

Evidence For  
**The Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir**  
Presented to the Government of India on December 23, 1990,  
by the Vishva Hindu Parishad

## **Contents**

**Preface**

**Introduction**

**Documentary evidence: Hindu testimony**

**Documentary evidence: Muslim testimony**

**Documentary evidence: European accounts**

**Evidence from the revenue records**

**Archaeological evidence**

**Untenability of the alternative hypothesis**

**Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid at Ayodhya: An Archaeological and  
Art-Historical Examination**

**Archaeological Evidences of Ram Janmabhoomi**

**Rejoinder to the AIBMAC documents**

## Preface

The struggle for the liberation of Sri Ramjanmabhoomi and restoration of a magnificent Ram Temple at Ayodhya has been going on continuously, in one form or the other, for several centuries. Many generations have participated in it and have paid heavy price in martyrdom. Only the perverse and blind will say that the Vishva Hindu Parishad is the originator of this struggle. V.H.P. represents only the latest reincarnation or organised manifestation of this centuries old Hindu aspiration. The V.H.P. deeply committed to the Hindu ideal of 'Sarva Pantha Sama Bhava', which alone can be the foundation of positive secularism, has been very keen to find a peaceful solution to this centuries old discord. It has sincerely felt that India's experiment in secularism will succeed only when the present generation of Indian Muslims disassociate themselves from the medieval ideology of religious exclusivism, expansionism and iconoclasm, pursued by foreign invaders like Babur or by intolerant rulers like Aurangzeb and glorification of such acts of vandalism in the name of religion. And, therefore, VHP has been trying all means of dialogue and persuasion to make Muslim leaders understand and appreciate its point of view.

It is really sad to see that Muslim leaders instead of taking any initiative on their own, to close this centuries old chapter of discord and conflict and to begin a new one of harmony and trust, have only been indulging in a futile exercise of defending such symbols of medieval vandalism. Instead of identifying themselves with their pre-Islamic ancestors like Ram and Krishna, they are still trying to trace their history from foreign invaders like Muhammad-bin-Kashim, Muhammad Ghaznavi, Mohammad Ghorri, Babur, etc.

It became very evident during the recent bilateral negotiations between the VHP and the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC), through a welcome initiative taken by the present Government at the Centre. It was made very clear at the very outset by the VHP representatives that they have no objection for the talks out prejudice to the schedule programme of the Parishad whether it is Karsewa or the Satyagrah or conferences or anything else. Thus began the bilateral talks on 1st December between the VHP and AIBMAC in the presence of representatives of the Government. The VHP was represented by Sarva Shri V.H. Dalmia, B.P. Toshiniwal S.C. Dixit, Moropant Pingle, Acharya Giriraj Kishor, Kaushal Kishore, B.P. Shukla and Surya Krishna.

According to the official minutes of the second meeting held on December 04, 1990, in the presence of the Minister of State for Home Affairs and the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, "Shri Zafar-yab, Jilani, Convenor of the B.M.A.C. claimed that there has been no evidence in support of

the fact that the Babri Masjid was constructed at the site after demolishing a Hindu temple. He said that there is neither any archaeological nor any historical evidence in support of the demolition. He further said that there is no proof of records in its support." "He further, said that there is no mention of the demolition of temple in any historical account at the site before the construction of the mosque."

Overlooking the centuries old history of discord and conflict, Mr. Jilani further said that the movement of the V.H.P. is of recent origin. Even when the idols were placed in the mosque in 1949 there was no intensity in the movement till 1986. If it could have been the birthplace of Lord Rama, there could have been a continuous agitation and there would have been mention in the records."

When the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Sharad Pawar asked why such a mention is found in Official Gazettes, Shri Azam Khan, a minister in U.P. Government and member of AIBMAC, "claimed that this problem was the creation of the Britishers to divide the Society."

The minutes say, "In the meeting many Muslim speakers asserted that Barbar never visited Ayodhya and hence there is no question of his demolishing the temple".

It was in the face of such assertions made by Muslim leaders that Shri Moropant Pingle, on behalf of V.H.P., suggested that "in the next meeting some three - four experts from each side should take part in the deliberations for placing evidences of respective sides in a coherent way."

The Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Shri Bhairon Singh Sekhawat "suggested that the evidence of both sides should be exchanged and examined by experts. But Mr. Jilani was of the opinion that first the members of both committees should examine the evidences and then the experts' help should be taken."

As the V.H.P. was keen to find an amicable solution at the earliest, Shri Pingle "suggested that all these should be done within a time-frame."

Therefore, "with the consultation of all including the three Chief Ministers and the Minister of State for Home Affairs, the following decisions were taken:

(a) Both sides should furnish evidences to the Minister of State for Home Affairs by 22.12.1990.

(b) The MOS(H) will make available photocopies of evidences to all concerned parties by 25.12.1990, and

(c) After reviewing the evidences both parties will meet further on 10.01.1991 at 10.00 A.M.

To carry the story of these bilateral negotiations, an official document prepared by the office of the Minister of State for Home Affairs under the title "Synopsis of the

evidences presented by the V.H.P. and AIBMAC to the Government for discussion on 10.1.1991", says, "as per the agreement reached between the representatives of the two contending parties on 23.12.1990, the two sides had to submit rejoinders on these evidences by 6.1.1991. The V.H.P. submitted the rejoinder in which it tried to refute claims of the AIBMAC pointwise. The AIBMAC did not react to the evidences put forward by the V.H.P. Instead, it submitted photocopies of more evidences in support of its claims. Since the AIBMAC did not give comments on the evidences put forward by the VHP, it is not possible for the Government to decide the areas of agreement and disagreement."

On 10th January, 1991, the two sides met at Gujarat Bhavan, in the presence of Government representatives. Three experts namely Prof. B.R. Grover, Prof. Devendra Swaroop and Dr. S.P. Gupta invited by the VHP also attended the meeting and presented a summary of the evidences submitted by the VHP before the meeting. It was decided that the documents submitted by both the parties would be distributed under four heads - historical, archaeological, revenue and legal and both the parties would submit names of their respective experts, who after having studied the documents would assemble on 24th and 25th January, 1991 to discuss them and to submit their comments before 5th February, 1991, when the two parties would again meet to arrive at some decision on the experts' report.

But, for reasons best known to them, the AIBMAC started dithering and retracting after this. While the V.H.P. submitted its list of experts on the appointed date, the AIBMAC failed to do so. They submitted a list on 18th January, but went on changing it till the last day. Ultimately, the experts presented by them on 24th January included four office bearers of the AIBMAC itself and four outsiders namely Dr. R.S. Sharma, Dr. D.N. Jha, Dr. Suraj Bhan and Dr. M. Athor Ali, while the VHP side was represented by legal luminaries as Justice Guman Mal Lodha, M.P., Justice Deoki Nandan Agarwal, Justice D.V. Sehgal, Senior Advocate Shri V.K.S. Chaudhury, academicians as Prof. B.R. Grover, Prof. K.S. Lal, Prof. B.P. Sinha, Dr. S.P. Gupta, Dr. Harsh Narain and Prof. Devendra Swaroop. The AIBMAC experts right from the beginning started claiming that they had not read the evidences submitted earlier and had not even visited Ayodhya, and hence they would need minimum six weeks time to study them. And actually on 25th January they did not turn up, keeping the VHP panel of experts waiting for two long hours.

Significantly, the evidence submitted by both the sides does establish that the present structure called Babri Masjid, was built in the year 935 A.H. (1528 A.D.) by Meer Baqi at the order of foreign invader Babar. The question remains as to why this particular site was chosen to build this mosque? Did Babar/Meer Baqi find this spot lying vacant or was an earlier Hindu shrine/structure standing on the

site was demolished and converted into a mosque? Was there any historical significance attached to the site?

It was to answer these central questions that the VHP had collected literary, archaeological, revenue and legal evidences. Instead of accepting or challenging this evidence, the AIBMAC and its experts have thought it better to walk away or to side-track the central issue.

Faced with such a piquant situation, the VHP announced to place the whole evidence before the Court of Public Opinion to enable it to make its own judgement and so here you find it. The evidence speaks for itself and needs no commentary.

While placing on record its deep gratitude to all the historians and legal experts, who took great pains in digging out this valuable evidence, the VHP dedicates their labour of love to the people of India, who as arbiters of India's destiny will recompensate it by their further determination to liberate the Rama Janmabhoomi, at whatever cost which may have to be paid for this cause.

Surya Krishna  
Secretary, V.H.P. (CENTRAL)

1-2-1991

## **1. Introduction**

On the western ramparts of the ruins of an ancient Hindu fortress, called Ramkot or Ram Durga, in the center of the temple city Ayodhya, amidst a large number of Hindu shrines, on the high mound overlooking the latter, stands a medieval Islamic structure, claimed as the "Babri Masjid". The fact that this structure was built after displacing the holy Hindu shrine of Ram Janmabhoomi, existing on the site believed by the Hindus to be the birthplace of Ram, and therefore held specially sacred by them, rests on a mass of literary, historical, archaeological and judicial evidence.

### **1.1 Sacredness of the site**

Some persons seek to question the very foundation of this evidence by arguing that Ram is a mythical and not a historical character, and that it cannot be proven that

he was born on the Janmabhoomi site. That objection can be answered by pointing out that such proof is not required according to the international standards prevalent in this kind of issue.

No one in the world has demanded evidence for the sacred character of the mosques on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Is it proven that the Dome on the Rock or the Al-Aqsa mosque was built over Mohammed's footprint in the rock? Is it true that Mohammed landed there after a journey through heaven on a winged horse? No one has questioned the grounds on which the Muslims hold these places to be sacred. And so, even the Israeli government upholds the right of the Muslims to their sacred places. Similarly, the grotto in which Jesus is believed to have been born, is protected as a place of pilgrimage for the Christians. The belief that Jesus was born there, is neither theologically important nor historically verified. Yet, the Christians' right to their sacred place is upheld without questioning.

Like followers of other religions, we do not need to offer a justification for considering that very site sacred.

So, the relevant question to be considered, is not: can you prove the grounds on which you hold this site to be sacred? The relevant question is : is there proof that an old and persistent tradition among Ram devotees has considered the site as the sacred Ram Janmabhoomi, and that Ram worship took place there in a temple, before and until the Babri Masjid was built? The evidence which is presented here, will prove that the question has to be answered in the affirmative.

## **1.2 Documentary evidence**

The literary evidence beginning with Valmiki's Ramayana, written, even on the most modest estimates, before the 2nd century BC, shows how Ayodhya became a sacred city in Hindu perception, a place of abundant sanctity and pilgrimage on account of its being considered as the city of Ram's birth, activities (*lila*) and death. The evidence also points to the fact that Hindu veneration has been for the site itself, which, as much as the temples or images standing thereon (if any), is in itself considered to be an object of worship.

The existence of a Ram Janmabhoomi shrine at Ramkot, marking what was believed to be the birthplace of Ram, and held by Hindus as one of their holiest spots on earth in the 12th-13th centuries, is well-attested by its description in the *Ayodhya Mahatmya*, a sacred Hindu text forming part of the *Vaishnava Khanda* of the *Skanda Purana*. The *Ayodhya Mahatmya* narrates the supreme glory of the Ram Janmabhoomi shrine situated to the west of Lomash Ashram and north of Vasishtha Kund, specially of offering worship on this spot on Ram Navami day, Ram's birthday.

All the historical literature after 1528 AD, when a mosque was constructed by Mir Baqi at a spot west of Lomash and north of Vasishtha Kund under the orders of the Moghul conqueror Babar, and using 14 black Kasauti-stone pillars of an erstwhile Hindu building, attest that the Hindus continued to consider this as their holy Janmasthan shrine, kept returning to it to offer their devotions, occupied its courtyard in due course, and built thereon a Ram *Chabootra* (cradle of baby Ram) and a Sita kitchen. There are numerous accounts that prove the continued celebration of Ram Navami festival at this place with great gatherings of people, and bitterness between Hindus and Muslims over the former's attempts to take over the place, leading to several disputes and clashes in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. This literature contains a mass of uncontroverted testimony from Muslims and European writers accepting that the Babri mosque was constructed on the site of the Ram Janmabhoomi, destroying the temple and using its materials.

Against this mass of testimony, it has been pointed out that Babar's own, otherwise meticulous, diary is silent about a temple demolition and mosque construction at the Janmabhoomi site. This seeming "argument from silence" has been conclusively explained by Mrs. Beveridge in her English translation (*Babur Nama in English*). Babar reached the Ayodhya area on March 28, 1528, and camped there for a short period to settle the affairs of Awadh. Unfortunately, in all known copies of Babar's diary, there is a break in the narrative between April 2 and September 18 of 1528. The loss of these pages could have occurred during the storm on May 17, 1529, or during Humayun's stay in the desert after 1540. Any reference to the destruction of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple would logically have to be found in those missing pages.

To the literary testimony for the continuous tradition of Ram worship at the disputed site, and for the uncontroverted belief that the Babri Masjid had replaced a Ram Janmabhoomi temple, we may add another category of written evidence : the revenue records. These show that the Masjid/Janmabhoomi area has been considered as Waqf property only after 1931 (and even then this was contested), and that it has always been known as "Janmasthan". In fact, most pre-British documents call the Babri mosque the "Masjid-i Janmasthan", or even just Janmasthan.

### **1.3 Evidence on the spot**

Our archaeological evidence comes from the excavations conducted in the area immediately south of and adjacent to the Babri mosque. Here the fieldwork was conducted from 1975 through 1980 by the Archaeological Survey of India under the direction of Prof. B.B. Lal. The excavations have revealed the existence of a series of burnt-brick pillar-bases at regular intervals. These are found arranged in

parallelrows in the directional alignment in which a number of black-stone pillars are existing in the mosque.

Archaeological evidence of "robber's trench" clearly proves that some of the bricks from the pillar-bases were intentionally removed by those who destroyed the temple. However, stratigraphical evidence proves that these pillar-bases were built in the 11th century and they continued to be in use till the end of the 15th century. From immediately below the topmost floor, which apparently belongs to the general floor of the mosque, archaeologists have recovered a variety of Islamic Glazed Wares which are dated to different periods between the 13th and 15th centuries. Evidently, the temple belonged to the period immediately before the construction of the mosque.

In the early 16th century when the mosque was built at this very place the builders of the mosque used a number of black-stone pillars from the old temple existing here. Some of these pillars have been found used as load-bearing pillars for the arches of the domes of the mosque. Art0historical studies of these pillars show that they bear a large number of images of gods and goddesses, such as the Yakshas, *Devakanyas*, *Dvarapalas* and *Ganas*, and sacred motifs, such as the *puṇnaghata*, lotus, *hansa* and *mala*, all of which belong to the Hindu iconography.

It is, therefore, clear that the evidence of the pillar-bases, the pillars and the glazed wares is conclusively in favour of the thesis that a temple has existed on the "Janmabhoomi" from the 11th through the 15th century, and that it was destroyed in the 16th century, to which period the "Babri Masjid" belongs.

## 2. Documentary evidence: Hindu testimony

The city of Ayodhya has undeniably been a city of great antiquity and a sacred spot to the Hindus for a long time. Giving the location of the city on the bank of river Saryu, and describing its area, prosperity and glory, Valmiki has said in his Ramayana:

कोशलो नाम मुदितः स्फीतो जनपदो महान् ।  
निविष्टः सरयूती रे प्रभूतधनधान्यवान् ॥  
अयोध्या नाम नगरी तत्रासीत् लोकविश्रुता ।  
मनुना मानवेन्द्रेण या पुरी निर्मिता स्वयम् ॥  
आयता दश च द्वे च योजनानि महापुरी ।  
श्रीमती त्रीणि विस्तीर्णा सुविभक्तमहापथा ॥

(Ramayana, Balakhanda, Canto 5, Sloka 5-7)



Many Puranas attest the fact that Ayodhya was considered one of the six holiest of the holy cities. To quote one:

अयोध्या-मथुरा-माया-काशी-कांची हृदवन्तिका ।  
एताः पुण्यतमाः प्रोक्ताः पुरीणामुत्तमोत्तमाः ॥

(Brahmanda Purana, 4/40/91)

In all Hindu scriptures since Valmiki, Ayodhya figures prominently and Lord Rama is referred to as an avatar of Vishnu.

Vyasa incorporated the story of Rama through the Ramopakhyan in the Vanparva of his epic Mahabharata. The earliest sanskrit dramatist Bhasa who lived before the advent of Christ, wrote his dramas 'Pratima' & 'Abhishek' based on the life of Rama. Identifying Rama with his archnavtar, he writes:

नमो भगवते त्रैलोक्यकारणाय नारायणाय  
ब्रह्मा ते हृदयं जगत्त्रयपते रुद्रश्च कोपस्तव  
नेत्रे चन्द्रदिवाकरौ सुरपते जिह्वा च ते भारती ।  
सब्रह्मेन्द्रमरुद्गणं त्रिभुवनं सृष्टं त्वयैव प्रभो  
सीतेयं जलसम्भवालयरता विष्णुर्भवान् गृहयताम् ॥

Kalidas the greatest classical poet & dramatist devoted the 10th canto of his Raghuvansham, to the narrative of Vishnu's incarnation on earth as Rama. In the 13th Canto of his book, where the poet refers to the return of Rama and Sita to Ayodhya in the Pushpak-Viman, he speaks of Rama as Vishnu himself:

अथात्मनः शब्दगुणः मुक्क्षः पदं विमानेन विगाहमानः ।  
रत्नाकरं पीक्ष्य मियः स जायां रामाभियानो हरिरित्युवाच ॥

There is not a single important poet or writer in classical Sanskrit literature who has not paid his best obeisance to Lord Rama in one form or another. Instead of attempting an exhaustive enumeration of such works or citing illustrations therefrom, we may only mention the following ones:

#### (A) Classical Sanskrit Literature:

##### Poems

- (1) Kalidasa (C. 400 A.d.): Raghuvamsa
- (2) Pravarasena (550-600 A.D.): Ravanavaho or Setubandha
- (3) Bhatti : (500-650 A.D.) : Ravanavadha
- (4) Kumaradasa : (c: 800 A.d.) : Janakiharana

- (5) Abhinanda (9th cent.) Ramacarita
- (6) Ksemendra (11th cent.):
  - (a) Ramayanamanjari
  - (b) Dasavatara-carita
- (7) Soacakalyamalla (12th cent.) : Udararaghava
- (8) Cakra Kavi (17th cent.) : Janakiparinaya
- (9) Advaita kavi (17th cent.) Ramalingamrta
- (10) Mohana svami : (1608 A.d. Roac(a,)marahasya or Roac(a,)ma Carita (India Office MS. of 1970 A.D.)

### Drama

- (1) Bhasa, (2nd cent. A.d.) (a) Pratima (b) Abhiseka
- (2) Bhavabhuti (8th cent.) (a) mahaviracarita (b) Uttararamacarita
- (3) Dinnaga (9th cent.) Kundamala
- (4) Murari (900 A.D.) Anargharaghava
- (5) Rajasekhara : (10th cent.) Balaramayana
- (6) Hanuman: Hanumannataka or Mahanataka
- (7) Saktibhadra (9th cent.) Ascaryacudamani
- (8) Yasovarman : Ramabhudaya (8th cent.)
- (9) Mayuraja : Udattaraghava
- (10) Anonymous : (a) Chalit RM (b) Krtya RM (c) Mayapuspaka (d) Svapnadarsana
- (11) Ksirasvami : Abhinavaraghava
- (12) Ramachandra (a) Raghuvilasa (12 cent.) (b) Raghavabhyudaya
- (13) Jayadeva : Prasanna-Raghava (12 cent.)
- (14) Hastimalla : Maithikalyana (1290 A.D.)
- (15) Subhata : Dutangada (13 cent.)
- (16) Bhaskara Bhatta : Unmattaraghava (14 cent.)
- (17) Trysamisradeva : Ramabhyudaya (15 cent.)
- (18) Mahadeva : Adbhutaramayana (17 cent.)
- (19) Ramabhadra Diksita : Janakiparinaya

### Miscellaneous Poems

#### (i) Slesakavyas

- (1) Dharnanjaya : Raghavapandaviya (12 cent.)
- (2) Madhava Bhatta : Raghavapandaviya
- (3) haradatta Suri : Radhava-Naisadhiya
- (4) Cidambara : Radhavapandaviya-Yadaviya (1600 A.D.)
- (5) Gangadhara Mahadevakavi : (18 cent.) Sankatanasanastotra

#### (ii) Vilomakavyas:

- (1) Suryadevi : Ramakrshna-viloma-Kavya (1540 A.D.)

