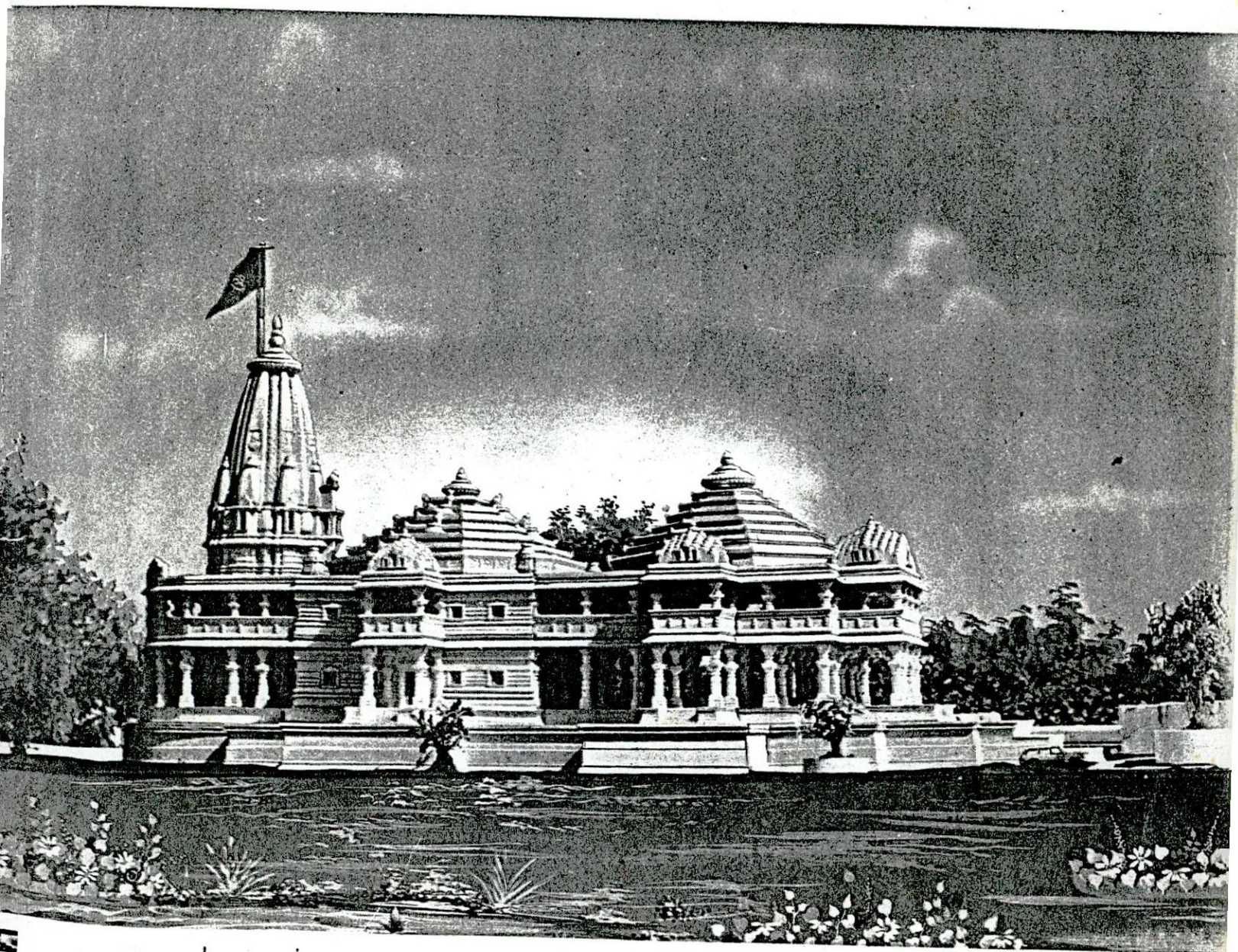


Evidence For
The Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir





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Presented to the Government of India on December 23, 1990, by the Vishva Hindu Parishad

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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 mount 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 foundations 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 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 the 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 parallel rows 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 the 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. Art-historical 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 *puṇaḡhata*, 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 सरयूतीरे प्रभूतधनधान्यवान् ॥
 अयोध्या नाम नगरी तत्रासीत् लोकीविश्रुता ।
 मनुना मानवेन्द्रेण या पुरी निर्मिता स्वयम् ॥
 आयता दश घ 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 ह्यवन्तिका ।
 स्ताः 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 Ramopakhyana 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 archavatara, he writes:

नमो भगवते त्रैलोक्यकारणाय नारायणाय
 ब्रह्मा ते हृदयं जगत्त्रयपते रुद्रश्च कोपस्तव
 नेत्रे चन्द्रदिवाकरौ सुरपते जिह्वा च ते भारती ।
 स ब्रह्मेन्द्रमरुद्गणं त्रिभुवनं सृष्टं त्वयैव प्रभो
 सीतेयं जलसम्भवात्परता विष्णुर्भवान् गृह्यताम् ॥

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 शब्दगुणं गुणैः पदं विमानेन विगाहमानः ।
 रत्नाकरं वीक्ष्य मिथः स जायां रामाभिधानो 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:

