

0. ANTI-MUSLIM RIOTS in DHARAVI - Story Preface

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It is estimated that about 1 million people live in the Dharavi section of Mumbai. This image depicts once of the entrance's into Dharavi. Image by Jon Hurd; online via Flickr and Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC BY 2.0](#)

Although more people in India are practicing Hindus than any other religion, Islam is also a very significant factor.

For the most part, individuals peacefully co-exist in the country. But growing tensions, arising from a dispute over a site which is holy to both religions, caused significant turmoil (and fatal consequences) in the early 1990s.

The 16th-century [Babri Mosque](#), located in Ayodhya (in the state of Uttar Pradesh), was built at a site which Hindus claim is the birthplace of their revered deity, Lord Rama. After religious violence erupted in 1853, British officials (then in [control of the area](#)) compromised access to the mosque. Only Muslims could enter the [inner court](#), but Hindus were allowed access to the outer.

After India became independent, [tensions erupted](#) again. In 1949, the [mosque](#) was closed to everyone and was designated a disputed area. By 1984, however, a group of Hindus (reportedly led by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad political party (VHP), formed a committee to "liberate" the site. Soon thereafter, Muslims created the Babri Mosque Action Committee.

Negotiations failed to reach a compromise.

By 1990, increasing tensions led to serious confrontation. Efforts were made to destroy the mosque. As reported in *Time Magazine's* November 12, 1990 issue, S.R. Bommai (president of then-Prime Minister's Janata Dal party), [observed](#):

The country is at a crossroads. We have to choose between secularism and religious fundamentalism, between democracy and mobocracy, between unity and disintegration.

"Mobocracy" destroyed the mosque two years later, on the 6th of December, 1992, after a [large crowd](#) of Hindu [activists gathered](#) for a ceremony at the site. Permission for the event had been granted by the court, on condition that the demonstration remain peaceful.

The situation (as reported by eyewitnesses) dramatically deteriorated, however, and a [rushing crowd](#) reduced the mosque to [ruins](#).

Immediately thereafter, anti-Muslim [riots erupted](#) in various parts of the country, including in Dharavi, one of the poorest sections of Bombay (as the city was then called). It is estimated that 2,000 people died nationally, as a result of the uprisings.

Some of those deaths occurred [in Dharavi](#).

Before the 1992 riots, a large percentage of Muslims co-existed with Hindus in Dharavi. Today, however, "pockets" of Muslims live throughout the city, much as pockets of "slum areas" exist throughout the larger metropolitan area.

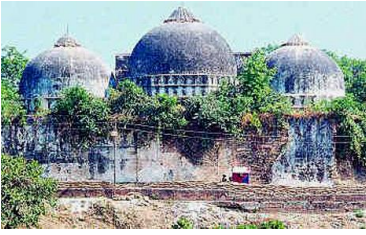
Something else changed, after the 1992 riots. Bombay became Mumbai (where terrorists killed or wounded [hundreds of people](#) in November of 2008). The Hindu-based name comes from Mumba Devi, patron goddess of the Kolis, who call her Mumba Aai (meaning "Mother Mumba").

Because train rails pass straight through Dharavi, its residents could "hop aboard" and take a trip elsewhere. They could travel, for example, to the Taj Mahal.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ANTI-MUSLIM-RIOTS-in-DHARAVI-Slumdog-Millionaire>

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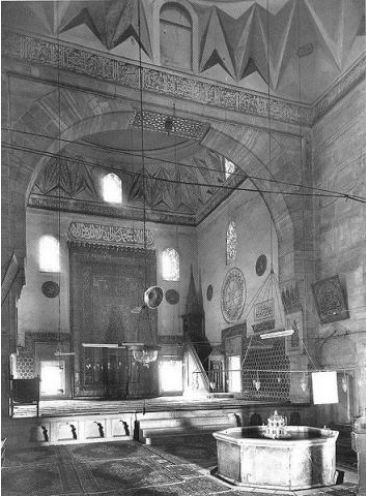
Babri Mosque - Rear View, Before Its Destruction

Photo by Shaid Khan, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Babri Mosque - Interior, Before Destruction

Photo online, courtesy Sunil Bajpai.

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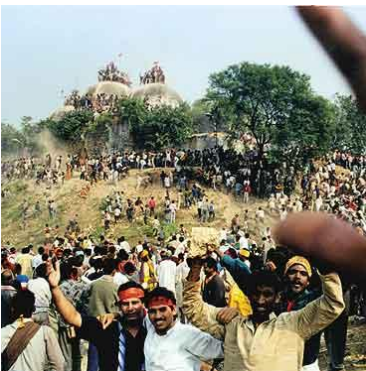
Babri Mosque - Column Before Destruction

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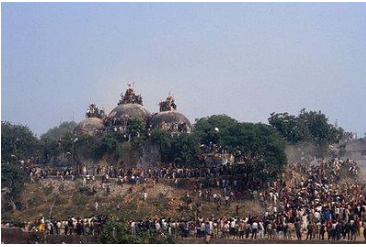
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Babri Mosque - Demolition

Demolition of the Babri Mosque, 6 December 1992. Photo online, Sunni News Files at Word Press - image 20050228.

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Babri Mosque - Crowd Commences Destruction

Image online, courtesy The First Post, a UK-based website.

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Dharavi - Scene of Anti-Muslim Riots

Photo online, courtesy Travel Blog.org - photo 267564.

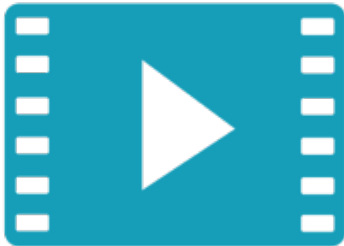
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Destruction of the Babri Mosque

From an Australian broadcast video, clip online courtesy Evilinda's Channel on YouTube.

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