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HINDU TEMPLES DESTRUCTION BY THE AURANGZEB IN INDIA – A STUDY



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Abstract: *The Mughal rulers did the religious persecution of the non-Muslims. They demolished thousands of Hindu temples and some masjids are constructed on the ruins of the temples. Among the Mughal rulers everyone here and there tried to establish their faith through brutal activities to end the Hindu practices. For this purpose, the Mughal rulers enacted the destoning of the Hindu temples. Recently the Hindus raised their voice to protect their temples and take them back from the clutches of the Muslims which are desecrated by the Aurangzeb. The objective of this article tries to bring the desecration of the temples by the Aurangzeb, who ruled 50 years to North India from 1658-1707 CE. According to Aurangzeb's view, the temples can be desecrated at any time as they cannot walk. He did issue several orders (Fatwas) specific as well as general, for the destruction of Hindu temples (Goel, S.R. 2020b: 97). The main objective of this research paper is to carry out the demolished Hindu temples during the rule of Aurangzeb in the present states of India: Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam, Telangana, and Karnataka. The study collects the source from books written during the Aurangzeb reign by the office bearers which are translated into English.*

Keywords: *Mughal Empire, Aurangzeb, Demolishment/destruction of Hindu Temples, Reasons*

Introduction

The first demolishing of Hindu temples may be traced back to 653 CE when Iban Samurah invaded Seistan (present Iran) while capturing he destroyed Zur in Dawar temple. While he makes several attacks to capture the Indian territories the local rulers are thwarted. But during 712-715 CE, Muhammad Bin Qasim who is a military general of the Umayyad Caliphate Dynasty (661-750 CE) conquered Sindh, which is ruled by

Dahir, who is a Hindu Brahman King with Brahmanabad as capital, and established the Caliphate rule (*Mujahid, 2005*). After Qasim, in 986 CE, the Ghaznavid Sultan Sabuktigin (977-997 CE) escalated the Holy War (Ghazwa-e-hind) (*Elliot, 1869: II: 19*) against the Hindus (*Ibid, 25*) and defeated the Hindu Sahi Dynasty (*Rehman, 1979: 1*). The Abu Nasr Utbi who is the son of Sultan and he is also designated as Personal Secretary to Sultan describes in his work *Tarikh Yamini* (*Elliot, 1869: II*) that his Sultan conquered Lamghan (a rich city east of Kabul) and burnt the inhabited infidels, demolished the Hindu god's idol, temples and converted to the infidels to Islam (*Ibid, 22*). The son of Sabuktigin, Mahmud Ghazni (998-1030 CE) made 16 invasions on India since 1002 CE in the name of Jihad (*Hughes, 1885: 243*), and took away local people for slavery, gold, elephants, and jewels as booty; but he is notorious for his attack in 1025 CE on Somnath Temple in Gujarat and destroyed the Shivalinga and robbed the wealth of the temple (*Thapar, 2005: 1*).

After Mahmud Ghazni, Qutbuddin Iqbal demolished the 27 Hindu and Jain Temples and construct a mosque with the demolished material in 1191 CE Vishnu Stambh was built inside a Hindu Temple Complex which is dedicated to Lord Vishnu (www.thejaipurdialogues.com). During the rule of the Delhi Sultanate from 1191 to 1394 CE 24 temples were demolished, from 1394 to 1600 CE, the period of growth of Regional Sultanates, 31 Temples were demolished. In the Mughal governance from 1526 to 1748 CE (*Misra, 1967*) all rulers are follows previous invaders, and the 1600 to 1764 CE 25 temples were demolished (*Eaton, 2000*). The Qutbuddin Iqbal, during his rule (1194 CE) destroyed nearly 1000 temples and raised mosques on their foundation; the knowledge of the law became promulgated, and the foundations of the religion were established (*Nizami, 2018:223*). In 1586 CE Akbar ordered the destruction of the temples of Abdulla Khan, the Sultan of Bukhara (*Fazl and Beveridge, 2000:757*). Shah Jahan also orders the demolition of construction temples in Benares and other parts of his dominion and Allahabad 76 such structures are razed down on 13th January 1633 CE (*Lahori, 2018: 39*).

