

As members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP - World Hindu Organization), we are frequently asked questions regarding the Ram Janma Bhumi issue. The following are answers to some typical questions raised by a wide cross section of people.

We hope that these answers will successfully convey our point of view and further clarify the issue. The factual information contained in the answers has been obtained from the list of references given at the end. We are willing to have an open debate and discussion. For further questions, comments, or information please contact :

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What is the Ram Janma Bhumi controversy ?

The Ram Janma Bhumi issue is a dispute over a shrine located in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. All available records conclusively establish that a temple of Sri Ram once existed at the site where the shrine is located. Hindus believe this shrine to be the birthplace of Sri Ram and have offered prayer and worship there since ancient times.

In 1528, the Mughal invader Babar destroyed the temple and built a mosque on its foundation. This is established by Babar's own historical records, the Babar Nama, as well as other historical, archeological and legal records [1][5][7][11]. More than 100,000 Hindu devotees and saints were killed while defending the temple [2]. Since then, there have been seventy six confrontations between the Hindu devotees and the Mughal armies during the reign of Babar, Humayun, Akbar and Aurangzeb, in which more than 200,000 Hindus have lost their lives [2]. As a result of these struggles, Hindus were able to maintain a limited degree of control and continued regular offering of prayers at the site.

In 1949, at the request of some influential Muslims, the newly formed Government of India confiscated the building and locked the shrine, barring access to all people. Hindus continued their protests as well as their regular offering of prayers at the periphery of the temple. On 7 June 1984, the VHP formed the 'Ram Janma Bhumi Mukti Yagya Samiti' whose objective was to have the temple unlocked. This committee successfully proved to the authorities that the executive order to lock the shrine for an extended period was invalid, and also established that there was no judicial order which prevented the Hindus from offering prayers inside the shrine. Accordingly, on 1 February 1986, the shrine was unlocked and Hindus resumed offering prayers inside the shrine, and also resumed their struggle to regain full control of the site and re-build a magnificent temple.

The Hindus, represented by the VHP, want to rebuild the temple because it is widely considered as one of the most sacred places for the Hindus. They have never stopped offering prayers at the site.

On behalf of the Muslims, the Babari Masjid Action Committee claims that the existing structure is a mosque. Actually, the Muslims have not offered prayers (Namaz) at the site for at least the past century. This is because the structure, having been built over the foundation of a temple, does not meet the essential technical requirements of a mosque. For example, it does not have minarets and a pond or well etc.

Why is the VHP leading the Ram Janma Bhumi movement ?

The VHP believes that the reconstruction of the temple is a matter of principle involving the honor, self-respect, and dignity of the Hindu people. History testifies that Hindus have suffered severe religious, social and economic persecution under foreign invaders. The meek and docile attitude of tolerant Hindus was taken as a sign of weakness, and the fragmentation of the Hindu empire and society was repeatedly exploited by Muslim invaders. Time and again, many of the Muslim rulers and generals engaged in forceful proselytizing, destruction of temples and their conversion into mosques, unfair taxation, demolishing of world-renowned centers of learning including burning of libraries, looting, plundering, etc. The reconstruction of the temple will signify the execution of justice and the restoration of Hindu honor.

Moreover, the character of Sri Ram embodies the highest spiritual, social and personal ideals of Hindu culture. That is why he is revered as 'Maryada Purushottam'. The VHP believes that, in an independent India, where 85 % of the population is Hindu, the Hindus have the legitimate right to emancipate a demolished temple in honor of their highest ideal.

Mahatma Gandhi had written in 'Navjeevan' dated 17 July 1937 - "Mosques built after destroying temples are the sign of slavery and Muslims should hand over the same to Hindu society" [9].

Isn't Ram Janma Bhumi really a local issue ? Why has the VHP turned it into a national issue ?

From times immemorial, the deep influence of the personality of Sri Ram has shaped Hindu life and thoughts in every corner of India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. His life and character, as portrayed in the Ramayana, has been an inspiration to countless generations of Hindus all across India and even overseas. He has inspired much of the ethics, philosophy, art, music, literature, and culture throughout India. Indeed, to a truly Indian soul, regardless of caste or creed, he is perceived as a personification of Dharma or duty at every level, be it individual or national. In this sense, Sri Ram is truly a national figure who symbolizes the cultural and political unity of India. This is evidenced by the monumental success and nationwide popularity of the Television series on Ramayan. Accordingly, Sri Ram Janma Bhumi cannot remain just a local issue.

