

If you serve the human beings then you will be serving the God. It may be God, it may be *Bhagwan* or it may be or whatever He may be. But what is going on now?

Hon. Ministers Shri Advani, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi and sister Uma Bharati are here. I have got great respect for all of you—not in politics but in other spheres. Shri Advaniji, as a political leader in India, you have got a stature. Dr. Joshiji, apart from this ministership, you have got a stature in the educational field. You are a scientist. Kumari Uma Bharatiji, when I saw you ten years back, you were a lady with saffron and were a great devotee of the Hindu religion. What have you done?

Yesterday, during the course of the debate, hon Minister Shri George Fernandes said that he saw that in Vietnam and Indonesia all the Hindu temples were being maintained by the Muslims. But here, your BJP Government, which has come to power after years, has demolished and destroyed the mosque. Is it the culture? Is it the Indian culture? ...*(Interruptions)* You are the culprit. You are destroying the Hindu culture and you are destroying the Indian culture. You can definitely not succeed in this. You have developed the criminal culture here.

Hon. Ministers Shri Advani, Dr. Joshi and Kumari Uma Bharati—the CBI has named you. After that you are here in the ministerial office without any moral ground. If you follow the ethics, if you follow the philosophy then you must have come forward on your own and say : 'Yes, we have demolished the mosque'. If so, then, hon. Prime Minister, what would be the position? I think they do not have the courage. Shri Advani, Dr. Joshi and Kumari Uma Bharati if you have that heart or that courage, you must act on it. Sir, they are criminals in that case on the moral grounds

Hon. Prime Minister, I know that you have got the preogative to decide who should be the Minister and who should not be the Minister or whom you could sack from office. After following the example of Shri Harin Pathak, you must have done similar action here. I think, the BJP Government have no other agenda. There is the unemployment. There is crisis of drought and flood. Nothing has been solved. This Prime Minister has opened this hidden agenda which he has stated on the 6th and 7th of this month that let a temple be built at the place where the Babri Masjid was demolished. We have all condemned it.

At this last moment, I wish to appeal to the Prime Minister to please sack those Ministers and create an atmosphere in which the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians or persons of any other colour may be united as one.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI HARIBHAU SHANKAR MAHALE (Malegaon): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I too, should be given an opportunity. My party Janata Dal (Secular) has not got an opportunity to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Everytime is not equal. If you act like this you would never get an opportunity.

16.51 hrs.

(At this stage Shri Haribhau Shankar Mahale came and stood on the floor near Table of the House.)

16.51 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER : Mahale ji, you go to your seat.

[English]

Shri Athawale, this is too much, please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)*

16.52 hrs.

(At this stage Shri Haribhau Shankar Mahale went back to his seat.)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I too should be given two minutes time....
(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat. Please go to your seat. Where is your seat? Please go to your seat. Shri Athawale, please take your seat, this is too much.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to state that I cannot support the resolution moved in the House on which we have held discussion for quite sometime. I have been asked to remove some of my colleagues from the Council of Ministers. I have been made a target of criticism saying that I have been shielding those Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this issue has not been raised for the first time. It has been going on for the last several years. I remember that last year also this issue was discussed in the House. Therefore, I had made a statement, which was referred yesterday by my colleague Shri George Fernandes.

I had stated .

[English]

"Neither the Constitution nor the law disqualify a Minister from holding office merely because a chargesheet is filed by the police or formal charges are framed by the court."

[Translation]

Neither it has been challenged nor it can even be challenged, but the question of morality is being raised. The logic is that the others have resigned. Harin Pathak's name was referred. Even Harin Pathak did not know that some of my colleagues in the Congress party like him so much. Yesterday, there was a talk of making him the Prime Minister. It will be a matter of great happiness if he becomes Prime Minister after me, but then what about my friends in the Congress who have been aspiring? ... (Interruptions) Harin Pathak resigned under certain different circumstances, he himself tendered resignation. He could not be forced to resign. When he expressed his desire to resign he was advised to wait for sometime. We wanted to see the nature of case to be framed in the court, but he was adamant on resigning, so it was accepted... (Interruptions) It depends upon their wish, but as far as the demand of removal of three Ministers is concerned... (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER : This sort of confrontation is not good.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : The question of asking them to resign does not arise. I will not accept their resignation even if they resign. It needs to be understood... (Interruptions) It is not a common offence... (Interruptions) It is to be appreciated that they are my colleagues hence I know them well. They have been entrusted responsibilities according to their abilities and qualifications and they have been carrying it out very well. We should wait for court's verdict since the matter is sub-judice. Justification is yet to be defined.

