

CHAPTER — XI

The details given above out of the books Cambridge History of India and that of History of India as told by its own historians, one will find that Mehmood of Ghazni came up to the Eastern part of the present day state of Uttar Pradesh during his expedition of 1018 A.D. From the details of Mehmood's expeditions by both the above named historians namely Sir Welseley Haig and H.M.Elliot and John Dowson, one thing is clear that Mehmood attacked first at the fort of MANAICH i.e. Ratagarh Qila, in Anwakh in the present district of Azamgarh, then attacked at the fort of ASNI (Zafrabad), present district of Jaunpur, and then to the kingdom of SARWA which existed at the bank of river Ken near the present district of Banda of U.P. and Kalinjer of Madhya Pradesh.

I will 1st deal with the fort 'Rata Garh' which was at MANAICH (ANWAK). Actually the history books of the period of Subuktigin followed by Mehmood, were written in Persian or Arabic and by Chinese travelers. These historians or travelers while recording the names of places of India could not correctly pronounce them, not being proficient in Sanskrit or the local dialect of each area. This resulted in naming different places in different forms by different writers. They noted it in their respective languages i.e. Persian, Arabic or Chinese and again their writings were translated by subsequent historians in English, all got corrupted. That is why for each place different writers/Historians wrote different spellings and in different phonetically pronounced words. It is this reason that is why the correct word, MAJH meaning central or middle area has been described as MANAICH, MIJH, MIH etc. by different historians. Mr. Wolseley Haig himself wrote, it is difficult to identify places which are, "disguised under script ambiguous in itself and mutilated by generations of ignorant scribes".

In fact the area between North of Gomti River and South of Tauns/ Tamsa River more particularly the area covering Majhui, Manghai, Kunwar, and Choti Sarju Rivers is called and described as the "MAJH" or MAJH ka Ilaqa. Besides this there is a village called Majhgaon near Rani-Ki_Sarai and another village called Machgaon near Kheta-ki-Sarai. To be more specific the area which was carved as district Azamgarh is the area known as Majh or Manaich. Manaich is not at the bank of Gomti as wrongly described by W. Haig . Modern Zafrabad is the original town ASNI.

Both the Historians Lt. Col. W. Haig and H.M.Elliot —John Dowson and all other contemporary Historians are unanimous on the point that Mehmood's 1018 expedition was directed first at the fort of Manaich/Majh then to the fort of ASNI and then to the town of SARWA. Manaich/Majh is at the river Manghai, ASNI at the river Gomti and SARWA at the River Ken.

Lt. Col Sir W. Haig in chapter II of 3rd Volume at page 13 himself described MANAICH and ASNI as two different places but indicate as if they are one. In fact these Historians depended solely on the Persian and Arabic text of History books, hence at places confused on the pronunciations of the names of the places and their exact placements on the maps. None of them made effort to visit the area or the places to verify the actual placement of the spots. They only tried to translate and pickup from various History books written in Persian and Arabic, who themselves differed in the location and description of the places and in pronunciations in their languages. Secondly the thrust of each Historian/Traveller or writer has been to describe the invasions of Mehmood rather capture of places, hence the exact location of places were not given much importance.

Actually Mehmood's expedition in 1008 A.D. against Anandpal of Peshawar was a very crucial expedition because this was a decisive war between Mehmood and Rulers of India. Anandpal had collected the Rulers of Ujjain, Gwalier, Kalinjer, Kannauj, Delhi and Ajmer and all fought jointly. It is also mentioned by various historians that in this war the women of the Northern India contributed with their ornaments, cash, cloths and other supplies for the help of the army to fight back the invader Mehmood. A fierce fight took place on 31st December, 1008 A.D. and Mehmood was about to run-away but suddenly the Elephant of Anandpal became out of control for some unknown reasons and took to flight from the battle field. Other Hindu Rajas took it as flight of Anandpal consequently they also ran away. Mehmood won the lost war. This joint defeat completely demoralized all the Hindu Rulers of Northern India and boosted the moral of Mehmood. Most of the Indian Rulers on hearing the news of Mehmood's arrival used to run away leaving their kingdom or surrender with payment of wealth to Mehmood without any resistance. Except accepting subjugation of the rulers and wealth Mehmood did not force any Hindu ruler to convert to Islam nor there is any evidence that he forced the common men to adopt Islam. Even the distruction of temples were aimed to takeout the hidden wealth in the temples.

Mehmood's act of distruction of Somnath Temple is described as an act of idol breaker for Islam. This is absolutely wrong notion. Mehmood's march to Somnath was only to loot the wealth hidden in the Temple.

