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- **LET THERE BE CONSENSUS FOR RAM TEMPLE**

<b>NRITYAGOPAL DAS</b>	<b>SWAMI VISHWESH TEERTH</b>	<b>VASUDEVANANDA SARASWATI</b>
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Sri Rama Janma Bhumi Temple is not a matter of votes or electoral politics. The portrayal of features central to the longest historical and cultural tradition of our country finds pride of place in the Constitution of Bharat. The crown space of its third Chapter on Fundamental Rights depicts a sketch empanelling Sri Ram, Sita and Lakshman with the title “3. Epic Period : Scene from the Ramayana (Conquest of Lanka and recovery of Sita by Rama)”. According to Justice Harinath Tilhari, Sri Rama is a constitutional and cultural personage. Sri Ram - the Macro Man - embodies our National Persona! He is an Incarnate Cosmic Persona!

# 1. RAM

Icon of faith and certitude of the country; steadfast, sublime & lofty hero of history; is respected as a role-model - people and connoisseurs call Him the “*Maryada Purushottam*” - the best of men of dignity & propriety - who also exemplified that a leader or person at the helm must be beyond any doubt in matters of his/her ability, integrity and humility - in that order - and His example was emulated down the pyramid all through in popular life including that of the bureaucracy. Ram’s Rajya - Ram’s governance means the rule of righteousness, incorruptibility, transparency and accountability in public and private life in which wickedness, sensuousness and terrorism have no place. *Ram Rajya* also means holistic development and all round welfare reconciling urban amenities with rural charm. In its worldview & paradigm, the ideal law of social development is the rule of perfect individuality and perfect reciprocity - self-realization is the sense, secret or covert, of the individual and of social development. Mahatma Gandhi had said that the country that produced a personage such as Sri Ramachandraji, the Hindus, Muslims and even Parsis should take pride in it. The place in Ayodhya where Sri Ramachandraji was born is marked by a small temple. When I reached Ayodhya, I was taken there. Ram Naam is the panacea of all ailments - no matter if it is physical, mental or spiritual. Ram is one of the names of God.

## 2. AYODHYA

It is the haloed birthplace of Bhagwan Sri Ram, it is the capital of the superb kings of the solar dynasty to which Sri Ram also belonged, it is one of the liberating Saptapuris – seven holy cities that grant salvation, it is the holy birthplace of no less than five Teerthankars (path/ford establishers) of the Jain school of religion; Ayodhya is also home to one of the places of spiritual practices of Bhagwan Buddha. Ayodhya also boasts of the footprints of Guru Nanak Dev – the founder of the Sikh school of religion, Ninth Guru Sri Tegh Bahadur and the Tenth Guru Sri Gobind Singhji Maharaj. The entire history of ancient India sings the story and glory of this city situated on the banks of the Holy Sarayu. Historians from all around the world and foreign travelers have prominently portrayed Ayodhya in their writings. The Atlases – depicting different periods of history – brought out by world famous publishers, significantly show Ayodhya in the cultural map of India.

## 3. INVASION

Babur invaded India in 1526 CE. He reached Ayodhya in 1528 CE (Common Era). Babur's general Mir Baqi invaded Ayodhya on his orders. According to historian Cunningham, Mir Baqi could not get to the temple and blast it by canon fire before it took him a 15-day long uphill task of facing intense resistance and battle from Hindus and before the battle took a toll of 174,000 Hindu martyrs. Mir Baqi superimposed a mosque-like structure at the site using the remains and rubble of the Rama Janma Bhumi Temple with the direction of Darvesh Musa Asiqan though the structure did not contain the elementary pre-requisites of a mosque, e.g., minaret for Azan to call the faithful to prayer, water tank for Wazu – cleaning oneself before saying prayers &c.

