

# Bismillah-Hir-Rehmanir-Raheem

## CHAPTER – I

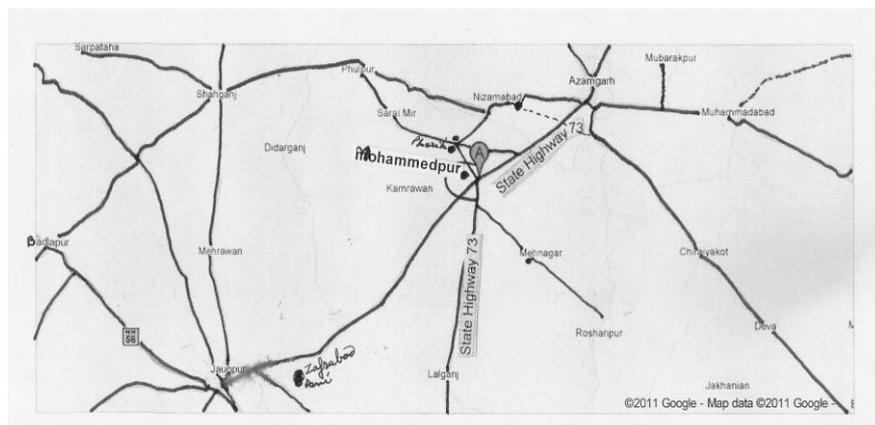
MOHAMMADPUR — a village, situated at the bank of River Manghai in the District of Azamgarh U.P.India. The river covers the village, from Eastern, Southern and Western sides. The village came into being in December, 1018 A.D.

According to 'Abjad' calculations, the word Mohammadpur, (in Urdu, Persian &Arabic) constitute to numerical total of 378. However while pronouncing the word "Mohammadpur", the letter (meem) sounds, thrice. In English 'M' is used thrice. The value of 'M' or (meem) is 40. If meem's value is counted twice along with the value of other letters it will constitute to 378. However if the value of "meem" is counted thrice as it sounds thrice the total will become 418. If 418 is taken as the Hijra century it will correspond to 1018 A.D. The village was named as such, so as to be able to know the year when it originated i.e. 418 Hijra corresponding to 1018 A.D.

The Northern boundary of the village touches the Southern boundary of another village called Phariha. Phariha in fact is being considered as the twin of Mohammadpur and is believed to have come in existence simultaneous or soon after the establishment of Mohammadpur.

Mohammadpur is situated at a strategic point. During Sultanate period there was an important passage from Asni i.e.modern (Zafrabad) in the District of Jaunpur, leading to Ghazipur. The passage was passing through Mohammadpur en-route to Ghazipur via Nizamabad, further ahead to Bengal via Bihar. Later when the region came under East India Company in 1801 A.D. the people of Azamgarh, more particularly the people of Mohammadpur did not relish the surrender of the territory to British by the Nawab of Awadh. The British found the vicinity of Mohammadpur and Phariha villages hostile to them hence to avoid passing by the side of these villages the British started construction of another Bridge on the river Manghai about half a Kilometer East of the Old Bridge. This bridge was constructed during the period of Firozshah Tughlak between 1351 A.D. to 1388 A.D. i.e. 650 years old. This Bridge was dismantled and rebuilt by Sher Shah Suri between 1540-1545 A.D. The upper layer of the bridge was once again dismantled by Babu Kunwar Singh in 1857/1858 and was re-instated after 1857 revolt subsided.

From Zafrabad, the passage got extended to Jaunpur and further to Allahabad in the South. It was extended from Azamgarh to Dohri Ghat and after crossing Ghaghra River by boat upto Gourakhpur. The old route to Bengal via Ghazipur and Bihar remained intact. At the point of Mohammadpur, another Highway from Varanasi via Chandwak Ghat was constructed by British and merged with the highway coming from Allahabad at Mohammadpur. However there was no bridge over Gomti River at the point of Chandwak upto about 70s and the people had to cross the river by boat. During 70s. two new bridges at Ghaghra and Gomti rivers at Dohri Ghat and Chandwak respectively were constructed. The old road which lead to Nizamabad was retained but in a poor condition. Mohammadpur became the junction for the roads coming from Allahabad via Jaunpur and from Varanasi leading to Azamgarh. The ancient road from Oudh passing through Shamsabad and merged at Nizamabad, with the ancient road from Zafrabad to Nizamabad was also retained but was not maintained instead the British made another road from Oudh which passed through Shahganj, Phoolpur, Saraimir and by the side of Phariha skipping Nizamabad, merged at the point between the village Kotila and Rani-ki-Sarai with the road passing to Azamgarh from Mohammadpur. From Nizamabad the original road is maintained which merges with the road coming from Mohammadpur just at the Northern end of the bazaar Rani-ki-Sarai. The bridge on Manghai River, through which the original passage of Sultanate period, was passing by the side of the Village Mohammadpur was built during Tughlak period which was and is the link bridge between the village Mohammadpur and Phariha etc. and the Bazar Mohammadpur junction.