Sri Ram is also revered by millions of people in other Asian countries such as Thailand, Burma, Singapore, and more importantly Indonesia, where the overwhelming majority of the population is Muslim. The excellent performance of the Ramayana ballet by Indonesian Muslims is widely recognized. In Indonesia, as well as in many other South-East Asian countries, the influence of Hindu culture was widespread in ancient times. Subsequently, under the invasion of external forces, many of the people were converted to Islam.

The VHP believes that Muslims in India should take notice of the proper perspective displayed by the Indonesian Muslims. The Indonesians have taken the attitude that their religion is Islam but their culture is uniquely their own. The Indian Muslims could also demonstrate a similar attitude, specially since most of them have Hindu ancestors. Being Hindus, they revered Sri Ram as an epitome of Hinduism which dates back long before any other religion existed.

The VHP believes that the Sri Ram Janma Bhumi temple located in Ayodhya, for centuries worshipped as his birthplace, is clearly a national monument. It is the duty of the Indian Government to protect national monuments. If the government does not have the wisdom and courage to do so, then it becomes the responsibility of the citizens to take corrective action.

A national figure like Sri Ram cannot be compared to an invader like Babar. Even the renowned Muslim poet Iqbal has praised Sri Ram in the following manner,

*" Hai Ram ke wajood pe Hindustan ko Naaz. Ahl-e-Nazar Samajhte hain usko
Imam-e-Hind"*

("India is proud of the existence of Ram. The intelligent consider him as the spiritual leader of India")

Why are the Muslims opposing the Ram Janma Bhumi movement?

Not all Muslims in India are opposed to VHP's stand on this issue. Muslims belonging to the Shiah sect have, in principle, agreed to hand over the shrine to the Hindus. Some have even offered to move the mosque themselves. A group of Shia Muslims led by Khumaini Arabi Darul Uloom of Lucknow has offered consecrated bricks to the Hindus and stated that "We want to tell the Government that the erection of Sri Ram Janma Mandir in Ayodhya can be a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity in this way" [10].

Another Muslim, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, has stated that " The Muslims should know that they are living in Bharatvarsh which is not an Islamic Nation where fatvas are issued. They should learn to honor the religious sentiments of 65 crore Hindus. The Hindus regard Lord Ram as their supreme God and revere His birth place as Kaba of Muslims. It, therefore, becomes the duty of every Indian Muslim to handover the Ram Janma Bhumi to Hindus" [10]. The VHP has received similar understanding and support from many other Muslims.

However, a vocal Sunni Muslim minority, headed by politicians like Syed Shahabuddin, is opposed to handing over the shrine to the Hindus. Their apparent reason for opposition is the fear of Hindu domination. The real reason is that they want to use this issue as political leverage to extract more special privileges and concessions from the ruling parties who are always willing to appease them for their block votes.

What has the VHP done to reassure the minorities of its intentions and to address their fears and concerns ?

Since 1984, the VHP has held several meetings with the leaders of the minority and continuously emphasized its desire for a peaceful solution. To prove their intentions, the VHP has offered to move the mosque to any other suitable location while maintaining its integrity and sanctity.

Although the invaders have destroyed many temples and erected mosques superimposed over them, the VHP is requesting that only three of the most important temples be returned to the Hindus, namely, Sri Ram Janma Bhumi in Ayodhya, Sri Krishna Janma Bhumi in Mathura, and Kashi Vishwanath temple in Kashi (Varanasi). This should calm any fears regarding Hindus wanting to engage in perpetual conflict with the Muslims.

How widespread is the Ram Janma Bhumi movement ?

For the sacred task of building the temple, the VHP invited the cordial participation of the entire Indian community, including those living abroad. It was suggested that interested communities, villages, towns and organizations could symbolize their consensus and spiritual cooperation with the movement by contributing consecrated bricks for the construction of the temple. Such symbolic consecrated bricks, known as Ramshilas, have been worshipped in 375,000 places across India. More than 50 % of the Indian villages have participated with nearly 500 million people taking part in the ceremonies. Several Muslim individuals and Muslim organizations have also participated in the ceremonies. Also, Ramshilas have been worshipped in 50 countries having a sizeable population of Hindus. By and large, the Ramshila poojan ceremony in India was conducted peacefully and in a harmonious environment.

Babar destroyed the temple 500 years ago ; why create problems now ?

A large majority of the Indian population, represented by the VHP, consider this issue quintessential to our sense of national pride and system of social justice. In the heart, mind and soul of the Hindus, this issue simply cannot be ignored. The passage of time does not make it any easier for the Hindus to bear the barbaric injustice and insult, even more so because this is a unique shrine and pilgrimage, not just any other temple. There can only be one Sri Ram Janma Bhumi and therefore there can be only one such temple.