## 4. PERSISTENT EFFORTS BY HINDUS TO RE-CLAIM THE BIRTHPLACE OF SRI RAM

Sri Ram Lalla's (Infant Sri Ram) birthplace temple marked a key spirituo-cultural melting-pot of and source of light for the entire Indic/Himalayan Tradition and signified as its site of faith and certitude and, its destruction, therefore, became a cause for intolerable pain for the devotees and the whole Hindu society. This misdeed by aggressors gave birth to a chain of

battles and struggles to liberate Sri Rama Janma Bhumi. Seventy-six battles took place between 1528 CE and 1949 CE to salvage the birthplace from alien occupation and millions of Ram devotees sacrificed their lives for the cause as they considered even the site itself as a “Deity” that is equally worthy of worship and celebration as Sri Ram Lalla. To them it was not a question of mere ‘property’. According to the French Jesuit priest Le Pere Joseph Tieffenthaler (1710-85), the Hindu devotees used to circumambulate the structure three times and pay their respects by prostration on the ground believing the site to be Ram’s birthplace. In the Hindu tradition, the significance of haloed sites is also highly taken into account and celebrated. This Janma Bhoomi, therefore, has been commanding perpetual and lasting faith of the Hindu society. Any worthwhile move to find a solution to the issue, must, therefore, address it taking the birthplace of Sri Ram as being the nucleus of the whole issue in hand by virtue of its status as a cardinal matter of faith & certitude of the core national society of Bharat instead of taking it for a mere subject of ‘property’.

## **5. ANYWAYS, THE RAM DEVOTEES OF AYODHYA AND THE ENTIRE HINDU SOCIETY UPHELD THE ACTUALITY OF THE BIRTHPLACE OF SRI RAM**

Thousands of devotees descended on the site early in the morning on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 1949 to have a Darshan (holy glimpse) of Sri Ram Lalla (Infant Sri Ram) who had appeared there. A security guard deployed at the site recounted that the previous night his eyes were dazzled by the sudden appearance of a divine light and when he returned to normalcy he saw that Sri Ram in infant form was graciously seated inside that building and hundreds of people were having his holy Darshan. Nonstop Keertan (devotional singing) opened outside the structure.

## **6. RAM LALLA UNDER LOCK & KEY**

With a view to maintaining peace and order, the then District Officer Mr. K.K. Nayyar, on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1949, declared the area disputed and clamped prohibitory orders. The main door of the structure was sealed with iron rods and it was put under lock & key. The priest alone was allowed in via a narrow entrance to perform ritual worship, offer food & water and do other related services to the Deity and the Faizabad Municipality President Sri Ram Verma was appointed the Receiver.

## 7. CASE IN THE COURTS OF LAW

In January 1950, a Ram devotee approached the Faizabad District Court praying for relief for daily Darshan of Ram Lalla, unhindered offering of worship and also prayed to ensure security cover for Sri Ram Lalla. A similar case was also filed by another devotee. The verdict in both the cases went in favour of the devotees. The High Court also gave its stamp of approval to it. In the meanwhile, a group of 13 local Muslims of Ayodhya approached the Magistrate to file an affidavit swearing and stating that the disputed structure was erected after demolishing the living birthplace temple, therefore, they had no objection if that remained in possession of Hindus. The third case was filed in 1959 by the Nirmohi Akhara of the Bairagis in which the relief prayed for was to remove the Receiver and handover the management of the Janma Bhumi temple to Mahant Jagannath Das. The Central Sunni Waqf Board filed a case in December 1961 with a prayer to remove the Hindu icons, declare the structure a public mosque and handover its possession to the Waqf Board.

## 8. HINDU CONFERENCE

In the year 1983, a Hindu Conference was held at Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh. The Conference was graced by the august presence of the two-times interim Prime Minister of India Sri Gulzarilal Nanda and also Sri Dau Dayal Khanna - a former Minister of the Government of U.P. and five times MLA from Muradabad - both leaders seasoned members of the Indian National Congress. Describing the mosques superimposed on Sri Rama Janma Bhumi-Ayodhya, Sri Krishna Janmasthan-Mathura and Sri Kashi Vishwanath Temple-Varanasi as statements against and challenges to the Hindu self-esteem, Sri Dau Dayal Khanna made a poignant appeal for their liberation. Sri Khanna's appeal had deep impact and the Resolution for the liberation of all the three sites was passed in that conference for the first time ever. Sri Rama Janma Bhumi Mukti Yajna Samiti (Liberation Committee) was formed with Mahant Avedyanath - Head of Gorakh Peeth - as president and Sri Dau Dayal Khanna himself as general secretary.