#### (iii) Citrakavyas:

- (1) Krsna Mohana: Ramalilamrta
- (2) Venkatesa : Citrabandha RM
- (iv) Amorous Khandakavyas:
  - (1) Venkatadesika : Hamsasandesa or Hamsaduta
  - (2) Rudra Vacaspati : Bhramaraaduta
  - (3) Vasudeva : Bhramara-sandesa
  - (4) Anonymous : Kapiduta
  - (5) Venkatakarya : Kokilasandesa
  - (6) Jayadeva Ramagita-Govinda
  - (7) Krsnacandra : Candraduta
  - (8) Harisankara : Gitaraghava
  - (9) Prabhakara : Gitaraghava
  - (10) Haryacarya : Janakigita
  - (11) Harinatha : Ramavilasa
  - (12) Visvanathasimha Sangita Raghunandana
  - (13) Visvanatha : Raghavavilasa
  - (14) Somesvara : Ramasataka

#### Prose Romance and Campus

- (1) Ksemendra : Brhatkathamajari
- (2) Somadeva : Kathasaritasagara
- (3) Bhoja : Campus RM (Many other campus such as Uttararamayana Campus, etc. based on Uttarakhanda of RM)
- (4) Vasudeva : Ramakatha

#### **(B) Hindu Scriptures**

##### Ramayanas

- (1) Valmiki Ramayana
- (2) Ramopakhyana in the Mahabharata (Vana Parva)
- (3) The Yoga Vasishtha or the Vasishtha Ramayana
- (4) Adhyatma Ramayana
- (5) Adbhuta Ramayana
- (6) Ananda Ramayana
- (7) Bhushundi Ramayana
- (8) Maha Ramayana
- (9) Mantra Ramayana
- (10) Vedanta Ramayana

##### Puranas

- (11) Vishnu Purana (4th C.) (IV,4,5)
- (12) Brahmanda Purana (4th C.) (2.21)
- (13) Vayu Purana (5th C.) (II,26)
- (14) Bhagvata Purana (6/7th C.) (IX,10-11)
- (15) Kurma Purana (7th C.) (I.19,21: II.34)

- (16) Agni Purana (8th C.) (Ch. 5.12)
- (17) Narada Purana (10th C.) (I.79, II.75)
- (18) Brahma Purana (Ch. 213, 70-175)
- (19) Garuda Purana (10th C. (I.143)
- (20) Skanda Purana (11/12th C.) (II.30)
- (21) Padma Purana (12/15th C.) (Para 116, Uttara 24,43-48)
- (22) Vishnu Dharmottara Purana
- (23) Narasimha Purana
- (24) Vahni Purana
- (25) Shiva Mahapurana
- (26) Devi Bhagvata Mahapurana
- (27) Brihaddharmapurana

#### Upanishads

- (28) Rama-Purvatapaniya Upanishad
- (29) Ramottaratapaniya Upanishad
- (30) Rama-Rahasyopanishad

#### Pancharatra Works

- (31) Agastya Samhita
- (32) Kaliraghava
- (33) Brihad-raghava
- (34) Raghaviya Samhita

### **(C) Other Religious Literature**

- (1) Jaiminiya Ashvamedha
- (2) Mailravana Carita or Hanumanad-Vijaya
- (3) Sahashramukha-ravanacharitam
- (4) Satyopakhyaana
- (5) Hanumat-Samhita
- (6) Brihat-Koshalakhanda

For the last two millenia, the tradition of veneration to Rama has existed in the Hindu society in one form or other. The earliest known inscription to testify this is found in the Nasik cave inscription of 19th regnal year, that is 150 A.D., of Satvahana king Vasisthi-putra Pulumavi which contains the following eulogisation of Gautamiputra Satkarni:

राम-केशव-अर्जुन-भीमसेनतुल्य पराक्रमः  
नाभाग-नहुष-जनमेजय-सगर  
ययाति-राम-अम्बरीष-सम-तेजः

A series of subsequent inscriptions such a Gandhar inscription of Vishwavarman (423 A.d.), Chalukya inscription of Pulakesin I (543 A.D.), Mamallapuram inscription (8th century A.D.), Hansi inscription of Chahmana Prithiraja II (1168 A.D.) establish the continuity of this tradition throughout.

Iconometric evidence proves that the worship of Rama as an incarnation of Vishnu is at least as old as the time of Brihatsamhita of Varahmihir, (5th century A.D.) who prescribes the details of Rama's iconometry in chapter 57 verse 30. Till the end of the 12th century A.D., the canons of iconometry regarding the image of Rama was laid down in the Matsyapurana, Manasollas, Bhatta-utpal & Al-Beruni.

Not only the Padmapurana 1.2.3. Haribans 1.41, Brahmapurana, ch 180, Garudapurana 1.202, Varahpurana ch. IV, but also the Gwalior inscription of the Gurjar Pratihar king Bhoja in the 9th century described Rama as an incarnation of Vishnu.

Besides Manasollas, Dasavatarcharit of Kshendra, Gitagobindam of Jaidev, Naisarhcharit of Sri Harsha & the Ram Charitam of Sandhyakarnandin adulate Rama as Vishnu's avatar.

Even the ancient Jain writers such as Amitagati (11th century) spoke of Rama as the all-knowing & all pervading protector of the World.

The evolution of the tradition of Rama worship at least from 4th century A.D. is established by the early Rama shrines surviving at ancient Ramgiri hill (modern Ramtek) 30 kms from Nagpur, dedicated by the Vakataka queen Prabhawatigupta (5th century), Ambhamata temple at Osion near Jodhpur, (11th century) containing images of Rama-Janaki & Hanuman, Rajivlochan temple (12th century) at Rajim in Raipur disctrict erected by Jagapal the minister of Kalachuri king Pritideva II and dedicated to Rama by an inscription of 1145 A.D., and the Rama temple at Mukundapur in Reva district (12th century) built by Malaysingha. Paintings depicting episodes from Rama's life have adorned the walls of numerous temples in India and outside from the famous Deogarh temple in M.P. (late gupta period) to the Angkor Bat in Cambodia.

According to well researched conclusion of scholars, there existed at least five Vishnu temples in Ayodhya in the 12th century viz.

- (1) Harismriti (or Guptahari) at the Gopratar (goptar) ghat,
- (2) Chandrahari on the west side of the Swargadwar ghat,
- (3) Vishnuhari at the Chakratirtha ghat,
- (4) Dharmahari on the east side of Swargadwar ghat, and
- (5) Vishnu (Rama) temple on the Janmabhoomi.

The last three of these have been replaced on all accounts by mosques built by Mughal emperors.

These are both textual and archaeological evidence to prove that it was a common practice from early times for the devotees of Rama (or Krishna) to offer worship to a temple image which was looked upon as being an embodiment of Rama (archanavtar). Instead of worshipping Rama in his earthly human form, a practice has grown of devotees worshipping him in the form of one (Vishnu) whose avatar he was believed to be. The textual support to this practice is found in the Padmasamhita, a Vaishnav text dating before 1000 A.D. which says:

स्वतन्त्रो राघवः प्रोक्तः पदे पूर्वोदिते यदि ।  
चतुर्भुजो गभीहे कल्पितः कमलासनः ॥  
पश्चाद् विमानशोभार्थं कल्पितः परवानयम् ।  
स्वतन्त्रे राघवे बिम्बे कर्माद्यर्थं प्रकल्पयेत् ॥

(That is, when an image of Rama is installed independently in the Sanctum for the sake of worship, it should have four arms).

This practice was quite natural, considering that Rama was initially seen as an incarnation of Vishnu, but came later to be seen as Vishnu himself. This practice is corroborated by the images installed in the ancient Rajivlochan at Ambamata temple referred to earlier. In the former, the temple has been specifically dedicated to Rama by an inscription (1145 A.D.) and been popularly known and revered as Rama temple, but the image inside is that of four-armed Vishnu. In the latter, the images of Rama & Sita are completely like Laxmi-Narayana but are identified as Rama-Sita by the presence of the seated Hanuman at their feet. An inscription of 467 A.D. testifies to the installation by a devotee of the image of Chitrakutsavami-Anantashayi" referring to both Rama & Vishnu.

An inscription of 467 A.D. testifies to the installation by a devotee of the image of Chitrakutsavami-Anantashayi" referring to both Rama & Vishnu. The same practice is indicated by an inscription found at Ayodhya which says that the Gahadval king, Chandradeva visited Ayodhya on 23rd Oct. 1093 on a pilgrimage on the occasion of a solar eclipse when he bathed in the Saryu and performed the worship of Vasudeva the protector of the three worlds.

(भगवतस्त्रिभुवनत्रातु वसुदेवस्य पूजां विधाय)

The long tradition of Rama worship as evidenced lay the numerous literary, scriptural and archaeological sources culminate in the 12th/13th century in the Ayodhya-Mahatmya forming part of the Skandapurana which describes the various holy spots in Ayodhya, and extols the pilgrimage to the city as the best means to

salvation. Along with various other holy sites associated with Ram such as Goptar ghat, Swargadwar, Sahasradhara (all of which exist till this day) etc; the Ayodhya-Mahatmya profusely eulogizes the Janmabhoomi shrine and gives it location. The merits of a visit by a devotee observing the vow ( ) on the Ramanavami day to the Janmasthana has been described in Ayodhya-Mahatmya in the following words:

"A man who has seen the Janmasthana will not be born again even if he does not offer gifts, practise asceticism, goes on pilgrimages or make sacrifice-offerings. A man observing the vow would be liberated from the bondage of rebirth on arrival of the Navami day because of the miraculous power of a bath and a gift. By seeing the Ramjanmabhoomi he shall obtain the result that accrues to one who gives away a thousand red cows day after day." (see Annexure 1 for relevant extract of Sanskrit text)

### **3. Documentary evidence: Muslim testimony**

A large number of Muslim writers who have written detailed accounts of the regional history of Awadh since 17th century, based on older authentic contemporary sources of various nature, have unanimously stressed the fact that on the basis of Babar's order, the Janmasthan of Sri Ram Chandra at Kot Ram Chander, Pargana Haveli, Awadh, which comprised not only the private apartments (mahal sarai) of King Dashrath and Sri Ram but also a temple and a kitchen popularly known as Sita Ki Rasoi, were demolished and a mosque constructed thereupon in 1528 A.D. under the guidance of the Commander Mir Baqi and the Patronage of a Muslim faqir named Sayed Musa Ashikan.

The earliest of such authors is none other than the granddaughter of Moghul emperor Aurangzeb. Many of these Muslim writers were residents of Awadh and some were eye-witness to or participants in the Hindu-Muslim clashes or the dispute in 1855.

Let us now see what the Muslim writers have said:

#### 1) Abul Fazl (1598 AD)

Abul Fazl, the author of *Akbar Nama/Ain-i-Akbari* (late 16th century) is an eminent writer of the Moghul age who has categorically associated Awadh (Ayodhya) with the residential place (*banga*) of Sri Ram Chandra who during the Treta age was the embodiment of both the spiritual sovereign supremacy as well as the mundane kingly office. Abu; Fazl also testifies that Awadh (Ayodhya) was esteemed as one of the holiest places of antiquity. He reports that Ramnavami festival, marking the birthday of Rama continues to be celebrated in a big way. As in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl is basically concerned with the institutional and

administrative system of the Moghuls (under Akbar), he does not provide any further detail about the disputed building ; nor, for that matter, about any shrines or buildings in general.

2) *Safiha-i Chahal Nasaih Bahadur Shahi*, written by the daughter of Bahadur Shah Alamgir during the late 17th century/early 18th century.

Out of the above Chahal Nasaih ("Forty Advices"), twenty-five instructions were copied and incorporated in the manuscript entitled *Nasihah-i Bist-o-Panjam Az Chahal Nisaih Bahadur Shahi* in 1816 AD, which is the oldest known account of the destruction of Ram Janmabhoomi for construction of the Babri Mosque, and its author is none other than Aurangzeb's grand daughter.

Mirza Jan, the author of *Hadiqa-i-Shahda*, 1856, Lucknow, has reproduced the above text in Persian on pp.4-7 of his book. The text runs as follows:

"... the mosques built on the basis of the king's orders (*ba farman-i Badshahi*) have not been exempted from the offering of the namaz and the reading of the *Khutba* [therein]. The places of worship of the Hindus situated at Mathura, Banaras and Awadh, etc., in which the Hindus (*kufar*) have great faith - the place of the birthplace of Kanhaiya, the place of Rasoi Sita, the place of Hanuman, who, according to the Hindus, was seated by Ram Chandra over there after the conquest of Lanka - were all demolished for the strength of Islam, and at all these places mosques have been constructed. These mosques have not been exempted from *juma* and *jamiat* (Friday prayers). Rather it is obligatory that no idol worship should be performed over there and the sound of the conch shell should not reach the ear of the Muslims ..." (see Annexure 2)

3) *Hadiqa-i-Shahada* by Mirza Jan (1856), pages 4-7.

The author was an eye-witness and an active participant in the *jihad* led by Amir Ali Amethawi during Wazid Ali Shah's rule in 1855 for recapture of Hanumangarhi from the Hindus. His book was ready just after the failure of the *jihad* and was published the following year (1856) in Lucknow. In Chapter IX of his book, entitled *Wazid Ali Shah Aur Unka Ahd* ("Wazid Ali Ahah and His Regime"), we find his account of construction of the Babri mosque.

Mirza Jan who claims to have gone through various old sources says in his own account as follows: "The past Sultans encouraged the propagation and glorification of Islam and crushed the forces of the unbelievers (*kufar*), the Hindus. Similarly, Faizabad and Awadh were also purged of this mean practice [of kufr]. This [Awadh] was a great worshipping centre and the capital of [the kingdom of] Rama's father. Where there was a large temple, a big mosque was constructed and where there was a small *mandaf*, there a small *kanati* masjid was constructed. The temple of Janmasthan was the original birthplace (*masqat*) of Ram, adjacent to



which is *Sita Ki Rasoi*, Sita being the name of his wife. Hence at that site, a lofty (*sarbaland*) mosque has been built by Babar Badshah under the guidance of Musa Ashikan... That mosque is till date popularly known as Sita Ki Rasoi..." (see Annexure 3)

#### 4) Muhammad Asghar's petition (1858)

Muhammad Asghar, khatib and muazzan of the Babri Masjid, filed a representation dated 30.11.1858, in case no 884, *muhalla* Kot Ram Chandra, Ajodhya to the British Government. In this complaint against the Bairagis of Janmasthan, he alleged that the Hindus had occupied the mosque, constructed an earthen mound therein, hoisted a flag on a high pole, installed a deity, started puja, wrote the name of Rama all over the walls and so on. The *muazzin* also observes that in the outer space of the constructed Babri mosque (i.e. in the courtyard within the walled boundaries of the mosque), there had been Janmasthan lying desolate where the Hindus had been worshipping for hundreds of years. This confirms the fact that even though the site of Janmasthan had been covered by the Babri Masjid, the Hindus had been worshipping in the open space for hundreds of years, i.e. even during the Moghul and the Nawabi periods, and that they had maintained their claim on the entire Janmasthan area. (see Annexure 4)

#### 5) *Fasana-i Ibrat* by the Urdu novelist Mirza Rajab Ali Beg Surur.

Dr. Zaki Kakorawi has appended an excerpt from this book by Surur (1787-1867) in his work. The excerpt reads as follows : "During the reign of Babar Badshah, a magnificent mosque was constructed in Awadh at a place which is associated with Sita ki Rasoi. This was Babari mosque. As during this period the Hindus could not dare to offer any resistance, the mosque was constructed under the benign guidance of Saiyed Mir Ashikan. Its date of construction could be reckoned from [the words] *Khair-Baqi*. And in the *Ram Darbar*, a mosque was constructed by Fidai Khan, the subedar."

After further describing the construction of another mosque at Hanuman Garhi by Aurangzeb, the author states that later on, after the defeat of Nawab Shujaudaula at Buxar, the Bairagis occupied the Garhi : "The Bairagis mitigated the mosque at Hanuman Garhi and constructed a temple [thereon]. And then, open prayers were henceforth offered [by the Bairagis] in the Babri mosque comprising the site of Sita ki Rasoi. The [Nawabi] administration could not do anything about it."

It may be noted that Surur mentioned the *Sahifa-i Bahadurshahi*, copied in 1816, as the source from which his observations could be verified by anybody interested. (see Annexure 5)

#### 6) *Tarikh-i Awadh or Muraqqa-i Khusrawi* by Sheikh Mohammed Azmat Ali Kakorawi Nami (1869).

Kakorawi (1811-1893) wrote this book in 1869, but it did not see the light of day for more than a century. When dr. Zaki Kakorawi prepared a press copy, the F.A. Ahmad Memorial Committee agreed to publish the book, in 1986, but without the chapter on the 1855 episode. Subsequently, dr. Kakorawi published this chapter independently in 1987, under the title: *Amir Ali Shah aur Markah-i Hanuman Garhi*.

It contains this account : "Awadh was the capital of the father of Lachhman and Ram. [There,] under the guidance of Musa Ashikan, a magnificent Babri mosque was constructed at the site of the temple within the premises of Janmasthan, which was popularly known amongst Hindus as Sita ki Rasoi. The date of construction can be reckoned from Khair Baqi... And a mosque was also constructed at the site of Ram Darbar by Fidai Khan, subedar, which was later demolished and mitigated by the Hindus." (see Annexure 6)

7) *Zia-i Akhtar* by Haji Muhammed Hasan (Lucknow 1878), p.38-39.

The author states : "The mosque which had been built by Saiyid Musa Ashikan in 923 AH in compliance with the order of Zahiruddin Badshah, Delhi, after demolishing the private apartments (*mahal sarai*) of Raja Ram Chander and the kitchen of Sita, as well as the second mosque built by Muiuddin Aurangzeb, Alamgir Badshah, [in fact] both these mosques have developed cracks at various places because of the ageing character. Both these mosques have been gradually mitigated by the Bairagis and this very fact accounts for the riot. The Hindus have great hatred for the Muslims..." (see Annexure 7)

8) *Gumgashte Halat-i Ajudhya Awadh* ("Forgotten Events of Ayodhya"), i.e. *Tarikh-i Parnia Madina Alwaliya* (in Persian) (Lucknow 1885), by Maulvi Abdul Karim.

The author, who was then the imam of the Babri Masjid, while giving a description of the *dargah* of Hazrat Shah Jamal Gojjri states : "To the east of this *dargah* is *mahalla* Akbarpur, whose second name is also Kot Raja Ram Chander Ji. In this Kot, there were few *burjs* [towerly big halls]. Towards the side of the western burj, there was the house of birthplace (*makan-i paidaish*) and the kitchen (*bawarchi khana*) of the above-mentioned Raja. And now, this premises is known as Janmasthan and Rasoi Sita Ji. After the demolition and mitigation of these houses [viz. Janmasthan and Rasoi Sita Ji], Babar Badshah got a magnificent mosque constructed thereon."

In this work, the author has referred to numerous contemporary sources. It was translated into Urdu by his grandson Maulvi Abdul Gaffar in 1979. (see Annexure 8)

9) *Kaisar-ul-Tawarikh ya Tawarikh-i-Awadh* by Kamaluddin Haidar Hosni al Hussaini al Mashahadi (Lucknow 1896), vol.II, p.100-112.

This author gives the same account of the construction of the Babri mosque as given in *Muraqqah-i Khusrawi*.

10) *Tarikh-i Awadh* by Alama Muhammad Najamulghani Khan Rampuri (1909).

Dr. Zaki Kakorawi has brought out an abridged edition of this book. An excerpt from vol.II (pp.570-575) of this edition runs as follows :

a) "Babar built a magnificent mosque at the spot where the temple of Janmasthan of Ramchandra was situated in Ayodhya., under the patronage of Saiyid Ashikan, and Sita ki Rasoi is situated adjacent to it. The date of construction of the mosque is *Khair Baqi* (923 AH). Till date, it is known as Sita ki Rasoi. By its side stands that temple. It is said that at the time of the conquest of Islam there were still three temples, viz. Janmasthan, which was the birthplace of Ram Chanderji, Swargadwar alias Ram Darbar, and the Treta ka Thakur. Babar built the mosque after having demolished Janmasthan."

b) "...in short, the turbulence [of 1855] reached such a stage that apart from the mitigated mosque at Hanuman Garhi, the Hindus built a temple in the courtyard of Babri Masjid where Sita ki Rasoi was situated..."

c) "...Ultimately, on Zildaqqa 1271 AH [July 1855], for the tenth or twelfth time, nearly two or three hundred Muslims gathered at Babri Masjid which is situated inside the Sita ki Rasoi..."

It is important to observe that the learned author used as many as eighty-one sources (manuscripts and books) covering the history of India/Awadh from the 17th-19th centuries, comprising mostly Muslim authors, though a few Hindu and European writers have also been referred to.

In parenthesis, we remark that the calculation of the year 923 from the numerical values of the letters making up the expression "Khair Baqi" (as before the adoption of Indian numerals, letters were still used sometimes to encode numbers), rests on a mistake. The full expression which is repeated in the inscription on the Masjid, is "Bavad Khair Baqi", of which the numeral value adds up to 935, the AH year partly coinciding with 1528 AD. (see Annexure 9)

11) *Hindustan Islami Ahad Mein* by Maulana Hakim Sayid Abdul Hai.

Maulana Hakim Sayid Abdul Hai (d.1923), an eminent scholar on the history of Islamic culture and also rector of Nadwatul-Ulama, wrote on "India under Islamic Rule" in Arabic, in the early 20th century. The book was published in Hyderabad in 1972. It was translated into Urdu and published with a foreword by his worthy son,

Maulana Abdul Hasan Nadwi, alias Ali Mian, by the Nadwatul-Ulama, Lucknow 1973. An English translation was published in 1977.