In fact, the Hindus have never forgotten this issue during the reign of the foreign invaders. They have continually struggled since 1528 to regain the temple. Now that the nation is free from the shackles of slavery, and is celebrated as the largest democracy in the world, its vast majority have the right to restore their revered temple to its ancient glory.

What is the proof that Ram ever existed ?

Sri Ram has been worshipped in India since times immemorial. Hindus have celebrated Dushera and Diwali long before any other religion existed. For such an ancient tradition and faith practiced through millennia, demanding a historical proof of existence is absurd. The birth and life of Sri Ram are described in the epic Ramayana, which has been handed down from one generation to the next. Sri Ram exists in every true Hindu soul and in the life of the nation as a whole. This ageless omnipresence is even more powerful and meaningful than the pages of history.

In any case, whether or not Sri Ram ever existed is completely irrelevant to this issue. The fact is that the Sri Ram Janma Bhumi temple definitely existed. There is ample proof available in historical, archeological and legal records. This issue is not about the existence of Sri Ram, it is about the destruction of the temple.

Why doesn't the VHP accept the ruling of the courts on this matter ?

The VHP thinks that this is not a legal matter ; it is a social issue involving the faith and cultural heritage of millions of people. Hence it cannot be decided by the courts.

Moreover, the legal system in India is open to manipulation and interference from the Government which is constantly trying to appease the Muslims for their block votes. Hence genuine impartiality of the courts cannot be assumed.

Hypothetically, even if we let the courts decide and the court rules in favor of the VHP, will the Government honor the spirit of the court's decision ? The Congress Government has set a disgusting precedence in the Shah Bano case in which the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Shah Bano. Ever anxious to appease the Muslims, the Congress Government passed an act in the parliament negating the effect of the Supreme Court's ruling.

This is a matter in which the Government must respect the genuine sentiments and just wishes of the majority.

Isn't the VHP deliberately inciting the people, thus leading to communal riots ?

Numerous communal riots occurred in India long before the Ram Janma Bhumi issue surfaced in 1984. At times, events as trivial as a hockey or cricket match between India and Pakistan have caused communal riots. Ordinary self-respecting citizens are not involved in these riots. They are generally caused by hooligans who are paid by political parties or other unpatriotic, selfish interest groups.

The VHP has categorically condemned the use of force or communal violence as a vehicle to achieve its aims. In fact, the VHP has demanded a full judicial inquiry in all incidences where its involvement has been alleged. Note that the VHP has insisted on a judicial inquiry and not a magisterial inquiry, because a magistrate is more likely to be influenced by the government. The VHP is willing to fully cooperate with anyone to prevent communal riots. If the Indian Government had even a shred of evidence to prove the VHP's involvement, by now they could easily have prosecuted the VHP and convicted it.

In general, the Hindus have not initiated communal riots. However, in recent times, the Hindus have changed the manner in which they respond when provoked by the Muslims. Prior to the emergence of the VHP as a national organization, the Hindus had no choice but to passively tolerate the attacks by the well organized Muslims. Now the Hindus have decided not to passively tolerate the situation but to respond in an organized and effective manner.

We believe that the Hindus have always shown acceptance and goodwill towards people of all faiths and the Muslims must also reciprocate by respecting the sentiments of the Hindus. The Hindus can no longer be taken for granted, either by the politicians or by the Muslims. Also, the apparent fragmentation of the Hindu society can no longer be used to behave defiantly with the Hindus. The Hindus will never deliberately commit injustice against any other minority, but if some minority intentionally harms the Hindus, a fitting reply will be given.

What are the VHP's overall objectives and how do they affect the minorities ?

The overall objective of the VHP is to organize Hindus in a positive and dynamic manner towards the reconstruction of a new Hindu society based on social equality, social justice, and the highest ideals of Hindu culture. The VHP wants to reform and unify Hindu society by purging its many evils such as caste, untouchability, dowry, apathy, etc.

Everyone can appreciate that this is an extremely difficult challenge because Hindu society is severely fragmented by caste, sect, language, and provincial differences. Also, many of its beliefs, practices and customs are deeply rooted in dogma, rituals, and blind faith. The VHP wants a genuine transformation of the Hindu society through the process of education based on a scientific and rational outlook, combined with the sublime values of Hindu culture.

