

WHEN MATTERS OF FAITH PREVAIL OVER RULE OF LAW: THE CASE OF BABRI MASJID

A brief history of Babri Masjid-Ram Janmbhoomi Dispute

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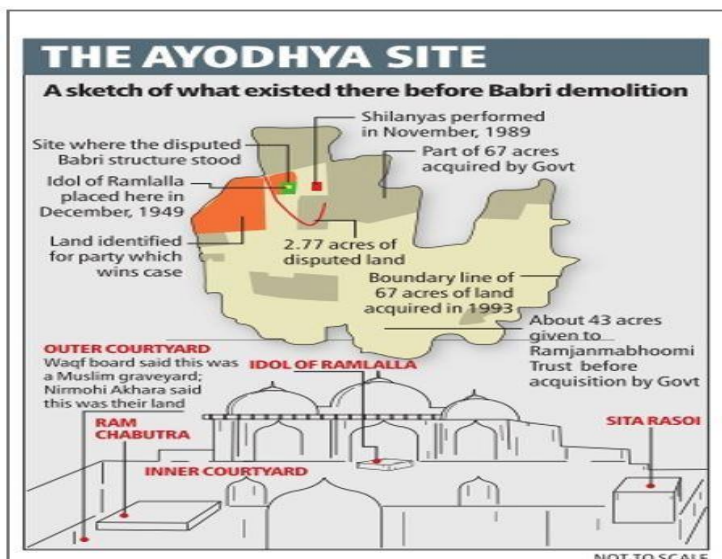
**Remember, Remember, the 6th
of December,
The axes, the hammers,
That would dismember a
mosque and a nation that has
since then-
only walked on embers.
-Akhil Katyal**

WHEN MATTERS OF FAITH **PREVAIL OVER RULE OF** **LAW: THE CASE OF BABRI** **MASJID**

The destruction of Babri Masjid on December 6th, 1992 became a major flash point in post-colonial India, signifying the arrival of the Hindu communal Right into National Politics. The Supreme Court has completed hearing the matter, and is set to deliver its judgment in mid-November, 2019.

This piece is concerned with tracing the extraordinary legal journey the dispute over the land took, through multiple litigations. The dispute went through Six Legal phases, the first, in the colonial period and the rest post-colonial. Here, the emphasis is on events after Independence, wherein Indians ceased to be colonial subjects and became right bearing citizens, shortly the Constitution of India came into effect, wherein India committed itself to be a Secular State.

With the exception of the colonial phase, this booklet demonstrates that all legal phases went on to Judicially legitimize several crimes that eventually lead to a historic mosque being converted into a temple, by ignoring very basic foundational principles of our legal system. Before moving ahead, it is important to have a look at the map of the disputed area, ¹ which reveals that an outer courtyard containing idols (Ram Chabutra) co-existed with the Mosque then before its demolition.



¹ Railing and grill was placed by the Colonial British Government specifying the inner portion to be used by Muslims and the outer portion must be used by Hindus in 1857

Legal phase 1- Colonial Era

The first suit relevant to the disputed area was filed in 1885, by the Nirmohi Akhara² Chief priest Mahanth Raghubar Das in the first suit in the Trial Court/Sub-Judge, Faizabad³; seeking permission to construct a temple over Chabutra Janam Asthan (Ram Chandra's Birthplace). It must be noted that this claim was made for an **area outside the current disputed area**. The Court was of the opinion that granting permission to construct a temple would result riots between the two communities. This judgment was appealed by the plaintiff, wherein the first and second appellate court upheld the trial court verdict, stating some important observations in the Second appeal :-

"The Hindus seem to have got very limited rights of access to certain spots within the precincts adjoining the mosque and they have for a series of years been persistently trying to increase those rights and to erect buildings on two spots in the enclosure: (a) Sita ki Rasoi(b) Ram Chandar ki Janam Bhumi..... The Executive authorities have persistently refused these encroachments and

² Nirmohi Akhara(Group without Attachment) is a religious denomination. It is one of the fourteen *akharas* recognized by the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad and belongs to the Vaishnava *sampradaya*

³ Suit No.61/280 of 1885

absolutely forbid any alteration of the 'status quo'⁴

Legal phase 2- Placing of Idols in the Mosque

On 23rd December 1949, a radio message sent at 10:30 am by District Magistrate Faizabad to the CM of UP stated that :-

'a few Hindus Entered Babri Masjid at night when the Masjid was deserted and installed a Deity there. DM, SP and force at spot. Situation under control. Police Picket of 15 persons was on duty at night but did not apparently act'⁵

Large scale worship of the idols placed under the central dome of the mosque caused communal disturbance around the area. The City magistrate, then attached the disputed property⁶ to the court to ensure no communal violence takes place, and locked the disputed structure. But no action was taken to remove the idols.