The book contained a chapter on "The Mosques of Hindusthan" (*Hindustan ki Masjidein*), giving at least six instances of the construction of the mosques on the very sites of the Hindu temples demolished by the Indian Muslim rulers during the 12th-17th centuries. As regards Babri Masjid, he writes : "This mosque was constructed by Babar at Ajodhya which the Hindus call the birthplace of Ram Chanderji. There is a famous story about his wife Sita. It is said that Sita had a temple here in which she lived and cooked for her husband. On that very site Babar constructed this mosque..." (see Annexure 10)

12) *Asrar-i Haqiqat* by Lachmi Narain Sadr Qanungo, assisted by Munshi Maulvi Hashmi (Lucknow 1923).

The author, L.N.S. Qanungo, says that the book has been written with the active help of an in consultation with Munshi Maulvi Hashim, who has collected all the material and agreed to the contents of the book.

This is a unique book which is a product of joint efforts by a Hindu and a Muslim. Significantly, this book also confirms all that has been said in the *Gumgashte Halat-i Ayodhya* on the demolition of Janmasthan and the construction of the Babri mosque.

#### **4. Documentary evidence: European accounts**

We now present a brief summary of all the post-Babar accounts of Ayodhya recorded by European travellers, archaeologists and scholars.

1) Travel report by William Finch, the European traveller (1608-11).

Finch, who visited Ayodhya, confirms the existence of the ruins of Ramkot, the castle of Ram where Hindus believed he had incarnated thousands of years ago. (see Annexure 11 for the relevant extract from William Foster, ed.: *Early Travels in India*, 1583-1619, London 1921 p.176)

2) *History and Geography of India*, by Joseph Tieffenthaler, (published in French by Bernoulli in 1785).

Tieffenthaler, the Austrian Jesuit priest who stayed in Awadh in 1766-71, reports that Babar destroyed the birth-place temple of Ram and constructed a mosque by using its pillars. However, Hindus refused to give up the place and in spite of the Moghuls' efforts to prevent them, they were coming to the place for worship. They had constructed the Ram Chabootra in the mosque's courtyard, which they used to

perambulate thrice, then to prostrate on the ground. They practised their devotion at the chabootra and in the mosque. Tieffenthaler testifies that they continued celebrating Ram Navami with great gatherings of people from all over India. (see Annexure 12, containing pp.253-254 of Tieffenthaler's *Description Historique et Geographique de l'Inde*, along with an English translation)

3) Report by Montgomery Martin, British Surveyor (1838).

He proposes that the Masjid was built on the ruins of the Ramkot itself, rather than of a building constructed by Vikramaditya, and that the pillars used in the mosque have been taken from Ram's palace, the figures thereon having been damaged by the bigot (i.e. Babar). (see Annexure 13 for pp.335-336 of Martin : *History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India*, vol.II)

4) *East India Company Gazetteer*, by Edward Thornton (1854).

This mentions that Babar's mosque is embellished with 14 columns of elaborate workmanship taken from the old Hindu temple. It also mentions that the Hindus practised pilgrimage and devotion on the Ram Chabootra which they believed to be Ram's cradle. (see Annexure 14 for pp.730-740 of Thornton : *Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Company*)

5) *Encyclopaedia of India* by Surgeon General Edward Balfour (1858).

It mentions that Ayodhya has three mosques on the sites of three Hindu shrines : the Janmasthan, the site where Ram was born ; the Swargadwar Mandir, where his remains were buried ; and the Treta ka Thakur, famed as the scene of one of his great sacrifices. (see Annexure 15 for p.56 of Balfour : *Encyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia*)

6) *Historical Sketch of Faizabad* by P. Carnegie (1870).

He describes the Ramkot with all its bastions and palaces and says that the columns of Janmasthan temple made of strong close-grained dark slate-coloured Kasauti (or touch-stone) and carved with different devices were used by Muslims in the construction of Babar's mosque. Carnegie also notes the construction of the new Janmasthan temple on the neighbouring plot of land in the early 18th century. He reports that until 1855 both Hindus and Muslims worshipped alike in the mosque-temple. (see Annexure 16 for Carnegie : *Historical Sketch of Tehsil Fyzabad, Zilla Fyzabad, with the old capitals Ajudhia and Fyzabad*, Lucknow 1970, p.5-7, 19-21 and a photograph taken by Carnegie)

7) *Gazetteer of the Province Oudh* (1877).

It confirms that the Moghuls destroyed three important Hindu temples at Ayodhya and constructed mosques thereon. Babar built the Babri mosque on Ram Janmabhoomi in 1528, Aurangzeb built one on Swargadwar, and either Aurangzeb or Shahjahan did the same on Treta ka Thakur. All other assertions from Carnegy's *Historical Sketch of Faizabad* are confirmed in this Gazetteer. (see Annexure 17 : *Gazetteer of the Province of Oudh*, vol.I, 1877, pp.6-7).

8) *Faizabad Settlement Report* (1880).

The report confirms that Babar built the Babri mosque in 1528 on the site of Janmasthan temple marking the birthplace of Ram. On Swargadwar Mandir, Aurangzeb constructed a mosque, and on Treta-ka-Thakur the same was done by either Aurangzeb or Shahjahan, according to the well-known Mohammedan practice of enforcing their religion on others. The columns of the destroyed Janmasthan temple have been used in the Babri mosque.

9) *Imperial Gazetteer of Faizabad* (1881).

It confirms the construction of three Moghul mosques at Ayodhya on the site of three celebrated shrines, viz. Janmasthan, Swargadwar and Treta-ka-Thakur. (see Annexure 18 : *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series. United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, vol.II, pp.338-9)

10) *Court verdict* by Col. F.E.A. Chamier, District Judge, Faizabad (1886).

In delivering his judgment in Civil Appeal No. 27 of 1885, the Judge, after visiting the Babri mosque site for personal inspection, observed : "It is most unfortunate that a Masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as that event occurred 356 years ago, it is too late now to remedy the grievance." (see Annexure 19 : extract reproduced in *Muslim India*, March 1986, p. 107)

11) *Archaeological Survey of India Report* by A. Fuhrer (1891).

Fuhrer accepts that Mir Khan built the Babri mosque on the site of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, using many of its columns. He also confirmed that Aurangzeb had constructed two other mosques in Ayodhya on the sites of Swargadwar and Treta-ka-Thakur temples. (see Annexure 20 : Fuhrer : *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-West Provinces and Oudh*, ASI Report 1891, pp.296-297)

12) *Barabanki District Gazetteer* by H.R. Neville (1902).

Neville reports that "numerous disputes have sprung up from time to time between the Hindu priests and the Mussalmans of Ayodhya with regard to the ground on

which formerly stood the Janmasthan temple, which was destroyed by Babar and replaced by a mosque". (see Annexure 21 : Neville: *Barabanki District Gazetteer*, Lucknow 1902, p.168-169)

13) *Faizabad District Gazetteer* by H.R. Neville (1905).

This chronicle confirms that the Janmasthan temple marking the birthplace of Ram at Ramkot was destroyed by Babar and replaced by a mosque using the materials and columns of the temple. In spite of its desecration, Hindus continued to regard it as a holy spot. The desecration caused numerous disputes and clashes between the communities. (see Annexure 22 : Neville : *Fyzabad District Gazetteer*, Lucknow 1905, pp.172-177)

14) *Babur Nama in English* by Annette Beveridge (1920).

After analysing the inscriptions on the Babri mosque and studying the archaeological features, she says that Babur was impressed with the dignity and sanctity of the ancient Hindu shrine it displaced, and that as an obedient follower of Mohammed, Babar regarded the substitution of the temple by a mosque as dutiful and worthy. (see Annexure 23 : Beveridge : *Babur Nama in English*, vol II., 1922, appendix on "The inscriptions on Babur's Mosque in Ajodhya (Oudh)", p.xxvii-xxix)

15) *Archaeological Survey of India* (1934).

It identifies all the holy sites of Ayodhya with reference to the ancient texts, numbered them and put up sign posts in stone to mark the sites. The Babri mosque was identified as the Ram Janmabhoomi and a sign post was embedded there saying : "Site no. 1 : Janmabhoomi".

16) *Revised Faizabad District Gazetteer* by Smt. E.V. Joshi (1960).

This Gazetteer records that under Babar's orders the ancient Janmasthan temple was destroyed and the Babri mosque was constructed on its site. The material of the old temple including some of the original columns were employed in building the mosque. (see Annexure 24 : U.P. District Gazetteers - Faizabad, Lucknow 1960, pp. 46-47, 352-354)

17) *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1978, 15th edition, vol.I).

This most authentic Encyclopaedia records that Ram's birthplace is marked by a mosque erected by the Moghul emperor Babar in 1528 on the site of an earlier temple. The Encyclopaedia also provides a photograph of the present structure, describing it as the mosque on Rama's birthplace, Ayodhya, U.P., India. Earlier

editions of the Encyclopaedia also contained this information. (see Annexure 25 : E.B. vol.I, p.693)

18) *Ayodhya* by Hans Bakker (1984).

In his most comprehensive study, the Dutch scholar Bakker has repeatedly and categorically accepted that an old Vaishnava temple was situated on the holy spot where Ram descended on earth. This Janmabhoomi temple was destroyed by Babar in 1528 and replaced with the now-existing mosque structure. 14 black-stone pillars from the temple were utilized by Mir Baqi in the construction of the mosque. Two more pillars have been driven upside down into the ground at the grave of the Muslim saint Musa Ashiqan, who is said to have incited Babar to demolish the Janmabhoomi temple. A seventeenth specimen which is a door-jamb with matching sculpture and similar age (and possibly from the same temple) is kept inside the new Janmasthan temple on the neighbouring mound. Bakker concludes that Ram Janmabhoomi temple was one of the oldest Ram temples in the country which was in existence in the 12th century. (cfr. Bakker : *Ayodhya*, Egbert Forsten, Groningen 1986, part I, pp.43-59, 60-66, 119-153, part II, pp.118-121, 143-149, 173-175)

19) *Ram Janmabhoomi vs. Babri Masjid* by Koenraad Elst (1990).

The Belgian scholar Elst has centred his study of the Ayodhya controversy on a critical examination of the anti-Mandir argumentations of Mrs. Surinder Kaur (*The Secular Emperor Babar*), Syed Shahabuddin (articles in *Muslim India* and *Indian Express*) and a group of JNU historians (*The Political Abuse of History*). Confronting these argumentations with the available evidence, as well as checking them in terms of logic and methodology, he concludes that the anti-Mandir thesis is untenable. (cfr. Elst : *Ram Janmabhoomi vs. Babri Masjid, a Case Study in Hindu-Muslim Conflict*, Voice of India, Delhi 1990)

## **5. Evidence from the revenue records**

In the revenue records, Kot Ram Chandra, the residential headquarters of Sri Ram Chandra has been shown quite distinct from the city (*shahar*) of Ayodhya. In the records, Janmasthan, a large complex serves as a landmark in Kot Ram Chandra. The first regular settlement Report (1861) as well as the later records confirm that these records are in continuation with the Summary Settlement (1858-59) as well as with the earlier records of the Nawabi period. The revenue records clarify the factual proprietary position of Janmasthan vs. Babri Masjid, and show how the site has generally been treated as Janmasthan and nothing else.

In the first settlement report (1861), the entire complex of Janmasthan shown under abadi (populated) is covered under khasra No. 163 with 10 plots with superior ownership declared in the name of Sarkar Bahadur Nazul (government), and the



mahants of Janmasthan along with their names and title to land have been shown with subordinate proprietary right (malikan-i matahit).

The map of Hadbast of the village Kot Ram Chandra appended to the Settlement Report (1861) shows only Janmasthan and the symbol of Mosque is not indicated anywhere on the plot in question.

This position is maintained even in the later three Settlements effected during the 19th-20th centuries (Fasli 1301, 1344 and 1397, corresponding to AD 1893, 1939 and 1989). In the 1937 settlement and latest Khasra Kistwar map the position is the same as in 1861 Hadbast map. As per revenue practice, numbers of the plots, sub-plots in the various categories of the revenue documents have however undergone change from one settlement to another. In the 1989-90 Settlement, the erstwhile Janmasthan complex has been shown under four khasra numbers, viz. 159, 160, 146 and 147 R. Ram Janmabhoomi, without being mentioned have been shown in two numbers, viz. 159 and 160. Of these, most of the area has been shown in the ownership of the local mahant while some portion has been put under Nazul. The new Janmasthan monument misnomered as Janmasthan to the north of the latter, shown in khasras Nos. 146 and 147 R is vested in the ownership of the local mahant.

Eventhough the amended khasra records of the Nazul Department (1931) under No. 580 put both the structure of the Babri Masjid and the Chabootra Temple in Waqf possession, Mahant Raghunath has been declared as subsidiary proprietor of the entire plot. However, the position taken by the Nazul records (1931) is not further reflected in any of the regular revenue settlements of 1936-37 and 1989-90.

In the Settlement Reports since 1861, no plot or sub-plot has been shown as Waqf. Muhammad Asghar and Mir Rajab Ali who claimed themselves to be *khatibs* and *muazzans* of the Babri Mosque were in fact the *zamindars* of village Shahanwa, about 6 miles from Kot Ram Chandra, and held *nankar/muqfi* (maintenance grant) on account of services rendered by them to the British government.

There is no record of the Babri Masjid as a Waqf in accordance with the provisions of the U.P. Muslim Waqfs Act of 1936 or its re-enacted version of 1960.(see Annexures 26, 27, A, B, C, D, E)

## **6. Archaeological evidence**

The text in annexure, *Ram Janmabhoomi / Babri Masjid at Ayodhya : An Archaeological and Art-Historical Examination*, by dr. S.P. Gupta, is a detailed survey of those findings at the disputed site which are relevant for the present discussion. It lists the details about the components of an earlier temple that have been re-employed in The Babri Masjid, and the results of excavations just outside

the building. These excavations were carried out in 1975-80 by the Archaeological Survey of India, and led by prof. B.B. Lal. Their object of investigation was primarily the early period, presumed to have been the period of the events which formed the historical core of the Ramayana epic. Therefore, the findings relating to the medieval period have not been highlighted in the concise ASI excavation reports published so far.

Dr. S.P. Gupta, former director of the Allahabad Museum, who participated in the excavations, has written this first-hand report on the category of findings pertinent to the present discussion. His conclusions have been broadly confirmed by prof. B.B. Lal, in an article published in *Manthan* (October 1990), as well as in an interview with BBC television.

Incidentally, we have taken note of the fact that some historians of Jawaharlal Nehru University have thought it necessary to raise suspicions against the professional integrity of dr. Gupta and prof. Lal. In a statement published in *Indian Express* (December 5, 1990), they insinuate that dr. Gupta falsely claims participation in the excavations, and that prof. Lal has changed his archaeological conclusions in order to satisfy newly arisen political exigencies. Both these insinuations are baseless. The fact that the JNU historians, protagonists of the anti-Mandir camp in the present historical debate, now find it necessary to resort to personal attacks, may indicate an increasing loss of confidence in their own arguments. (see Annexure 28)

## **7. Untenability of the alternative hypothesis**

### **7.1 No second Janmasthan**

A thesis advanced by the anti-Mandir people is that the new Janmasthan temple (also known as *Sita ki Rasoi*) on the mound adjacent to and north of the Babri structure is itself the original Janmasthan shrine. On many grounds, this proposition is untenable :

- 1) This is a relatively new temple and there is no archaeological evidence to suggest that it is more than 250 years old.
- 2) Available historical evidence shows that this shrine was originally started by a sadhu named Ram Dasji in about 1704 AD, on a piece of land donated by Mir Masoom Ali Mafidar. Subsequently, the present impressive structure was built by a Hindu minister of Safdarjang (the Shia Nawab of Awadh), Naval Rai, who rebuilt many temples during this period of relative benevolence, mostly on sites of original sites destroyed by Muslims. Where the original site was occupied, as in this case, a neighbouring site was used for the construction.

3) Tieffenthaler described the new Babri Masjid in detail as being the site of the original Ram Janmabhoomi, while he also mentions the new Janmasthan temple (Site ki Rasoi) as a very famous one in the city.

4) The thesis that the original Ram Janmabhoomi shrine continued without any interference leaves unexplained the origin of the persistent controversy about Ram Janmabhoomi on the Babri Masjid site.

## **7.2 Hindus never ceased claiming the site**

It is well-attested that Hindus persistently tried to retrieve their holy land, which led to conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus regained control of the courtyard by the 18th century and kept up their pressure on the site under the domed structure. There is no reasonable explanation for this persistent attachment to the site, except that it was in continuation of an older, pre-Masjid tradition.

A document enclosed with a letter dated 12th August, 1855 from Wazid Ali Shah, the king of Oudh, to the British Resident Major James Outram, carrying the seal of the Qazi of Faizabad in the year 1735 A.D., mentioned that a serious riot had taken place over the Masjid "built by the emperor of Delhi" (apparently a conflict of the kind that took place in 1855) between Hindus and Muslims, during the times of Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Ali Khan, the first Nawab of Oudh (1707-1736) over the possession of this mosque. (NAI, Foreign, Political Proceedings, 28th December, 1855, No.355 (Enclosure No.5)).

Maratha documents show that one of the main objectives of Maratha operations and policy in North India was the liberation of the sacred cities of Ayodhya, Varanasi and Prayag. In the year 1751 Maratha armies led by Malhar Rao Holkar, at the invitation of Safdarjang, the second Nawab of Oudh, defeated the Pathan forces in Doab. Immediately after his victory Malhar Rao Holkar requested Safdarjang to handover Ayodhya, Kashi and Prayag to the Peshwa. (A.L. Srivastava: *The First Two Nawabs of Oudh*)

Again, when in 1756 the third Nawab Shujauddaula invited Maratha help against impending Afghan invasion, the Maratha agent of the Court of Oudh demanded the transfer of these three holy places including Ayodhya and the negotiations lingered on for more than a year on this one point. Ultimately in July 1757, Shujauddaula agreed to transfer the holy cities of Ayodhya and Kashi to the Maratha leader Raghoba. But the transfer could not be implemented as Maratha armies got entangled in the conquest of the Punjab which ultimately led to the tragedy of Panipat (1761 A.D.)

But Peshwa Balaji Bajirao's eagerness to acquire Ayodhya is reflected in one of his letters dated 23rd February, 1759 to Dattaji Scindia, his General in the North wherein the Peshwa reminds Scindia that "Mansur Ali's son (i.e., Shujauddaula)

had promised to Dada (i.e. Raghoba) to cede Benares and Ayodhya" and instructs him to take hold of those places alongwith Prayag. (Cf. Sarkar J.N.: *Fall of the Moghul Empire*, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1934 ff 231-233).

Historians Dr. A.L. Srivastava, Sir J.N. Sarkar, G.S. Sardesai and Dr. Hari Ram Gupta who have studied this period of history very deeply have concluded that "Had the Bhau (Sadashiv) emerged successful from Panipat, within a few years Kashi, Prayag and Ayodhya would have been emancipated". (Hari Ram Gupta: *Marathas & Panipat*, Chandigarh 1961, p.292).

In 1767 Tieffenthaler found that in spite of the Mughal kings' efforts to prevent them, the Hindus had re-occupied the courtyard, raised the Ram Chabootra thereon, and were worshipping there as well as under the domed structure.

In 1854 Thornton recorded in his Gazetteer exactly the same situation as Tieffenthaler had found.

In 1855 there was a big clash in which nearly 300 Muslims under Shah Ghulam Hussain took possession of the Babri mosque and tried to fix doors on it. On protests from Hindus, clashes started. Muslims attacked Hanumangarhi, but were driven back with considerable loss. Then the Hindus counter-attacked, stormed the Janmasthan and killed 70 Muslims who were buried nearby. Shah Ghulam Hussain jumped over the wall and fled.

In 1856, the Muazzin of the Babri mosque, in a petition before the British authorities admitted that the courtyard had been in possession of the Hindus for hundreds of years and now they were interfering with the domed structure as well.

In 1934, serious Hindu-Muslim clashes occurred in and around the Babri mosque, occasioned by a cow slaughter. Many people were killed and the structure was seriously damaged.

In November and December 1949, the Hindus held large sessions of Ramayana-recitation around the site, in order to purify it. On December 22/23, idols were installed (some say they miraculously appeared) and the place was re-consecrated for Ram worship.

### **7.3 Attempts to suppress Muslim testimony**

While all Muslim writers before 1949 proudly proclaimed the destruction of the Ram Janmabhoomi for construction of the mosque, hailing it as virtuous act of proclaiming the victory of Islam over Hinduism, there are definite indications that in recent years (especially since the Hindus strengthened their claim over the site) attempts have been made to suppress evidence and manipulate records. The following cases will show this.

1) *Gumgashte Halat-i Ajodhya Awadh* by Maulvi Abdul Karim (referred to in 3:8), was translated from Persian to Urdu by his grandson Maulvi Abdul Gaffar. The first edition of this translation, published in Lucknow in 1979, retained the description of demolition of the temple at Janmasthan. But this portion was removed from the second edition published in 1981 (p.53-54).

2) In 1989, a leading intellectual of this country looked for the book "*Hindustan Islami Ahad Mein*" ("Hindustan under Islamic Rule"), by Maulana Hakim Saiyid Abdul Hai (referred to in 3:11), which included a chapter on *Hindustan ki Masjidein*, containing a description of the demolition of several temples in the country including the Ram Janmabhoomi, and their replacement by mosques. He found that many people who certainly should have known the book, were not willing to recall it. The book was also missing in the libraries of famed Muslim institutes, including the AMU. If one perforce wants to consider all this mere concoction and insinuation, this much is verifiable fact : the English version (1977) has the tell-tale passages in the descriptions of seven mosques built on temples, including the Babri Masjid, censored out or substituted.

