS ON THE SITE.

THE DEMOLITION SPARKED NATIONWIDE RIOTS THAT KILLED 2,000 PEOPLE AND SHOOK THE FOUNDATIONS OF INDIA'S CLAIM TO BE A MULTIETHNIC, SECULAR DEMOCRACY.

THE HIGH COURT IN THE STATE OF UTTAR PRADESH RULED THAT THE 64-ACRE SITE SHOULD BE SPLIT, ONE-THIRD TO THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND THE REST TO TWO HINDU GROUPS.

THE HINDUS WILL KEEP THE AREA WHERE THE MOSQUE ONCE STOOD BECAUSE THE COURT DETERMINED IT WAS THE BIRTHPLACE OF RAMA AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SHOWED A TEMPLE HAD PREDATED THE MOSQUE, ACCORDING TO THE JUDGMENT.

HINDUS WANT TO BUILD AN ENORMOUS TEMPLE TO RAMA ON THE SITE, WHILE MUSLIMS WANT TO REBUILD THE MOSQUE. THE RULING WILL LIKELY FORCE BOTH GROUPS TO SCALE DOWN THOSE PLANS.

THE COURT SAID THE STATUS QUO SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AT THE SITE FOR THREE MONTHS.

ZAFFARYAB JILANI, A LAWYER FOR THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY SAID "IT'S NOT A VICTORY OR DEFEAT FOR ANY PARTY. IT'S A STEP FORWARD. WE HOPE THIS MATTER WILL BE RESOLVED." HE SAID HE WOULD APPEAL THE VERDICT TO THE SUPREME COURT.

H.S. JAIN, ONE OF THE HINDU PLAINTIFFS, ALSO SAID HE WOULD APPEAL BECAUSE "100 PERCENT OF THE LAND BELONGS TO HINDUS. WHY SPLIT IT?"

PUBLIC REACTION TO THE VERDICT WAS RESTRAINED.

IN AYODHYA, HINDUS RUSHED TO NEARBY TEMPLES TO GIVE THANKS, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE THROUGHOUT THE TOWN WAS PEACEFUL. IN LUCKNOW, WHERE THE DECISION WAS ISSUED, SHOPS WERE CLOSED, STREETS WERE DESERTED AND POLICE WERE ON PATROL IN THE HOURS AFTER THE VERDICT.

HINDU AND MUSLIM GROUPS IN MUMBAI, A FLASH POINT FOR PREVIOUS HINDU-MUSLIM VIOLENCE OVER THE TEMPLE DISPUTE, APPEALED FOR PEACE.

HAJI ARFAT SAID, "WE HOPE ALL PROBLEMS REGARDING MATTERS WITH HINDUS AND MUSLIMS CAN BE SETTLED IN THIS AMICABLE WAY."

MORE THAN 40,000 POLICE AND PARAMILITARY FORCES HAD FANNED OUT ACROSS THE CITY, LIQUOR STORES AND MANY SCHOOLS WERE CLOSED AND MANY BUSINESS SHUT DOWN EARLY IN ANTICIPATION OF THE RULING. BUT THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF VIOLENCE IN INDIA'S FINANCIAL CAPITAL.

MANY IN INDIA SAY THE COUNTRY HAS MOVED ON, WITH HINDU NATIONALIST GROUPS ON THE WANE AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION MORE INTERESTED IN THEIR EDUCATION AND CELL PHONES THAN COMMUNAL DIVISIONS.

EVEN HARD-LINERS CALLED FOR HEALING.

MOHAN BHAGWAT, SAID THE RULING SHOULD CLEAR THE WAY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAMA TEMPLE. "I WILL APPEAL TO MUSLIMS TO FORGET THE PAST. WE HAVE GOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT TOGETHER."

NARENDRA MODI, THE CHIEF MINISTER OF GUJARAT STATE THAT SAW SOME OF INDIA'S WORST RELIGIOUS RIOTING, SAID THE JUDGMENT WOULD "STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY'S UNITY."

MANY OF THOSE ACCUSED OF INCITING VIOLENCE TWO DECADES AGO ALSO APPEALED FOR PEACE.

LAL KRISHNA ADVANI, A PROMINENT LEADER OF THE HINDU NATIONALIST BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY, HAS BEEN CHARGED OVER HIS ALLEGED CONNECTION TO THE DEMOLITION, ALTHOUGH HIS TRIAL HAS BEEN MIRED FOR YEARS.

ON THURSDAY, HE PRAISED THE COUNTRY FOR RECEIVING THE VERDICT WITH MATURITY, AND SAID IT "OPENS A NEW CHAPTER FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION."

(MY COMMENT: NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME PASSES AND HOW MANY LIVES ARE LOST, "APES IN SHOES" JUST CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO LIVE IN PEACE LIKE SO MANY OTHER OF THE SO-CALLED "LOWER ANIMALS."

AS LONG AS HUMANS ARE DIVIDED AGAINST EACH OTHER BECAUSE OF BELIEF IN INVISIBLE GHOSTS, THIS MADNESS WILL CONTINUE).

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

FAMOUS QUOTES

THOMAS GRAY (1716 –1771) 54 YEARS.

HE WAS AN ENGLISH POET, CLASSICAL SCHOLAR AND PROFESSOR AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.

"...WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS, 'TIS FOLLY TO BE WISE."