

## Pledge of Allegiance debate

The Fresno Bee

July 14, 2014

In a recent letter, Eric Parsons argued for the elimination of the word "God" from the Pledge of Allegiance by wondering how people would react if that word were to be replaced by Allah. The word "Allah" is a contraction of al-Ilah, where al means "the" and Ilah means "God" in Arabic. So Allah literally means "the God." Replacing God with Allah would then produce, "one nation under the God," instead of "one nation under God."

Which version is better? "One nation under God" is better because it does not specify which God; it could be the Christian God, the Jewish God, the Islamic God, etc.

As for his "one nation following the Tao, or Shiva," the former is Chinese, the latter is Sanskrit. We have outsourced enough to China and India; do we really need to outsource the English language now? God happens to be the generic word for deity in English. To take offense to that linguistic fact is to make light of genuine offense-taking. There is so much non-imaginary suffering going on in the world that I take offense to humanity's lack of caring for the real suffering of fellow humans.

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