Nawab Asafud-daula expired in 1797 A.D. By 1797 British virtually controlled Oudh. On the death of Asafud-daula, Wazir Ali and Sadat Ali became the claimant as ruler of Oudh. Wazir Ali was son of an ordinary man but was purchased by Asafud-daula as a child and groomed him as his son. Sadat Ali was the real legal heir of Asafud-daula but the British first put Wazir Ali as the ruler of Oudh and left Sadat

Ali Khan sulking on pension and settled in Benaras. Wazir Ali in fact became anti British hence he was ultimately removed by British declaring him as a bad character.

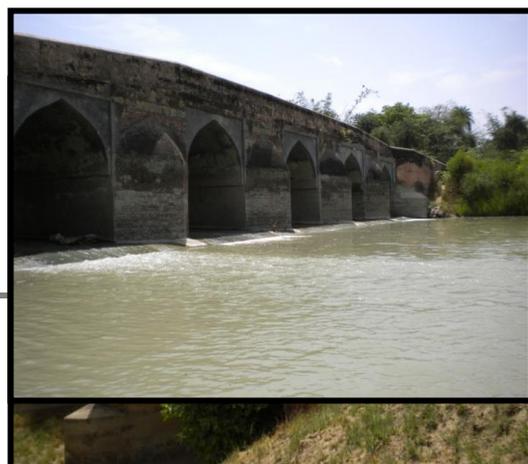
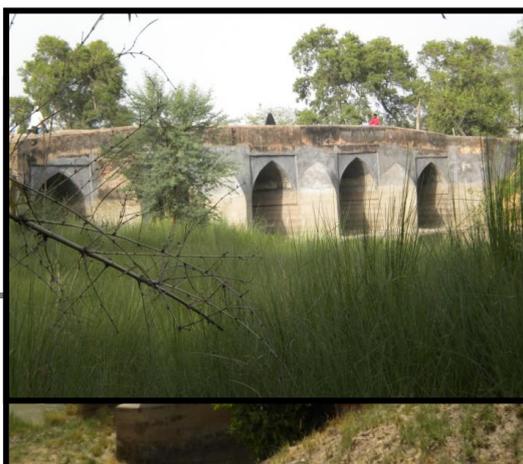
Sir John Shore decided to install Sadat Ali Khan as Nawab of Oudh and asked Lord Dalhousie to contact Sadat Ali Khan with the offer to install him as the ruler of Oudh. Lord Dalhousie contacted Nawab Sadat Ali in Benaras and asked him that if he is appointed as Nawab of Oudh what will he offer to East India Company. Without realising the implications and considering the offer of Dalhousie merely a joke. Sadat Ali Khan offered that he will surrender half of Oudh to them. East India Company declared Sadat Ali Khan as the ruler of Oudh, Dalhousie demanded from Sadat Ali Khan that he should fulfill his commitment. Accordingly the areas comprising Ghazipur and Azamgarh including the village Mohammadpur came under East India Company under an agreement dated 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1801 which Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan, signed with Lord Dalhousie. Wazir Ali in retaliation killed some Britishers in Lucknow and ran away to "Betol" via Azamgarh in January, 1799 (See Azamgarh Gazettier 1911 Page 123)