3) The manuscript of the *Muruqqa-i Khusrawi* by Sheikh Mohammed Azamat Ali Nami, was only available in the Tagor library, Lucknow, for over 100 years. In 1986, when the F.A. Ahmad Memorial Committee published it, they omitted the chapter relating to the destruction of the Ram Janmabhoomi and the Hindu-Muslim clashes in 1855. Later dr. Zaki Kakorawi had to get this published independently without getting any financial aid from the committee.

4) The Settlement Record of 1861 (First Khasra Kishtwar Settlement Report) contained only the name of Janmasthan on all the 10 plots of Khasra no. 163. But in the copy of the report kept in the Faizabad Mahafazkhana, someone has made interpolations to insert the names of *Jama Masjid* and *Muqafi* against one of the plots. The interpolation becomes evident if one looks at the record available at Tehsil Office, the record of second Revenue Settlement 91893 AD) and the Revised Khasra records of Nazul department of 1931 AD.

The fact that some people thought it necessary to conceal, manipulate or even obliterate pieces of testimony to the history and the actual use of the disputed structure and its courtyard, corroborates our view that these pieces do have proof value in favour of the Mandir hypothesis.

#### **7.4 Total lack of counter-evidence**

The thesis recently advanced by some persons that the Babri Masjid did not replace any extant Ram temple goes against common sense in many ways. The well-attested fact that the Hindus offered Ram Puja in the mosque courtyard even under Muslim rule, the rows of 11th century pillar-bases aligned with the wall of the

present structure, the touch-stone pillars incorporated in it, the Hindu sculptures they carry, all these indications converge on the thesis of a pre-existent Ram temple replaced by the Babri mosque. This thesis is also in perfect conformity with historically attested behaviour patterns of Hindu devotees and Muslim conquerors. Indeed, the Ram Mandir hypothesis postulates a little more than that the general patterns applied in Ayodhya too.

By contrast, the anti-Mandir thesis rests on a number of untenable assumptions :

- 1) The Babri Masjid was built on empty land. But the site is the highest point in central Ayodhya, the place of honour : in no city in the world would it ever have been left empty, much less in a temple city of long standing.
- 2) Mir Baqi went elsewhere to collect the touch-stone pillars, but at that other place where the material was readily available, he did not build a mosque (for no second mosque with such pillars is known).
- 3) The tradition associating the site with Rama was created out of nothing while the site was occupied by an imperial mosque. Hindus left whatever place they had earlier considered the birthplace, without a trace, and started an exclusively Hindu worship in a mosque courtyard taking the unparalleled risk of confronting the Muslim power, for no historical reason at all.
- 4) The British concocted the story, eventhough their knowledge of these traditions was scant, no priests or sadhus belonging to this tradition would ever believe an outsider's theory (till today they reject any scholarly chronology of Indian history), plenty of temples-turned-mosques were in existence without needing concoction, and no similar rumour-mongering by the British has been reported anywhere in India.

In an academic context, the burden of proof would rest squarely with those coming up with such a string of far-fetched hypotheses to contradict a well-established hypothesis attested to by a long list of uncontroverted independent testimonies by local Muslim as well as European writers spanning 4 centuries. More so because the Mandir hypothesis is not only supported by the evidence which we have presented, but is coherent with well-attested behaviour patterns:

- 1) Muslim conquerors destroyed many temples and replaced them with mosques.
- 2) In a few cases, they left the whole building standing (Kaaba, Aya Sophia); but far more often they left the earlier building only partly standing, or razed it completely, but visibly used parts of the destroyed temple, to flaunt the victory of Islam over paganism: e.g., the Jama Masjid of Damascus (Syria), the Gyanvapi mosque (Varanasi), Jami Masjid of Rajamundri (Andhra), Quwwat-ul-Islam

Masjid (Delhi), Adhayi-Din-ka-Jhonpra mosque (Ajmer), Jami Masjid of Kannauj (U.P.), Jami Masjid of Sambhal (U.P.).

3) As N. Manucci (17th century) and A. Cunningham (19th century) have testified, Hindus often kept returning to places on which a mosque had been imposed, and this more so to the extent that the place itself, rather than the erstwhile temple, was sacred to them.

A simple test whether the anti-Mandir hypothesis deserves any consideration at all, is the element for which evidence should be most easy to find: the British concoction hypothesis. In the plentiful and well-kept archives which the British have left us, it should not be too difficult for genuine historians to find some piece of evidence. But so far, no proof whatsoever has been given either for such an actual course of events or even for similar British tactics at another time and place. If the anti-Mandir polemicists cannot even come up with that, their whole hypothesis stands exposed as a highly implausible and purely theoretical construction.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The choice is between two hypotheses. Actually, the hypothesis that a Mandir stood on the Ram Janmabhoomi site until Babar's troops destroyed it and replaced it with the Babri Masjid, has only recently been made into a "hypothesis" and forced to compete with the alternative anti-Mandir hypothesis. Until recently, the pre-existence of a Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir at the Babri Masjid site was a matter of established consensus. It was confirmed by a large number of Hindu, Muslim and European sources from the 17th century onwards, and never once put in doubt. And it explains all the relevant facts and observations mentioned in all the sources, and all the iconographical and archaeological findings at the site.

By contrast, the alternative hypothesis is a recent invention of armchair theorizers under political compulsions. Formally, it does no more than put into question a number of the sources which confirm the Mandir hypothesis. It does not offer a coherent scenario that would explain all the available facts. It goes against general historical knowledge in a number of respects, and fails to justify its extraordinary assumptions. Materially, it does not come up with any proof: no proof that any of the pro-Mandir documents is telling lies, much less any proof of the events that would make up an alternative non-Mandir scenario.

The choice is between a hypothesis firmly rooted in reality, and a hypothesis constructed in the air and totally out of tune with general knowledge and particular evidence. Faced with this choice, any sincere scholar, and indeed any citizen with common sense, will not find it difficult to make up his mind.

# **RAM JANMBHOOMI/BABRI MASJID AT AYODHYA AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ART-HISTORICAL EXAMINATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As we approach the 'Babri Mosque', located at the site popularly called 'Ram Janmabhoomi' we see a simple and modest structure with three domes, the central one bigger than the two side ones, It is surrounded by two high-rising walls, running parallel to each other with large open space in between.

I.2- On the high entrance of the domed structure are fixed two stone tablets, side by side, which bear two inscriptions in Persian informing us that this structure was built by one Mir Baqi on the orders of Babur.

I.3- There are 14 pillars of black stone fixed in this domed structural complex-two are located at the small entrance in the outer boundary wall on the east, while four are located in the main door opening into the central part of the domed building; four each are located in the two walls which separate the central domed area from the southern and northern domed areas.

I.4- The walls of the Babri Mosque are made of coarse-grained whitish sandstone blocks, rectangular in shape, while the domes are made of thin and small burnt bricks, Both these structural items are plastered with thick chunam paste mixed with coarse sand.

I.5- The 14 pillars, on the other hand, have been carved out of dark schistose stone with fine silica grains. The surface is now blackish with bright sheen, as if polished.

I.6- While the coarse sand and the bricks used in the mosque are generally of local origin, found nearby regions, the dark stone, called locally 'Kasauti' or 'touch stone', is found in far off places only, such as the Himalayan foothills or 'terai' in U.P. and Nepal.

I.7- It may be mentioned here that while apparently the mosque does not bear any decoration with figures of Gods and Goddesses, the dark stone pillars have several of them, besides other sacred motifs.

I.8- It may also be mentioned that under a national archaeological project, called 'Archaeology of the Ramayana sites', a team of archaeologists headed by Prof. B.B.Lal, former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, excavated this site from 1975 through 1980 on the immediate south and west of this monument.



We, are, therefore, faced here with a peculiar situation while the domed structure shows some architectural features which are peculiar to Muslim architecture, the pillars show features which are peculiar to Hindu architecture.

In order to understand this apparently odd situation, archaeologists undertook a detailed examination of the domed structure as well as the black stone pillars, They have then supplemented this study with the examination of the material remains which have been unearthed in the trenches laid in an area which is adjoining the southern boundary wall of the mosque.

## **II. THE PILLARS**

II.1. In the so-called 'Babri Mosque', built in the 16th century (1528 A.D.-1530 A.D.), there are at least 14 stone pillars of a pre-existing structure. The pillars support the super-structure of some vital parts of the mosque, such as the arches of the entrances. These pillars are of dark schistose stone which is of the slate variety. Locally it is called 'Kasauti' stone or 'touch stone' because, as the tradition goes, against this the purity of gold could be tested. This stone is found in nature as rock formations in the lower Himalayas; in the Nepal Terai and the Terai of Uttar Pradesh. Out of this stone, temple images alone were carved in the early times. Many of them are still found in the temples of these very regions, and many others are housed in Museums such as Lucknow and Allahabad. These images of the so-called Kasauti stone are dated from the 9th through the 12th century A.D. In other words, till the 11th century no temple was ever built in the around Uttar Pradesh where this stone was used for pillars of any monument, religious or secular, and Hindu or Buddhist, or even Jain. Muslims, of course, did not at all use it here. It is significant to note that this stone is entirely different from the black basalt stone, generally used for one kind of Pala sculptures in eastern India, which is an igneous rock.

II.2- There are two more similar pillars of the black schistose stone. These are found placed upside down by the side of the grave of one Muslim saint, Fazle Abbas alias Musa Ashikhan. In the local tradition, he is generally blamed for inciting the then authorities, headed by one Mir Baqi, to demolish the temple at Janmasthan and build a mosque there. It has been mentioned by different authors, including Hans Bakker, the writer of the famous book entitled Ayodhya.

II.3- In addition, there is a door-jamb, resting against a wall in the courtyard of the modern Janmasthan temple built in the late 18th century, across a road that separated the 'Janmabhumi' from 'Janmasthan'.

II.4- There are also nearly half-a-dozen Vaishnav images located at various places in the cities of Ayodhya and Faizabad, besides a number of other images.

II.5- The pillars are carved at the base with a sacred water-pitcher, called purnaghata or kalash. It has overhanging creepers with rich foliage, arranged in a highly stylised form. From this, in one example, a devkanya is seen emerging and standing on a lotus flower. In another example, at the place of the devkanya, there is a picture of hamsa with elaborate tail. From this Kalash, sometimes a decorative lotus rises up on one of the octagonal facets of a pillar a female figure, standing in tribhanga mudra, is still visible, although it is found heavily mutilated by the iconoclasts.

II.6- These columns have sixteen facets, passing into a square at the bases. On all the four corners of the base of a column we see load-carrying or bharavahaka Yakshas, sitting with hands down. These are semi-divine beings in human form shown supporting the kumbhas or vessels out of which the shaft of the pillar is shown rising.

II.7- The door-jamb is of the same stone as of the columns, i.e., schistose. It is 115 cms. long and is decorated with sculptured figures from top to bottom. At the base, there is a small arch recess in which one can see a standing male figure. The image is wearing a Karanda mukuta (or tiara) on the head, and a vanamala on the bare front body. While the right hand is in vyakhyana mudra, the left hand is carrying a weapon, trishula. Above the niche are the two vertical bands of decoration, the right one shows the rising creeper motif, divided into two vertically running friezes. The left one contains three figures of devkanyas or apsaras, i.e., nymphs of heavenly female beings, alternating on the top with gana i.e., semi-divine male in the dancing pose. These are arranged one above the other, the uppermost figure is in fact of a salabhanjika i.e. a female (nymph) figure holding and bending the branch of a blossoming tree. The other apsaras are also shown standing in simple niches.

II.8- These columns or pillars can easily be dated on the basis of what we call the science of Art style, if we carefully look at the forms of various elements of the above mentioned decorations and also other decorations on them. We will date them in the early 11th century. Floral and geometrical motifs such as inter-secting garlands and creepers (the leaves and flowers), and diamonds and triangles, the globular form of the water pitchers with moulded mouths, the long hanging garlands, the female figure (body, eyes, nose, and face) and the architectural features, such as the form of the arch and the pilasters as well as thin transparent dhotis, conclusively prove that these pillars were definitely carved in the early 11th century. These forms belong to what we sometimes call in art-history 'Late Pratihara' or 'Gahadval' style. We have several examples of similar forms occurring in temple decorations from different ancient temple-sites in northern India such as Jamsot.

Evidently, these black stone pillars or columns belong to an old Hindu temple, these could not belong to any other religion including Buddhism, since no

Buddhist temple has been built anywhere in India during the 11th century in which Buddha or a Bodhisattva or Tara or some other God is not present.

### **III. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION**

III.1- Besides the excavations conducted by Alexander Cunningham in the 19th century at some Buddhist places in Ayodhya, other than Janmabhoomi, Prof. A.K.Narain of the Banaras Hindu University excavated Ayodhya in 1969 by laying three trenches at three different places in the city, considerably away from Janmabhoomi. From 1975 through 1980, Prof. B.B.Lal, Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, also laid trenches at 14 different places at Ayodhya, but including one at Janmabhoomi. Some trenches were taken just behind the Babri Mosque in the west, and some by the south side of the mosque for detailed archaeological survey of India. The scheme was a part of a large national project launched by the Central Government, when Prof. Burul Hasan was the Minister of Education and Culture. It was called 'Archaeology of the Ramayana Sites'. These 17 trenches yielded the following select data which have direct bearing on the problem.

III.2- Firstly, the earliest habitational layer in these trenches, laid directly above the natural soil, yielded the most beautiful pottery of Indian material culture, called Northern Black Polished Ware(early period) with silvery and golden hues. It is fired uniformly at a very high temperature, more than 1000 degree C, which produced not only unique polish, but also unique metallic sound. It is a dated pottery and it belongs to the 7th century B.C.

III.3- Secondly, there has been almost continuous human habitation in the Janambhoomi-Masjid area from the 7th century B.C. upto the 3rd century A.D. Then there occurred some break in the habitation in the Janmabhoomi area.

III.4- Thirdly, in the 11th century some people constructed a series of rectangular 'bases' or short pillar- like structures of burnt-bricks, each about 3ft. tall. This was done by cutting the debris of the earlier periods. These 'bases' were meant for the pillars of a super-structure. These 'bases' have been found arranged in parallel rows. It is significant to note that the directional alignment of the 'bases' is the same as that of the several pillars of black stone found in the mosque.

III.5- Fourthly, a well laid thick floor, made of pinkish white chundam or like and small kankars was found running over and across a 'base'. It was found running even beyond the excavated area, towards the mosque. It is conclusively proved by the floor material in the section of the trenches. This is the original 'mosque floor' level.

III.6- Fifthly, below this topmost floor a thick deposit was found which has yielded Islamic Glazed Ware sherds of various types and colours including blue, red and

green, which may be dated between the 13th and 15th centuries. It includes a White Glazed Ware with blue paintings which was prevalent in Persia in the 15th century, i.e. much before the date of the mosque which was built in the 16th century.

III.7- Sixthly, there was a well-laid chunam and kankar floor below this layer, but it was found running against the 'bases'.

III.8- Seventhly, there was one more similarly laid floor below this floor, also running against the 'base'.

III.9- According to the science of 'Archaeological Stratigraphy', while the top-most floor belonged to the level and period of the mosque, the lower two floors belonged to the earlier pre-mosque structure. The fact that instead of one, there are the remains of two floors of this pre-mosque structure is interesting since it shows that the floor of the structure was restored almost completely and at least once.

III.10- Eighthly, at least in one example the 'base' records the fact of destruction upon the foundation. It is the evidence of a rectangular pit without its 'brick' base. It must have been done anciently by laying a 'robber's trench' by some one interested in demolishing it and removing its bricks for constructing some other structure.

#### **IV RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK**

These kinds of art and archaeological evidences establish two things:

IV.1- one, the antiquity of the site of Ayodhya goes back at least to 700 B.C.

IV.2- Second, in the 11th century a large structure on pillars was erected at the site now popularly called 'Janmabhoomi'. At this very place, now a 16th century mosque stands. It has 14 black stone pillars, decorated with beautiful floral, faunal and human carving, largely mutilated. The carvings on them show that they were carved in the early 11th century. When compared with similar carvings on the pillars of structures of the 11th century elsewhere in U.P. we find that these are used in temples made of other stones, generally buffish sandstone. It is, thus, clear that the black stone pillars at Janmabhoomi also belonged to a temple. No secular structure in and around Uttar Pradesh used this stone for pillars.

IV.3- Further, most of the pillars of the 11th century temples were removed at a later date, in the early 16th century, although a few of them are still in their original placement, others are displaced. Originally, there may have been 84 pillars and the area covered by them must have been around seven times more than that covered by the domed structure of the mosque.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES OF RAM JANMABHOOMI**

-By Dr. B.P. Sinha\*

The significance of archaeological evidence in the context of Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy, is being keenly stressed by both the contending parties - VHP and BMCC. Being one of the few having the first hand experience of both as a historian and a field archaeologist for many decades, I would like to point out the inadequacy of archaeology as the only or even a dominant source for the reconstruction of ancient Indian history. Our knowledge about our past will be very poor if we ignore archaeology and it will be still poorer if we depend on archaeology alone as our most important source. While archaeology is a young and growing science in India, other sources such as epigraphy, numismatics and literary evidences have for much longer time been analysed and collated to build a framework of ancient Indian history, and therefore, archaeology as a tool is useful for confirmatory evidence mainly.

Archaeology, as a positive science gives us information about material life of periods as unfolded by different stratas exposed from it that what it has not exposed, never existed. Momentous archaeological discoveries are like Archimedes' 'Eureka' i.e. chance discoveries, and the same chance goddess may bestow luck to other archaeologists disclosing from within the womb of the mother earth such knowledge missed by previous, may be well-versed, archaeologists. So it is always safe and wise to qualify the results of archaeological discoveries as 'to-date' or 'so far.' This self-evident, but often ignores, virtue of caution can be demonstrated. When we were excavating Chirand, luxuriant chalcolithic ceramic culture was noticed on the earliest exposed level in many trenches down to the virgin soil. But in one of the trenches was discovered evidence of an earlier neolithic culture, a pleasant surprise to the excavator who was almost going to close the excavation, then underway for many years. What a loss to knowledge it would have been! Again if R.D. Bannerji and Marshal had been excavating "Mohenjadaro" today under the present-day financial constraints and expensive archaeological technique of vertical digging, it was very likely that they would have stopped the digging after laying bare the so-called coolie quarters with elements of "Harappan" pottery & building activities; but then we would have missed the massive Harappan architecture and its special monuments for which the civilisation is most famous. The point is that in view of lack of extensive horizontal excavations of all stratas of a site, its full history is not possible to be grasped. Moreover, in the context of getting archaeological proof of our pre-historic past & personalities one should ask the question what sort of evidence will prove the historicity or non-historicity of the Epic or Vedic characters. As no

evidence of writing before Asoka (leaving out the Harappan script) has been available so far, no contemporary written material for the time of "Rama" or Krishna" should be expected. The cultural sequence exposed in the various stratas could give only relative chronology but no absolute chronology. Even when "C 14" (carbon-14 archaeological test) dates would give some approximate bracket in absolute dates to the excavated cultures, as there is no certainty or unanimity about the exact period of time when "Rama" or "Krishna" flourished, how far one would be right in assigning one or the other set of "dated cultures" unearthed in trenches as the culture of the time of Rama or Krishna. This would be arguing from the unknown to the unknown, particularly when we are not sure whether cultures depicted in the "Ramayana" or the "Mahabharata" works which were definitely much later composed than the time of the heroes, must have contained elements of culture, more of their authors' times than of their pre-historic heroes. Thus the inadequacy of archaeological evidence and literary works as well for the period of Rama or Krishna particularly, material culture-architecture should be self-evident. In view of no evidence of use of stone as building material before "Ashoka" or of burnt brick before "Buddha" is available, the literary references to the luxurious buildings described in Epics and the "Puranas" will never be confirmed by archaeology. Wood-construction must have perished under the bowels of earth down the millennia. The difficulty of reconciling the literary evidence and the archaeological evidence "to date" is thus obvious. The easiest way chosen by many is to reject wholesale the testimony of the ancient literature the Epics and the Puranas for the period before the time of the Buddha. But this selective rejection is not beyond reproach. The same scholars who reject the Puranic dynastic lists before the Buddhist period, have used the same Puranas for the political and dynastic history of the Buddhist period. But, it is hardly fair then, giving allowances for emendation, glosses, imagination to reject the entire pre-Buddha dynastic list as sheer figment of imagination, particularly when some kings, priests and peoples mentioned in the Vedic literature are mentioned in the Epics and the Puranas.