⁴ Second Civil Appeal No.122 of 1886 before the Court of Judicial Commissioner, Oudh. (Justice W. Young)

⁵ A.G Noorani (2003): "The Muslims of India" : chapter 6, pp. 240 , Oxford University Press

⁶ Section 145 read with 146 Criminal Procedure Code, 1908.

145. Procedure where dispute concerning land or water is likely to cause breach of peace

146. Power to attach subject of dispute and to appoint receiver

Legal phase 3- Civil Suits Filed by parties claiming title over the disputed land

Subsequently, in 1950- two civil suits were filed by Hindu Parties claiming title to the disputed land. In one of the suits the trial court **passed an interim order ensuring that no one interferes with idols placed under the dome.** However, the disputed structure was closed and no entry to structure was possible. This order was then confirmed by the High Court, completing the first step of judicially legitimizing the crime committed on 23rd December 1949. The stand of the Uttar Pradesh government in these suits, was that the place was used as a mosque till 1949. In 1959, Nirmohi Akhara filed a suit claiming title to the disputed structure, followed by the Sunni Wakf Board in 1961. (SWB)

Legal phase 4- Opening of Locks by District Court Faizabad

While these suits were pending, on 1st February, 1986, the district judge, Faizabad on an application from a private individual (not a party to the suits), passed an order for unlocking the gate of the inner courtyard of the Babri Masjid to allow free access for Puja.

Shockingly, no Muslim parties to the suits were made a party to this hearing. The Sunni Wakf Board, UP, in

whose records the Masjid stood as a Waqf⁷ property was not even informed. The district authorities maintained the 'sanctity of law' by complying with the order, and with a stroke of a pen a historic mosque built more than 500 years ago was converted into a Hindu Templ.. The Government of UP, who was a defendant in this matter, did not chose to appeal this order or apply for a stay.

This completed the second step of judicially legitimizing the crime committed on 23rd December 1949 by violating foundational principles in law; a person not a party to the civil court regarding the disputed area has no the right or capacity to bring an action in a court (**Locus standi**) and that the Sunni wakf Board was not heard at all; a violation of **principles of Natural Justice.**

Ram Lalla as a petitioner and the Demolition of Babri Masjid

In 1989, Deoki Nandan Agarwal, the 'next friend'⁸ of the Ram Lalla (Deity), now treated as a separate legal personality, filed another suit claiming title to the disputed structure. Subsequently, all the suits were transferred to Allahabad High Court and were ordered to be heard together. Meanwhile, the movement to

⁷ Waqf- An endowment made by a Muslim to a religious, educational, or charitable cause.

⁸ Since Deity is not a Human Being ; an appropriate human being represents the interests of the deity in Court

construct a Ram-Temple gathered momentum, led by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and backed by the Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP), who formed the state government in UP in June 1991.

On 6th December, 1992, around mid-day, a crowd addressed by leaders of the VHP and BJP, climbed the Babri Masjid structure and started damaging the domes, and within a short period of time the whole structure was demolished. This became a trigger for communal riots, not only in UP but all over the country.

This prompted the imposition of President's Rule, and the Acquisition of disputed area by the Central Government.⁹

Legal phase 5: Acquisition of Disputed Land by Central Government and Response of Supreme Court

The relevant part of the Objects and reasons for the Acquisition Law states:-

'As it is necessary to maintain communal harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst the People of India, it was considered

⁹ The Acquisition of certain Area at Ayodhya Act, 1993

necessary to acquire the site of the disputed structure and suitable adjacent land for setting up a complex which could be developed in a planned manner wherein a ram temple, a mosque, amenities for pilgrims, a library, museum and other suitable facilities can be set up'

Some significant features of this law must be pointed out; such as, Section 4 of this law held that Suits, appeals or other proceedings pending before any court concerning the acquired land 'shall abate', in other words those claims to title will no longer be decided. Section 7(2) held that Central Government in managing the land acquired shall ensure that the position existing before the commencement of this Act in the area on which the Babri Masjid stood is maintained, in other words, the act ensured that there would be no Redressal to the demolition and the practice of Puja of the idols installed there after the mosque's demolition on 6th December, 1992 would continue.