Temple Distractions by Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb is the sixth ruler of the Mughal rulers, who is also known as *Alamgir* which means Conqueror of the World (*Sohoni, 2016*). He ruled from 1658 to 1707 CE. During his reign, more than 300 temples were destroyed at various places in India. The two colossal idols, Idol-Bamiyan in Afghanistan, carved out of the rocks were mutilated on his orders (*Moorcroft and Trebeck, 1841*). He has also given several orders, both explicit and general, to demolish temples in his eagerness to establish Islam State, the general order issued by him in April 1669 CE, to governors of provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the Hindus strictly put down their religious practices (*Jadunath, 1947: 51-52*).

Motivations Behind Temple Demolition

Eaton (2000) believes that these destructions/demolitions are political, while others believe that temples were demolished because of economic distress (*Ticku et. al., 2018*). However, another important reason could be religion.

Table 1: List of Temples that Were Destroyed

Sl. No	State	Place during Aurangzeb's Reign	Present Location	Temple
1	Gujarat	Sarashpur, Ahmedabad	Saraspur, Ahmedabad District	Chintaman
2		Gujarat	Saurashtra, Gir Somnath District	Somnath
3	West Bengal	Kuch Bihar in Odisha	Cooch Behar District	Narayan
4	Uttar Pradesh	Mathura	Mathura District	Dehra of Keshav Rai
5		Benares	Varanasi District	Vishwanath
6		Soron, Allahabad	Prayagraj, Soraon District	Siraramji
7		Gonda	Balrampur District	Devi Patan
8	Rajasthan	Khandela and Sanula	Sikar, Khandela district	--
9		Jodhpur	Jodhpur District	-
10		Udaipur (one in front of Maharana's Mansion)	Udaipur District	-
11		Udaisar Lake (3 Temples on its bank and 172 Temples in and around Udaipur were destroyed)	Udaipur District	-
12		Chitor (63 Temples were destroyed)	Chittorgarh District	-
13		Amber (66 Teles Destroyed)	Amer, Jaipur District	-
14	Maharashtra	Satara Village, Aurangabad	Aurangabad District	Khande Rai (Present Khandoba Rao)
15		Ellora	Aurangabad District	-
16		Trimbkeshvar	Nasik District	-
17		Pandharpur	Solapur District	-
18		Yavat Bhuleshvar	Pune District	-
19		Akot village, Akot Taluk of Akola District	Akola District	-
20	Karnataka	Bijapur	Vijayapura District	-
21	Assam	Dewalgaon	Assam	-

Source: *Compiled from Campbel 1896, Crooke 1897, Desai 1987, Lokhandwala 1965, Stewart 2013, Goel 2020a & 2020b.*

Table 2: Ordered to Temples Destruction

Sl. No	State	Place during Aurangzeb's Reign	Present Location	Temple
1	Rajasthan	Malarna	Madhopur, Sawai District	-
2	Gujarat	Western Mewar	Mehsana District	Someshwar
3		Vadnagar		Hateshwar – New Name Hatkeshwar
4	Telangana	Haidarabad (Part of Golkonda)	Hyderabad District	-
5	West Bengal	Tilkuti Village of Medinipur Province, Orissa	Medinipur is divided into two districts. Midanpore Paschim and Midnapore Purba in the State of West Bengal	-
6	Odisha	Katak Province, Orissa	Cuttak District	-

Source: *compiled from Khan & Sarkar, 1947, Sarkar, 1927, and Goel 2020a & 2020b*