I would not talk about Bihar. Whom are you supporting to? I would not like to say with whose support colleagues from your party are holding office of Ministers. But one thing is clear, with every one's consent we should frame a code of conduct so that none can be alleged to

have adopted double standards. It cannot be one sided affair. Therefore, I would like to request my friends in the opposition not to raise issue of morality. It is not a question of justification. As far as I know personally, but you would say that I am trying to influence the court. No, I do not want to do so nor I do so. I am sure the court will not be influenced even if best lawyers appear before it.... (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Efforts have been made.... (Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : No effort has been made. ... (Interruptions) Come along, let us all sit together, discuss it and find a way out with consensus. Advani ji has not hunger of power.

17.00 hrs.

When charges of financial misappropriation were levelled against Shri Advani ji, he resigned from Membership and said as long as I am not proved to be innocent, I will not come here. He stayed out and then contested election and got elected. With whom the public is? Our votes are being counted, we are in the majority in the House. Our allies are supporting us in this regard and we are committed to national agenda. We have dropped disputed issues deliberately, there was no such compulsion. But, keeping in mind the present state of affairs in the country and frequent changes in political affiliations, we should work unitedly. See, after all, you also take support from other parties. You form Government with their support and later on topple it. Perhaps, you do not like smooth running of our Government. Our coalition partners are working with us despite minor differences. It is a good sign for democracy and you should welcome it. But you had thought that the NDA Government would go, since it was a very serious issue. But NDA stands united. Though, I do not want to make it an issue of NDA versus the opposition. Ayodhya issue is a sensitive one. I would not use the language which was used against me yesterday. That day I was present in the House. There is my speech. I had moved a No-Confidence Motion at that time. That is also a part of the record and I had given vent to my anguish and resentment. "The mask has been unveiled" — what does this expression connote? What kind of language is this? That is true of the opposition. I have not resorted to defections and thus there is no question of changing the masks. I have been a Member of Parliament for the last 40 years. I have not defected to different parties. I have expressed my views fearlessly and have stood by the contemporary Governments in the time of crisis. But, today, no one is ready to deliberate upon the national crisis.

I have said just now that there should be unanimity in some matters. We cannot work without consensus. We do not enjoy a majority in the Rajya Sabha. We need the cooperation of other parties. They may stall the proceedings but such tactics are not in the interest of the welfare of the country. Just a few minutes back, I said that I have never spoken on this matter since the Ayodhya tangle but I was constrained to speak out when the proceedings were brought to a standstill. I do not understand this act of stalling the business of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : Are you asking me?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you know that Shri Somnath Chatterjee has been present here from the very outset and I am reminded of Shri Indrajit Gupta.

We had laid our heads together and taken some decisions. Objections may be raised but not in a manner that hampers conduct of the business of the House ... *(Interruptions)* or jeopardise decisions connected with shaping the destiny of the country. Now, they may ask as to what did we do when we were in the opposition? Somnathji you may recall that I have always laid emphasis on the fact that the Question Hour should never become a subject of pandemonium in the House.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sometimes you made it so.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Whatever you want to say, you may say it at 12.00 O'clock ... *(Interruptions)*. Now-a-days the Members troop into the well and lay a siege around the hon. Speaker even before he assumes his chair ... *(Interruptions)* Are we, that way, setting a right precedent?

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : It is the latest development.... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : This latest development does not augur well. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : If only you had come and tried to consult the Opposition, it would not have happened. You did not even attend the Speaker's meetings.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : All the time, consultations were going on.

[Translation]

We did not extend formal invitations since it was a matter concerning the hon. Speaker.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You should have found a way out.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : If this is your grievance, then I would say that it is logical ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I had many times asked where the Prime Minister was, where the Leader of the House was and where the leader of the Government was when there was a crisis here. You may ask him. I have said that in the Speaker's meetings also.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I did not know that you were so eager to meet me, otherwise I would have come.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You do not fulfil our demands whenever we approach you.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Sir, there are certain sensitive issues about which the political parties should observe a measure of restraint. I was taken aback by the allegation that I did not condemn what happened at Ramjanambhoomi and Babri Masjid. I was one of those who criticised it.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Then criticise it today also.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I have already done ... *(Interruptions)*. Now it is being said that all this is being done to gain a political mileage. That is what has been said here. I would like to clarify in the backdrop of what circumstances I was constrained to utter a few words. The House is stalled, the proceedings have come to stand-still. Is it so because the Prime Minister is not meeting the leaders of the opposition. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : We did not say this, we only asked where is the hon. Prime Minister!

