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Amritanandamayi Mutt - A global pilgrimage centre

By P Parameswaran | 20th September 2012 12:06 AM

Justice Krishna Iyer has hit the nail on the head when he described the attempted assault on Mata Amritanandamayi as “lunatic theology becoming rabid pathology”. He has effectively pointed out how a fanatic intruder, shouting Jihadi slogans dashed to the dais where Amma was, as usual, giving darshan to hundreds of devotees from all over the world. One shudders to think as to what would have happened if the assailant had succeeded in reaching Amma. What happened afterwards is well known to need repetition.

The most lamentable part of the story is that certain print and visual media as also some columnists exploited this unfortunate incident to cast aspersions on Amma as well as the Ashram and simultaneously to glorify the assailant as a “martyr”. It is obvious that these people have scant regard for truth. They were only eager to clutch an opportunity to discredit Amma and Ashram.

The incident at Vallikkavu is only the “context”. What is really important is the ‘text’ behind it. It was neither an isolated event nor as simple as it appears on the face of it. It raises many serious questions. How did a Brahmin boy from Bihar who had disappeared from his home for a pretty long period finally surface in Mata Amritanandamayi Ashram? He was said to be an intelligent student who was spiritually oriented and an aspirant to understand the truth about God. In his travels across distant areas, he must have come across different institutions and religious sects. The very fact that he was shouting Arabic -- Islamic words -- “clearly shows he had been deeply influenced by some Islamic teachers”. It is not just getting acquainted with that religion, he must have been converted into Islam.

The real question to be investigated into is where this Brahmin boy got indoctrinated so deeply and lost the balance of mind. Was he instigated by someone to make the Ashram the target of his fury. If so, who is behind it? It is surprising that those self-proclaimed human rights activists who shout from house-tops against Amma and Ashram have not cared to ask for an inquiry by a competent authority about the antecedents of Satnam Singh after he left his home and reached the Ashram. What is really frightening is the dangerous potentials and possible ramifications of this fanatic approach where the Muslim communal politicians have gained the upper hand. They have successfully targeted some of the traditional, cultural symbols and practices that are wholeheartedly followed in Kerala, calling them un-Islamic. Lighting of the lamp in all functions, both official and unofficial, was a traditional practice in Kerala by one and all, irrespective of religion. Even some of the earlier mosques used to keep lamps burning during day and night. Of late, since Muslim League acquired political muscle, they have seen to it that in no official function can the lamp be lighted.

Similarly, the present Education Minister has refused to accept the official residence allotted to him because it was named ‘Ganga’. He got it changed to the English word ‘Grace’. Ganga without India or India without Ganga is unimaginable, but it has become anathema to the Muslim League. At the same time, religious and semi-religious

functions and festivities of Islam like the Ramzan celebrations and Iftar parties and Namaz are being held in official establishments like the State Legislature. What a perversion of secularism, which is considered the hallmark of our Constitution!

Of late, there has been a demand for a separate Secretariat Annexe in the Muslim dominated Malappuram district. The League is spreading its tentacles all over the Malabar region, right from Kasargod to Palakkad. In the name of promoting minority interests, 1,000 people have been appointed as “promoters”. Madrassas have been upgraded and given the status of aided schools with the government’s financial support. It is already well known that a large number of educated youth have been recruited by Pakistan-based terrorist organisations. A series of terrorist activities like bomb explosion as well as communally motivated murders have taken place in Kerala. Even our Prime Minister was forced to admit that Kerala is now a hot-spot for religious fundamentalism and a haven for terrorists. With five ministers and four universities and also a large number of industrial and other establishments proposed to be set up with huge investments from the Gulf countries, Malappuram district is poised to become a highly sensitive area capable of exercising tremendous political and economic power in Kerala. It is a fact of history that during the agitation for the Partition of India, Muslim League had sought a separate and independent ‘moplasthan’ just as the present day Assam. Those facts of history cannot be wished away nor will it be safe to shut the eyes to hard realities.

But this does not mean that the entire Muslim community in Kerala falls in this category. Far from that. There is a large section among them who sincerely believe that they are truly beholden to the Indian cultural heritage. But barring a few honourable exceptions, they do not feel bold enough to express their genuine feelings. In a way, they are held hostages by fanatic elements.

Mata Amritanandamayi Mutt is a calm, quiet and serene religious sanctuary where people from across the world come to seek comfort and solace to their soul. Amma is a living symbol of humanity -- motherhood that provides immense social, educational, cultural and medical services to the people at large. It is a centre of international pilgrimage. If such a place can be targeted by “theological fanatics” as Justice Krishna Iyer has pointed out, neither secularism nor democracy will be safe. It is already late for the state and union governments to take stringent steps to thwart such nefarious conspiracies and their fallout.

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