The constitutionality of the Acquisition Act was challenged in **Ismail Faruqui & Ors. v. Union of India (1994) 6 SCC 360** in the Supreme Court. Along with that, a presidential reference under Article 143 (1) of the Constitution, was under consideration; seeking the advisory opinion of the Supreme Court on whether a Hindu Temple existed in the area prior to the

Construction of the Babri Masjid, and if so, what are the legal implications of the same.

A five judge Bench of the Supreme Court in a 3:2 split, upheld the constitutionality of the acquisition act with the exception of section 4(3), which meant that the suits claiming title to the disputed area had to be decided, and till then the land will vest with the Government. The Court unanimously rejected to answer the Presidential reference, on grounds that it was unnecessary and that the Court under writ jurisdiction cannot examine such detailed evidence.

The Majority upheld, section 7(2) which sought to maintain status quo **after the destruction of the masjid and perpetuated the performance of puja on the disputed site, ignoring what happened on 6th December 1992.** The government spoke of re-building the Masjid but legislated to ensure that the perpetrators of the crime reaped its fruits.¹⁰ The justification was convoluted to say the least; the Majority held that the destruction of the Masjid, interfered with the puja practiced by Hindu's in the Ram Chabutra(outer courtyard), while Muslims had not been offering Namaz Since December 1949. Therefore, Hindu devotees suffered by the Demolition, whereas Muslims anyways

¹⁰ A.G Noorani (2014), 'The Destruction of the Babri Masjid: A National Dishonor', Published by Tulika Books; pp. 8

had stopped worshipping since December, 1949; blatantly ignoring that the worship did not stop by choice, but coercion, violence, and force.

The Supreme Court judgment, included other crucial holdings that made the case of the Muslim Parties weaker in the long run. *First*, an argument was made that Mosque cannot be acquired by the state as it would violate Articles 25¹¹ and 26¹², the Majority's response

¹¹ Article 25 :- Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion-

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion

(2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law

(a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;

(b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus Explanation I The wearing and carrying of kirpans shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion Explanation II In sub clause (b) of clause reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly -

<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/631708/>

was that places of religious worship can be acquired by the state, which is confirmed by previous decisions of the Supreme Court, and they found no reason to make an exception to Islamic religious sites. However, the second response to same argument was that the protection afforded under 25 and 26 is to a religious practice which forms an essential and integral part of the religion, (popularly known as the essential religious practices test) ; the **Majority then went on to hold that since Namaz can be offered at every location, a mosque is not an essential part of the practice of Islam.**

Second, it introduced the concept of comparative significance or particular significance, by holding that performance of Namaz at the Babri Masjid, could not be considered on the same footing as Hindu's claim to worship on the disputed area, as it is regarded to be Ram's Birthplace, which would stand on a different footing and should be treated differently and more respectfully.

¹² 26. Freedom to manage religious affairs Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right

- (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;
- (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion;
- (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and
- (d) to administer such property in accordance with law

The '*essential religious practices*' test holds that if one seeks to claim the protection of Article 25 for a particular religious practice, they would have to demonstrate that such a practice constitutes an essential part of a religion which is primarily to be ascertained with reference to the doctrines of that religion itself. Several legal scholars have pointed out the various problems with this test, *firstly*, Judges have to practice theology and decide what is essential to religion and what is not, *second*, this process ends up agreeing with the already dominant traditions and thereby sidelines various dissident traditions within religion, *thirdly*, the test is vague, unpredictable and difficult to ascertain because of the contradictions and variations within religion and religious practices itself.¹³

Any research on Islam would reveal that *Masjids* are central to Islam, they are the only public spaces that connects Muslims of all neighborhoods and serve as community building spaces. If, essential means bare necessity, then the only real necessity is the *Kalima*¹⁴ for

¹³ Dr. Tarunabh Khaitan, "The Essential Practices Test and Freedom of Religion – Notes on Sabarimala " , Indian Constitutional Law and Philosophy Blog (29th July, 2018), Also available at - <https://indconlawphil.wordpress.com/2018/07/29/guest-post-the-essential-practices-test-and-freedom-of-religion-notes-on-sabarimala/>

¹⁴ The formal content of the declaration of faith: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

one to be called Muslim; would that then lead to the absurd conclusion that all other aspects of the faith are unprotected by Article 25? If so, then wouldn't such a meaning will render the Article without any substance?