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : There were some other Ministers present there. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are a witness to the fact that I have presented myself before you whenever I have been remembered.

...(Interruptions)

Sir, I did not speak for three consecutive days, why were the proceedings of the House stalled? My statement which is being discussed and criticised here, came later on....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mulayam Singhji, please take your seat now, you may speak later on. It is not in good taste to speak at this moment. [English] The Leader of the House is speaking. Please understand what is the confrontation?

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I do not understand the reasons behind stalling the proceedings of the House. They are demanding the resignation of the Ministers, why? Just because they wish so. They think that they can sow the seeds of dissension. I did not want to raise this issue. Now, it is being said that I made the statement under duress and Shri Chandrashekharji is also speaking in the same vein that I have said all this under pressure. Mr. Speaker, Sir, those who are acquainted with me and my disposition would never accept this theory.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal) : You are Atal.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Besides being Atal, I am also Bihari. There was no pressure. It is also an unfounded premise that raking up this issue was necessitated by the compulsions of strengthening my party. In Uttar Pradesh, elections are round the corner. Elections are still far off and all the political parties are making preparations for the elections. But to think of raising this matter for the purpose of harnessing the popular support in the ensuing elections is highly wrong. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are a lot of conjectures in the air. It has also been said that hon. Advaniji was ready to tender his resignation and that is why this matter has been raised. The media quizzed me, the moment I came out after attending the meeting with you. There was only one pressure and that was from the media. I also wanted to say that the environment being created for the resignation of Ministers was highly inappropriate and we would never concede to it. I would like to clarify two points regarding the question- answers session that ensued. I can read out for them and Shri George Fernandes has gone through my statements yesterday. One thing is to be noted that I have not given any *suo-moto* statement. If we do not give reply to a particular question, it is said

that we are ignoring them. They ask me whether any medley is going on in the NDA and when I reply in the negative, objections are raised on this. I have no differences with Advaniji but there is a propoganda that we differ with each other. It is also being said that I have raised this issue in order to keep him in good humour. Someone even went to the extent of saying that since we wanted to go back to the stand of Hindutva that is why we have raised this issue. I would like to aver that our stand has already been chalked out with our allies. We will firmly adhere to the understanding reached with our allies. There is no question of deviating from that I have said this in reply to the second question. I am saying as to how can this matter be resolved. They have raised the issue of Ram Mandir. I said that there are only two ways of constructing the Ram Mandir. First is the legal method whereby the court may provide land to the organisations interested in constructing the temple by giving decision in their favour and thus the temple may be constructed ...(Interruptions) I am sorry. Second option is that both Hindu and Muslims may confer together and reach an understanding thus paving the way for construction of a temple and a mosque ...(Interruptions) Only if a mutual understanding is reached and you will also agree that there is no third way out.

But distorted connotations are being derived Now Chandra Shekharji is saying that if I had clarified the facts then why did not they come to know about that?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal) : Please tell us about the Masjid where it is located.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Balija) You are repeatedly taking my name. I am surprised and I do not understand as to why is the resignation of the Ministers being demanded. I have said that if the media has published a distorted statement of the hon. Prime Minister, then why did not he issue clarifications in the last eight days? If the hon. Prime Minister could make three statements outside the House, then why not the fourth statement of clarification was given outside the House itself. We are not going to be impressed by your oratory because I have been with you since long and know you very well. If you would have given a statement outside, then proceedings of this House would not have been stalled for eight long days and we also would not have contradicted your statement. The hon. Speaker, was kind enough to invite the party leaders by sending them notices. The Prime Minister and the former Prime Minister, Shri Chandrashekhar being no exception. I received the notice as did you but you did not turn up. Business of the House would have been conducted smoothly. If you would have come that day.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : On behalf of the Government the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs participated in every meeting. If due to some reason, I could not participate in any meeting, I informed the hon. Speaker but how can this crisis be attributed to my absence from the meeting.

SHRI CHANDRASHEKHAR : You had made a statement but did not issue a clarification, that is why this crisis emerged.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Had a clarification been issued, the House would have functioned smoothly.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This is not right.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : The crisis occurred because two parties were vying with each other.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : What is this national sentiment? You shall have to define it.