Poem / Poems

- (1) Ka (1) Kalidasa (C. 400 A.d.): Raghuvamsa
- (2) Pr. (2) Pravarasena (550-600 A.D.): Ravanavaho or Setubandha
- (3) Bh. (3) Bhatti: (500-650 A.D.): Ravanavadha
- (4) Ku (4) Kumaradasa: (c. 800 A.d.): Janakiharana
- (5) Al (5) Abhinanda (9th cent.): Ramacarita
- (6) Ks (6) Ksemendra (11th cent.):
 - (a) Ra (a) Ramayanamanjari
 - (b) Da (b) Dasavatara-carita
- (7) So (7) Soacakalyamalla (12 cent.): Udararaghava
- (8) Ca (8) Cakra Kavi (17th cent.): Janakiparinaya
- (9) Ad (9) Advaita kavi (17th cent.): Ramalingamta
- (10) M (10) Mohana svami: (1608 A.d. Roac(a,) marahasya or Roac(a,) ma Carita (India Office MS. of 1970 A.D.)

Drama / Drama

- (1) Bha. (1) Bhasa, (2nd cent. A.d.)
 - (a) Pr. (a) Pratima
 - (b) Ab. (b) Abhiseka
- (2) Bh. (2) Bhavabhuti (8th cent.)
 - (a) Ma. (a) mahaviracarita
 - (b) Ut. (b) Uttararamacarita
- (3) Di. (3) Dinnaga (9th cent.)
 - (a) Ku. (a) Kundamala
 - (b) Mu. (b) Murari (900 A.D.)
 - (c) An. (c) Anargharaghava
- (4) Ra. (4) Rajasekhara: (10th cent.)
 - (a) Ba. (a) Balaramayana
 - (b) Ha. (b) Hanuman:
 - (c) Ha. (c) Hanumannataka or Mahanataka
- (5) S. (5) Saktibhadra (9th cent.)
 - (a) As. (a) Ascaryacudamani
 - (b) Ya. (b) Yasovarman: Ramabhudaya (8th cent.)
 - (c) Ma. (c) Mayuraja: Udattaraghava
- (6) An. (6) Anonymous: (a) Chalit RM
(b) Krtya RM
(c) Mayapuspaka
(d) Svapnadarsana
- (7) Ks. (7) Ksirasvami: Abhinavaraghava
- (8) Ra. (8) Ramachandra (12 cent.) (a) Raghuvilasa
(b) Raghavabhyudaya
- (9) Ja. (9) Jayadeva: Prasanna-Raghava (12 cent.)
- (10) Ha. (10) Hastimalla: Maithikalyana (1290 A.D.)
- (11) Su. (11) Subhata: Dutangada (13 cent.)

- (16) Bhaskara Bhatta:: Uhmattaraghava
(14 cent))
- (17) Tryasamisradēva:: Rāmaphyudāya
(15 cent))
- (18) Mahadēva:: Adbhutaramayana
(17 cent))
- (19) Ramabhadra
Diksita:: Jānakiparinaya

Miscellaneous Poems

(i) Slesakavyas:

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

(ii) Vilomakavyas:

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

(iii) Citrakavyas:

- (1) Krsna Mohana:: Ramalilamrta
- (2) Venkatesa:: Citrabandha RM

(iv) Amorous Khanda-kavyas:

- (1) Venkatadesika:: Hamsasandesha on Hamsaduta
- (2) Rudra Vacaspati:: Bhramaraaduta
- (3) Vasudeva:: Bhramara+sandesa
- (4) Anonymous:: Kapiduta
- (5) Venkatakarya:: Kokilasandesha
- (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) Mailavana Carita or Hanumad-Vijaya
- (3) Sahashramukha-ravanacharitam
- (4) Satyopakhya
- (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 to 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:

ॐ क ॐ • राम-केशव-अर्जुन-भीमसेनतुल्य पराक्रमः
 ॐ ख ॐ • 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 Kshemendra, 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), Ambamata temple at Osion near Jodhpur, (11th century) containing images of Rama-Janaki & Hanuman, Rajivlochan temple (12th century) at Rajim in Raipur district 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 (archanavatar). 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 गर्भगृहे कल्पितः कमलासनः	
पश्चाद् विमानशोभाय 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. (भ्रावतस्त्रिभुवनत्रातु 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 Rama 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 (व्रत) on the Ramanavami day to the Janmasthan has been described in Ayodhya-Mahatmya in the following words:

"A man who has seen the Janmasthan 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 will be liberated from the bondages 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 (*bangla*) 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. Abul 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 Nasaih Bahadur Shahi* in 1816 AD, which was preserved in the Library of Mirza Haider Shikoh S/o Mirza Suleman Shikoh. This 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-Shahada*, 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 *kufar*]. 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, Ajudhya 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 eventhough 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 the 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 had 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 Ajodhya 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 Gojri 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* [= towery 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 and 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.739-740 of Thornton : *Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East India Company*)

5) *Encyclopedia 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 : *Encyclopedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia*)

6) *Historical Sketch of Faizabad* by P. Carnegy (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. Carnegy 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 Carnegy : *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 Carnegy)

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 visting 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/muafi* (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 *Sith 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 Babri Masjid in detail as being the site of the original Ram Janmabhoomi, while he also mentions the new Janmasthan temple (Sita 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 to 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.A. 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-consacrated 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*" ("Hindusthan 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 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 Tagore 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 *Muafi* 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

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 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 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 theorists 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.