## 9. PUBLIC AWAKENING BY RATHS

In October 1984, Sri Ram-Janki Rath (temple on wheels) took rounds of Uttar Pradesh. Unfortunately, the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi was killed. Declaring a year of

mourning the rounds of the Rath was postponed. In October 1985, at Udupi in Karnataka, the Dharma Sansad (Parliament of Heads of Bharatiya Schools of Religion) was again convened that called upon the Government to open the lock put on Sri Rama Janma Bhumi. Ram-Janki Rath again took to the highways and byways and woke up people all over the country.

## 10. THE LOCK OPENED

A lawyer Sri Umesh Pandey by name approached the Court of Law with the prayer to open the lock. The District Judge of Faizabad, Sri K.M. Pandey gave orders on February 01, 1986 to open the lock. At that time, the Prime Minister at the Centre was Late Sri Rajiv Gandhi and the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh was Sri Bir Bahadur Singh of Congress party.

## 11. SRI RAMA JANMA BHUMI NYAS (Trust) FORMED

In December, 1985, a Trust titled “Sri Rama Janma Bhumi Nyas” was formed by Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Sri Swami Shivaramacharyaji Maharaj. The Nyas enlisted the active support of members such as Senior Jagadguru Sankaracharya Jyotishpeethadhishwar Swami Shantanandji Maharaj (Prayag), Mahant Avedyanathji Maharaj (Gorakhpur), Paramhans Ramchandra Dasji Maharaj, Mahant Nrityagopal Dasji Maharaj, Mahant Ramkeval Dasji Maharaj (all of Ayodhya), Prabhudatt Brahmachariji Maharaj (Prayag) and Sri Dau Dayal Khanna, Sri Vishnu Hari Dalmia and Sri Ashok Singhal.

## 12. MODEL OF THE TEMPLE

For construction of the temple, a layout plan and model for the same was essential. The famous temple architect of Ahmedabad, Sri Chandrakant Bhai Sompura prepared the model for a 270 ft long, 135 ft wide and 125 ft high two storied stone temple.

## 13. THE FIFTH PETITION FILED

On July 01, 1989, a retired Judge of Allahabad High Court, Sri Deoki Nandan Agrawal filed a petition in the Faizabad District Court making both Sri Ramlala Virajman and the site of Janma-Bhumi as petitioners in their capacity as “Deities” and, therefore, juridical persons,

praying for the relief to declare the entire Rama Janma Bhumi premises as Ramlala's property and thus prevent the opposing entities from putting hurdles on the way of construction of a grand temple at that site. In July 1989, all the cases were declared to be pertaining to the same site, and were placed before a three-judge full bench of the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court for collective hearing and quick disposal of the matter.

## **14. SHILA POOJAN (CONSECRATION OF BRICKS)**

The Dharma Sansad was again convened in January 1989 on the auspicious occasion of Purna Kumbha Mela at Prayagraj. It was decided in the august presence of Poojya Deoraha Baba that Brick Consecration Programmes would be held in various parts of the country and abroad for temple construction. The inaugural ceremony was done at Badrinath Dham. Consecrated bricks from 275,000 villages, towns, cities of Bharat and many overseas countries reached Ayodhya peacefully. 62.5 million devotees registered their participation in the Shila Poojan ceremonies.

*H.H. Deoraha Baba blessing the bricks that Sri Shrish Chandra Dikshit, Former Director General of Police, U.P., is carrying on his head.*

## **15. FOUNDATION STONE LAID**

With the consent of the then Union Home Minister Sardar Buta Singh, U.P. Chief Minister Sri Narayan Dutt Tiwari and others and in the presence of Ven. Mahant Avedyanathji, Vitarag Ven. Vamdevji and Ven. Mahant Ramchandra Dasji, the foundation stone was laid at the appointed time in the morning on 09<sup>th</sup> November, 1989 at the hands of Sri Kameshwar Chowpal - a Ram devotee from the Dalit community of Bihar.