Now, according to Pargiter's reconstruction of the Dynastic synchronisms of the Puranas, Rama-Dasarathi is about 30 generations or so, earlier than Krishna of the Mahabharata. But, according to archaeological evidence to date Ayodhya, the traditional homecity of Rama is not earlier 8th century B.C., while in Hastinapur and other Mahabharata sites, PGW culture equated with the Mahabharata pottery by Mr. B.B. Lal is dated between 110-800 B.C., & the Mahabharata war was fought according to Lal in 836 B.C., according to Pargiter in 950 B.C. So, Rama who was not the founder of Ayodhya must have come much after 800 B.C., and should be nearer Buddha than Krishna; especially when many archaeologists place PGW later than Lal has put it. But, the excavator of Dwarka and the pioneer of marine archaeology, Mr. S.R. Rao has found evidence of the submerged city of

Dwarka of Krishna, which he would place not later than 1500 B.C. Dwarka was later than Hastinapur which was founded by Kuru, while the former was founded by Krishna himself. All this discussion just points to the insufficiency of the available archaeological date and lack of consensus among archaeologists about the period of the Epic-Puranic heroes. Would it therefore be wise today to fix the chronology, and even relative chronology of Rama and Krishna with any degree of certainty. More extensive diggings may shed some more light on the vexed problem. It would be sheer bravado, therefore on this evidence to deny the historicity of Rama and Krishna so richly portrayed in ancient historical traditional accounts. Even the archaeological excavations do not confirm the history of Ayodhya in the past, post NBP or Post-Maurya period. The Sunga, Kuhana and Gupta stratas have been rather bare, but epigraphy, coins and literature speak of flourishing Ayodhya in these and earlier periods. Archaeology has not revealed anything of the prakars, pratolis, devapatha referred to by Patanjali in the Mahabhashya. Neither we have found in the excavation evidence of Buddha's and Adinathas' association with Ayodhya. Should we reject Buddhist and Jain evidence as imaginary as the Epic? We should particularly remember that the Jaina tradition of line of Tirthankars is consistent and quite reasonably reliable. 1st, 2nd, Ikshavaku dynasty of Ayodhya, which this certainly antedated 8th century B.C. Dhanadeva's inscription, the coins of Mitra-kings of Ayodhya, and the fortification of Ayodhya, its capital city-architecture of the time of Gupta Kings, Vikramaditya & Baladitya of the 5th-6th century A.D., are all unknown to archaeology of Ayodhya. Would we be justified to reject the epigraphic, numismatic and literary evidence? And where are the Samgharamas described by Hsuan Tsang and associated with Vasubandhu and Asanga? It is not only the "Epic Ayodhya" but even "Gupta Ayodhya" that is uncorroborated from archaeology. But, both traditions and other historical sources vouchsafe for an active and living Ayodhya-Mahatamaya appended to the Skanda-purana should be dated not later than 9th century A.D. It refers to "Sir Ram Janmabhoomi" and other sacred places. According to Vikramankadeva charita, Bilhana came to Ayodhya on pilgrimage. Therefore, to think of Ayodhya as an important place for Hindus only from the 14th century onwards is all hogwash. Sculptural representations of Ramayana scenes in temples have been found in different parts of India from the 3rd century onwards. Sri Krishnadeva has drawn our attention to senes from Ramayana sculptured at the Ikshavaku art centre of Nagarjunikonda in Andhra pradesh dated in the 3rd Century A.D. The sculptured stucco panels at Aphasad in Bihar, depicting as many as eight scenes from the Ramayana were introduced to the scholarly world by the present author, and they are dated in the 7th century A.D. The depiction of redemption of Ahalya by Rama is vividly depicted in the Gupta temple at Deogadh dated in 6th Century A.D. Similar scene depicted on a terracotta and belonging to the Gupta period has been found at Sravasti. In a stone

niche from Nachna (4th-5th Century A.D.) earlier than Deogadh example, Surpanekha's episode has been beautifully engraved. Numerous Ramayana scenes on Angkorvat (Vishnu temple) in Cambodia are testimony to the spread of Ramayana fame in the S.E Asia. Ramayanic scenes at Ellora (8th century) are well-known. Sculptures representing Ramayana scenes are found in Karnatak. The scene depicting Meghanada dragging Hanuman to Ravana's court was first noticed as Nachna (M.P.) and is found at the Varahi temple at Chaurasi (dt. Puri, Orissa) of the 10th Century A.D. From the Chinese sources it has been shown that the Ramayana was a well-known and popular story in the time of Vasubandu. The public recitation of the Ramayana is referred to the manuscript of kalpanamanditika of the 2nd century A.D. found in Central Asia. The Paumacarita of Vimalasuri dated in the 1st Century A.D. is a recast of the Ramayana story. The Khotanese and the Tibetan version of the Ramayana further prove the antiquity and widespread of the Epic story. A distinguished scholar (B. N. Puri) held that on the basis of available evidence the Ramayana was known in Central Asia from the 2nd century A.D. may be still earlier, as Asvaghosha who wrote Buddha charita was indebted to Valmiki and is said to have lived in Ayodhya. The recitation of the Ramayana is referred to in a Kambuja inscription of the 6th century A.D. Recitation of only secret texts is reasonable. The above very bried summary of Rama in art and literature from the 1st century A.D. down to the 12th Century A.D., makes it clear that Rama was held in great reverence not only in almost all parts of India, but also in South-East Asia, and Central Asia. The worship or deification of Rama is also as ancient. Even if we exclude the evidence of the Balakanda and the Uttarkanda or the Ramayana showing Rama to be an incarnation of Vishnu, believed to be no part of the original Ramayana of Valmiki, they are certainly not as late as Ramanand or Kabir. But Kalidasa in the Raghuvansa (4th-5th Century A.D.) refers to Rama as a divine figure.

However, while archaeology has so far failed to prove or disprove the hoary antiquity of Ayodhya going back to 2nd millennium B.C., or that of the historicity of Rama, it has certainly clearly indicated that the Babri Maszid stands on the ruins of a pre-Islamic structure of the 10th-11th centuries. That brick-pillar bases placed at uniform distances going into section of the excavated trenches are extending into the Babri Maszid complex cannot be doubted. About a dozen pillars used in the mosque are standing testimony to the fact that parts of a damaged Hindu structure have been appropriated in the construction of the mosque. It is now contended by some leading motivated historians that the structure was a Buddhist one, may be one of which Husan Tsang refered to in his account of Ayodhya. But, the distinguished historians failed to mention rather may be as a deliberate move to spread disinformation that the Chinese pilgrim has mentioned no less than 10 'deva' temples, which would be Brahmanical only. What is wrong to ascribe one of these Brahmanical templese lying ruined under the Maszid? And should we forgive the



Muslims for destroying the Buddhist structure? One is reminded of Goldsmiths' famous schoolteacher who went on arguing though vanquished still. However, the most crucial point in the archaeological evidence has been missed. The structure belongs to the 10th-11th centuries A.D. So it was constructed more than a couple of hundred years after the Chinese pilgrim. The chances of the structure being Buddhist are dim. We all know that as a result of Shankaracharya's digvijaya and other causes Buddhism suffered mortal injuries and soon disappeared from the land of its birth. We know that under the patronage of the Buddhist Pala kings, it survived in Bihar and Bengal only. One would like to know if Buddhist monuments of substantial dimensions were erected in the 10th century and later, east of Banaras. It is, therefore, a valid point to hold that Babri Masjid stands on the destroyed Hindu temple of the Pratihara or Sahadavala times, who were all Hindus by faith. We are not aware of any ruling dynasty of 9th-10th centuries in this part of the country claiming to be Buddhist by faith, and it is well established that Buddhism largely flourished on royal munificence. Unfortunately, the details of the so-called Salabhanjika figure found in the Babri Masjid have not been given. But, granting the presence of the motif, it is hardly fair to rule the ruined structure, whose parts were appropriated in the Masjid, on this ground alone as Buddhist. It has been well-argued and documents elsewhere that in the post-Gupta period the motif was adapted by Hindu sculptors & salabhanjika model was modified to represent Lakshmi, Ganga and Yamuna. In the Harshacarita Lakshmi has been compared to a salabhanjika adorning the arm of a great hero like a victory-stand. From the same book it has been inferred that columns engraved with salabhanjika motifs were found in royal apartments. The word salabhanjika occurs in Aryasaptasat of Govardhanacharya, a court poet of Lakshmanaursena (12th century A.D.) a Hindu by faith. The Allahabad Museum houses many salabhausika figures in dancing poses under mango tree. They are representatives of Jamsat-art. So the motif was not exclusively Buddhist in the post-Gupta period. It is really strange that while the obvious conclusion is that the structure was Hindu, the obduracy to ignore Hindu religion and art has made a particular brand of historians to look for a very unlikely explanation instead of the obvious one.

There should be no valid reason, now to hold that the structure over which the Babri Masjid stands was not Hindu in character. Then who destroyed the temple? It is possible that Mahmud Ghazni or more probably Muhammad Ghorii plundered Ayodhya as well, but as traditions persist that the masjid was built in the time of Babar, and it is natural to hold that the temple was destroyed in his time as well. Since the time of the prophet Muhammed, the Muslim conquerors or invaders have been destroying un-Islamic structure and idols from China to Spain including Arabia, Iran and India. And Babar could very well emulate the persistent tradition. Meer Baqi's inscription in the mosque clearly states that it was built at the command of Babar in 1528. And if not Babar, Mohmud Ghazni or Muhammad

Ghori. How does it weaken the Hindu standpoint? Unfortunately, the pages containing the events between April 2 and 18 September have been long lost irretrievably. Babar believed in and led jihad against Hindu rivals, and he did smash jain idols and mutilated many jain temples in 1525 such as in Urwah Valley near Gwalior as is admitted in his autobiography. In 1527 after his victory over Ranasanga in jihad against non-muslims, Babar took the title of Ghazi, as he himself claims in Babarnama. Before the battle, on the eve of his jihad against the Rana, he broke his drinking cups into pieces in a manner, in which if Allah wills, the idols of the idolators will be smashed." So where remains the case that Babar, a tolerant ruler, could not destroy the Hindu temple at Ayodhya. He certainly demolished many Hindu temples at Chanderi when he occupied it and Babar was in for a jihad covering a dar-ul-hab into dar-ul-Islam. There is a persistent evidence coming from Muslim sources since 1558 that the controversial site was known as Janmabhumi site on the basis of earlier medieval sources certainly not on British detail.

In our opinion the Hindus were never reconciled to the loss of this sacred place and it may be due to opposition that the mosque was not completed - it is without minarets and a pond for ablution (wazu) of namazis in the mosque by the faithful doers the centuries. It was probably in recognition of the strength of the Hindu opposition (in vast majority in the city) and in deference to his policy of toleration that according to local tradition Akbar is said to have built the Chabutara on which Hindu idols were installed for worship and the adjacent spot known as Sita-ki-Rasoil was called Sitapak. The Muslim rulers dared not destroy the sacred site of architecture. But Hindu sense of grief and loss continued and often violent clashes over the issue of Ram Chabutara or the Janmabhoomi continued in the time of the great Mughals like Jehangir and Aurangzeb, and of the nawabs which must have caused considerable loss of life. Long before the British occupied Ayodhya, the European traveller Tieffenthaler who visited the place in 1767, wrote about the Hindu worship being regularly conducted in the Masjid and mentions the tradition of the Janmabhoomi temple having been destroyed to make way for the existing mosque. It is sheer blindfoldness to assert that the dispute was concocted by the British for divide and rule. One cannot expect the great muslim divine and scholar Maulana Abdul Hai to be writing under British inspiration. He categorically writes that the Babri Masjid was constructed by Babar on the site of birth place of Sri Ramchandraji.

So there should be no doubt in any reasonable unprejudiced mind that the Babri masjid was built after destroying a Hindu temple. It is sheer obduracy to argue that Mir Baqi got the Hindu pillars from a few kilometers away to install in the mosque. Why was he so much in love with the pillars? It is obvious that he used the pillars which he found after destruction of the temple on the site and a similar

evidence has been found in Kutubminar complex. And it is beyond dispute that for hundreds of years if not thousands, the Hindus have believed this site to be the birth place of their divine Lord Rama. You cannot whisk away such long held pious belief of millions with even tons of weighty polemics. Who could dare dispute that the hair in Hazratbal mosque in Srinagar does belong to the Prophet Muhammad? It is absolutely desirable for the Muslim community in the interest of peace and goodwill of the vast majority of their co-nationals to respect the aroused sentiments of the Hindus to agree to relocate the mosque and co-operate with the Hindus in construction of Rama's temple on the site. Mosques have been and are being relocated on much minor grounds even in muslim countries. And particularly when the mosque has not been in constant use by the namazis for decades. I have been a regular visitor of Ayodhya since 1926, and I have seen the continuous worship of 'Rama's idols on the "chabutara" and except for the some Muslims at prayer in the mosque compound. As has been said above, the mosque without facilities for essential ablution (wazu) for namaz was never very popular with namazis. And the Hindu worship and also struggle for the repossession of the site continued unabated. As early as in 1936-37, a bill was introduced in the legislature council of U.P. to transfer the site to the Hindus. Sri G.B. Pant, the Chief Minister tried to assuage the roused feelings of both the communities, and it is said that the bill was withdrawn on the unwritten understanding that no namaz was performed; the caretaker and his family could be the only namazis. And in 1949, the idols were discovered and installed in the garbhagriha, and till 1986, the continuous worship of Sri Ramalala has been on in the masjid with no entry of muslims there. The Hindu devotees received parshads, had darshan of the deity through iron-grilled window, protected by police. Since 1987, the Hindus have been worshipping the deities installed in the mosque without any hindrance. So the Babri Masjid does represent the humiliating experience of the Hindus and the militancy of Islam, and the Hindus throughout centuries have not accepted the fait accompli. This is not that much true of Mathura or Dwarka sites. The masjid on the otherhand has never been a very prominent and popular place of worship for the Muslims who congregated in Faizabad with splendid mosques. The masjid has not been in use since 1936. In view of all this, is it too much for the Hindus now to build a temple on the site which is traditionally the most pious site for the Hindus, after carefully and piously relocating the mosque at some distance from the site! The muslims may be assured that if they show the necessary grace, wisdom and sense of realism, no aggressive mass Hindu movement against other mosques could be again built up. Should not the Babari Masjid Co-ordination Committee, and the VHP and BJP think on such a course of action to assure communal amity and peace, the bedrock on which the stability and prosperity of the nation depends.

(Dr. B.P. Sinha)

## **Rejoinder to the AIBMAC documents**

Submitted to the Government of India on January, 6, 1991

### **Contents**

1. We have given evidence

2. Brief rebuttal to the AIBMAC documents

3. The tactics of dispute

4. The larger picture

5. Our demand

### **1. We have given evidence**

The Government of India had asked both parties to this dispute to present historical evidence concerning the question whether a Hindu temple was demolished to make way for the Babri Masjid. Evidence means, human or material testimony for the scenario that a flourishing Hindu temple stood there and that it was forcibly replaced by a mosque; or for the alternative scenario, that something else than a Hindu temple was there, such as empty space, and that the mosque was built without interfering with the existing customs of worship.

We have given evidence: solid archaeological and iconographical evidence that a Hindu temple existed there, and a mass of documentary evidence of different types, showing the unanimous tradition, held since at least the early 17th century, that the Babri Masjid was built on a very sacred but forcibly demolished Hindu temple, believed to indicate Rama's birthplace.

But in the long list of documents submitted by the All-India Babri Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC), we do not find any primary evidence: testimony that the Masjid was built on an empty spot, or that the owner of the plot had willingly sold it to the Muslim rulers for construction of the Babri Masjid. We also do not find any secondary evidence in the AIBMAC bundle of documents: authentic testimony from local people or from travellers saying explicitly that they had always believed that the Masjid had been built on empty land.

Allow us to make a few general observations concerning the evidence offered by the BMAC. The very first striking fact about the documents, as already noted, is that none of them contain evidence for the point which the AIBMAC was required

to present proof. In a few cases, they contain scholarly argumentations. While not strictly evidence, we do agree that they deserve to be in this dossier. Quite a number of the pieces, however, are pieces written by politically minded people with no scholarly competence in this field at all. And even among the genuine academics, there are some with a strong ideological bias: history, as well as literature science, cannot be equated with physics, as far as strict neutrality is concerned. It follows that even the opinion of big names cannot count as proof, unless the actual evidence on which their tall opinion is based, is added.

For instance, S.K. Chatterjee may be a big name as a linguist, but his two statements on the Ramayana are flatly untrue: that nobody believes it has a historical core (many scholars believe, for instance, that it dramatises the conquest of the South by people from the North, which amounts to a historical core), and that it was the purely individual creation of one poet, Valmiki (who in reality drew upon different earlier versions).

Big names have no proof value. They are a social, not a scientific category. So, no matter what the merits of a C. Rajagopalachari, J. Nehru, B.R. Ambedkar may have been, we cannot count them as knowledgeable in the precise historical question with which we are dealing. Had they come up with any evidence for their off-hand opinions, we could have looked into it. Unfortunately, we find nothing there but opinion.

A second observation is that all these separate pieces of "evidence" do not yield a coherent scenario at all. In fact, many of the documents contradict each other. Thus, some ancient sources integrate the Rama story into Buddhist tradition, while some modern pamphleteers say the Ramayana symbolises the victory of Brahmanism over Buddhism. Some say there is no historical core at all, others say the Ramayana dramatises the "Aryan" conquest of South India. Some say the Janmabhoomi site was empty, others that it contained a Buddhist stupa. Some say that the Masjid was built by Babar, others say it was built one or two centuries earlier. There can be only one history, one scenario that took place in reality. The AIBMAC people have not made clear for which scenario this evidence musters proof.

A third observation is that the AIBMAC evidence is quantitatively very copious, yet very meagre as far as the central issue is concerned: proving or disproving that the Babri Masjid forcibly replaced a flourishing Hindu place of worship.

There is much about the legal story, which proves little more than the obvious fact that after the Muslim take-over the place was considered Muslim property both under Nawabi and colonial rule. So, that part of the "evidence" simply restates the judicial problem, but does not clinch the issue of its historical rights and wrongs. But then again, it also proves that Hindus kept on claiming the place, both in court and on the ground. The point is precisely that it was unjustly in Muslim

possession, and that Hindus kept on fighting for what was theirs but was denied them by the Muslim and British rulers.

But there is in these documents only little about the events in Ayodhya in the Moghul and Nawabi periods. And what is conspicuously missing, is any kind of testimony that Babar or another Muslim commander saw this empty piece of land and, out of an abhorrence of emptiness, ordered a Masjid to be built. That would have been evidence for an alternative to the Mandir scenario.

In the AIBMAC documents pertaining to ancient history, especially to the period when Ram supposedly lived, we see the same failure. There is not one contemporary or near-contemporary testimony of Valmiki inventing the character Ram out of nothing. There is not one line from any of the many Ramayana versions, that declares the Rama character was merely invented to build a good story around. That would be something of a proof that Ram was purely fiction. Failing that, it becomes quite hard to prove that someone did not exist. We have offered proof that Ram was at least considered and treated as a historical character by ancient Hindu writers, including Purana writers whose dynastic histories have been at least partly confirmed by modern historical research, even while this was not the question for which evidence was requested. But our AIBMAC friends, even while trying to smuggle Rama's historicity into the debate, do not come up with any evidence, merely some latter-day opinions.

We reiterate that for us, the historical details of the events that became the subject matter of the Ramayana are not what is at stake in this debate. The point is whether it is a traditional Hindu sacred place, not why it is one. Therefore, all documents pertaining to other aspects of the matter than the existence of a temple which was forcibly replaced by the Babri Masjid, are really beside the point.

Nevertheless, we have given our comment on all the AIBMAC categories of historical documents, in the one-by-one rebuttal. With the judicial documents, we have dealt more briefly, i.e. only in so far as they pertain to the historical debate.

## **2. Brief rebuttal to the AIBMAC documents**

A.1) C. Rajagopalachari gives no evidence whatsoever. He quotes Gandhiji as saying that the episodes of the Ramayana are "stories". So what? You can buy books called "The tragic Story of Partition": they are just as much about history. If they also have a moral, you can tell them to your children, and then they become "stories". If we are not misled by the word "story", we can read on and notice that C. Rajagopalachari made a distinction between Rama as "avatar" and Rama as "king of the Ikshavaku race", i.e. between the mythological and the historical Rama.

The fact that Rajagopalachari makes the Rama scenario into a children's story, proves the non-historicity of Rama only if one is willing to conclude that real events and characters cease to be historical the moment their "story" is made into a Bombay film.

A.2.a) Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy gives no evidence whatsoever. He lambasts Rama as a mean character and representative of the "Aryan race" - a wholly unscientific category thoroughly discredited by the use Hitler made of it. In fact, even on that spurious count, Ramaswamy is mistaken: Rama, like Krishna, is classically described as dark-coloured, like the purest specimens of Ramaswamy's Dravidian race. But the point for this discussion is that Ramaswamy doesn't even deny the essential historicity of the Ramayana. He only denies its sacredness, and asserts that its real hero was Ravana. The purely propagandistic, unscientific and contradictory character of Ramaswamy's approach to the Ramayana, can be seen from the fact that on the one hand, he often called the Brahmins the guardians of the oppression of the Dravidians by the Aryans, and on the other, he calls the Brahmin Ravana the Dravidian hero who fights the ugly Aryan invader, the non-Brahmin Rama.