MR. SPEAKER : This is not the way.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : When two parties try to jostle their way to raise this matter in the House ... (Interruptions) Did he ponder over it. He is not in the race but the main opposition party is vying with Mulayam Singhji on this issue. This is a very dangerous trend.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Please do not divert it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : So far as appeasement is concerned, no one can beat Mulayam Singhji. He was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He ordered firing at the devotees of Rama. He clamped curfew in whole Uttar Pradesh so as to restrict the movement of people altogether.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : I saved the country by ordering firing. Temples have been demolished in all the Muslim countries of the world. We safeguarded those temples.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : You did a very good job, but there should not be competition amongst the political parties on such an issue. We shall have to avoid such competition. I am not digressing from the issue. Regarding my statement, I have said that this is a matter of national sentiment and how can any objection be raised on it?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : What is the national sentiment.... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : How shall we continue like this?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : This can be a subject of discussion. When the Somnath Temple was renovated and reconstructed after hundreds of years of the temple remaining in a dilapidated condition after the country achieved independence, then Somnath was again, I am not referring to Shri Chatterjee... (Interruptions) Whether the statements uttered at that time, or the viewpoints or feelings expressed regarding construction of Somnath Temple then do not apply today? ... (Interruptions.)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This will not go on record. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Jaipal Reddy is sitting here to give the reply.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : It is not that it is a Hindu temple and is being constructed. So it is a national feeling, a few days back.... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai) : He is misleading the House.... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You are also disturbing the House.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : There have been a number of observations on this, both on the floor of the House and outside but not a single party has ever said that there should not be any temple. The dispute is only whether it should be constructed on that spot. Therefore, during Shri V.P. Singh's tenure it was suggested that the land would be given next to that spot and you can build any temple you want. Therefore, there was no question of anybody standing in the way of construction of temple. When you say, the task is yet to be fulfilled and you say that it represents the national sentiments, then the question arose.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : No, no that is not so. Mr. Speaker, Sir, whether the construction of such an

ancient and holy temple is not considered to be an expression of national sentiment? I have only said that the construction of that temple should be done by common consent and consensus. ...*(Interruptions)* Demolition of the mosque was condemned. I do not want to go into the controversy, but the leader of the Congress Party and former Prime Minister went there and laid the foundation stone.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SONNATH CHATTERJEE : It was done wrongly.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Yes, but I do not blame him for that. He had a feeling in the heart of his heart that whatever he was doing served lesser purpose for his elections, but more for a good cause because the construction of Ram Mandir was obligatory....*(Interruptions)* I am not ready to accept this, because previously.

...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : During Shri Rajiv Gandhi's time, it was done not at the disputed spot....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing should go on record except what the Prime Minister says.

...*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Shri Narayan Datt Tiwari is sitting here. Is he not aware of the entire situation?

[English]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the House is misleading the House. I have got the High Court order with me.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You are also disturbing the House.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : I am not disturbing the House, Sir. He is misleading the House.

MR. SPEAKER : This will not go on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Aiyar, please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing except the Prime Minister's reply should go on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, a few days back a function was held to celebrate the tri-centenary of Khalsa Panth—was it not the expression of national sentiment? Khalsa Panth was established 300 years back and a national function was organised on this occasion. The Khalsa Panth may be a sect but it is important component of our national life. I remember that Dr. Rajendra Prasad had on the occasion of Somnath Temple....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Aiyar, if you do not have patience, you can leave the house.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing should go on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have decided right now....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : If you do not have patience, you can leave the House.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : All right. I am leaving the House.

MR. SPEAKER : From the beginning itself, he was disturbing the House.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We have decided to make the memorial of Dr. Ambedkar ...*(Interruptions)* more grand and expansive. Is it not the expression of national feeling. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Prime Minister, are you yielding?

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Recently, we have decided to celebrate the 2600th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavira.