## **16. EVIDENCE OF TEMPLE UNEARTHED DURING LEVELLING PROCESS**

In order to develop infrastructure for pilgrim facilities, the Government of U.P. acquired 2.77 acres of land surrounding and leaving alone the disputed site. The acquired land was uneven and was conspicuous by a high mound. The Government leveled the ground. During the leveling process, keeping the disputed building safe, the high mound was cut till 12 ft

aground. On June 18, 1992, many beautiful carved stone blocks were recovered from the South-Eastern corner of the Janma Bhumi complex that contained broken icons of Shiv-Parvati, sun-like half-lotus, temple top Amalak, Vishnu icon and richly carved stone blocks and icons. All these finds were of archaeological importance and were self-evident proofs of the historicity of some ancient temple. All the archaeological finds are kept in safe custody at Ayodhya for Darshan even today.

## 17. DELAY IN JUDICIAL VERDICT

This land acquisition by the U.P. Government was challenged by the Muslims in the High Court. The people anticipated that the verdict of the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court on the acquisition of the 2.77 acres of land would be delivered prior to 06<sup>th</sup> December, 1992, because the hearing of this case had ended on 04<sup>th</sup> November, 1992 and the verdict was anticipated. Based on this anticipation only, the date for Karseva was fixed to be held on 06<sup>th</sup> December, 1992 and this fact was also in the knowledge of the Court. Even then, the Court notified two days prior to the holding of Karseva (4<sup>th</sup> December, 1992) that they would deliver their verdict on 11<sup>th</sup> December. The patience and pent up feelings of the Ram devotees assembled there from all over the country gave way, the situation got out of control and in spite of all possible efforts made by the organizers and the administration, the disputed structure could not be saved from being pulled down.

## 18. INSCRIPTION RECOVERED FROM THE STRUCTURE

Significantly, an inscription was discovered from a wall of the structure. Inscription experts from the Government of India deciphered it and said that it was in Sanskrit and belonged to 1154 CE. It contains 20 lines. The first line reads “*Om Namah Shivaaya*”. The inscription describes a Vishnu-Hari temple with a gold-pitcher topping it. It also talks of the splendor of Ayodhya and mentions the humbling of the arrogance of Dasaanan.

## 19. CONSTRUCTION OF A MAKESHIFT TEMPLE

The Karsevaks leveled the site of the demolished structure, placed Ram Lala there, constructed for Him an enclosure on the leveled ground using bricks, mud, sand & cement,

bamboo clubs and sticks and tarpaulin. Formal worship started in it. Early in the morning on 08<sup>th</sup> December, 1992, on the orders of the Central Government, the security forces took everything under control and clamped curfew. This newly constructed temple is today called the makeshift temple.

## **20. AGAIN PERMISSION GRANTED FOR DARSHAN**

After the disputed area in Ayodhya came under the control of security forces, curfew was imposed on the township on 08<sup>th</sup> December, 1992. On the appeal of a lawyer named Harishankar Jain, Justice Harinath Tilhari of the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court gave permission for Darshan-Poojan.

The High Court, in its verdict, provided for Hindu pilgrims and Darshanarthi to have Darshan of Sri Ram Lala from a specified distance. It also provided for safety, security and appropriate upkeep of the divine images from cold, heat and rain and also preservation of the items of archaeological importance.

## **21. ACQUISITION BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

On January 07, 1993, the Government of India, through an ordinance, acquired the disputed site and the 67 acres of land around it. Later on, through passing of a Bill in Parliament, it legalized it. A Muslim Ismail Farouqui by name and other affected persons challenged the Acquisition Ordinance in the Supreme Court of India.

## **22. PRESIDENT OF INDIA SOUGHT ADVICE ON HISTORICITY**

On January 07, 1993 itself, the then Mahamahim President of India, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma sent a query under Article 143(A) of the Constitution of India to the Supreme Court of India asking for its reply. The query was: "Was there a Hindu temple/building at the site of the Baburi structure before 1528 A.D.?"