One story about the Somnath and Mehmood is that on reaching the Temple when he entered the main hall he saw a huge deity hanging in the mid of the hall without any support from top or bottom. For a moment he got nonplus but soon he realised the secret behind the above hanging of the deity. He ordered for breaking a wall. No sooner the wall was demolished the deity lost its balance and huge amount of gold and jewelry came out from the wall. In the process he demolished the entire structure and was able to amass huge amount of wealth which he collected and left for Gazni.

In a reality show of “Kaun Banega Karorpati” fourth edition on 13th October’ 2010 a question was asked, to name the Temple which was originally of “Gold” then of “Silver” and then of “Wood” followed by of “Stone”. The answer which was told as correct was Somnath Temple. If this answer is correct in that event it appears that the Temple was destroyed/ demolished thrice. If that be so in that event who demolished/ destroyed the Temple twice before Mehmood did so. It appears that the answer given is not correct. Because according to Historians the temple was demolished only once and by Mehmood. Prof. J.L. Mehta in his book at Pages 58, 59 & 61 mentions:-

“Mehmood was a greedy man who lived for money. He knew that by raising the cry of Jihad he could muster a large number of recruits willing to join him as Ghazis and volunteers in his expeditions. Attacks on the Hindu temples served both the purpose — acquisition of wealth and fame as idol breaker.”

“Somnath being at Harbour, the sea faring people carried the tales of its fabulous wealth. Mehmood felt tempted to plan the greatest and the most daring exploit of his life with the two fold objects of acquiring its wealth and winning fame and glory as an idol breaker among his co-religionists” (I call it to fool his co-religionists).

“On reference to Sachau Page 103 Dr. Mehta mentions that the Linga was fifteen feet long of which six feet were below and nine feet above the ground. Albairuni says that it was made of Solid Gold.”

Salateen-e-Hind volume I by Hakeem Mufti Intezamullah Sahab Shahabi Akbarabadi at Page 71 mentions:-

“The real reason of Mehmood’s attack on Somnath was because the temple was full of enormous wealth. Mehmood collected un-describe-able wealth from various temples. In Somnath there were gold chains of over 200 Monds holding Bells. The main hall where the deity was established there was no need to lit any light (Qandeels). The entire hall was fixed with numerable Diomands, Jewells and other precious Stones which aluminated the entire hall round the clock. These attacks by Mehmood on temples was not

with the object to break the idols but only for procuring the wealth and he was successful in this object much more than his expectations.” In his entire life Mehmood did not attempted or forced even a single man to adopt or convert to Islam. Though he never treated Hindustan as his abode or to bring it under his direct rule still he introduced coins in his name and in Devnagri Script. He appointed many Hindus in his army as commanders such as Hindu Rao, Twaliq.”

Whatever the reason or object of Mehmood his act of distruction of Temples left a deep rooted hatred against Muslims.

At page 78 J. L. Mehta refers Faristha that the idol was hollow from within but was full of precious stones worth crores of rupees which burst forth on the first strike by Mehmood. This statement is disputed by Prof. Habib, however J. L. Mehta at page 59 & 60 mentions as under:-

“The temple was a spacious edifice. It stood on a raised platform of stone’s slab. The pyramidal roof of the shikhra was made of thirteen stories and was surmounted by fifteen golden doms. The main building was supported by 56 ornamented pillars. Chains of gold with bells each weighing 20 mounds, was hanging in a corner of the Temple. It used to be pulled at prayer hours to inform the praises and devotees. A thousand Brahmins worshiped the idol continuously. The gold Idol was washed with the water of Ganges brought from hundreds of miles away. Five hundred devdasis and two hundred musicians were in the service of the temple. Three hundred barbans were employed to shave the heads and beards of the Pilgrims. The temple establishment was endowed with 10,000 villages by Indian Princes and men of means.”

The above description compared to others seems to be correct.

Since the Kannauj Ruler had already accepted the supremacy of Mehmood and assured Mehmood his friendship and support in all respect, Mehmood be-friended him and offered him support and protection from other surrounding hostile Hindu rulers. The friendship of Kannauj Ruler with Mehmood was not to the liking of other Hindu rulers surrounding Kannauj Kingdom and they became his enemy. Taking advantage of Mehmood’s engagements in Khurasan for over two years in 1016-1017 these Rulers continued their tickling against Kannauj. During all these period while the Northern India Hindu rulers struggled against Mehmood, Mahindra Pala-I who was ruling in the Eastern part of India including Bengal and Bihar upto eastern part of present U.P. remained out of the Hindu Ruler’s confederation against

Mehmood. Mahindra-Pala-I, captured many territories in the eastern part of U.P. including Benaras, and constructed the Ratagarh Qila at Awantikapuri (Anwak) touching the eastern border of Kannauj. This frightened the Kannauj ruler who desperately sent messages to Mehmood for help and informed to Mehmood that because of his friendship with Mehmood he was being troubled by all the neighboring rulers. Mehmood's expedition of 1018 A.D. in fact was to punish all those rulers who were threatening Kannauj.