The VHP has a positive outlook towards the entire Indian society. There is no intention to inflict harm on any minority group. The VHP believes that the Hindus need to set their own house in order. That is why the VHP has undertaken the task of social upliftment and integrated development amongst the poorest and most neglected sections of the Hindu Society such as Vanvasis (tribals) and Harijans. These people are the product of centuries of cruel neglect by the rest of Hindu society which was too preoccupied with its own welfare and thus failed to extend common benefits and privileges available to mainstream Hindus such as education, medical care, social recognition, economic opportunities, etc.

The VHP has initiated and is managing about 2500 development projects in urban slums, tribal sections and rural areas of India. These projects provide basic necessities such as drinking water, help with farming and agriculture, medical care, vocational training, etc. The projects stress self-help through education, particularly for the young generation. Thousands of VHP volunteers have given up lucrative jobs in favor of serving the poor in backward areas. In VHP's development projects, all people are equally served regardless of their caste, creed, or religion. Many Muslims and Christians have benefited from VHP's projects.

In Delhi, the VHP runs an orphanage for Sikh children whose parents were killed in the 1984 massacres. These children are being raised in the highest traditions of the Sikh faith.

The VHP's development work amongst the poor, as well as its active campaign against social evils such as dowry, sati, untouchability, etc has not received the publicity it deserves. The VHP is certain that through its sincere constructive social work, the entire Indian nation will eventually appreciate its positive outlook towards all Indians. Particularly, the minorities will realize that their interests will be better served by genuine Hindus rather than by perverted secularists.

The VHP believes that the Muslim organizations should also take similar constructive steps to reform their society. In a recent interview [3], Maulana Wahid-Uddin Khan, Chairman of the Delhi based Islamic Center for Research, has clearly stated that the entire Muslim leadership in India is motivated only by political self-interest. He said that politicians like Syed Shahabuddin, who pretend to be champions of the Muslim cause, have not built a single school for the welfare of the Muslims.

The VHP's objective is to create a national renaissance which enlightens every aspect of our social, cultural and national life. A well organized and enlightened Hindu society will serve the entire nation's interest, including the minorities. It is a tragedy that a pretence of secularism has placed this renaissance in a political tug of war with a part of the Muslim community. If Sri Ram cannot be considered as a national hero in India then who else can be considered so ? The Government must not view everything purely in communal or political terms. Some commonly accepted national values and principles have to be established if India is to become a great nation again. Sri Ram is an incarnation of all the right values and principles we need in order to become a great nation.

Isn't the VHP a Hindu fundamentalist organization which spreads communalism ?

In the media, the VHP is often referred to as a 'Hindu fundamentalist' organization. This is due to a lack of in-depth understanding about the VHP, and also due to skepticism about its overall objectives and intentions.

The media and other opinion makers of Indian society operate on a peculiar notion - any institution which calls itself 'secular' is praiseworthy, but if it calls itself 'Hindu' it must be communal and fundamentalist. They would like to equate Hindu beliefs with Islamic or Christian fundamentalism. Such over-simplifications are the cause of much confusion and harmful division of opinion. They overlook the fact that secularism in India has its origins in Hinduism. A broad-minded outlook towards all religious faiths is also one of India's major contributions to world civilization. Secularism is an innate quality of Hindus. The rejuvenation of enlightened Hinduism in India will strengthen secularism and not communalism, as often implied by the media.

Hinduism cannot be compared to any other religion because it is not a religion in the usual sense of the word. Hinduism is a way of life based on certain timeless principles. Unlike other religions, it is not based on the teachings of a particular prophet or a particular book. Therefore it is very broad and receptive in its outlook. Hinduism not only views other religions with tolerance and fraternal understanding, but also accepts them as equally valid paths to reach higher levels of spiritual evolution.

Generally, what is unique about Hindus is that they are never fanatic about their religion, even when they are provoked or threatened. Hinduism embraces all religions. Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism were welcomed in India with open arms. We, as Hindus, are proud of this tradition. Even during the times in history when Hindu power had established ascendancy over the Muslim rulers, Hindu Kings such as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj treated other religions with respect and dignity. He could have unleashed the same brutal forces as his Muslim counterparts had done, but he chose the path of mutual respect. In return, he won the loyalty of many Muslims who served as commanders in his army.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Hinduism strives for the betterment of all religions and through them the entire world." The VHP wholeheartedly believes in this universal outlook of Hinduism. In this context, the term 'Hindu fundamentalism' is somewhat meaningless, particularly since it cannot be compared with Islamic or Christian fundamentalism. In any case, the VHP's universal outlook should not pose a threat to anyone. Its demand for justice and defense of legitimate rights cannot be called fundamentalist, simply because it is convenient to do so.

