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Category : [March 1993](#)

Published by Anonymous on Mar. 02, 1993

A Question Of National Honor

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Firstly, it must be clearly understood that Ayodhya is not merely a religious issue; it is a question of national honor. Babur, a ferocious Mongol invader, had willfully broken the temple that commemorated the birthplace of Lord Ram and then the bigoted king had gotten a mosque built on it. The Babri structure was a blot not only over the birthplace of Lord Ram but also on the honor, the conscience, the self-esteem of the Hindus. Yet Hindus have tried to accommodate the demands of the Muslims. The best solution was offered by L.K. Advani. He suggested relocation of the so-called mosque by the Hindus themselves, with expenses borne by them.

But the intransigent Muslim leadership and other parties spurned the idea, though it could have brought an amicable settlement. For, the relocation of mosques is not something that could be called unheard of, even in the Islamic world. In Egypt, when the Aswan dam was being built, any number of mosques were not only relocated, but also demolished. Similarly, in Pakistan when the new capital Islamabad was built, several mosques were razed to the ground. Even in Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam, the mazaar built by Bilal, the first black disciple of Prophet Mohammed, was demolished by the authorities.

Hindus were disgusted and outraged to learn that obstinate Muslim leaders were absolutely insouciant to the Hindu's sentiments: countless mosques could be demolished in the Islamic countries but one abandoned, dilapidated mosque could not be allowed to be relocated in India - one in which no prayers were held by Muslims for decades and even according to the Islamic tradition, had ceased to be a mosque.

So what happened on December 6, 1992, was that the lava of Hindu discontent,

anger and rage erupted at Ayodhya. The structure came down, and that gave a big handle to all the anti-Hindu forces to launch a vicious attack on the BJP. Thousands of Hindus have been thrown into jails; a witch hunt has been ordered to trace the people who took part in the demolition; the official electronic media is busy giving biased, anti-Hindu news and views; the press has joined the anti-Hindu chorus, thus transforming the anti-BJP campaign into a media blitzkrieg against the Hindus.

The press, especially the elitist English press, has always ridiculed Hindus' dream - a Hindu nation. Journalists, along with other de-Indianized intellectuals of the country - who have remarkable say in the system - lose no opportunity to lampoon and besmirch the people committed to the ideals of Hindu nationalism. The greatest allegations against the Hindu nationalists are that they are anti-secular and fascist. Nothing could be farther from the truth, for, as everybody knows, Hinduism is inherently pluralistic, tolerant and as such secular and anti-fascist.

Interestingly, the intellectuals who are condemning the Hindu nationalists in the wake of the Ayodhya demolition never uttered a word though scores of temples were destroyed and lakhs of Hindus were driven out of their ancestral homes in Kashmir, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan. For these intellectuals and their patron politicians, secularism means Muslim appeasement.

Weren't there excesses in the wake of the French Revolution? But did they malign the sanctity or significance of the ideals - liberty, equality and fraternity - of the revolution?

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