A.2.b) Jawaharlal Nehru gives no evidence whatsoever. He merely notices that parodies of the Ramayana are staged by Dravidian separatists who propagate variations on the Aryan race theory. This propaganda of course assumes that the successful fight of the Northern king Rama against the Southern king Ravana in fact dramatises a historical event of conquest of the South by the North. While not a proof of the Ramayana's historicity, it is at least proof of contemporary people's conviction that it has a historical core. Nehru says in so many words: "The Ramayana and the Mahabharata deal with the days of the Indo-Aryans, their conquests and civil wars."

Further on, he says he didn't consider the Rama episodes as factually true (When? As a child?), but in a next quote he explodes this hypothesis by saying that the Ramayana is the story of "the Aryan expansion in the South", which he doesn't conceive as a myth but as history. So, he says the Ramayana is dramatised history.

A.3) Dr. Sukumar Sen gives no evidence whatsoever. But at least, here we meet the first scholar among the authorities invoked to substantiate the AIBMAC case.

From what Dr. Sen writes, we learn that Valmiki was a historical character and that in his time, the Rama story already existed. However, no testimony of Rama or the other Ramayana characters is available in the Vedas (though Sita appears as an earth goddess). But Rama shows up occasionally in other writings, including the Mahabharata. And there were many Rama traditions, variations on the Rama theme, upon which Valmiki drew to compose his most classical version of the story. In spite of the current efforts to pit Buddhism against Rama, there are

Buddhist versions of the Rama "legend" and Buddhist sources relate with pride that Buddha was of the same Ikshavaku lineage as Rama.

Dr. Sen notes that Sita appears in the Vedas as an earth goddess. But all he really knows, is that the name Sita appears there. It is perfectly possible that the worship of Sita together with Rama is not a continuation of any Vedic Sita worship, but concerns a later human being who was called Sita just like anyone can be called after a god or goddess, and who became the wife of the historical character Rama. From the fact that old texts mention a god Shiva, we also do not infer that therefore Shivaji cannot have been a historical character.

The fact that there are many versions of the Ramayana, is no evidence against its historicity at all. Try the experiment of telling one story to several people and letting them renarrate it to others: after a few steps in this transmission process, substantial differences will have crept in. Consider also the plural versions of stories in scriptures of other cultures. For instance, in the Bible, there are two different Creation stories; two wholly different genealogies of Jesus are given; in fact, every single story from Jesus' life is related differently by the different Gospel-writers, a mere thirty to sixty years after Jesus' death. And yet, no serious scholar concludes therefrom that Jesus did not exist.

A.4) P.S. Sridhara Murthy doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. His text is full of crank statements and crackpot theories, all built on top of the Hitlerian theory of the Aryan race. Thus, he calls Shiva "the only non-Aryan original Indian god": may we remind him that Shiva was depicted as white, like the "Aryans", while the Vishnu incarnations Krishna and Rama are depicted as dark, like the "non-Aryans"?

His crank tendencies develop into a full-fledged conspiracy theory (of course pure conjecture without any proof) where he combines his visceral hatred for the Brahmin Aryan "race" with the inconvenient fact that central characters in the Rama tradition (Rama, Valmiki, Vishvamitra) were non-Brahmins, and that the bad guy, Ravana, was a Brahmin: the Brahmins "were desperately looking for an epic hero who could attract the non-Brahmin common folk and show how the Vedic tradition can condescend to honour and worship one practising certain ideals. The image, character and personality of Rama just fulfilled this need. Rama was manufactured to fill the vacuum. Valmiki, Rama and Vishvamitra had to be, therefore, non-Brahmins... They also had to notify the common folk that in the Vedic religion even Brahmins and scholars when found guilty would not be spared and would be branded as villains and demons. So Ravana had to be depicted as a Brahmin and a scholar."

This is quite a mad line of reasoning. It says that, if Brahmins depict others in a scornful way, it proves they consider them inferior; and if they don't, but make them into heroes (even assuming that it is "they" who created the Ramayana), it



proves the same thing, only it now involves a ploy to hide this scorn from the people who are its objects. This tendency, quite persistent in Mr. Murthy's text, to explain any course of events in such a way as to prove invariably the same thing, is called paranoia.

More of this Brahmin conspiracy theory is the contention that the episode of Rama's abandoning Sita "was designed by the Vedic religion to hint the people that Buddha's conduct was, after all, wrong". The "hint" is based on the fact that Buddha too left his wife. He writes this four sentences after stating that "Rama's conduct was in direct contrast with that of Buddha".

Mr. Murthy also makes a lot of the now-abandoned 19th century theory that Ravana was a Buddhist, and quotes with approval the wholly unsubstantiated statement that "Rama legend represents the victory of Hinduism over Buddhism". While we don't subscribe to this interpretation, we do notice that the Ramayana is once more presented as an embellished version of an actual historical process.

In the racist anti-Aryan theory of both Ramaswamy Naicker and Sridhara Murthy, one need not look for consistency. Since all possible facts prove the same thing, there is no need for them to co-ordinate facts. For instance, even while inferring, from the fact that Rama was a warrior, that he must have been hostile to the Buddhists and Jains because of their absolute "non-violence", Mr. Murthy makes much of a Jain king who "repulsed" Mahmud Ghaznavi's nephew who came on conquest.

He says that Jains ruled Ayodhya well into the 12th century AD, and lists 10 Jain temples existing in 1330. None of these was claimed to be where we say the Janmabhoomi is, so we have no quarrel with that. In fact, some of these Jain temples have also been destroyed by Muslim conquerors, and add proof to our well-founded proposition that Muslim conquerors have massively destroyed temples of all Pagan sects, including Jainism and Buddhism.

In his booklet, published in 1988, which seems little more than a rehashing of Mrs. Surinder Kaur's *The Secular Emperor Babar*, published in 1977, Mr. Murthy quotes some more big names.

A.4.a) S.K. Chatterjee gives no evidence whatsoever. He gives the opinion that "there is evidently no historical core below the surface, no scholar of Indian history now thinks that Rama, the hero of Ramayana, was a historical person who can be relegated to a particular period of time". This opinion is already amply disproven by all the people, including scholars, who have said that the Ramayana is a dramatisation of the "Aryan conquest of South India", which amounts to a basis in history. So, his statement is flatly untrue. Equally untrue is the statement that the Ramayana is "a literary creation by some single poet who has been named

Valmiki": there were many poetic creations built around the Rama story available in different parts of India, by the time Valmiki composed his classical version.

So, S.K. Chatterjee may have been an authority on some things, but on the Ramayana he was not above making flatly untrue statements.

The contention that the Rama story cycle was invented out of thin air, goes against all we know of ancient culture. The same mistake was made about Homer's Iliad, the story of the conquest of Troy by the Greeks. The official teaching was that it was fiction, until Schliemann started digging and found Troy. Generally, all the ancient epics are embellished and dramatised amplifications or modifications of a true story.

A.4.b) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar gives no evidence whatsoever. He gives the opinion that the Ramayana "in its second edition, from a purely historical work, also became a didactic work aiming to teach a right code... [In the third edition, it was], like the Mahabharata, made into a repository of legends, knowledge, philosophy..." What Ambedkar says, is quite the opposite from what S.K. Chatterjee says: the Ramayana most certainly grew around a historical core.

A.4.c) Dr. Jyoti Prasad Jain gives no evidence whatsoever. He wants to claim all the temples of Ayodhya for the Jains. Mr. Murthy and the AIBMAC infer from that that he may be a good ally against the Hindus. Unfortunately for them, Dr. Jain shares our view that Babar and other Muslim rulers destroyed many Hindu (including Jain) temples. He restates the well-known fact that Babar mutilated Jain idols. Mr. Murthy promises to disprove this well-known fact "in the following pages", but in the following 29 pages, he doesn't return to this subject at all.

A.4.d) The Gazetteers do not give any evidence whatsoever, according to Mr. Murthy. Yet, some of the Court petitions filed by Ayodhya Muslims base themselves on the 1905 Gazetteer by Neville, which is here dismissed as written by someone who has "neither studied history nor archaeological reports". His only argument is that the report does not tally with the 1960 Gazetteer. And this is where it does not tally: the 1905 Gazetteer says that Babar stayed in Ayodhya for "a week", while the 1960 Gazetteer says he stayed there for "a few days" (this last version is explicitly taken from Mrs. Beveridge's translation, which was published years after Nevill's Gazetteer). It certainly proves that Nevill was a non-historian: he does not even correct his figures in the light of a Gazetteer published 55 years later!

If our AIBMAC friends want to wage this debate on the strength of the confabulations of a crackpot like Mr. Sridhara Murthy, we could have given them plenty.

In fact, in spite of the scorn Mr. Murthy heaps on them, the Gazetteers do prove that the British surveyors, who were generally non-partisan and conscientious people, saw no reason to doubt the veracity of the local tradition that the Babri Masjid had been built on a demolished Hindu temple. All the relevant British Gazetteers state that Babar or his subordinate demolished a temple to replace it with the Babari Masjid.

A.4.e) The pillars in the Babri structure, and their iconography, give no evidence whatsoever - at least not in favour of the anti-Mandir hypothesis. For a detailed rebuttal of Mr. Murthy's statements (based on the findings of a "research team" led by Sher Singh) on pp.31-35 and pp.41-43, we refer to our own evidence, notably annexure 28. Briefly: Mr. Murthy is wholly mistaken in stating that the same stone has been used in other masjids (Kasauti is but a popular and imprecise name, the stone used here is *schistose*), and that the sculptures are Buddhist. His sources are wholly outdated since the archaeological work of A.K. Narain and B.B. Lal.

A.5) Dr. R.L. Shukla gives no evidence whatsoever. His text starts with a political tirade. Then, he heaps scorn on a number of archaeologists and historians, calling them "fanatic", "notorious", "nonsense", "opposed to social change" etc., all kinds of personal attack which are totally irrelevant to the discussion. Short, this man has no scientific temper, and his pamphlet does not belong in a compilation of scientific evidence. Then, without naming his source, he extensively restates some of the research results of the excavation campaigns led by Prof. A.K. Narain and Prof. B.B. Lal. It is well-known by now that the latter has publicly stated that the Babar Masjid has replaced a pre-existing building, quite possibly a temple, and has claimed that the Ramayana has a historical core (as in his article in *Manthan*, October 1990). So, all the archaeological findings, including the as yet unpublished ones, do not at all add up to evidence that no Mandir was there, on the contrary.

A.6) The Jataka story gives no evidence whatsoever. It was apparently included because it locates the dynasty of Dasharath and Rama in Benares rather than Ayodhya. Of course, in a cultural tradition not guarded by a central authority, variations occur, and these may include the localisation of the main events. But there is no living tradition anytime in the past millennium that locates Rama in Benares. We base our claim on the Ram Janmabhoomi site not on some long-forgotten isolated statement dug up from ancient manuscripts, but on a well-established living tradition.

A.7) V. Raghavan and C. Godakumbura give no evidence whatsoever. They give some more variations on the Rama story, proving once more that the Ramayana was not "a literary creation by some single poet who has been named Valmiki", as S.K. Chatterjee claimed. The book, especially the parts omitted in the AIBMAC compilation, but mentioned in the table of contents, also describes how Muslims in

Malaysia and Indonesia venerate Rama and narrate and enact his story (in spite of restrictions recently imposed by Malaysia's Islamic government).

The version which is given, "is not widespread" and even now "only known to traditional performers". The writer "obtained it from a dancer" in one particular village. If such a lone tradition in the backwoods of Sri Lanka must count as clinching evidence on the Ayodhya issue, then the numerous local testimonies should count even more as evidence, right? The cited text incidentally also says that "some of it may have a historical basis".

A.8) Malladi Venkata Ratnam doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. What he does give is a crank theory: that Ayodhya is really the Greek word Agadon, that Rama ruled in Egypt, and more such totally unsubstantiated flights of the imagination. Look, if we had wanted, we could have included some Hindu crank theories as well: that Rome really is Ram-nagar, that the Taj Mahal was built by Hanuman, that Menes the first pharaoh is merely our Manu, and what not. But we decided to give some genuine scientific evidence. And we did not expect to find some of the unfortunate deadwood of Hindu scholarship in our opponents' "evidence".

A.9) Sushil Srivastava doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. He creates a wholly artificial problem by reading the Ayodhya Mahatmya directions for the location of the Janmasthan as if they were written for (and by) people who use a compass rather than orient themselves roughly by solar directions. In one paragraph, Mr. Srivastava has to use the word "exactly" (North, West, etc., with zero degrees aberration) seven times, in order to arrange for the Mahatmya directions not to lead us "exactly" to the Babri Masjid site. And with all that hair-splitting, he only manages to move the "exact" location of the indicated Janmasthan two dozen yards, so that "Kaushalya Bhavan is nearer the Janmabhoomi than the Babri Masjid is". Methodologically, we can only notice that he distorts the text by acting as if it says "exactly North" etc., in a modern sense of the term "exact".

Further on, Mr. Srivastava himself declares that it is but logical that Muslim officers chose "the central spot" as "the best location" for erecting their place of worship: does he not realise that the many Hindus, Jains and Buddhists there must have had the same idea during the preceding centuries ?

It may be of interest that in a part of his book which was not included in the AIBMAC evidence, Mr. Srivastava floats the theory that the Masjid was not built by Babar, but sometime in the 14th century. The theory that the Masjid was not built by Babar, seems to be implicitly assumed also in documents A.4 and A.11. Since the enemies of Hinduism will use absolutely anything to sow doubts, we may as well reply to that theory.

We may point out simply that this theory makes absolutely no difference to our case. The Hindu attachment to the site is in no way dependent on who destroyed the temple and built the "Babri" Masjid. Looters may quarrel over the booty, but for the victim the damage has been done all the same. Those testimonies (among the ones we have presented in support of the local consensus that the Masjid had been built on a Hindu sacred place to which the Hindus kept returning) which include the belief that Babar built the Masjid, are not rendered unreliable, since this belief can be explained perfectly from the inscriptions on the Masjid which claim the honour for Babar.

If anything, this theory would deprive the already discredited "argument from silence" about the temple demolition in Babar's diary from its last bit of force. The argument that Babar was a "secular emperor", would also lose its relevance. If we look at the record of the preceding Muslim dynasties in temple-destruction, the destruction of a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya would only be true to type.

We may at once put to rest the fable, with which Mr. Sushil Srivastava sympathises (as well as the writers of A.4 and A.11) that Babar was a secularist (unless a "secularist" is defined as "someone who has utter contempt for Hinduism", as seems appropriate these days). In his diary, he himself writes that his attack on Chanderi was a *Jihad* to convert a *Dar-ul-Harb* ("land of strife") into a *Dar-ul-Islam*. On the eve of his *Jihad* against Rana Sanga, he vowed to give up drinking and had the cups and vessels destroyed: "These vessels were broken into pieces in the manner in which, if Allah wills, the idols of the Pagans will be smashed." He also comments on his victory against the Rajput confederacy in 1527, and after quoting copiously from the Quran, he writes: "After this success, *ghazi* (slayer of infidels) was written amongst the royal titles. Below the titles entered on the Fath-Nama, I wrote the following quatrain:

"For Islam's sake, I wandered in the wild,  
prepared for war with Pagans and Hindus,  
resolved myself to meet the martyr's death.  
Thanks be to Allah ! A *ghazi* I became."

If this Babar was a secularist, can the present-day Babri advocates be communalists ?

A.10) Arvind N. Das gives no evidence whatsoever. He does, however, repeat the trick of the JNU historians (see document A.16) in their famous statement, of quoting the convenient part of B.B. Lal's findings (that Ayodhya was not inhabited before the 7th century BC) but concealing his other finding, that there must have been an 11th-century building right where the Babri structure stands. Mr. Das quotes Mr. Srivastava (see document A.9) without any criticism. After deliberately concealing the findings at the site, he suddenly goes on to assume that a building was there, and to postulate that it cannot have been a Hindu

temple. And then he opines that the stone pillars and old reports suggest that there was "a Buddhist stupa" here. Of course, the Chinese travellers whom he mentions, have never located a stupa at that site, they have merely described a strong Buddhist presence in Ayodhya. And of course, if Mr. Das had not been 100% illiterate on Indian culture, he would have known that a Stupa is a solid structure, not a pillared one.

And then he brings up the big lie of a centuries-long vast struggle between Brahmins and Buddhists, systematically spread by Hindu-baiters: "The possibility of the destruction of this site by Brahmanical onslaught, which desecrated even the Mahabodhi temple at Gaya, cannot be discounted". Of course, the Mahabodhi temple was never destroyed by Hindus. It was abandoned when the Buddhists, who had continued to live and work in Hindu India for many centuries, were exterminated by the Muslim invaders, especially Bakhtiar Khalji who destroyed the Buddhist universities, levelling both the buildings and their inmates. This was exactly what the Muslim invaders had done in Central Asia. They didn't fabricate an opposition between Hindus and Buddhists, as our secularists have been doing: for them, these were both Kafirs. They killed Brahmins as they killed Buddhist monks, they broke Buddha statues as they broke Shiva idols, they levelled Buddhist temples as they levelled Vaishnava temples, and they wrote it down with equal glee and pride, so that we at present have all the evidence, and nobody can deny it.

The same thing counts for Jain establishments: Pagan institutions of every sect have suffered under the Islamic onslaught. Famous Buddhist and Jain institutes that have been destroyed by the Muslims without leaving a trace, used to flourish at the following places: Bukhara (from *bihara*, *vihara*, i.e. Buddhist monastery), Samarkand, Khotan, Balkh, Bamian, Begram, Jalalabad, Peshawar, Takshashila, Mirpur-Khas, Nagar-Parkar, Sringer, Sialkot, Agroha, Mathura, Hastinapura, Kanauj, Sravasti, Ayodhya, Sarnath, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vaishali, Rajgir, Odantpuri, Bharhut, Paharpur, Jagaddala, Jajnagar, Nagarjunikonda, Amaravati, Kanchi, Dwarasamudra, Bharuch, Valabhi, Palitana, Girnar, Patan, Jalor, Chandrawati, Bhinmal, Didwana, Nagaur, Osian, Bairat, Gwalior and Mandu. Smaller establishments add up to several hundreds.

As for the Bodh Gaya temple, Mr. Das should know that, after centuries of disuse, it was taken over by a Hindu priest in the late 19th century, when a project of the Burmese king to renew it fell through because of the Burmese war. Is that what he means by "desecrated"? In spite of British attempts to keep the Buddhists (identified with Japanese expansionism) out, and in spite of small-human individual interests coming in the way, the temple was peacefully restored as Buddhism's foremost shrine in the world. Since 1953, the temple is managed by a mixed Hindu-Buddhist management committee, constituted under the Bihar Bodh Gaya Temple Act, passed in 1949 on the basis of earlier agreements worked out between the Mahabodhi Society and the Hindu Mahasabha.

While Hindu society was never guilty of finishing the Buddhist presence at this sacred place, and could have invoked the British rulers' assent to the non-Buddhist control of the place (as our AIBMAC friends invoke the British assent to the status-quo in citing the 1886 court ruling), we didn't mind restoring it to the Buddhist community, not so much because they belong to the same *sanatana* tradition as we, but because we are sensitive to their veneration to that place. We do not claim this sensitivity as merit, it comes naturally to all human beings. It is only a mistaken commitment to fanatical dogmas that is disturbing the AIBMAC people's sensitivity in the case of our own three shrines.

A.11) The unnamed authors of the chapter "*Birthplace of epic hero*" (among them, apparently, is Sher Singh, the chief authority for Sridhara Murthy's opinions, see A.4), give no evidence whatsoever. But it is nice of them to quote H.R. Nevill, who notes that "it is locally affirmed that... the Janmasthan was in Ramkot and marked the birthplace of Rama. In 1528 AD Babar... destroyed the ancient temple and on its site built a mosque." In fact, that is what we have been saying all the time. Why aren't the Babri polemicists coming up with a document stating that "Babar saw this empty land and on its site built a mosque"? That would be evidence. But this here is secondary evidence for our own viewpoint, that the Babri Masjid was built on a forcibly destroyed temple.

The AIBMAC has underlined the statement that "no record of the visit to Ayodhya is to be found in the Musalman historians". If this means that they consider this statement to be vindicated by the authority of Mr. Nevill, from whom it is quoted, we want to draw attention to the fact that Mr. Nevill nonetheless sticks to the opinion that Babar did visit Ayodhya, which must have occurred about the time of his expedition to Bihar". Mr. Nevill was one of those competent scholars who are aware that an "argument from silence" is the weakest kind of argument. He took care not to be deceived by it, especially because he had other, positive evidence to take into account: the inscriptions on the Masjid that mention Babar as its patron.

As we notice with agreement, these authors are convinced that Mahmud Ghaznavi destroyed absolutely every temple that he came across, for they demand from Mrs. Beveridge an explanation on "how the three important Hindu temples could survive the attack of Mahmud Ghaznavi".

These authors are quite incompetent as historians, for they simply can't read their own evidence, and keep on drawing wrong conclusions. They say Mr. Nevill had "grave doubts about [the Ramayana's] historicity", which is a very non-neutral attitude, when in fact Mr. Nevill had written quite neutrally, without any uncommon gravity: "It is not yet possible to say whether any of this story is really historical". The research on ancient history was outside the scope of Mr. Nevill's job as Gazetteer-writer.