What is the role of political parties in this movement ? Aren't the political parties really exploiting the religious feelings of the masses ?

In India, perhaps more than elsewhere, politics permeates every aspect of national life. This is true of religion also. However, Sri Ram Janma Bhumi is not so much of a political or even religious issue. Rather, it is a matter of principle involving the honor, self respect, and dignity of the Hindu people, the overwhelming majority of India. The VHP believes that this principle cannot be bargained or shortchanged for political ends, regardless of which political parties might be involved.

With regard to restoration of temples, the Congress party has set a favorable precedence. The Somnath temple, demolished by another foreign invader, Mahmud Ghaznavi, was reconstructed immediately after Independence with the blessings of the President Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Home Minister Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel, since it was a matter of national honor and prestige. The decision for its re-construction was taken by the Cabinet under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Hindus have the right to expect the same consideration from the present Government also.

It is true that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fully supported VHP's stand on this issue. However, the BJP did not make this as a central issue of its campaign. The VHP would have continued its agitation for Ram Janma Bhumi regardless of BJP's support. There are those who see this as BJP's exploitation of people's religious feelings. This is a very cynical view. In a democracy, it is the responsibility of the political parties to respond to the legitimate needs and concerns of its people. The BJP's unprecedented success at the polls clearly indicates its responsiveness to the Indian people.

In spite of being a secular democracy, why is there so much social unrest, communal tension and violence in India ?

According to its Constitution, India is a secular democracy. However, the Government of India, which has been formed by the Congress Party for most of the 43 years since independence, has deliberately and consistently abused the principle of secularism to an extent that its current interpretation has been completely distorted. Secularism is "the view that consideration of the present well-being of mankind should predominate over religious considerations in civil affairs or public education [12]". For its own political ends, the Congress party has interpreted secularism in just the opposite sense, by establishing appeasement of religious minorities as its fundamental policy. Rather than viewing the religious minorities as human beings, the Congress party and its clones view them as a vote bank to be exploited for political expediency, regardless of the cost to the nation.

Under the pretext of secularism, the Congress party has granted the minorities, particularly the Muslims, the right to be governed by their own laws. In return, the Muslim politicians have also realized that the Congress party (or its clones) cannot maintain political power without their support, and thus take advantage of the situation by inciting their Muslim followers to behave defiantly with the Hindus. Since the Hindu votes are fragmented by caste and provincial considerations, the Hindus, in spite of being the majority, watch helplessly. In addition to the selfish political games played by the Congress party and its clones, there remain the persistent problems of mass illiteracy, widespread poverty, severe unemployment and under-employment, all of which compound the frustrations of the people, thus leading to tensions and violence.

The concept of secularism has been so perverted that it has become synonymous with anti-Hinduism. For a Hindu to be considered 'secular', nationalistic and respectable, he must deny his Hindu identity. When Muslims and Christians organize themselves, behave assertively, and openly declare that they are proud of their religion, this is seen as religious 'devotion'. If Hindus do the same, they are branded as 'communal' and 'fundamentalist'. The slightest assertion of Hindu unity, even if it is for a noble and legitimate purpose, is perceived as provoking the minorities and creating fear amongst them.

The largest contributing factor to social unrest, as well its largest beneficiary, is the Congress Party and its clones, who deliberately incite riots through paid hooligans and then appoint themselves as the sole guardians of minority interest. A fear has been deliberately created in the minds of the Muslims that they are in danger unless the Congress party protects them.

Even a casual observer of Indian events will draw the inevitable conclusion that the Congress party and government has been responsible for creating circumstances which ultimately lead to social unrest and communal violence. For example, it is well known that Bhindranwale, who instigated the killing of many innocent people in Punjab, was brought to the forefront of politics by Indira Gandhi. Her Government looked the other way while hundreds of innocent people were being brutally murdered. The situation got out of hand, eventually leading to Operation Bluestar.

Also, it is widely recognized that the 1984 communal violence in Delhi which followed Indira Gandhi's assassination, in which many innocent Sikhs were brutally massacred, was instigated by Government politicians. That is why a complete investigation was never conducted and preliminary findings were never made public. Only a Government which is in collusion with the perpetrators can allow such heinous crimes to go unpunished. It is to the credit of the Sikhs as well as Hindus that they recognized the close traditional ties between the two communities and there have not been any significant riots. The current situation in Punjab is a result of 'divide and rule' partisan politics masterminded by the center, as well as the result of an on-going power struggle between the center and the state. There is no serious religious conflict between the Hindu and the Sikh people. In fact, most Hindus regard the Sikhs as an integral part of the overall Hindu community and gratefully recognize the monumental sacrifices made by the Sikh Gurus for the preservation of Hindu Dharma.