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI (Nainital) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, perhaps the facts supplied to the hon. Prime Minister are erroneous because whatever he said about the Babri Masjid and the laying of foundation stone of the Temple is far from truth. The plan submitted was in the court by Waqf Board demarcating the area by ABCD that housed the mosque. It was after due deliberations for one full week that permission was granted to lay the foundation stone of the temple at a site far from the ABCD marked area of the Sunni Waqf Board, which was not included in the disputed site and then it was a condition in the agreement that no further construction would be done after laying the foundation stone. All shall wait for the verdict of the court and during the premiership of Shri V.P. Singh in this House. ... (Interruptions) You are not ready to listen the truth (Interruptions) and in this House, it was said that foundation stone had not been laid at the disputed site ... (Interruptions) This reply was given here during Shri V.P. Singh's tenure. So the statement of hon. Prime Minister that the foundation stone of the temple was laid at the disputed site is wholly untrue.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I have not said so.... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You please sit down.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, right now the Government have decided that a National committee should be constituted to celebrate 2600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira. The persons of different political parties having different sets of ideologies are the members of the committee. We are thinking in terms of celebrating this occasion collectively. It would not be wrong on my part to say that celebrating this kind of occasion reflects the national sentiments. What do you want to define... (Interruptions) It is ultimately a question of sentiments. At that time also some people had criticised Dr. Rajendra Babu. The efforts were made to the extent of preventing Dr. Rajendra Babu from attending the Somnath Celebration. But he did not accept the same by saying that he will go to even a mosque and a church he was invited to do so. Our country is not anti-religion ... (Interruptions) The ideology of communists is different in this regard. But our ideology is based on the basic tenant of respect towards all regions and equal treatment, without fear or favour, towards all religious.

These are the words of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

[English]

"Even though I am a *Sanatanist* Hindu by faith and daily practice, yet I believe that every man can reach God by worshipping Him according to the dictates of his own faith. Not only have I respect for all religions and their places of worship, but I also go to them to pay my respects whenever possible. Whenever there is an opportunity I go to Dargah, Masjid, Church and Gurudwara with the same feeling of respect with which I go to the temple of my faith."

[Translation]

Dr. Rajendra Prasad had also said that the reconstruction of Somnath temple is the symbol of our national sentiments. Similar sentiments are also affiliated with Ram temple but the possibility of its construction can only emerge when a consensus evolves after holding celebrations. I had said this thing only. And this thing was extended to made a mountain out of a mole hill with the intention of deriving mileage. Though some manipulations are always there in politics yet it was purely a political game. ... (Interruptions) I need not give any explanation in this regard by I am definitely perturbed to find that my honesty has been put under doubt.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : No.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Miryalguda) : Your own allies have suspected you.... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : My life is like a open book wherein there is nothing to hide. You can have difference of opinion with me and I have nothing to hide in this regard. But to accuse me of putting on a mask ... (Interruptions) Those who change the parties, they not only change their mask but their entire body and also their soul and yet accuse me of... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Order, please.

[Translation]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You had inducted Sukhram ji... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Order, please.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only mode of expressing the national sentiment is not the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya. Our national sentiment is affiliated to several other great leaders and great places. I gave the example of Chaitya Bhoomi in this regard. We have decided to construct a glorious national monument there. I would like to once again quote from the speech of Rajendra Babu :

"There are many symbols of our national life of which we are proud of, whether it be Dargah Sharif at Ajmer or Dargah of Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi, be it the Golden Temple at Amritsar or the Church of St. Francis in Goa, these are all the great symbols of our national life".

Whether these monuments do not reflect our national sentiments? There is no reason to believe this ... (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Babri mosque was also a symbol of national sentiment. Why was that allowed to be demolished. Which temples are responsible for its demolition ... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM DAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : Who are these people who have demolished the Babri mosque?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ramdas Athawale, please take your seat. This is too much.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : My submission is that there should be a limit to look at this problem from the narrow perspective of party politics alone.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, elections will be fought, defeat also would have to be faced but it is always necessary to keep in mind that this thing do not harm our national unity and integrity. It is shameful on the part of those who indulged in hampering the proceedings of the House despite knowing about the truth. These people have once again raised this question before our national forum. Why it is so? We have not done so far we were bound by NDA manifesto. What was the need to demand resignation for it was made last year itself and it was denied. Why is it so that the proceedings of the Parliament is being disrupted?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, our's is the biggest democracy in the world. Despite differences of opinion we are trying to make it surge ahead. We are also getting success in this

regard but if the issues pertaining sentiments are kept on being raised in this manner how can the democracy prosper? Why were the proceedings of Parliament disrupted. You cannot go ahead of Mulayam Singh ji in this respect. Hence it is my submission to the main opposition party that you will have to think over it seriously and in an impartial manner. We are running a coalition Government. The public will give its verdict over our performance but if the national sentiments are raised by some political parties or by some persons then its consequences will be very dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have evaded some issues and fun was made of us. One of the issues among there is Ram temple also and I would not have replied the questions if they had not been associated with Ram temple. I did not call the press conference of *suo-moto* conference. If I did not answer, I would have been accused of not replying.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Give honest replies.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I am giving right replies.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : This is the right answer and that is the danger.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : This can be debated as to what is the right reply and it will be decided by the public at last and we are ready for that but sentiments of the people should not be provoked ... (Interruptions) You need not wrong about our partners. You are searching for new partners. Is there any one to align with Jyoti Basu. Mulayam Singh ji has a distinct opinion in this regard.