Shah Alam II (1759 to 1806 A.D.) had already surrendered entire Bengal and Bihar to East India Company. Akbar Sani (1806 to 1837 A.D.) and Bhadur Shah Zafar (1837 to 1857 A.D.) were Kings but just for name sake and the British were virtually ruling. The feeling of dejection of the people of Azamgarh and that of Mohammadpur against the Nawab Sadat Ali Khan was so great that they refused to accept the British as the administrator and refused to accept the rule of Sa'adat Ali Khan as well. Niamatullah Khan and his son Maulvi Mohammad Naeem Khan actively led the revolt against the British on 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1857. Due to this feeling of dejection by the people of Mohammadpur, which influenced the young mind of Pir Ali Khan (born in 1820) to leave the village Mohammadpur in and about 1828 and went to Patna and became leader of the revolution in Patna against British and led the revolt and became Shaheed-e-Watan on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1857. The details of his Shahadat can be found in my books "Excavation of Truth" published in 2007 and, "Hamare-hi-Lahoo se Bagh-e-Watan Shadab Hai" published in 2010. On 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, 2007 when I was in Patna at Khuda Baksh Library on the occasion of paying homage to Peer Ali Khan Mr. Naqi Ahmad Irshad a prominent writer and belonging to the family of renowned Shad Azeemabadi was one of the distinguished guests on the Dias. On my inquiry, he told me that when Mr. William Taylor tried to arrest Mr. Ali Karim he escaped and avoided the arrest and ran away from the jurisdiction of Patna Division, and after William Taylor was removed as Commissioner of Patna division after the martyrdom of Peer Ali Khan and his followers Mr. Sameul took over as

Commissioner. Mr. Ali Karim a big Zamindar and Mr. Lutf Ali Khan a rich banker expressed their loyalty to the East India Company and in turn both were appointed on plump posts. This was the difference between the nationalism of the above two rich gentlemen and a poor Peer Ali Khan. Peer Ali Khan who at the cost of his life refused to disclose any detail about his movement and the people associated with him, against the British which included Syed Lutf Ali Khan and many others. Pir Ali Khan refused to name any one of his group including Mr. Lutf Ali Khan and preferred death against lurement of British to spare his life in return of treachery against his followers. Bravo Pir Ali Khan.

To avoid the hostile population of Mohammadpur and Phariha etc. the East India administration started the construction of another Bridge over River Manghai North of Bazar Mohammadpur junction in 1855-56 and a bypass to avoid the vicinity of not only Mohammadpur but most of the Muslim populated villages. Except Kotiala there are no other prominent Muslim village between Mohammadpur and Azamgarh. Azamgarh was declared district by the East India Company in 1832 which comprised 72 miles from East to West and 56 miles South to North i.e. approximately 4032 sq.miles. The construction work on the new Bridge at river Manghai had to be abandoned, when the people of Mohammadpur under the leadership of Maulvi Mohammad Naeem Khan and his father Neyamatullah Khan, revolted on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1857 against the British. The new bridge was completed after the 1857 turmoil subsided.

Idgah



(Purana pul constructed during Tughlaq period, rebuilt during Shar Shah Suri's regime.)

(The Bridge built by British during 1855 – 1858)

The Afghan settlers and the Rajputs of the area have been maintaining very cordial relations since the period of Sultanate which disturbed the Moghal Rulers who considered it as threat to their rule in the area. To counter it Akbar did maximum damage to the interest of Afghan migratories settled in various villages in the area. The Muslims immigrants specially in the area of Azamgarh in India from all over Muslim world presented a solid homogeneous love held together by the cement of Islam. They projected as composite community having within its fold representative of various races from all over the Muslim world and with passage of time they included within their fold the Hindu converts also.

Lado Khan, of my family 10<sup>th</sup> generation from top had to leave the village and went out of the Country to Saudi Arabia for Haj never to return, probably went to Afghanistan, in and around 1570 A.D. In 1609 A.D. Jahangir (1605 to 1628 A.D.), with the aim to break the nexus between Afghans and Rajputs carved out from Jaunpur ruled territory a Jagir in the area and appointed one Abhimanyu Singh Gautam a Rajput as its ruler/administrator (1605 to 1637 A.D.). This was done by him with the object to create discord between Rajputs and the Afghan settlers. The Jagir comprised of 24 parganas which included the