Another example of the Government creating circumstances which lead to communal violence is the current situation in Kashmir. By indefinitely keeping Article 370 of the Constitution, which grants a special status to Kashmir, the Indian Government has effectively isolated Kashmir from the rest of the country. The Muslims living there do not consider themselves as part of India and the Hindus are being driven out of the valley by the terrorists. The disastrous consequences and the severe toll on human life are self evident. The situation continues to deteriorate with the possibility of being drawn into an armed conflict with Pakistan. In addition to the many innocent people that are already being killed, thousands of Indian soldiers may have to lay down their lives. Even after paying this heavy toll, there is no assurance that the problem will be resolved. All this because India's politicians continue to place their own interests above the national interest.

What is the VHP's view of secularism and the communal situation in India ?

The VHP believes that Hinduism is intrinsically secular and therefore, external mechanisms to make it secular are not necessary. India's history testifies that Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity were welcomed in India with open arms, and they have flourished in its system of religious freedom. This was possible only because of the uniqueness of Hinduism which embraces all other religions. Hindus, born and raised in this tradition of plurality, are inherently secular and broad minded. Many saints and sages of India, such as Sri Guru Nanak Devji, have stated that all religions ultimately converge to the same higher reality. This message is deeply ingrained in the Hindu psyche.

However, we must look into our long history with the Muslims and try to understand why peace and communal harmony have not been achieved in spite of our liberal secularism. In recent history, the best example of Hindu liberalism was Mahatma Gandhi. It will be difficult to find a nobler apostle of peace, non-violence, and religious tolerance in the history of the world. And yet, despite his best efforts, he could not prevent the partitioning of India on religious grounds. He also could not prevent the violent and barbaric communal bloodbath which followed the partition. These communal clashes were amongst the most destructive ever recorded.

We believe that Indians must learn an important lesson from our history. Peace and harmony cannot be achieved through appeasement of minorities, nor can a weak leadership impose communal unity if some community is determined not to cooperate. In the interest of peace and communal unity, Mahatma Gandhi was willing to offer a disproportionately large number of concessions to the Muslim League, but his goodwill and understanding were not reciprocated. Without any strength to back-up convictions, mere talk of peace and harmony is futile because it is perceived as weakness.

All Indians must accept the fact that 85% of the Indian population is Hindu. More importantly, it should also be recognized that India is secular because of its majority Hindu population. Pakistan and Bangladesh, which share the same history, are not secular and are solving their religious minority problem by gradually eliminating minorities. In fact, most countries in which Muslims are in a majority are not secular states. The plight of minorities in these countries is a sad story of the violation of human rights, the non-existence of religious freedom and the stripping of human dignity.

In contrast, the minorities in India enjoy complete religious freedom. The Indian constitution even provides a separate personal law for the Muslims. India is perhaps the only country in the world with such laws. The roots of this secularism are in Hinduism.

We fully recognize that the majority community has the responsibility to protect the basic rights and legitimate interests of the minorities. We believe that the Hindus have more than adequately shouldered this responsibility in the past and are gladly willing to do so in the future also. However, we believe that the granting of ever increasing special rights and privileges to the minorities for political expediency is fundamentally wrong. The Government must not view every situation from a majority versus minority perspective. It must adhere to some basic national principles and values. Rather than establishing minority rights, the Government must establish human rights. Other Hindu minorities such as Harijans and Vanvasis, who are also exploited for their votes, will also benefit from this approach. Only by electing a Government whose convictions, policies and actions are firmly rooted in human rights can India hope to solve its complex social problems.

How can communal harmony be achieved while maintaining secularism ?

It is clear that the overall situation in India calls for radical changes in the social, economic and political fields. Such changes cannot be achieved by a single individual; a purposeful organization of people is necessary. In a democracy, it is the responsibility of the citizens to organize themselves to bring about positive changes in a peaceful and constructive manner. Since 85 % of the population is Hindu, the primary responsibility for bringing about change must also be shouldered by the Hindus. The logical place for the Hindus to start is by first setting their own house in order. It is in this spirit of reforming and rejuvenating Hindu society that the VHP has begun the task of peaceful and purposeful unification of the Hindus. We believe that this is the first pre-condition, not only for communal harmony, but also for other positive changes in all aspects of our national life.