Moreover, since Abrahamic religions rely on Holy scriptures, each of them have their own established Jurisprudence. This homogeneity allows one to categorize what is essential and what is not- in the faith. Hinduism on the other itself is plural and heterogeneous, wherein essentiality and non-essentiality are malleable categories; this allows political powers to emphasize on one aspect over the other, such as, the creation and emphasis on the belief that Ram Chandra's Birth was in Ayodhya and more importantly under the exact disputed area. Further, multiple versions of the Ramayana exist, and various scholars have indicated different birthplaces for Ram Chanra.¹⁵ Yet this was not highlighted, instead it was taken as a fact, that Hindu's have believed that Ram Chandra was born at the disputed area, without any substantiation.

The Majority while upholding the Acquisition law, concluded, that the status of a Masjid in Secular India is the same and equal to that of any other place of worship

¹⁵ Prabhask K Dutta, "What if Lord Ram was not born in Ayodhya?", Published by India Today , (September 9, 2019) also available at :- <https://www.indiatoday.in/news-analysis/story/what-if-lord-ram-was-not-born-in-ayodhya-1597129-2019-09-09>

of any religion. One would assume all places of worship would also include Temples, but the 3 Judge bench of the Allahabad High Court in September, 2010, thought otherwise. The High Court ordered the Tripartite partition of the Babri Masjid; a conclusion that no party pleaded for, which judicially sanctioned the conversion of a historic mosque into a temple, created by deceit and force aided by state agencies on the night of 22-23rd December, 1949.

Legal phase 6- Allahabad High Court Verdict :
The Triumph of faith over Reason and Law

The Majority comprised of Justice Sibgatullah Khan' and Sudhir Agarwal's Majority, who ruled that the 2.77 acres of land be divided into three parts, with $\frac{1}{3}$ going to the Ram Lalla or Infant Rama represented by the Hindu Maha Sabha, $\frac{1}{3}$ going to the Sunni Waqf Board and the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ going to Nirmohi Akhara. Note the disputed part under the dome, did not go to the Muslims. The minority (Justice Dharam Veer Sharma) rejected the Muslim case *in toto*.

Justice Khan disagreed with Justices Sharma and Agarwal on all major points, wherein he held, that no temple was demolished for constructing the mosque, that Muslims offered Namaz inside the mosque while Hindus worshipped the Ram Chabutra in the outer Court yard, and the fact that partition between Ram Chabutra and the

Masjid was erected in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Yet he jumped to the conclusion that the two communities had joint possession of the entire premises, with mysterious silence on the connection between the findings and the conclusion.

Justices Sharma and Agarwal on the other hand relied on a series of legal fictions along with faith, to reach their conclusions, with a worryingly emotional tone in the judgment. Before we commence to understand these legal fictions, a basic understanding of the law of limitation and adverse possession is warranted.

What is law of Limitation ?

The concept of limitation is concerned with fixing or prescribing time period for initiating legal actions, after which it will be barred. The main object this time limit is that it is the interest of the State that there should be a limit to a litigation and also to prevent any kind of disturbance or deprivation of what may have been acquired in equity and justice or by way long enjoyment or what may have been lost by a party's own inaction, negligence or delays. Best explained by the famous quote on limitation by Dutch jurist , John Voet:-

“controversies are restricted to a fixed period of time, lest they should become immortal while men are mortal”.

What is Adverse Possession ?

Similarly the law of adverse possession holds that in case an owner does not stake his claim over his property for 12 years, a person in possession can acquire legal rights over the property.

Courts Response to Law of Limitation and Adverse possession

The Sunni Waqf Board (SWB) argument was, that disputed Area was a mosque since 1528, and was registered as a Wakf property in 1944, that even if one assumes a temple was destroyed 400 years ago to build the mosque, as per the law of adverse possession and limitation, the SWB have legitimate claim over the disputed land due to uninterrupted peaceful possession for hundreds of years and since no legal suit has been brought by anyone for those many years, admittedly, hence, the suits now claiming title to the disputed area are barred by the law of limitation.