They falsely accuse Mrs. Beveridge of hiding Mr. Nevill's opinion from the reader. She does indeed not give every other author's opinion, which is quite legitimate if you prefer facts to opinions. An example: "She also wants to keep the readers in the dark about another statement made by Nevill regarding the construction of this mosque." This is the statement which she conceals: "In 1528 Babar built the mosque at Ayodhya on the traditional spot where Rama was born." Of course, Mrs. Beveridge herself has not said anything else.

Or has she? This, according to the pro-Babri writers, is the difference: "There is no mention of destroying any ancient temple [in Nevill]", while Mrs. Beveridge had said that Babar had destroyed a temple which marked Ram's birthplace. Well, two pages earlier, they themselves have quoted Nevill stating that Babar "destroyed the ancient temple and on its site built a mosque". So, Mr. Nevill needed two sentences to say that Babar destroyed a temple and that it was considered Ram's birthplace, while Mrs. Beveridge says it in one sentence. That is then with a lot of grimness presented as distortion.

If we leave out Ramaswamy Naicker, then this is already the third outright crank document which the AIBMAC offers as "evidence". We think this is, in effect, a tactic to make us waste our energy on stupid non-evidence, and to distract the eventual reader's attention from the real evidence, which we have given, and from AIBMAC's own utter lack of any genuine evidence.

A.12) Rajesh Kochhar doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. He makes a large number of assumptions, in fact many more than he can explicate. If his contention that Ayodhya lay in Afghanistan is true, all the work done so far about the "archaeology of the Ramayana sites", has to be re-done. But the interesting point is that this writer does not give the slightest trace of an argument for his case. All he says is that the "Aryans" must have lived in Afghanistan in the time allotted by the Puranas to Rama, about 1900 BC, and that sites have been excavated there. This says absolutely nothing about any Ram indications (even while tacitly assuming that the Ramayana does have a historical core).

Moreover, he is not up-to-date concerning the "Aryan" theory and the Indus civilisation. Thus, he still says that the Indus people did not know the horse, that typically Aryan animal. This is not true: remains of horses have meanwhile been found at two sites. The entire Aryan Invasion theory is now being questioned internationally, though we have no illusions that Hindu-baiters will soon stop exploiting this theory, for which a lot of opinion but not a single piece of proof has ever been mustered.

He himself does not give a single reference to any proof for this theory, but because of his attachment to the Aryan Invasion dogma, he does overrule available literary evidence that conflicts with it: "Archaeological evidence does not prove that Puranic history is bunk. It does, however, prove that its geography is all



wrong. Obviously, the Ayodhya of today cannot be the same as the Ayodhya of ancient times." How so, *obviously*? You can only say that its geography is all wrong, if you know what the right geography was. But the "right geography" at present only means that which conforms to the still-prevailing paradigm, the Aryan Invasions theory. There is absolutely nothing in this document that substantiates an alternative geography, from which the Puranic geography could then be shown up as wrong.

According to the findings of the excavation campaign "Archaeology of the Ramayana sites", Valmiki's description of Rama's exile journey does fit the archaeological findings at five sites, and if not Rama's, then at least Valmiki's Ayodhya must be today's Ayodhya (about the historicity of the Ramayana and its localisation, see Prof. B.B. Lal's article in *Manthan*, October 1990). And in Valmiki's time, we know for fact that at least Buddhists and Jains stayed in Ayodhya (among other things, coins with Jain imagery of the 3rd century BC have been found, i.e. roughly contemporary with Valmiki) There is no reason to believe that they would, after that, have lost track of their sacred city (where five of the Jain Tirthankaras were born). So, these are already two indications that there is a continuity from Valmiki's Ayodhya to today's Ayodhya.

With that, Mr. Kochhar's claim becomes in effect that Valmiki situated Rama in an area he himself knew, the present Ayodhya, without therefore pretending it was the historical location of the events around which he wrote his Ramayana. That is not logically impossible. But then that is the only thing that can be said in favour of his theory. There is not even a single hint at any kind of evidence for his suggestion that Rama lived in Afghanistan.

A.13) Chidananda Dasgupta doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. He does a lot of abusing and accusing, and totally glosses over the real issue in this context: the historical fact that the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya was forcibly replaced with a mosque, not as an isolated incident, but as the local application of a thousandfold practice which was kept up throughout the area of Muslim conquest. The part which the AIBMAC has underlined is merely an abuse against "the" Brahmins; but the sentence goes on to bracket them with the Ulema, who are said to have an equal disregard for competent historical opinion. At any rate, somebody who fills a page with curses against people who disregard historical evidence, should have come up with some evidence himself, instead of taking a position that is thoroughly discredited by the authentic evidence which we have offered.

Since much of Mr. Dasgupta's tirade is directed against us, we want to state clearly that it is not we who "demand that history books should be burnt". It is those who want to rewrite and "decommunalise" history, and to whitewash the awful record of the Islamic conquerors and rulers, who make efforts to conceal authentic Muslim history-writing, which details with what horrible fervour and for what

pious motives thousands of temples were destroyed, and millions of Kafirs slaughtered.

In our bundle of evidence, we have mentioned that some of the Muslim testimonies for the Ram Mandir tradition have narrowly escaped oblivion, since attempts were made to conceal or destroy them. Some of the maps in the revenue records have been tampered with. The "eminent JNU historians", oft-quoted champions of the Babri cause, have been caught in the act of manipulating evidence (see articles by Prof. A.R. Khan in IE, 25/2 and 1/4/90, and appended to this text). It is not those who have firm evidence, who need to resort to such dirty tricks or to "burning the history books".

A.14) Prof. R.S. Sharma doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. In this interview with Pranava K. Chaudhary, he calls the Ram temple "fictitious". This is unscientific of him, because it leaves unexplained the solid tradition of testimonies to the contrary, as well as the archaeological evidence.

*The Times of India* has gone around collecting anti-Mandir statements from "authorities", as if we are still in the Middle Ages, when quoting an authority counted as proof. All these big names still have to come up with the first piece of proof for the hypothesis that the Babri Masjid was built on an empty spot, that the Hindus under Muslim rule went there for worship for no reason at all, that all the Muslim and foreign testimonies were untruthful, and that the local tradition for the pre-existence of a Ram Mandir was somehow concocted.

Prof. R.S. Sharma states that "in 1981, A. Fuhrer uncritically adopts some motivated local tradition that the three Ayodhya temples including the one at Rama's birthplace were destroyed by Muslims. But there is *absolutely* no basis for such sweeping statements." This "motivated" local tradition had been noted already in 1858 by Balfour. About the Janmabhoomi, it had been noted by local Muslims in 1735 and even earlier by Aurangzeb's granddaughter.

We could of course make inferences and postulate a wilful ignorance on the professor's part. But we don't like personal allegations, so let us rather put it this way: if even a renowned professor who has just recently published a book on "Rama's Ayodhya and Communal History" can be ignorant of all the plentiful documentary evidence ("absolutely no basis", he says), how can we be expected to take serious all the amateurs whom our AIBMAC friends have brought together to provide "evidence"?

A.15) Sher Singh doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. But at least he makes a try. He claims that "the whole mischief was started by P. Carnegy in 1870. He alleged that the columns used by the Muslims in the construction of the Babri mosque belong to the Janmasthan temple". In reality, that much had already been said in 1767 by Father Tieffenthaler. And it has very recently been proven by Dr.

S.P. Gupta, with the most modern methods for the use of which Mr. Sher Singh makes an appeal.

Sher Singh is the chief expert on which Sridhara Murthy bases his remarks on the archaeological part of his crank tirades. This is already his third appearance in this list of documents (the AIBMAC sources are not so numerous as they had seemed, after all). He wants the JNU historians to make a C14 testing of a beam in the Babri structure, which the 1960 Gazetteer considers as made of Sandalwood, and taken from the earlier Ram Mandir. In fact, this wooden beam was put in during the repairs carried out on orders of the British government, after the 1934 riots. A C14 dating could only confirm that. After having led a research team working on this controversy, Sher Singh should have known these things.

A.16) The 25 JNU historians don't give any proof whatsoever. All they can do, is try to cast aspersions on the arguments which Hindus have been giving. A coherent alternative hypothesis which takes into account all the known facts, is not available in the JNU historians' oft-quoted statement. Their statement has been taken care of by Prof. A.R. Khan (articles in *Indian Express*, 25/2 and 1/4/90, appended to this text) and by the Belgian scholar Koenraad Elst (*Ram Janmabhoomi vs. Babri Masjid*). Nevertheless, even after Prof. Khan exposed this document as "elusive in character", criticised its methodology, and drew attention to "not only concealment of evidence but also distortion of evidence", the entire pseudo-secularist intelligentsia has continued to quote "the eminent JNU historians" as the final word on this issue.

The AIBMAC should have shown in what way this document substantiates their case, then we could give a precise reply to that deduction. So far, we can only say that this statement beats around the bush flamboyantly.

It talks a lot about there being no proof for Rama's existence, his time and place of birth, his elevation to divine status etc.: all these things do not concern us here, we have been asked by the Government for evidence of the medieval Ram Mandir and its destruction by Muslim invaders who built the Babri Masjid on top of it, and we have given that evidence. We repeat that we do not have to justify why we consider a place sacred, we expect our sacred places to be respected as much as members of other religions would do.

The JNU document also philosophises about how there existed inter-communal amity as well as intra-communal strife. Very well, people are people and cannot be reduced to their religious denominations. Therefore, many common Muslims don't observe the Quranic injunctions against friendship with Kafirs (Quran 3:28, 3:118, 5:51, 5:144, 9:7, 9:28, 58:23, 60:4). Some Muslim rulers also preferred a stable kingdom with communal amity to their Islamic duty of persecuting the Kafirs (though they were severely criticised for this Islamic laxity by the guardians of orthodoxy, e.g. Akbar by Ahmad Sirhindi, who had a wealth of verses at their

disposal for proving the Muslim's duty to fight the Kafirs: Quran 2:191, 2:193, 4:66, 4:84, 5:33, 8:12, 8:15-18, 8:39, 8:59-60, 8:65, 9:2-3, 9:5, 9:14, 9:29, 9:39, 9:73, 9:111, 9:123, 25:52, 37:22-23, 47:4-5, 48:29, 69:30-37).

In particular, the Nawabs, who belonged to the Shia sect, which shortly before had been persecuted by Aurangzeb, were not too zealous in their observance of Quranic rules regarding the Kafirs. That is why they allowed the Hindus to worship in the Masjid courtyard, understanding that the Hindus were very attached to this sacred place. But all that peaceful co-existence between Shias and Hindus does not add up to proof that the Babri Masjid was built on empty land.

About the three instances of Nawabi officials giving grants to Hindu institutions, cited in the JNU pamphlet as evidence of the Nawabs' secularism, Prof. A.R. Khan (History Dpt., Himachal University, Shimla) has remarked : "It may be noted that in the first two evidences the authors have deliberately concealed the fact that both the *diwans* were Hindus. [By contrast], while mentioning about the gifts by the officials of the Nawabi court to Hindu priests (in their third evidence), they have not forgotten to state that the officials were Muslims. This not only amounts to concealment of evidence but also distortion of evidence." (IE 25/2/90)

The JNU text does not go into the archaeological evidence, in fact it denies that there is any for the relevant period: "So far no historical evidence has been unearthed to support the claim that the Babri mosque has been constructed on the land that had earlier been occupied by a temple." As Mr. I. Mahadevan has pointed out (IE 6/12/90), the JNU historians have selected from the ASI report what suited them, the absence of any remains of habitation from before the 7th century BC, and left out the finding that there was again a building on the disputed spot from the 11th century AD onwards.

It is true that the first brief ASI report on the excavation led by Prof. B.B. Lal does not mention the pillar-bases; but it does mention the floors made of lime and *kankars*. While not mentioning the pillar-bases, the report does mention remains of at least a building. In the present discussion, that is a very pertinent fact: the Masjid replaced a building. It is up for discussion what kind of building it was, but at least, the choice of possible scenarios has been narrowed down and no longer includes the possibility that the Masjid was built on empty land.

Concealing this all-important fact in a statement that pretends to put distorters of history to shame, is quite a feat. If there was an open intellectual arena in India, rather than a Left-controlled one, the JNU historians would have lost their big name for their attempts at distortion, and maybe also their big mouth.

The JNU historians, all 25 of them, seem to be not aware of the existence of a great many testimonies firmly establishing that the Masjid or at least its courtyard were used by the Hindus for Ram worship since well before the British period. Or they

gloss over it. They certainly don't bring up arguments to disprove or somehow undermine this testimony. Since the JNU historians disregard both the relevant archaeological findings and all the documentary evidence, their entire document in no way affects our case.

A.17) Sakina Yusuf Khan doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. But as a journalist, she deserves to be fired. The article "*No pillar-bases at Ayodhya: ASI report*" is blatantly undeontological in several respects.

First of all, while purporting to give B.B. Lal's views on the recently disclosed presence of pillar-bases just near the Babri building, it disregards Prof. Lal's recent unambiguous support for the presence of pillar-bases of the 11th century, made public in an article in *Manthan* as well as in an interview with BBC television. Instead it quotes an earlier report, more than ten years old, in which the details of the findings of the medieval period are not given, and acts as if this is counter-evidence against the recent statements by Dr. Gupta about the pillar-bases.

Secondly, it pretends that the ASI report gives as its verdict: no pillar-bases. In reality, such a statement is nowhere present in the report. Since the excavations were primarily concerned with the Ramayana period, the report was very brief on the findings from the medieval period. That is why it only mentioned the kankar/lime floors, not the pillar-bases, and proclaims its own intention not to go into the full details: "The entire later period was devoid of any special interest." The pillar-bases have been left unmentioned not by way of a verdict, but because at that time, the ASI was not so interested in them.

A.18) Praful Bidwai doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. And that is very serious, because he sets out to lecture people precisely on the issue of history falsification and concoction of evidence. What would Goebbels do if he came back today, and found himself bereft of any evidence to support his case? What absolutely cheap lie would he certainly launch to put his enemies on the defensive? Simple, he would say: "VHP campaign of lies: Goebbels is already here".

Praful Bidwai starts out with a heavy allegation against us: "Concocting archaeological 'evidence' that a Ram temple existed at the disputed site". How can archaeological evidence be "concocted"? Not that we are interested in his magic formula, we have the real evidence. But maybe the pro-Babri faction would like to give it a try.

He attacks Dr. Gupta's presentation of the archaeological evidence in *Indian Express* (2/12/90), saying without any proof or even illustration that its conclusion is based on logical fallacies. He says that Dr. Gupta failed to show how the pillars had a load-bearing function, that they belonged to the site and to a religious building. But Dr. Gupta has argued these points quite convincingly in that article, and in more detail in annexure 28 to our evidence. Moreover, it is only logical that

pillars bear weight, that religious sculptures indicate use in a religious building, and it was a general practice to re-use parts of a demolished temple in the very mosque built on top of it. If Praful Bidwai wants to propose an alternative scenario (which he implicitly does by casting doubt on the scenario for which Dr. Gupta has given evidence) which goes against common sense, the burden of proof is on him.

Praful Bidwai repeats the JNU historians' exercise in character assassination (reply to Dr. Gupta's article, IE 5/12/90) by insinuating that Dr. Gupta falsely claims participation in the excavations. The fact of the matter, made clear in *Indian Express* on 6/12/90, well before Praful Bidwai published his article, is that Dr. Gupta could not formally be registered as a member of the team, for the statutory reason that he worked for the National Museum, not for the ASI, so he was given "observer" status. Bidwai also levels insinuations against Prof. B.B. Lal and Mr. Mahadevan, who had aptly called the JNU's statement a case of, in their own terminology, "political abuse of history" (IE, 6/12/90).

Bidwai's totalitarian sympathies come out clearly where he protests against the fact that *Indian Express* had dared to publish other views than his own: "The Express's attempt to balance this distortion by Dr. Gupta was equally unbalanced. The paper did carry the JNU historians' reply, but only as one of three articles, the other two being pro-Gupta." Two articles were pro-facts and one was Leftist insinuation: secularist India will be damned if this continues. Well, most papers kept their readers entirely in the dark concerning the archaeological findings that clinch the issue in favour of the Mandir. Some give plain lies (see document A.17). *The Times of India* collected replies from a number of academics, but did not inform its readers of the findings that had occasioned this sudden propaganda offensive (except indirectly in the questions put to prof. Romila Thapar). Even if one paper gave only the Hindu view, it would still come nowhere near balancing the black-out on the Hindu view and on the documentary and archaeological facts of this matter, in the press at large.

Bidwai's indignation follows a precedent. When, on 1/4/90, *Indian Express* published the JNU historians' reply to Prof. A.R. Khan's article (in which he demolished the JNU historians' methodology and exposed some of their unmistakable attempts at deception), they started out by complaining that *Indian Express* had not published their original and well-known statement, saying they feared that this way, Prof. Khan's critique would be too "confusing". Well, it had been published in at least the *Telegraph*, the *Times of India* and the *Illustrated Weekly*, and spread as a separate pamphlet. And still they wanted more publicity, because the Left have come to believe in its own God-given (mmm) right to lord it over the media.

Recently, Dilip Simeon and others protested in a joint letter (ToI, 2/11/90) against the publication of "the VHP viewpoint", viz. a not too anti-Hindu article by Swapan Dasgupta, who is not one of our members, in the *Times of India*, which

mostly publishes rabidly anti-Hindu columns like Simeon's own. Of course, the control over the press is crucial when you have to prevent the truth from coming out.

According to Mr. Bidwai, these are also parts of Goebbels' propaganda: "Proving that the temple was destroyed by 'invaders'..." and "claiming that the only recompense for this act of sacrilege is the demolition of the mosque".

As for the temple destruction, we have given evidence, and Mr. Bidwai has only given swearwords and slogans. His own allegations are mere slander until he gives counter-proof. After regularly writing on "communalism" for a long time, Praful Goebbels has still not come up with anything, and we know why: he doesn't have anything. In order not to be found out, he has to keep up the offensive. Goebbels knew that if you attack people, they tend to go on the defensive rather than put you to scrutiny.

We are not claiming that the relocation of the mosque is the recompense for this act of sacrilege. We claim that the restoration of the three sacred sites in Mathura, Varanasi and Ayodhya is merely a matter of justice: these are Hindu sacred places, not Muslim ones. The mosques there were only built to humiliate the Hindus, and that is why the Hindu-baiters are so insistent on keeping them there.

The recognition of the Hindu rights over their sacred places is of course not a recompense for "this" sacrilege on the sites themselves. They are at most a symbolic recompense for the thousandfold sacrilege, temple-destruction, Kafir-killing, slave-taking, abduction of Kafir women, which the Muslim invaders, egged on by their Scripture and their clerics, have systematically committed in India, as in other Pagan lands they conquered.

This simple recognition that the Hindus have a right to their own sacred places, does by far not amount to a recompense, much less to "avenging of desecration of a Hindu monument by the 'Muslims'", as Bidwai represents it. *Avenging* it would mean desecrating the Muslim sacred places in West Asia.

Bidwai rejects the collective term "Muslims", "who mysteriously remain the same continuous subject in history - the present generation being responsible for its ancestors' deeds". But no, we do not think that Muslims are automatically "continuous" with Babar and other invaders. First of all, we are well capable of distinguishing between the mass of people who merely happen to have been born and raised in a Muslim community, and those who are conscious keepers and propagators of specific Islamic doctrines about subduing and exterminating the unbelievers. And even for those leaders, there is no automatic continuity: it is their own choice, whether to continue the way of Babar or that of Dara Shikoh.

While Muslims come and go, the one "continuous subject in history" is their Scripture, Quran and Hadis. These contain dozens of injunctions to make war on the Kafirs, i.e. on us. Now, it is indeed possible that the present generation of Muslims takes distance from these teachings, or gives a radically new interpretation to terms like "Kafir" and "Jihad". If so, the proof will be that they can at least in a few symbolic instances undo the wrong that the past application of the outdated interpretation of their Scripture has inflicted on the Kafir societies. Recognising the right of the Hindus to the sacred places that earlier Muslim generations had stolen from them, would indeed be "discontinuous" with Islam's fanatic past.

Mr. Bidwai finds this also Goebbelsian: "Sedulously propagating the lie that the mosque has not been used since 1936 as a place of worship, and therefore the dispute is between a (real) temple and a non-existent mosque about which the Muslims are being mean and unreasonable (unlike the Hindus)". Of course, Mr. Bidwai doesn't give a trace of proof that this is a lie.

This "lie" is simply the official version. We would be open to the possibility that the place was used for Muslim prayers even in the forties, but we cannot help it that the Civil Judge of Faizabad observed, in his 3/3/51 judgment : "It further appears from the copies of a number of affidavits of certain Muslim residents of Ayodhya that at least from 1936 onwards the Muslims have neither used the site as a mosque nor offered prayers there and that the Hindus have been performing their Pooja etc. on the disputed site. Nothing has been pointed to discredit these affidavits." Certainly, Mr. Bidwai who is lecturing us on abiding by the Court verdict, cannot object to our quoting a Court verdict, based on the unchallenged testimony of local Muslims. While sometimes even a judge's view may later prove erroneous, at any rate it is no proof of being Goebbels, to repeat the text of a Court ruling.