Table 3: List of Masjid, Mazar/Dargah build at the Site of Temples

Sl. No	Name of Masjid/Mazar/Dargah	Place	Built year
1	Astan Masjid	Karanj, Akola, Maharashtra	1659 CE
2	Kachahri Masjid	Hiduan, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan	1659-60 CE
3	Mazar of Bu Ali Kalandar	Kar, Haryana	1660 CE
4	Kharadiyonki Masjid	Nagaur, Rajasthan	1665 CE
5	Bara Khamba Masjid	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	1665 VR
6	Masjid in the Fort	Bahadurgarh, Patiala, Punjab	1666 CE
7	Mominoki Masjid	Badikhatu, Nagaur, Rajasthan	1667 CE
8	Dargah of Musa Qadiri	Shahpur, Gulbarga, Karnataka	1667-68 CE
9	Bindu Madhav Masjid	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	1669 CE
10	Dargah of Shah Nizam Bukhari	Chhoti Khatu, Nagaur, Rajasthan	1670 CE
11	Dargah of Bal Jati Shah	Dmoni, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh	1671 CE
12	Atharwali Masji	Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh	1671-72 CE
13	Lodi Msjid	Ashti, Wardha, Maharashtra	1671-72 CE
14	Lad Khan Masjid	Sirugappa, Bellary, Karnataka	1674 CE
15	Ghosikyonk Masjid	Nagaur, Rajasthan	1677 CE
16	Saraiwali Masjid	Sheikhpet, Hyderabad, Telangana	1678-79 CE
17	Dargah of Mian Mishk	Hyderabad, Telangana	1680 CE
18	Alamgiri or Vijaimandal Masjid	Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh	1682 CE
19	Jagirdar ki Masjid	Bhonrasa, Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh	1683 CE
20	Babuganj Masjid	Patna, Bihar	1683-86 CE
21	Badi Masjid in Bada Bagh	Bhonrasa, Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh	1685 CE
22	Khwaja Ambar Masjid	Patna, Bihar	1688-89 CE
23	Masjid and Mazar of Lal Khan	Amner, Amravati, Maharashtra	1691-92 CE
24	Bhap Sahib Ki Masjid	Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh	1692 CE
25	Shahi Mahmud Ki Masjid	Somnath Patan, Gujarat	1694 CE
26	Alamgir Masjid	Elagadula, Karimnagar, Telana	1696 CE
27	Dault Khan ki Masjid	Maham, Rohtak, Haryana	1696 CE
28	Kanehri Julahonki Masjid	Nagaur, Rajasthan	1699 CE
29	Jahaniya Masjid	Raichur, Karnataka	1700-01 CE

Source: compiled from Goel 2020a & 2020b

Sunnah means in Arabic habitual practice, also spelt *Sunna*, the body of traditional social and legal customs and practices of the Islamic Community (<https://www.britannica.com>). Hence, the tradition which records the sayings or doings of the Prophet Muhammad is *Sunnah* (Hughes, 1885: 622-623). All Muslims must follow *Sunnah*. The sayings and doings of *Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam* (means A blessing commonly used by Muslims after mentioning the name of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, rendered in English as peace be upon him).

Prophet Muhammad is recorded in the *Quran*, *Hadith* and *Sirat Rasul Allah*. The Holy Wars or Jihad (*The great series of Western holy wars were the Crusades, which lasted from 1095 until 1291 CE. The aim was to capture the sacred places in the Holy Land from the Muslims who lived there, so it was intended as a war to right wrongs done against Christianity. The first Crusade was started by Pope Urban II in 1095. His primary campaign was against his own tribe in Mecca, the Quraysh. Prophet Muhammad proclaimed prophethood around 610 and later migrated to Medina after being persecuted by the Quraysh in 622. After several battles against the Quraysh, Prophet Muhammad conquered Mecca in 629, ending his campaign against the tribe* (<https://www.bbc.co.uk>)) raised by the Prophet Muhammad not only to capture the territories but also for Ahl-i-Qitaab (*means in Arabic People of the Book in Islamic thought, those religionists—Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, as well as the imprecisely defined group referred to as Sabians—who are possessors of divine books (i.e., the Torah, the Gospel, and the Avesta), as distinguished from those whose religions are not based on divine revelations* (<https://www.britannica.com>)) and Al-Mushrikun (*means those who practice shirk, which means "association" and refers to accepting other gods and divinities alongside God (as God's associates). The Qur'an considers shirk as a sin that will not be forgiven if a person dies without repenting of it or idolaters, polytheists (Surah 98: Ayat 6)* (<https://en.wikipedia.org>)), to accept Islam so that Allah's religion reigns supreme. Thus, the Muslim invaders and rulers, who attacked the non-Muslims and destroyed the places of their worship, were following *Sunnah*. A Muslim man or a Muslim mob attacking and destroying the temples of non-Muslims in any part of the world is also doing the same. The Prophet Muhammad himself has destroyed many idols and issued orders to destroy many.

Some of these incidents are mentioned in *Sirat Rasul Allah*. After entering *Mecca*, the Prophet Muhammad went to *Kaba*, he found a dove made of wood. He broke it in his hands and threw it away. Later, he turned to the 360 idols housed in and around the temple. Prophet Muhammad was standing by them with a stick in his hand, saying "The truth has come and falsehood has passed away. Verily, falsehood is bound to pass away. Then he pointed at them with his stick and they collapsed on their back one after the other (*Ishaq, 1967: 552*).