In response, the Majority held that a deity cannot be dispossessed as it is a perpetual minor(Child) against whom no claim of adverse possession can be brought. In

other words, once a deity always a deity; moreover, this deity is not just a regular deity. The place being Ram Janmabhoomi, it makes the site itself a deity and its religious significance means that the state cannot acquire the land in any circumstances.¹⁷

Further, since the deity is a perpetual minor, the law of limitation doesn't apply. In other words the court has used an exception given to children regarding the law of limitation and permanently applied it to the deity. In addition to this, they held that the swb could not show that Babur had a title to the land, nor "any registered lease deed" about the disputed land. So the SWB has no legal documentation to prove its ownership, and that the property in-fact belonged to Dashrath (the King of Ayodhya), after him it passed to a charitable trust and a temple of built. This temple was then allegedly destroyed without formal sanction under the law. However, Dashrath's lease deed was not asked for, nor the charitable trust after it.

Surprisingly, the same concept of adverse possession was used to support the Hindu claims, in that since the placing of idols in the mosque in 1949 and the

¹⁷ Nivedita Menon , "The Ayodhya Judgment: What Next ?", Published by Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 46, No. 31 (JULY 30-AUGUST 5, 2011), pp. 81-89

demolition of the mosque in 1992, no Namaz¹⁸ has been held, completely ignoring that, these acts are as illegal as the supposed demolition of the temple, and in fact are easily verifiable.

Problems with the Judgment

Note that the claim that the Deity is *first*, a perpetual minor, and *second*, no claim of adverse possession can be brought against it; which is entirely based on the internal tenets of Hindu law or custom. This takes me back to the **Ismail Faruqui Case**, more specifically the wholesale rejection of the argument that adverse possession, limitation and eminent domain cannot be applied to mosque in line with Muslim law, as 'secularism' requires that no place of worship be exceptionalized. Yet, majority in Allahabad did exactly the same; exceptionalized Hindu places of worship to the detriment of other places of worship.

Moreover, the exception under limitation given to minors are based on the legal disability faced by minors, which ends at attaining majority; this certainly was not meant to be applied to idols, as idols have a right to contract unlike minors.

¹⁸ Justice Sharma accepts the claim that Namaz had stopped in the year 1934.

Warisha Farasat,¹⁹ also points towards, a Supreme Court precedent that was blatantly ignored, in **Karnataka Board of Waqf vs. Government of India**²⁰, where it was held that there is no room for historical facts and claim, as far as title suit of civil nature is concerned. That Reliance on borderline historical facts will lead to erroneous conclusions.

The holding by the Majority that a temple existed underneath the mosque was entirely based on the Archeological Survey of India report, ordered by the Allahabad High Court in 2003 that held a structure existed underneath the mosque. A team of archaeologists and historians (Including Suraj Bhan, R S Sharma, M Ather Ali) over the years have challenged VHP's claims of 'evidence' of a temple on the Babri Masjid site. The carved stones that were apparently collected from the site do not have any historical context of being present at that particular site.²¹

A.G. Noorani explains that the Court had before them a simple case of restoration of possession to those forcibly dispossessed by an order under section 145 of the

¹⁹ Farasat, Warisha (2010): "Ayodhya Verdict: Does it Provide Closure?", <http://kafila.org/2010/11/09/ayodhya-verdict-does-it-provide->

²⁰ 2004 (10) SCC 799

²¹ Supriya Varma, Jaya Menon (2010): " Was there a Temple under the Babri:Masjid?: Reading the Archaeological Evidence, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XLV, No. 50, 11 December, 2010.

Criminal procedure Code, 1898. The Magistrate, New Delhi, in February 1972, passed exactly the same order in the famous case of the dispossession of the Congress (O) from Congress House in New Delhi by Members of Indira Gandhi's Congress (R).²² Instead the Majority resorted to various legal fictions based on Hindu law and customs, which clearly prevailed over established principles of law in civil suits. This judgement was appealed by all parties in 2010²³ in the Supreme Court and has been pending since then.

Developments between High Court verdict (2010) and the hearing of appeal (2019)

On 9th May, 2011, the Supreme Court stayed the operation of the High Court Verdict, till it decides the appeal on Merit, by expressing doubts on how the Majority in High Court engineered a partitioning of the disputed land on its own (without any party praying for the same).