An important basis for unity is the common thread of Hinduism which runs through the various castes, sects, sub-sects, societies, linguistic and provincial groups. Even though the various groups have branched-out over time, acquiring an identity of their own, the root of the tree remains the timeless principle of Sanatana Dharma. All groups draw inspiration from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagvad Geeta, as well as from personalities such as Sri Ram and Sri Krishna. They also share a common ancestry, common culture, common history, and a even a common sense of nationhood. This rich heritage of the Hindus is a treasure which belongs to everyone and can serve as a tangible unifying force.

Another equally important basis for unity is the commonality of the modern day concerns shared by everyone such as, social justice, social equality, human rights, education, industrial and economic development, environmental protection, etc. These are issues which we all must come to terms with, particularly in today's complex, interdependent and shrinking world.

As the Hindu society becomes more unified, organized and socially conscious, it will also realize its responsibility to elect leadership, not only in the political sphere but in all other spheres, on the basis of merit and national interests. The current practice of electing leadership on the basis of caste, sect, religion and provincial considerations will be gradually abandoned.

Only a competent and truly nationalistic leadership, which places the nation's interest above all personal and party interests, will have the strength, convictions and vision to formulate and implement policies which can bring about real progress in the nation. Such a Government will view all individuals as human beings first, regardless of their religion. Religion will be viewed as a personal choice of the individual and will not have any bearing on his/her public life. When the Government views its people in the proper perspective and stops exploiting their religious identities, a new milestone towards communal harmony will be reached. Of course, the Government will also have to take similar radical steps to deal with the other problems poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment.

**Some Frequently Asked Questions
on
Shri Rama Janmabhoomi
of Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India**

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Preface

There is a law of life that :

“There is no Reality : There is only Perception”.

Goebbels the Chief of Hitler’s propoganda machine exploited this law to the hilt and propounded a unique theory :

“Repeat a lie six times and it shall begin to sound as truth”.

This theory has since assumed diabolical proportions in the present times where falsehood flourishes while truth lies buried deep under the avalanche of Goebbelsian propoganda.

One such National lie was perpetrated by the then Prime Minister Sri Narasimha Rao in the evening of 6th December, 1992 when he announced on National T.V. network that –

“The Babri Masjid has been destroyed”

Hundreds of leaders of all non-BJP/non-Shiv Sena parties avidly lapped up this lie and went on a condemning spree targeting the VHP, RSS, Bajrang Dal and the BJP for the murder of the mosque. The Goebbels theory was working over-time.

It seems Sri Narasimha Rao forgot about the even more powerful other Law of life, which keeps resounding in every emblem of this nation “SATYAMEVA JAYATE” — “TRUTH TRIUMPHS”.

Thus, when the Rao’s Government’s very own White Paper was published, it was compelled to confess two crucial truths:

- 1) Commencing the White Paper with the Chapter “OVERVIEW”, in the very second para, it had to admit that: **“In effect therefore, from December 1949 till 6th December, 1992, the structure had not been used as a MOSQUE”.** (This means that what got destroyed on 6th December, 1992 **WAS NOT A MOSQUE AT ALL**).
- 2) That nowhere in the entire 122 page WHITE PAPER could the Government dare to call the demolished structure “The Babri Masjid”. Throughout the text, it has been variously called the “RJB-BM complex”, “the disputed structure”, “the disputed shrine”, but “Babri Masjid” **not even once**. In fact, in the Chapter captioned “BACKGROUND”, it has been categorically stated that the structure concerned

“is now commonly referred to as ‘Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid’” (not Babri Masjid).

3)

After December 1949, on 15th March, 1953, the Civil Judge had confirmed the injunction granted by the lower Court on 19th June, 1950 restraining all and sundry from removing the idol or interfering in any way with the right to worship the deity. Thus, since 23rd December, 1949, **the demolished structure was housing a COURT APPROVED functioning temple.** In this very judgement, the Court had significantly recorded: “.. at least from 1936 onwards, the Muslims have neither used the site as a mosque nor offered prayers there, . . . and since December 1949, the Hindus have been performing their pooja, etc. on the disputed site”. Thus, that structure was not only NO MOSQUE; it was actually housing a functioning temple for over forty years at the point of time it got destroyed.