This will do as a comment on Praful Goebbels' slander campaign. There is, on top of all this, the fact that, without referring to any authentic statement, he describes "Hindu Rashtra" as "a blatantly communal society run on majoritarian terror and reduction of [the minority people] to the status of second-class citizens, in which bigotry, violence and intolerance rule". In fact, this is an accurate description not of the Hindu Rashtra to which we aspire, but of Pakistan, the Muslim Rashtra already in existence. But it leaves out (as all Hindu-baiting texts do) an analysis of why Pakistan is like that. It is like that because it is informed by the same anti-Hindu fervour which led to the destruction of the Ram Mandir.

B.1) The six documents of group B don't give any evidence whatsoever, except for our own viewpoint.



The Persian inscriptions on the Babri Masjid show that Mir Baqi built it at the "command" of Shah Babar (*Ba farmuda-i Shah Babar*), and not at his own sweet will. The date given in the inscription fits the time Babar stayed in or near Ayodhya (March-April 1528). The inscriptions are given as evidence of "the construction of Babri Masjid in 1528 AD by Meer Baqi Tashkandi". We have no quarrel with that. It is standing there, so someone must have built it.

B.2) "Babar's testament", a short but highly surprising declaration of secular kingship, doesn't give any evidence whatsoever that the mosque was built on something else than a destroyed Hindu temple. Otherwise, it proves a lot.

The English note under the Persian text says: "Dr. Tirnusi helped me in deciphering the text and also confirm the evaluation of this document I had made in the first edition of my *Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* in 1940." Interesting. What "evaluation of this document" do we find in that 1940 book?

Firstly, the copied page is in the book from which it was copied (*Babri Mosque or Ram Janam Temple*, by Dr. R.L. Shukla and Mrs. Nilofer Ahmad), also a copy, from yet another book, by Dr. S.R. Sharma. It has uncarefully retained the subscribed note by Dr. Sharma, making it easy for us to check this out. Alright, in appendix 9, Dr. Sharma gives this testament. But on page no. 24 and 25, the learned author has given a long list of reasons why this document is a modern "forgery and clumsy forgery".

A number of independent scholars have concluded that this document is a forgery. Mrs. Beveridge, for one. She has been quoted very selectively in this compilation. She has listed no less than 15 reasons why it has to be a forgery. Radhey Shyam (in app.4 of his book *Babar*, 1978) rejects a few of these, but not the conclusion. It seems that P. Saran and S. Roy have also concluded that this document is a forgery.

What is this nonsense, including a proven forgery in a pile of "evidence"? It is certainly evidence of something.

B.3) Even Babar's own diary doesn't give any evidence whatsoever, except that he did go to Ayodhya. As is well known, the pages with his notes from the period in which he is supposed to have been in or near Ayodhya, are missing. Interestingly, while one page from Mrs. Beveridge's translation of the *Babar Nama* has been presented, the other pages of the appendix dealing with the inscriptions, as also the following two pages with footnotes, and some other relevant pages, have been cleverly concealed. There, Mrs. Beveridge restates what was universally believed, and what was recorded in all the successive Gazetteers dealing with Ayodhya: a temple was destroyed there to make way for a mosque.

Then again, it has not really been concealed: in A.11 it has been quoted and vehemently attacked as a "preconceived" piece of "concealment" and "distortion".

B.4) Alexander Cunningham doesn't give any evidence whatsoever that has any bearing on our case. He declares himself that he is primarily interested in the Buddhist sites and monuments as mentioned in the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, particularly Hsuen Tsang's. The short and insignificant references to historical sites of all other religions were only incidental. Thus Cunningham's silence on what didn't concern him, the Ram Janmabhoomi site, is absolutely no proof that the place was not considered as Rama's birth-place, hence sacred to the Hindus. This document is absolutely irrelevant and only meant to increase the bulk of papers sent to the VHP.

And yet, it is useful. Off-hand, Cunningham confirms that Ayodhya is considered Ram's city of birth. And he does not trace any Buddhist monuments at the Janmabhoomi site, thus putting to rest a recent canard floated to keep us busy running around after the balloons of "secularist" concoctions.

B.5) Dr. R. Nath doesn't give any evidence whatsoever, relevant to the topic under consideration. He shows that there were different types of mosque structures. Well, so what?

But more interesting for our purpose is Dr. Nath's reaction to the inclusion of his text in the AIBMAC "evidence". From a lengthy reply, the Indian Express (3/1/91) has published this excerpt: "The reference to my book is vague and I do not know which statement of mine has been quoted in what context. I have been to the site and have had occasion to study the mosque, privately, and I have absolutely no doubt that the mosque stands on the site of a Hindu temple on the north-western corner of the temple-fortress Ramkot, by which the river Saryu (Ghagra) originally flowed."

B.6) Mrs. E.B. Joshi doesn't give any evidence whatsoever. *The 1961 Gazetteer*, is a very late and not unmotivated writing, which suppresses the opinion of the previous Gazetteer authors without invoking any new findings whatsoever that might justify this deletion. Apparently this was done under pressure from the then Government.

It becomes more curious when we see the AIBMAC citing this document that repudiates Nevill's Gazetteer, and at the same time citing Court petitions by Muslims that invoke Nevill's Gazetteer as evidence. The judgment in document E.25 (p.14) clarifies explicitly that this Gazetteer text is admissible as evidence under U/S 57 of the Evidence Act.

In this light, Mrs. Joshi's silence over the destruction of the temple seems to be wilful suppression of a long held fact of history.

C/D) The C and D groups have to be dealt with together, since they pertain to revenue records and court proceedings which are complementary to each other. They do give evidence. Court after court and writer after writer has firmly taken the view that the mosque was built here after destroying a pre-existing temple, which they very much regretted. The British Judge in 1886 put it this way: "It is very unfortunate that a mosque should have been built on land held specially sacred by the Hindus". But with his haughty colonial unconcern, he felt that: "As that happened 356 years ago, it is too late to remedy the grievance". The British were objective enough to see the correctness and well-foundedness of the Hindu grievance, but as a matter of colonial policy they didn't want to interfere with the status-quo.

Document D.2 proves at least that the chabootra (not necessarily the first one, given the earlier upheavals between Hindus and Muslims and between both and the British) was set up in 1857, so the Hindu claim to the site cannot be passed off as a recent "political gimmick for building vote-banks" and other such nonsense. Hindu society has never given up its claim to this sacred site.

E/F) The E and F groups of documents don't give any evidence whatsoever, except for what we all know and what is precisely the problem: some Muslims have had official and effective possession of the site for a long time after Babar forcibly took it from the Hindus.

Among the documents relating to the 1949 Hindu reconversion of the building into a place of Ram worship, the Court Order of the Civil Judge of Faizabad, dated 3/3/1951, is conspicuously missing. We surmise that our AIBMAC friends did not want to draw attention to the fact that the Judge was skeptical regarding the Muslim claim of having offered Namaz in the building up till December 1949, and on the contrary cited the unchallenged testimony of local Muslims to the effect that the building had not been used since 1936. But then that is all we have to say about these judicial documents, because we have no intention of walking into the trap of exchanging the scholarly debate on the evidence for the quarrels of the judicial dispute.

All the legal squabbles over land titles etc. emanating from the situation created by force in 1528, including the matter of the effective use of the building before 1949, are completely irrelevant to the issue about which the Government of India has requested evidence, viz. the forcible demolition of a Hindu temple and its replacement with the Babri Masjid; and even more irrelevant for the fundamental issue of the restoration to Hindu society of one of the places it holds specially sacred. Even if a mosque forcibly imposed on one of our sacred sites is effectively used as a mosque, it remains just as much a forcibly imposed token of desecration and humiliation.

### **3. The tactics of dispute**

With this total lack of evidence, the AIBMAC cannot hope to clinch the issue in its favour. So, the next best thing it could try, is to prevent the Hindu side from clinching the issue in its favour, by showing that the evidence which we have given, is not really evidence. Though some of our documents have been dug up from the archives only recently, a number of them had been drawn attention to in public forums, so the AIBMAC could have attacked the reliability of those evidences. However, in the long list of AIBMAC documents, there is not a trace of a critique of the four Muslim testimonies presented by Harsh Narain (IE 26/2/1990) or Tieffenthaler's testimony presented by A.K. Chatterjee (IE 26/3/1990). There is also not a trace of evidence for the oft-used explanation that the local people, gullible as Hindus and Muslims both can be, swallowed a story purposely concocted by the British.

The anti-Mandir argumentation in other intellectual forums including the press has also not come up with any evidence that disproves our case or renders our evidence unreliable. The AIBMAC list of documents contains a number of these samples of the anti-Mandir rhetoric that has been spread in the press, which invariably blow a lot of hot air but don't give any evidence whatsoever.

There have been a few attempts to discredit the archaeological conclusions made public by Prof. B.B. Lal and Dr. S.P. Gupta. These attempts are not made by competent archaeologists or people who have any kind of first-hand knowledge of the Janmabhoomi archaeology, but by armchair historians like Prof. R.S. Sharma or the JNU historians, who happen to be firmly rooted in Marxism, a tradition notorious for its numerous brutal falsifications of history. In particular, there have been baseless insinuations against the professional integrity of both archaeologists. On top of that, all kinds of untenable denials as well as fantastic alternative explanations of the archaeological findings have been floated. But no evidence.

Competent archaeologists and art historians have come out in support of Prof. Lal and Dr. Gupta, including Muhammed K.K. (Dy. Superintending Archaeologist, ASI Madras circle, in IE 15/12/90), Mr. Iravatham Mahadevan (indologist and editor of *Dinamani*, IE 5/12/90), and Dr. R. Nath, author of *History of Mughal Architecture*, whom the AIBMAC had quoted in support of its case. He has confirmed : "I have been to the site and have had occasion to study the mosque, privately, and I have absolutely no doubt that the mosque stands on the site of a Hindu temple on the north-western corner of the temple-fortress Ramkot." (IE 2/1/91) But so far, not one among the Hindu-baiters who have lectured us about the primacy of science over myth, has given up his attachment to the anti-Mandir myth in the face of the incontrovertible scientific evidence.

There is a method in these unscholarly attempts to sow suspicions against the undeniable archaeological facts, though it is not the scientific method. It is like a defence lawyer's attempt to create confusion and thus hold up the clear-cut case of the prosecutor. Perhaps such tactics are alright in court, but in a scholarly debate they are considered highly objectionable, and a definite indication of a commitment to something else than the truth.

A distraction tactic, that is what the entire anti-Mandir argumentation amounts to. Instead of coming up with one genuine piece of evidence, the Babri polemicists merely raise new distractions to create confusion. The effect is that, in writing this reply, we have been forced to deal with silly statements made by biased and incompetent people, whose opinions would count for nothing in a sincere academic debate. What does a Hindu-baiting politician like Ramaswamy Naicker know about Ayodhya? Yet, because his biased layman's opinion is presented as evidence, we are forced to deal with it. To be sure, we are perfectly willing to devote our time to any kind of evidence deemed valid by our opponents, on this occasion. But in the press, where the public opinion is sought to be moulded, it is hardly feasible to go and disprove all these spurious contentions, so bringing them up has effectively created the impression that the anti-Mandir hypothesis really rests on some evidence of its own.

A strong example of these distraction tactics in the AIBMAC bundle of documents, is the fact that no less than seven different hypotheses regarding Rama's birth place have been given: 1) He was never born at all; 2) He was born at an unknown place; 3) He was born at Ayodhya, a few dozen yards north of the Ram Janmabhoomi site, where now the Sita ki Rasoi stands; 4) He was born in the village Ghuram in Panjab; 5) He was born in Afghanistan; 6) He was born on the banks of the Saryu in Nepal; 7) He was born in Benares. So, they expect us to go and disprove all these seven hypotheses, of which they themselves disbelieve at least six.

A typical case of a story floated in the press to distract from the real debate on the real evidence is the "theory" that the Janmabhoomi spot housed a Buddhist establishment. The Leftist press is exploiting this canard to the fullest, the AIBMAC evidence mentions it in several places, but understandably does not highlight it too much. In tactical terms, the stand that the Masjid was built on empty space, is the first line of defence, and it is still taken by the AIBMAC. The stand that the spot was not empty, but that the building was Buddhist, is the next line of defence, increasingly taken by the Leftists, who realise that the first line has become untenable.

That the Babri Masjid replaced a Buddhist building, is not indicated by any iconographical or documentary evidence (in contrast to the solid iconographical testimony that it was a Vaishnava temple and the massive written testimony that it

was a Rama temple). While there were plenty of Buddhist buildings in North India, the Ram Mandir was not one of them.

But the general proposition that whatever Buddhist establishments existed, we demolished the way the Ram Mandir was demolished, that proposition is of course correct. For the Muslim conquerors, Buddhism was just one sect of Hindu paganism. So, they totally exterminated Buddhism both in Central Asia and in North India. Owing to their centralised and high-profile institutions, the Buddhist monks were an easier target than the decentralised Vedic-Hindu society. The recent canard that Hindus destroyed Nalanda University (destroyed by Muslim conqueror Bakhtiar Khilji) and the Bodh Gaya temple (never destroyed but left unkempt after the Buddhists had been slaughtered by Bakhtiar and other Muslim conquerors), is just an artificial smokescreen to conceal the well-attested fact that Islam did to Buddhism exactly what it did to other sects of Sanatana Dharma as well as to other Pagan traditions wherever it found them.

The strongest weapon of the anti-Mandir polemicists has so far been their near-total control of the media. This alone has enabled them to bring into disrepute a firmly established and massively attested tradition, to depict it as "myth" and "distortion", and to float an alternative hypothesis which is incoherent with our general historical knowledge and in conflict with all the available specific evidence. This mighty propaganda feat, achieved over the last couple of years, is one small instance of a larger operation of history-distortion. This operation seeks to erase from our people's consciousness the memory of the unprecedented crimes committed in the name of Islam.

#### **4. The larger picture**

"The Mohammedan conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilisation is a precious thing, whose delicate complex of order and liberty, culture and peace may at any time be overthrown by barbarians invading from without or multiplying within." Those are the words of Will Durant, a Western scholar who was not a "Hindu communalist". Its basic statement is but a summary of the massive testimony given by the Muslim invaders and their chroniclers themselves. It is also confirmed by the "silent witnesses", all the leftovers of destroyed temples which have been incorporated in mosques. It is therefore not a "prejudice" or "communal distortion of history", it is just factual.

There is a convenient contention these days, that the "communal" view of history, which sees the Islamic onslaught as the materialisation of a constant Islamic doctrine rather than as a diffuse coincidence of economical and other secular factors, is merely a British concoction in order to "divide and rule". Thus, R.S. Sharma attributes to the British scholar H.M. Elliot "the best example of British

communal historiography", because Elliot "denounces the Muslim rulers in the most severe terms". (*Communal History and Rama's Ayodhya*, p.11) Yet, that tirade does not explain away the fact that Elliot's classic (along with Dawson) *History of India as Told by its Historians*, is entirely based on authentic records by mostly Muslim historians. It is not a concoction or a distortion, but a synthesis of the Muslims' own testimony to the crimes as well as the motives of Muslim conquerors and rulers.

So, when Indian historians have recognised Islamic doctrine as the largest single factor of communal strife in India, it was not because they "were caught in the communal trap laid by British historians", as R.S. Sharma wants us to believe. It was because, as historians, they had to take the authentic testimonies into account. By contrast, the "secularist" historians have glossed over a mass of authentic information in order to impose their secular explanation on the unwilling facts.

One may always come up with conflicts that have occurred between this sect and that, at some point in time. Of course, any two groups, ethnic, religious, occupational, may at some point develop a conflict between them. But it is temporary and ultimately gives way to a renewed peaceful co-existence. But there are a few ideologies, notably Islam and Marxism-Leninism, that entertain a doctrine of deliberate aggression and intolerance of other societies. In their case, conflict emanates from an ideological backbone. And instead of conflict situations always gravitating back to a peaceful *modus vivendi*, we see that in their case, strife becomes the rule. That is how Hindu society came to suffer under the systematic onslaught of invaders who had been taught to take pride in killing and oppressing the Pagans, and to emulate the example of desecration of Pagan temples, set by the Prophet.

It is not a communalist concoction that Mohammed took the Kaaba from the Pagans of Arabia, and destroyed all the idols in it. This act, described in detail and glorified in Islamic scripture itself, set the tone for Islamic behaviour all through the conquest of North India. It cannot be wished away now, no matter how many "secularists" the AIBMAC may invite to shout abuses at the top of their voice against those who restate these simple and well-attested facts.

## **5. Our demand**

The Pagans of Arabia are not there anymore to reclaim their Kaaba. Islam has destroyed them. After that, it has destroyed many more cultures, starting with their places of worship. The Manichaeans, Nestorians and Buddhists of Iran and Central Asia are not there anymore to reclaim their temples and monasteries (and the few Zoroastrians that have survived are too oppressed, too few and too afraid to raise their voice).

But we have survived, though not unscathed, and we do demand the restoration of our most sacred places. **We demand that the Muslim community of India recognises the rights of Hindu society to these three shrines: Kashi Vishvanath in Varanasi, Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura, and Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya.**

Against this perfectly reasonable demand, yet another smear campaign has been unleashed, saying that we preach "revenge". Revenge would mean that we go and destroy the Muslim sacred places in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. We have no intention of doing that. It would also mean wars of conquest, persecution, killing of millions, abducting millions of women and children into slavery, short, a mirror-image of what the Muslim conquerors and rulers have done to Hindu society. We have no inclination at all to inflict revenge on the Muslim community.

We do not even demand "compensation" or "restitution". The AIBMAC does not have the power to give us Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh back. It does not have the power to bring the millions of victims of Jihad back to life. The Germans also had no power to bring the victims of Auschwitz back to life. But at least, they have expressed their regrets without any reservation or ambiguity.

We do not even demand the return of the thousands of places of worship that have been forcibly replaced with mosques. Let the local Muslim communities continue to use them. All we demand, is the return of *three* sacred places.

Right now in the Soviet Union, Muslims as well as Christians and Buddhists are claiming and getting their erstwhile places of worship back, which the Communists had confiscated and put to all kinds of secular uses. The offices and whatever else had been installed in them, have to be lodged some place else now. But that, as well as the fact that these communities had been doing without these places of worship for seventy years, has not been taken as a reason for keeping the status-quo.

We merely want *three* places back, three age-old sacred places. And we would prefer getting them back from the Muslim community, to getting them back by an official decree. For the Muslim community, this is an excellent opportunity to make up voluntarily for the huge massacres, persecutions, slave-takings, abductions, temple-destructions and swordpoint conversions which its earlier generations inflicted upon Hindu society, as on other non-Muslim communities both in India and elsewhere.

In the past two years, many nations and communities have chosen to make a formal recognition of past errors, and apologised to the victims or their descendants. The Japanese people, through their prime minister as well as their new emperor, have apologised to the Korean people for the oppression in the half century preceding 1945. The Soviet Union has apologised to the Koreans for the



start of the Korean war. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa has apologised to the blacks for its ideological support for the Apartheid system. The Soviet leaders have recognised the guilt of their predecessors in the Katyn massacre of Polish officers. They have corrected the text on the Katyn monument and held a joint ceremony on the spot with the Polish president. The way to make a new beginning goes via the recognition of the wrongs of the past.

So, the time is ripe, and we would like the Indian Muslim community to rise to the occasion of its own free will. After all, two mosques and one non-mosque are a very small price for an immense gesture of goodwill, which will convince Hindu society that the Muslims have effectively broken with the unhappy record of their predecessors. For us these places are no less sacred than Kerbela or the Al-Aqsa mosque are for the Muslims. Muslims should understand what kind of message they are sending by insisting on continuing the occupation of our sacred places, an occupation which was started by fanatics and mass-murderers like Babar and Aurangzeb. We do not like to think of our Muslim compatriots as heirs and followers of such invaders and tyrants. It is up to them to make a gesture that will signify a formal break with this painful past.

We do believe that religion and societies can be reformed. When the Christians came to India, they broke our idols and practised conversion by force. They don't do that anymore. So, we are convinced that religious reform in the sense of a profound humanisation is possible. We do not want to keep identifying the Muslim community with the crimes inflicted on us by some of their predecessors. And precisely because we believe that the past can be forgotten as soon as the concerned parties agree to do so, we expect the Muslim community in India to come forward and make a gesture that will turn this unfortunate page.

We will conclude this plea for a gesture of goodwill and historical honesty, with a quote from one of the AIBMAC documents. This document, Babar's testament to Humayun, which is such a nice piece of secularism, has unfortunately been shown to be a forgery. Not that this is dramatic: so many declarations of secularism are also of doubtful genuineness.

Anyway, since our AIBMAC friends believe that Babar's will is an authentic and authoritative statement, we appeal to them to abide by it, especially where it says : "People of diverse religions inhabit Hindustan. You should not allow religious prejudices to influence your mind, and administer impartial justice, having due regard to religious susceptibilities and religious customs of all sections of the people. In particular, refrain from the slaughter of cows, for that is the way to win the hearts of the people of Hindustan... You should never destroy the places of worship of any community..." (p.272 of S.R. Sharma : *The Crescent in India*)

So, we appeal to the All-India Babri Masjid Action Committee, to all Muslim Indians and in fact to all people of goodwill, to fulfil Babar's last wish. We call on

them to join Hindu society in enacting an all-India ban on cow slaughter, and to respect the Hindu sacred places, especially Kashi Vishvanath, Krishna Janmabhoomi and Ram Janmabhoomi.