A five-Judge Full Bench of the Supreme Court under the chairmanship of the then Chief Justice Sri M.N. Venkatcheliah was constituted. The Bench heard for 20 months the petitions

against the acquisition and also considered at the same time the points concerning the Special Presidential Reference. It gave its verdict on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1994. This verdict is famed as the “1994-6-SCC, p. 383 – Ismail Faruqi Vs. Government of India”. The Supreme Court gave the responsibility to the Allahabad High Court to decide upon the ownership title of the site and also find answers to the Presidential Reference, and added that the Special Presidential Reference was fundamental to the solution of the dispute.

The three-Judge (two Hindu Judges and one Muslim Judge) full bench of the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court again began hearing since 1995 all the cases. The statements of the witnesses were also recorded in the High Court. The High Court also took the Presidential Reference as very important.

## **23. GROUND PENETRATING RADAR SURVEY (GPRS)**

The High Court issued orders to conduct Ground Penetrating Radar Survey on the logic that if any pre-1528 building was demolished in that case some remains of that structure could be anticipated. In December 2002 CE, a GPRS team under the leadership of a Canadian scientist conducted radar photographic survey of the site. The scientist in his final report talked of the remains of a huge building lying beneath the ground, but advised for scientific archaeological excavation to confirm the GPRS report.

## **24. EXCAVATION**

The Archaeological Survey of India excavated the site in the year 2003. The GPRS report was confirmed. It found 27 walls, carved stones forming parts of walls, plasters, four floors, 52 pillar bases in two rows. A Shiva temple was also found. All the facts and details are there today on the Court records.

## **25. HISTORY OF DIALOGUES**

On the initiative of the Government and social leadership, three rounds of dialogues took place. With the efforts of the then Prime Minister Late Sri Rajiv Gandhi, the Hindu and Muslim representatives met for the first time in the presence of the then Union Home Minister Sardar

Buta Singh. But the dialogue failed due to the non-cooperative attitude and intransigence of Sri Syed Shahabuddin.

During the premiership of Late Vishwanath Pratap Singh, another round of dialogue took place between the representatives of Muslims and Hindus. The Muslim side comprising of religious and social leadership was headed by Late Ali Mian Nadwi (Lucknow) and the Hindus were represented by the Sants and other key members of the Hindu society. The dialogue could not arrive at any meaningful conclusion due to the Muslim representatives not grounding their stand on any sound logic and also making of somersaults. For once Sri Shahabuddin said that if the claim of the Hindus was proved that there was once a Hindu temple at the site of the disputed structure, in that case the Muslim community would voluntarily handover that site to the Hindu society (vide - 1994-6-SCC, p. 383 - Ismail Faruqi Vs. Government of India). Other Muslim representatives interrupted him.

At midpoint of this session of dialogue, the Muslim representatives went out to offer their noon Namaz and when they returned, at that point, with a view to solving the dispute and winning the goodwill of the Muslim community, the senior-most Sant Swami Satyamitranandji Giri stood up and extending his Angavastram solicited the Namazis: "After the offering of Namaz, there is a rule to offer Zakaat (donation). I implore you to please give me the Sri Rama Janma Bhumi." To this a Muslim representative commented, "Is it a match box that we would give it you?" This dialogue also thus bore no fruit.

After Late Sri Chandrasekhar became Prime Minister, the third round of dialogues took place in December 1990 between the representatives of Vishva Hindu Parishad and the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC). Both the parties filed their respective written evidences with the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs. Written evidences were exchanged. Both the parties produced rejoinders to each other's evidences and put forth objections. But the Babri Masjid Action Committee adopted an attitude of evasion. January 10, 1991 was earmarked for a meeting between the revenue and the legal experts from both the sides. The experts representing the Hindu position punctually came for the meeting but the AIBMAC experts did not turn up for the meeting. This meeting was postponed to 25<sup>th</sup> January, but in that meeting also no Muslim representative did turn up. It was taken that the Muslim community was not in favour of continuance of the dialogue. As a result this round of talks also remained unproductive.