Before the matter was heard on merits, a submission was made by the SWB, that the Judgment of the Supreme Court in **Ismail Faruqui's Case** needs reconsideration and prayed for a reference to a larger Bench, insofar as the courts observations with respect to mosques not

²² A.G Noorani (2014), 'The Destruction of the Babri Masjid: A National Dishonor', Published by Tulika Books; pp. 1

²³ M. Siddiq v. Civil Appeal Nos. 10866-10867 OF 2010

being essential in Islam and a temple at ram Janmabhoomi having a greater comparative significance than the mosque in the disputed area. The Majority (Justices Ashok Bhushan & Dipak Misra) held that matter need not be referred to a Constitution Bench as the observations in the Ismail Faruqui judgment on mosques not being essential to religion is in the context of acquisition of the mosque and made with respect to the facts of that case and is independent to appeals with respect to the title area. The Minority (Justice Nazeer) dissented, observing, that the questionable observations in *Ismail Faruqui* have permeated the Allahabad High Court verdict, and hence requires re-consideration.

Conclusion

A.G Noorani Laments, 'Muslims have lost in every judicial forum as a mosque was converted into a temple: in 1949-50 and in 1986, when K.M Pandey, District Judge, Faizabad, ordered that locks on the gates of the mosque be opened.... In 1992, the Mosque was demolished. In 1994 the Supreme Court pronounced against the Muslims and in 2010 the Allahabad High Court dismissed their claims'.²⁴ This loss continued in 2018 when the Supreme Court refused to refer its own decision in *Ismail Faruqui* to a larger bench.

²⁴ A.G Noorani (2014), 'The Destruction of the Babri Majid: A National Dishonor', Published by Tulika Books; pp. 44

Secular India had lost. What is at stake here is of course the secular ethos of India, but also a value often taken for granted; equality before law or rule of law. What does that mean ? That all individuals or groups within the polity must equally be subject to the same established principles laid down by law.

This is best exemplified by the Majority Judgment in *Ismail Faruqi*, wherein the court, while upholding the acquisition, rightly held that the status of a Mosque in Secular India is the same and equal to that of any other place of worship of any religion. In the route to reaching the above conclusion, the court relied on the *Masjid Shahid Ganj Case*²⁵, which also concerned the application of the Indian Limitation Act, 1908, this time to a mosque in Lahore which was in occupation of Sikhs since 1762. In fact, it was not disputed that the area was once a mosque, but Privy Council on 2nd May, 1940 held;

"Muslim Law is not the common law of India.....
It is impossible to read into the Modern
Limitation acts any exception for property made
waqf for purposes of a mosque"

The High Court also relied on the above observations, but conveniently **ignored** that the Privy Council in the

²⁵ *Masjid Shahid Ganj & Ors. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee, AIR 1938 Lahore 369*

same case also held that there has never been any doubt the property of a Hindu Religious endowment- Including a thakurbari-is subject to the law of limitation.²⁶

A memorandum to the Prime Minister by the Majlis-e-Mushawarat on 14 February 1968, articulates the concerns of the Muslims at that time; and it remains to be of importance even today:

" Mr. Prime Minister, the object of this campaign is not religious but political. It is to destroy the secular order, to subvert the rule of law and to humiliate the Muslim Community, to nurture hatred and ill feeling between Hindu and Muslim communities and generally to prepare the country for a takeover by the fascist forces in the name of Hindu Chauvinism. Unfortunately, there are sympathetic elements in the executive and judiciary and even in the political parties which have joined hands. Due to democratic compulsions even the secular political parties have preferred to maintain silence."²⁷

A Joint reading of the judgments establish a very dangerous precedent for the replacement of mosques by temples, as an attempt to undo historical injustices going

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 264-65

²⁷ pp. 248 The Muslims of India

thousands of years back. Based not on principles of evidence in law, but solely on a one sided Narrative of History (the Muslims as invaders theory), which also has been debunked by various historian of repute, within India and outside.

The current establishment has ensured that an environment of hate thrives against religious minorities. The Death threats to Senior Advocate Rajeev Dhavan, who represents the Sunni Waqf Board, simply for doing his job as a lawyer, serves as an example of threat and danger faced not only by religious minorities but all those that raise their voice in support of their cause.

To the Muslims of India, the demolition of Babri Masjid and the subsequent violence triggered by it; is a collective trauma. It serves as a symbol of how the Judicial system has consistently failed the community. It also serves as an example of our country's failure to stand up for the principles of secularism and fraternity enshrined in the preamble of our Constitution. The Supreme Court has completed hearing the matter on 17th October, 2019, and now has the chance of redressing all that has gone wrong.

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