following 20 Perganas vize, Nizamabad, Kaoria, Talhani, Gopalpur, Sagri, Mohammadabad Gohna, Ghosi, Chaker, Nathopur, Chiraiakot, Qiryat Mithopur, Balhabans, Deogaon, Mau-Nath-Bhanjan, Shadi-Abad, Behria-Abad, Pach-Chotar, Siapurthari, Zahoorabad, Bhu-vaun. The names of remaining four parganas could not be found hence not mentioned here. Abhimanyu Shingh Gautam (1605 to 1637 A.D.) established his capital in Mehnagar a town about 20 Kms. east of Mohammadpur. However either to further please Jahaangir or to create a feeling of oneness with the Afghan settlers/Muslims of the area, Abhimanyu Singh Gautam adopted Islam and named himself as Daulat Khan. Mohammadpur was and/is in the Paragana Nizamabad. Nizamabad has now been made Tehsil. Few generations down the line from the family of Abhimanu Singh Gautam/ Daulat Khan, Vikramjeet Singh Gautam killed his brother Rudra Singh who was the then ruler of the Jagir. On the complaint of the wife of Rudra Singh with the then Moghal King Shahjehan (1628 to 1658 A.D.), Vikramjeet Singh was arrested and brought to Delhi before the Moghal ruler who sentenced him to death. To escape the death Vikramjeet Singh pretended and declared to have adopted Islam. Thereafter the King ordered for his release from the prison with the condition that he will settle in Delhi so that he will not disturb the Bhuwani Kunwar ruling the Jagir. While in Delhi he married a Muslim woman, from whom he had two sons named Azam and Azmat. After some times he went back to Mehnagar and dislodged Rani Bhuwani Kunwar and declared himself as the ruler of the Jagir, independent of Mughal Rule and also declared to have returned to Hinduism. The wife of Rudra Singh, Rani Bhuvani Kunwar once again brought the matter to the notice of the then Moghal King Shahjahan. Vikramjeet Singh was again arrested and was killed. Thereafter Bhuvani Kunwar the widow of Rudra Singh was re-appointed the administrator of the Jagir and was entrusted the responsibility of upbringing of Azam and Azmat which she did honestly. When grew-up Azam was appointed as the ruler of the Jagir and named himself Azam Shah in 1665 A.D. and established a new township and named it Azamgarh. Another town, Azmatgarh was established by Azam Shah's younger brother Azmat. Azamshah was an able General and successfully Commanded Armed forces of Imperial Kingdom of Aurangzeb, at various battlefields specially against Marathas. In and around 1677 A.D. Azam Shah died in captivity of Aurangzeb (1658 to 1707 A.D.) in Kannauj and thereafter his brother Azmat Shah became ruler of Azamgarh.

Mr. Phoolbadan Singh in his book, "Azamgarh ka Swadheenta Sangram" published by Zila Swadheenta Sangram- Sainik Sangh- Azamgarh on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1974 mentioned:-

After taking over the administration Azmat Shah to take revenge against Aurangzeb holding him responsible for the death of his brother Azmat Shah declared himself independent of Mugal Rule. Aurangzeb to curb his revolt sent an army under the command of Mr. Chabeli Ram in 1688 A.D. to dislodge Azmat Shah. However Azmat Shah managed to arrest Chabeli Ram and defeated his army. Chabeli Ram was kept in captivity in the fort of Herbanspur.

Aurangzeb deputed another commander to attack Azamgarh in the beginning of 1707 however once again the commander was killed and the army of Aurangzeb was pushed back.



Mohd Aslam a journalist attached to daily Sahara Urdu has given following details:-

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. his sons and subsequent generation proved to be most incompetent. Between 1707 and 1759 A.D. in about 58 years eight kings starting Shah Alam Bhadur Shah-I ending with Azuddin Mohd. Alamgir II were crowned and/or deposed. In this about 58 years

except Nasiruddin Mohd. Shah who ruled for about 29 years all others remained in power between 1 to 6 years only. Alamgir II and Shah Alam II combined ruled 46 years, Akbar II 31 years and Bahadur Shah II (Zafar) for 20 years. Shah Alam II, Akbar II and Bahadur Shah II were only name sake kings under total control of Britishers.

Aurangzeb died in 1707 and his empire started to decline. Farukhseir entrusted Oudh under the administration of one Iradat Khan, who was soon over thrown by one Kunwar Bira Singh of Bhojpur. But the Rajputs and Afghans of the area did not submit to the subjugation of the Bira Singh and remained independent of any ruler.