(Nawal Kishore,
Lucknow, 1881)178

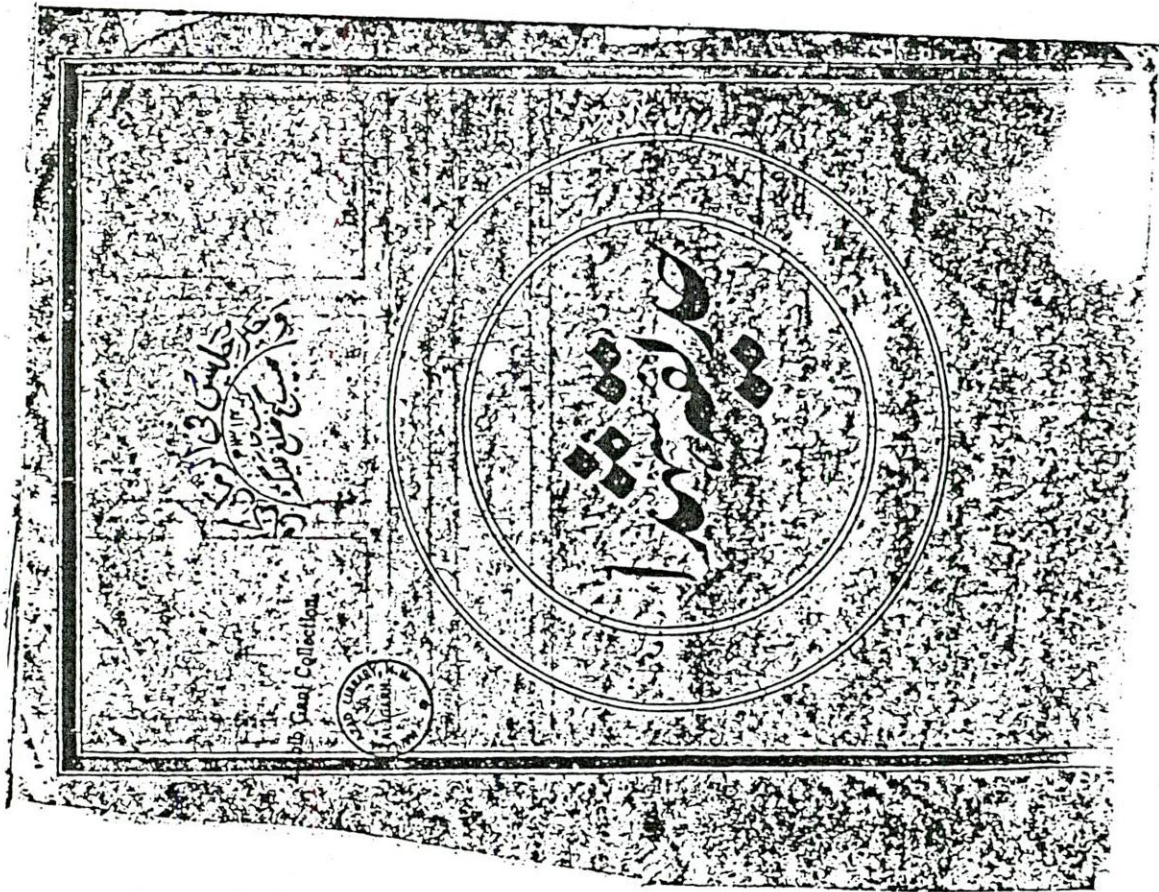
اوده از بزرگ شهرهای هند - طول صد و
 نوزده درجه و شش دقیقه - عرض بهیست و هفت
 درجه و بهیست و دو دقیقه - بیشین زمان
 بدر از اصد و جهل و بهشت گروه و پنهاسی و
 شش آباد بود - از نرین محابده با شتای
 بر شمایند - لیسواد شهر خاک، سیزی کند و
 طلای بر نرید - نگاه راج رام خدر بود - در دور
 تریا فرمانرانی محنوی را با تحت لشینی
 صوری فرایم داشت - یک کوه شهر
 دریای اطله دریای سرو پیوسته بیان
 قلم بلزد - نزد این شهر دو قبر بزرگ
 ساخته اند شش و هفت کوه نری -
 عامه خوالقا شیت دایوب پیر

نیدارند و دیو اف باها برخوانند - برخی بر آنکه
در تن پور تربت کبیر شود - در زمان سکند
لودی بود - لختی در محنی بردن شالیس یافت
و از فرسوده رسمهای روز برکناره شد -
مراوان خفایق لبش بندی زبان از دیادگار +

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1857 AC

Annexure 3
(I)



مطابقاً :
مہاراجہ پرنس اعظم گجرات

پرنس اعظم گجرات



شمارہ ۱۰۵

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