

Introducing

Vinay

from

A

Thing

Called Destiny

Love story with a *Dharmic* Twist

A Thing Called Destiny

Vinay had literally provided to Vidushi an alternate view to many issues for which she had only heard a one-sided narrative. For instance, she initially supported the view that all women should also be permitted to enter and worship at the Sabarimala temple. The reason for her belief: everyone around her believed the same. After all, it was 2016, and India was a secular nation.

Vidushi had no idea about the temple's origin, history, practices, or anything else, nor had she made any effort to find out.

And that's when Vinay patiently explained to her, citing references from *Sri Bhuthanatha Upakyanam*, that denying women of a particular age group entry into Sabarimala temple was not misogynistic, patriarchy, or menstruation being considered impure. Instead, it was to maintain the distinction, individuality, and uniqueness that was exclusive to *Lord Ayyappa*, the presiding deity of the temple, where he is being worshipped in the form of a *naishtika brahmachari* (celibate until death).

To help her relate to the point, Vinay explained, 'Alright, have you been to any Lord Vishnu shrine and been offered *vibhuti*?'

Without sparing any thought, Vidushi replied, 'Yeah, yeah.'

And when Vinay continued to stare at her with a gentle smile, she became more thoughtful and answered measuredly, 'Matlab, I've been to a lot of temples, and I've applied *vibhuti*, wait...*vibhuti* is that ash *na*, that we apply on the forehead.' She asked just to confirm, even though she was absolutely aware of what it was.

'Hmm.'

'Then, I've definitely applied,' Vidushi said, regaining confidence.

'In a Lord Vishnu temple?' Vinay asked, and Vidushi could sense she had gotten it wrong from his look.

'Alright, maybe I haven't visited any shrine of Lord Vishnu offering *vibhuti* as *prasada*,' Vinay said, and his voice conveyed

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humility rather than sarcasm.

He explained that *vibhuti* is primarily offered in Shaivite shrines (belonging to Lord Shiva), and just because it falls under the bracket of Hinduism, one can't go to all the temples and expect *vibhuti* as *prasada*. It struck Vidushi how inattentive she had been to details like these. Upon introspection, she wasn't sure if she was offered *vibhuti* in a Vaishnavite (Lord Vishnu) shrine, ever, like ever.

'Similarly, there are temples like Dakshineswar Kali Maa and Muniyandi Swami Temple, where non-vegetarian food is offered to the temple deity as *prasada*, but just because it is offered in these temples, you can't go and claim that they do the same in Tirupati Balaji temple or Maa Vaishno Devi,' Vinay explained. 'One simply can't enforce a practice or custom everywhere because it's practiced elsewhere, and both fall within the broader umbrella of Hinduism.'

This time, Vidushi understood the implications such deeds could have. Forget about offering non-veg food to a temple deity, even having it in your possession anywhere within the temple grounds could cause a problem.

'The beauty of Hinduism, or our country, for that matter, lies in its diversity,' Vinay said. 'If you standardize all practices and customs without paying attention to the origin of that custom in the name of providing equality, there will be nothing left as diversity. There would be no uniqueness...no individuality...no originality.'

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So, I trust you would have got to know a little more about me and the kind of things I am interested in.

And unlike others, I wouldn't be asking you any question.

Rather, I would like you to hear from the person himself, from whom I have learnt not just about the Sabarimala temple issue, but a whole lot of other things related to *Bharat*.

He is none other than the eminent legal luminary and Supreme Court Advocate **J. Sai Deepak**. You can hear him articulate his views on the issue surrounding the Sabarimala temple at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQid899EjXc

Watch the full video here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1VyL6MCmFI

Additional references:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdI36JqXZUY

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab2hHYB9crY

And yes, the above excerpt in the novel has been directly inspired by the works of Adv. J. Sai Deepak.

And needless to say, please do stay connected at:

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