Until you are in alliance with the Congress Mulayam Singh ji cannot extend his hand of friendship to you ... (Interruptions)

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : It is true ... (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You are present for the same ... (Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to take more time of the House. We should seriously ponder over the matters related with the sentiments. Party politics should be confined to a certain limit and we should be ready to face the challenges in a collective manner irrespective of the difference of opinion which will certainly continue. Till yesterday you were in favour of open market economy but now you are changing

tracks. You have a right to change your stand over the economic issues but you should certainly refrain from indulging in such bend of behaviour which may hinder the path of the Government for implementing its decisions on economic front.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You want to make them your ally...(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Not only do we want to shake hands but we want to go to the extent of embracing them...(Interruptions) If you are talking about mutual love then one should express it by throwing a hearty embrace and it is also on Iftar occasion...(Interruptions) Merely shaking of hands would not do instead one should cordially embrace others, not that the interests of the other persons are harmed...(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not question of embracing one or two persons or parties. The country will get success only when the entire country unitedly try to achieve it. We want to go ahead in that direction only.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have long admired Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee as an outstanding orator. I have heard him perform like a thespian in this House. But today I regret to note that let alone by his standard but by anybody's standards, his performance was poor to the point of being miserable....(Interruptions)

Yesterday, when I was moving the Motion, there were heavy interruptions. May I say, as somebody who has been in these Houses not for as many years as Shri Vajpayee, that I do not know of a single instance when a mover of the Motion was so heavily interrupted. This Prime Minister, who is holding forth so eloquently on the virtues of parliamentary etiquette, maintained his guilty silence in the midst of the interruptions. Why were they interrupting me? I would like to draw your attention to the fact that they were objecting to the way you admitted the Motion. They questioned your authority....(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister said that we had stalled the House. May I, in all humility, point out to him the boot is on the other foot? If only you agreed to a discussion on this Motion on the very first day, this House would not have been stalled at all.

Why did you not agree for discussion on the very first day, or the second day, or the third day? We know, you had a lot of problems, at three levels. One, at the level of *Sangh Parivar*, another, at the level of the BJP, still another, at the level of the NDA. So, you, Shri Pramod

Mahajan, and others needed time. You took time. And we gave time. Therefore, you cannot blame us for what happened in the House.

Today, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was so deeply hurt by what I said that he stooped down to the level of mounting a personal attack on me. Well, I leave Shri Vajpayee to his level. But I must offer a clarification. This is a clarification, not only for you, Sir, but also for many others, who are in your Cabinet. I do not want to name them.

When I quit the Congress party in 1975 in the context of Emergency, you thought my changing the party then was an act of idealism. By the same token, Shri Vajpayee, when I rejoined the Congress in 1999, I did it for the sake of secularism. It was a greater example and a greater demonstration of ideological commitment, and lofty idealism. May I tell you, I joined the Congress party when it was clear to everybody, including the purblind, that the Congress party would be in the Opposition? ... (Interruptions) At that time, my erstwhile Congress colleague, Shri Sharad Pawar, left the Congress party. It was an act of sacrifice, dear Sir....(Interruptions)

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (Baramati) : I was expelled.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I stand corrected, Sir – after you were expelled. At least, you would credit me with some understanding of Indian politics. I never thought the Congress party had a ghost of a chance of coming to office at that time.

It was Benjamin Disraeli who gave the ultimate definition of a political party.

“Political party is an organised opinion; political party is an instrument of ideology, not an instrument of office, not a tool for getting into positions.”

Even Winston Churchill changed from the Conservative party, he joined the Liberal party because his conscience felt that he should turn liberal. It was not for the sake of an office. It is odd that I am explaining all this to the PM. Some of whose cabinet colleagues have changed more than 20 parties in 20 years, who are our colleagues....(Interruptions)

Even today, you have refused to condemn the demolition of Babri Masjid. We provoked you, taunted you, and incited you. I must admire, laud, appreciate, applaud your reserve, your taciturnity, you refused to respond.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : He is not a free man.