It was only in 1730 A.D. Mohammad Shah Rangila (1719 to 1748 A.D.) allotted the eastern part of Oudh including Azamgarh to Nawab Murtuza Khan of Jaunpur. Murtuza Khan also could not properly subjugate Azamgarh hence the district was transferred to Nawab Sadat Ali Khan of Oudh. Sadat Ali Khan deputed one Moazzam Khan to control the area who established his centre of control at Nizamabad from where he intended to collect land revenue. This was the period when Ahmed Shah (1748 to 1754 A.D.) and Alamgir Sani (1754 to 1760 A.D.) were on the throne of Delhi and were most in-competent Kings, first remaining six years and the other 4-5 years in power. Moazzam Khan while in Nizamabad appointed Khatedars and Numberdars. In the mean time Sadat Ali Khan declared himself independent ruler of Oudh. He also appointed Chakledars at various places of eastern U.P. including Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Gorakhpur, etc. prominent of them were Mirza Ata Beg, Raja Bhuvain Prasad and Jagroop Singh. These Chakledars in turn appointed many Numberdars in villages to collect land revenue on their behalf. My Great-Great Grand Father Neyamatullah Khan who was Sardar of village Mohammadpur was one such Numberdar on behalf of the Chakledar who was in charge of the area of Azamgarh.

Phoolbadan Singh also mentions that upto recent past the area of Azamgarh had many big jungles and many miles long "Usar". These are proof that this area has been free from any effective control of any ruler. Because of this many Rishis, Munis and Saints found it a very calm and suitable place for establishment of their hermitage. Also this gave ample opportunity to Rajputs and Afghans to settle in the area.

Dr. J.L. Mehta in his Book, "Advance study in the History of medieval India" Volume I at pages 249 to 251 mentions that Behlul Lodhi (1451 – 1489 A.D) belonged to Ghilzai tribe of Afghan. He was founder of first Afghan ruling house of Delhi, which with three rulers ruled for 75 years (1451 – 1526 A.D.) Behlul Lodhi ruled for 38 years (1451 to 1489) till died in 1489. Behlul took over the throne of Delhi on 19<sup>th</sup> April' 1451. During his rule Afghans developed in the Country as he shared power with Afghan Amirs. His style of rule was different from that of Turkish Sultans of Delhi. He did not occupy the throne like monarchs but used to sit on the carpet surrounded by his prominent nobles.

Afghan immigrants from their home land were received with an open arm and extended patronage by the state through grants of land and Government service. The Nobles enjoyed autonomy.

After Behlul, Sikander Lodhi occupied the throne and ruled between 1489 AD to 1517 A.D. i.e. 28 years. Sikander Lodhi's mother was daughter of a Hindu Goldsmith, hence others related to Behlul objected his elevation to throne, but Sikander suppressed with strong hand all oppositions. He shifted his capital in 1504 A.D. to a village of Agra on the Bank of Yamun, which was developed into a beautiful town during his period of rule.

After the death of Sikander, Ibrahim Lodhi became Sultan in 1517 A.D. and ruled upto 1526 A.D. till he was killed by Babar on 21.04.1526 at Panipat war.

The advent of Islam in the area which latter became Azamgarh district started since about 358 (h) to 421 (h) with the adventures of Mehmood of Ghazni. According to Azamgarh gazettier of 1911 Salar Masood's army came upto Bhagatpur of Azamgarh. It is due to this reason every year a Mela is held in Bhagatpur to commorate the said occasion and said Mela is called in the local terms as "Ghazi Mia Ka Mela". Salar Masood Ghazi is called as Ghazi Mia by the local people.

Mohammad Yasin in his book, "A History of Islamic India" at page 10 writes:- The relations between Afghans and Mughals were not friendly. They had deep rooted hatred for each other. The Afghans, as compared to Mughal were known for their dare-davil courage. They mainly inhabited in the vicinity of Ganges mostly in Eastern U.P., Bihar and Bangal. They were obstinate soldiers. They shared in common with Rajpoot's many habits such as taking intoxicating drugs/opium before a battle to embark any enterprise with a raging resolution to die or be victorious.