The act of Prophet Muhammad is also mentioned in the Nazm (Poem) "*Wa-yabqa-wajh-o-rabbik*" by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, who is a well-known Urdu poet. He writes "*jab are-khuda ke ka abe se sab but u thva eja enge.... bus naam rehega Allah ka*" It means that when from the sacred square of the Kaaba, Idols of false Gods will be uprooted.... only the name of Allah will prevail.

On the day of conquest after the Zuhr Prayer (noon prayer) he ordered all the idols around Kaaba should be collected and burned and broken up. Fadalab. Mulawwih al-lathi said commemorating the day of conquest "*Had you seen Muhammad and his troops, the day the idols were smashed and when he entered, you would have god's light become manifest, and darkness covering the face of idolatry*" (*Ibid*).

Idols were not the only abominations that the Prophet Muhammad had to take care of (*Goel, 2020b: 356*). Quraysh had put pictures in the Kaaba including two of Jesus,

and Mary... The apostle ordered that the pictures would be erased except those of Jesus and Mary (*Ibid*).

Ishaq stated that the temple of al-Uzza was destroyed on the order of the Prophet Muhammad. Khalid was sent to al-Uzza which was in Nakhla to destroy the temple. It was a temple that the tribe of Quraysh and Kinana and all Mudar used to venerate.... Khalid destroyed the temple and returned to the apostle (*Ibid*: 565). Similarly, the temple of Al-lat was also destroyed on the order of Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad sent Abu Sufyan and al-Mughira to destroy the idol... When al-Mughira entered, he went up to the idol and struck it with a pick-axe... (*Ibid*: 615-617). The temple of B. Rabia, a branch of B. Tamim was destroyed by Al. Mustauthir B. Rabia of the same tribe which used to worship it. He sang *I smashed Ruda so completely that, I left it a black ruin in a hollow* (*Ibid*: 39).

Of the many Ayats against the non-Muslims, the following *Ayats* of the *Quran*: *Surah 2: Ayat 193, Surah 8: Ayat 39, Surah 9: Ayat 41, Surah 9: Ayat 73, Surah 9: Ayat 123, Surah 66: Ayat 9*, talk about raising war against the non-Muslims which is obligatory for the Muslims (*Surah2: Ayat 216*) even if they are unarmed (*Surah 9: Ayat 41*) and outnumbered (*Surah 8: Ayat 65*) and if they turn back (except for tactical reasons) they will face the wrath of Allah and meet an evil (al-Shaytan) fate (*Surah 8: Ayat 15-18*).

Thus, all the Islamic rulers followed Sunnah while persecuting non-Muslims/Hindus. The Islamic rule, under Aurangzeb, was no different. They followed the *Hanafi School of Islamic Jurisprudence* (*Hanafi school, also called Madhhab Hanifah, in Islam, one of the four Sunni schools of religious law, incorporating the legal opinions of the ancient Iraqi schools of Kufah. The Hanafi legal school (madhhab) developed from the teachings of the theologian Imam Abu Hanifah (c. 700–767) as spread by his disciples Abu Yusuf (died 798) and Muhammad al-Shaybani (749/750–805) and became the dominant system of Islamic administration for the 'Abbasids and Ottomans. Although the Hanafi school acknowledges the Quran and the Hadith (narratives concerning the Prophet Muhammad's life and sayings) as primary sources of law, it is noted for its extensive reliance on systematic reasoning (ray) in the absence of precedent. The school currently predominates in Central Asia, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and the countries of the former Ottoman Empire (www.britanica.com)) and the Jizyah (means "head tax" or "poll tax" paid by non-Muslim populations to their Muslim rulers (Ibid)) was structured in such a way that poor have to pay more tax and thus the likelihood of these people accepting Islam was higher. The rich, middle, and poor must pay the Jizyah equal to 2.5%, 6.25% and 6% of the gross income respectively (Sarkar, 1927: Vol 3:270). The collection of Jizyah from non-Muslims/Hindus is mentioned in the Quran (Surah 9: Ayat 29).*

Conclusion

Aurangzeb in his rule, the Rajasthan state is a highly witnessed destruction/desecration of at least 308 Hindu temples. Some temples could not be traced even today. The acts of temple destruction during his rule must not be seen in isolation from

his predecessors. The destruction of Hindu temples was a common phenomenon observed before Aurangzeb's rule. Thus, the destruction of temples of non-Muslims/Hindus during the Islamic invasions and the Islamic rule in the past can be explained when it can deep dive into the Holy Scriptures.

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