## 26. AFFIDAVIT OF THE GOVERNMENT

In the matter of the Special Presidential Reference made to the Supreme Court, when the Apex Court asked for more clarification on it from the Government of India, the **Solicitor General of India, Sri Dipankar P. Gupta, in a written affidavit on behalf of the Union of India made, inter alia, the following stand:-**

***“Re : Special Reference No. 1 of 1993 and connected Ayodhya matters.***

***“Government is committed to enforce a solution in the light of the Supreme Court’s Opinion and consistent with it. Government action in this regard will be evenhanded in respect of both the communities. If the question referred is answered in the affirmative, namely, that a Hindu temple/structure did exist prior to the construction of the demolished structure, government action will be in support of the wishes of the Hindu community. If, on the other hand, the question is answered in the negative, namely, that no such Hindu temple/structure existed at the relevant time, then government action will be in support of the wishes of the Muslim community.”***

***(Ref. - 1994-6-SCC, p. 383 - Ismail Faruqi Vs. Government of India)***

## 27. THE ONLY WAY

Even after many rounds of talks, not even a single step has moved forward till date towards the solution of the problem. After 60 long years of trial in the Courts of Law, the matter now nears the verdict stage from the High Court. Nevertheless, the option of challenging the High Court verdict in the Apex Court remains open. Nobody can predict as to how much more time the final verdict is likely to take. More the time taken more would grow complex the situation. Under the circumstances, there is only one way of consequence, that is, as the Union Government has vowed in its above-mentioned official declaration (affidavit), it should now respect the scientific “affirmative” answers provided by the Ground Penetrating Radar Survey (GPRS) report and the subsequent scientific excavation report submitted by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), to the Special Presidential Reference made to the Supreme Court regarding the Ayodhya question, and emulating the precedent of Somnath

temple reconstruction which was given a go ahead by a Central Cabinet decision under Prime Minister Nehru, it can now, through a similar decision or a Law of Parliament, decide in favour of construction of a grand temple at Sri Rama Janma Bhumi and handover the land to the Hindu society. The chronic humiliation of the Hindu society would be cleansed only if the temple is constructed at the Janma Bhumi and that also according to the wishes of the millions of Ram devotees and the people at large who consecrated the Ramshilas all over Bharat and in many countries abroad under the banner of Ramshila Poojan Programme and sent the same to Ayodhya, donated token amounts towards collection and carving of stone blocks that are now kept in safe custody at the Ayodhya and Rajasthan workshops, and, nonetheless, also after the model approved by the Sri Rama Janma Bhumi Nyas and the Hindu presence accounting for 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the global population.

For the Parliament of free India, it is a subject that warrants an enlightened and challenging decision to be taken on its part to reassert our cultural freedom and national self-esteem. It has to take a clear stand as to whether it would worry about and bat for the foreign invader Babur and his general Mir Baqi who made a humiliating statement on Hindustan by demolishing the Rama Janma Bhumi temple and replacing it by a mosque-like structure or consider the Janma Bhumi issue as a matter of national glory in the light of the glorification of our historical and cultural tradition in the Constitution of Bharat, and broaden and pave the path for construction of a grand temple at Sri Rama Janma Bhumi. Bhagwan Sri Ram is a constitutionally celebrated national personage and icon of Bharat. We again quote Mahatma Gandhi: the country that produced a personage such as Sri Ramachandraji, the Hindus, Muslims and even Parsis should take pride in it. The place in Ayodhya where Sri Ramachandraji was born is marked by a small temple. When I reached Ayodhya, I was taken there. Ram Naam is the panacea of all ailments - no matter if it is physical, mental or spiritual. Ram is one of the names of God.

The question is that of the birthplace of Sri Ram which is the nucleus of the whole issue and not that of the structure that once stood there. The fight has since been to recover the birthplace of Bhagwan Sri Ramachandraji, not to grab anybody's property. The highest assembly that represents the whole Indian populace must listen to the call of the inner-self of the nation!

We hereby urge upon the Hon'ble Members of Parliament to broaden and pave the way for



construction of Sri Ram temple at the haloed birthplace of Sri Ram at Ayodhya!