

# “GOD IS ONE”



Courtesy: Google Images

The clerics of 'Jama Masjid', Delhi passed a Fatwa against Salman Khan, the leading light of Bandra, only because he prayed to lord Ganesha. **Tanaya Adarkar** speaks to a cross section of people and finds out their reactions...

**S**alman Khan performing the puja of Lord Ganesha and dancing fervently while performing the visarjan; the Khan-clan praying to the 'Lalbaugcha Raja'; Shah Rukh Khan visit-

ing the Golden Temple in Amritsar. These and many such examples of even Hindu actors visiting the Ajmer Dargah, Haji Ali Dargah and Mahim Dargah are reported by the media. So is the fatwa justified?

“Our celebrities are a perfect example of a secular India”, says Preyas Agarwal, a student. “I remember my grandpa saying that before Independence, people of all communities used to take part in each other’s festivals. During Diwali, his Muslim friend’s wife would help in making the sweets. They used to visit us and burst crackers with us.” From the pre-Independence to the present day, it is not only celebrities but also the masses who uphold the sentiments of another religion.

“Everyone has the freedom to pray according to his or her belief,” says Ammar Millwala, a management student from Bandra. “Why only Salman Khan, even Shah Rukh Khan prays to Ganesha. It is their wish, whom they want to pray to. I don’t think they are disrespecting their own God by paying respect to some other Gods,” adds Millwala, who has friends from other religions and participates in their festivities with equal fervour.

There are others who see it in a different light. Hafiz, a young businessman, feels that Muslims believe in the oneness of Allah; He is the only one and if you pray to some other God

Courtesy: Google Images



the whole purpose of being a Muslim is defeated. Hafiz however sternly opposes fatwa. He says, “Salman Khan is just respecting his sister and sister-in-law’s sentiments. There is nothing wrong in it. His entire family is a perfect example of secularism.”

Preyas Agarwal, a college student, says, “I always visit my friends place on ‘Eid’ and the food they prepare is delicious. Importantly, there are a number of non vegetarian dishes cooked on that particular day. It is a great feeling if one respects another religion and also believes in his own, because this means you believe in the power of goodness in different forms. In short, I strongly believe that GOD IS ONE”

adarkartanaya@gmail.com

## Fair for all!

**Bandra fair has come and gone. Himanshu Verma digs deep to find out what Bandraiters think about the annual affair**

**M**ount Mary Church is one of the oldest and most visited churches of Mumbai. It celebrates its existence for one whole week on the eve of Our Lady of Mount’s birthday on the first Sunday after 8th September which is called the Bandra fair or the Mount Mary fair. According to some local legend, the famous statue of the Virgin Mary crafted in wood was recovered from the sea by a fisherman. This statue was kept in the church and since then people celebrate with great pomp.

During this time the area is decorated and stalls selling various items like food, religious object, etc. line up Mount Mary church steps. “With changing time the fair is expanding on commercial level,” says 70-year old. Gonzalves, adding that “previously it was just some stalls of Goan made sweets, wax idols, roasted grams, etc. but now it is getting bigger and commercial every year.” Another bakery store owner Joey states, “I set a stall of bakery items which makes fair enough earning; but due to continuous rain, this year’s business has

not been so great.”

The fair is indeed a treat to people of all ages and all religion. “Everyday I use to commute from Borivali to Bandra for my college and during those days I use to visit the fair with my college friends, but now I try to make it when time permits,” asserts 26-year old Vasudha, a career counselor. Echoing the same sentiment is Aishwarya Shah a student of MCA, “I come here with my friends and we enjoy a lot. After our visit to the church we go to Bandstand and Bandra fort and chill out.” While Likesh Mahajan, a Software engineer, says, “It usually becomes crowded and besides the administrative arrangements there are perpetual traffic jams which should be done in a more systematic way.”

The good thing about this fair is that it spreads unity among all religion as they come under one roof to pray at the shrine. We hope our Lady of Mount will maintain this integrity forever.

**HIMANSHU VERMA**  
himanverma@gmail.com