Despite the above, thanks to the Goebbels theory, that structure is still being universally called “THE BABRI MASJID” and the Hindus are to this day carrying the reprehensible stigma of having destroyed the worship place of another religion – a charge as heinous as eating beef for a Hindu. That any Prime Minister could stoop to uttering such an outrageous lie, which not only caused the death of innumerable innocent persons, but even sullied the image of the whole Nation in the eyes of the world, is beyond comprehension. Even if he was unwilling, for the sake of the Muslim vote bank, to call it a functioning temple, he can possibly have no explanation for not calling it the “Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid” complex. But then, if he had not spoken the lie, then no large-scale bloodshed would have followed and without that kind of bloodshed, he could have neither been able to ban the VHP, RSS and Bajrang Dal (which ban was in any case rejected as illegal by the Court), nor would he have been able to dismiss all the BJP Governments in a single stroke and cripple the BJP who had humbled his party at the polls. **But for this lie, all his planned Political Dividends would have been lost.** He, therefore, had to lie no matter if it disgraced the whole Nation.

For those who never visited Ayodhya at any point of time (and this includes not only Indian citizens, but all the people of the world) because of statements made day in and day out in the media, a “perception” has been created that while there is a Ram Mandir at the Janmabhoomi site a Babri Masjid also existed somewhere in very close proximity of the temple which was vandalized by Karsevaks on 6th December, 1992. People have reacted with incredulity when they are told that there was just one spot with a single structure which was called Ram Janmabhoomi temple by the Hindus and Babri Masjid by the Muslims. Many have been apt to dismiss this truth by dubbing it as a VHP ploy to create confusion.

Let alone others, when none other than the Home Minister Shri S.B. Chavan visited the temple during the climactic weeks of 1992, he paid his obeisance to Ram Lala, gave Rs.200 as his ‘*dakshina*’ (offering) to the deity and then turned to the then DIG-Faizabad standing next to him, and expressed his desire to be taken to the Babri Masjid. The shocked DIG politely told the Home Minister that he was already standing “inside the

Babri Masjid”. **“But this is a temple” he retorted softly. “This is all that exists Sir”**, replied the DIG. **“The Hindus call it the Ram Janmabhoomi temple and the Muslims call it the Babri Masjid.”** It was an extremely embarrassing moment for Shri Chavan, but then he could hardly be blamed, because never having visited Ayodhya earlier, he had been a victim of the ‘perception’ the media had created. The crowning performance under the same “perception” however, came from Sri Narasimha Rao himself **when he declared from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15th August, 1992 that “We shall build a grand temple of Ram – BUT – the Masjid cannot be disturbed”**. He was, as though, promising a boiling hot cup of tea to the Hindus and an ice cold cup of coffee to the Muslims simultaneously in the same cup. But then, sincerity or truth are redundant for the followers of Goebbels theory.

The Goebbels theory thus succeeded in convincing his Cabinet colleagues, his party members and the elitist columnists that it was a Masjid that had been destroyed. Everyone, yes ! even the staunch protagonists of the temple sometimes call that structure “the Babri Masjid”. Such then is the power of Goebbels theory if it is practiced consistently and relentlessly.

The reason why the Samskriti Raksha Manch has chosen to come out with this booklet has been the latest announcement by the Marg Darshak Mandal informing the Nation that by the 12th March, 2002, all obstacles that are coming in the way of Temple construction need to be removed because the actual construction program will commence on any auspicious date and time after 12th March, 2002.

As this sensitive issue concerns the whole Nation and as so many truths about the movement lie buried deep under the Goebbelsian mountains of falsehoods it has become imperative to share with the entire Nation, authenticated truths relating to the important points that have been raised from time to time; in the form of answers to questions that have been asked by the people as well as the members of the media.

True, the issue of Temple construction is not in the NDA agenda and this is as it should be. Such a work cannot possibly be included in the agenda of any Government in a secular polity. The issue squarely belongs to the entire Hindu community and can possibly not be wished away. The categorical support of over 99.7 million signatories to a petition submitted to the President on 10th May, 1993 demanding the construction of a Ram Temple at the Ram Janma Bhoomi site, can just not be ignored.

The Samskriti Raksha Manch (SRM) has devoted hundreds and hundreds of hours of research and intermittent interaction with the VHP and Hindu religious leaders to ensure that what SRM publishes has on it the stamp of truth and authenticity. Accordingly, every reader is welcome to challenge the veracity of any statement in the answers and the Manch shall only be too happy to come up with convincing answers to all doubts raised.

A truth cannot be truth unless it logically and convincingly answers all possible doubts.

As mentioned in the body of this book, the issue of liberation of the temples of Mathura and Kashi and the construction of a grand Rama temple befitting the Godly stature of Rama today offers a unique opportunity to the Muslims for commencing an era of enormous love and understanding between the Hindus and Muslims of this country. The decision has to be made of the kind of relationship the Muslim community aspires to foster with the Hindus. It is yet time to grab the opportunity and help to create a Bharat of which every citizen feels immensely proud.

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