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1

The city of Kashi epitomizes the unshakeable resilience & unity of Hindus. Devastated multiple times by Islamic invaders, it rose again every time to be rebuilt & renewed by Hindus from all over India, who ensured its perpetual rebirth & existence.



2

Hindu temples of Varanasi were devastated so many times, that almost no ancient temple site could escape modification. The 10th c. Kardameshwar temple of Siva, in Kandura village near BHU is the only temple in its original state dating from

the pre-Muslim period.

There is no major religious sanctuary in the city of Banaras that pre-dates the time of Aurangzeb in the 17th century. The only temple complex which was saved from the destruction is at Kandwa (i.e. Kardameshvara), because of its location in the countryside making it nearly inaccessible during that period. The city of Puranic glory and beauty as it was known in the 12th century had completely disappeared by the end of the 17th century. The sacred city could not be destroyed, but it could certainly be defaced.

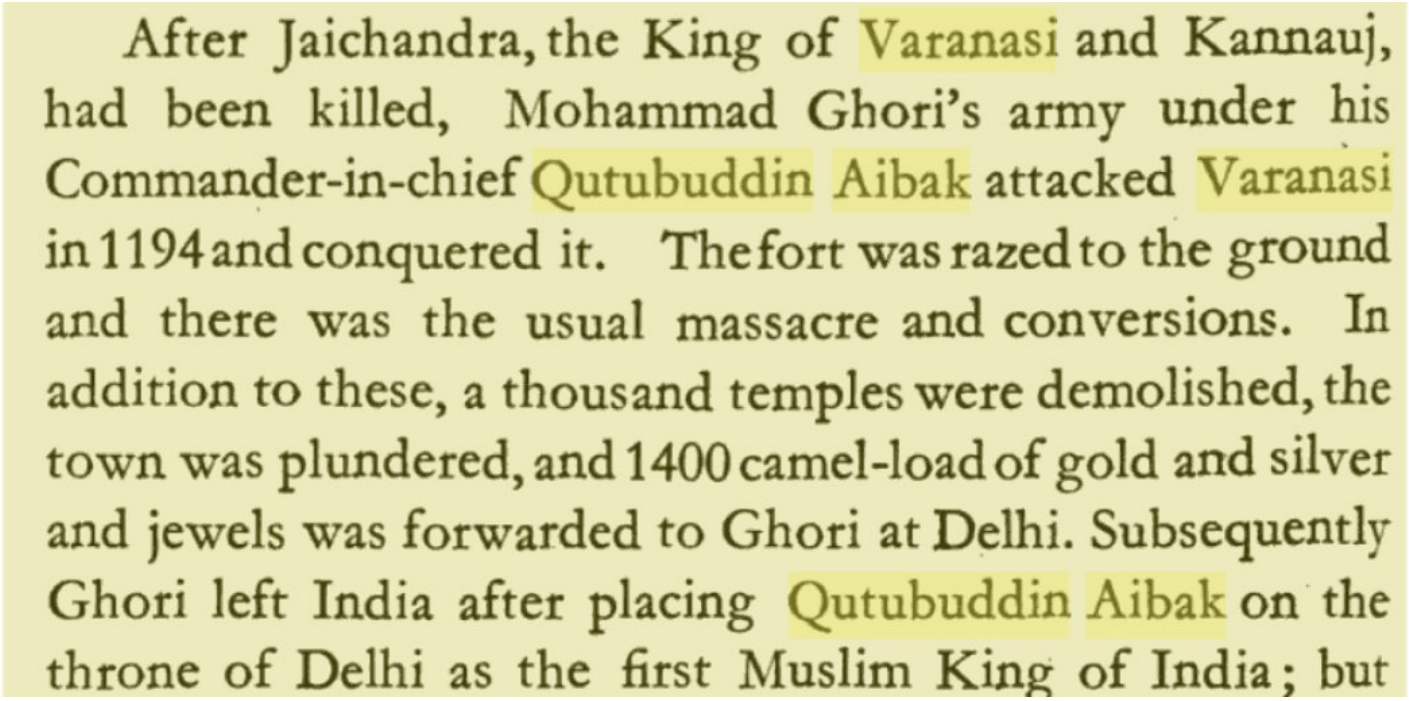
3

The Islamic invasions began in In 1033 CE when Varanasi was plundered by Mahmud Ghazni's son Nialtagin. By end of 11th c., Chandradeva, established the Gahadavala dynasty by regaining Kashi & built the Adi Keshava shrine with gold, valuables, 1000 cows & a village.

In 1035 A. D. Varanasi was looted by Nialtagin but he stayed in the city for only a few hours and left it, as he had come, by the river. Soon after, however, Syed Salar Masud, sister's son of Mahmud of Ghazni, started from Ajmer on his mission of spreading Islam, and although he himself went towards Gonda, one of his followers Malik Afzal Alvi led a campaign against Benares and reached as far as the present Kashi Railway Station. There seems to have been a fierce battle and the invading army was annihilated. Those days, however, had there own ethics

4

In 1194 CE, Muhammad Ghori's commander Kutubuddin Aibak attacked & razed Varanasi to the ground. Hindus were massacred & over 1000 ancient temples destroyed. So much booty was taken away that it took 1400 camels to carry it.


After Jaichandra, the King of Varanasi and Kannauj, had been killed, Mohammad Ghori's army under his Commander-in-chief Qutubuddin Aibak attacked Varanasi in 1194 and conquered it. The fort was razed to the ground and there was the usual massacre and conversions. In addition to these, a thousand temples were demolished, the town was plundered, and 1400 camel-load of gold and silver and jewels was forwarded to Ghori at Delhi. Subsequently Ghori left India after placing Qutubuddin Aibak on the throne of Delhi as the first Muslim King of India; but

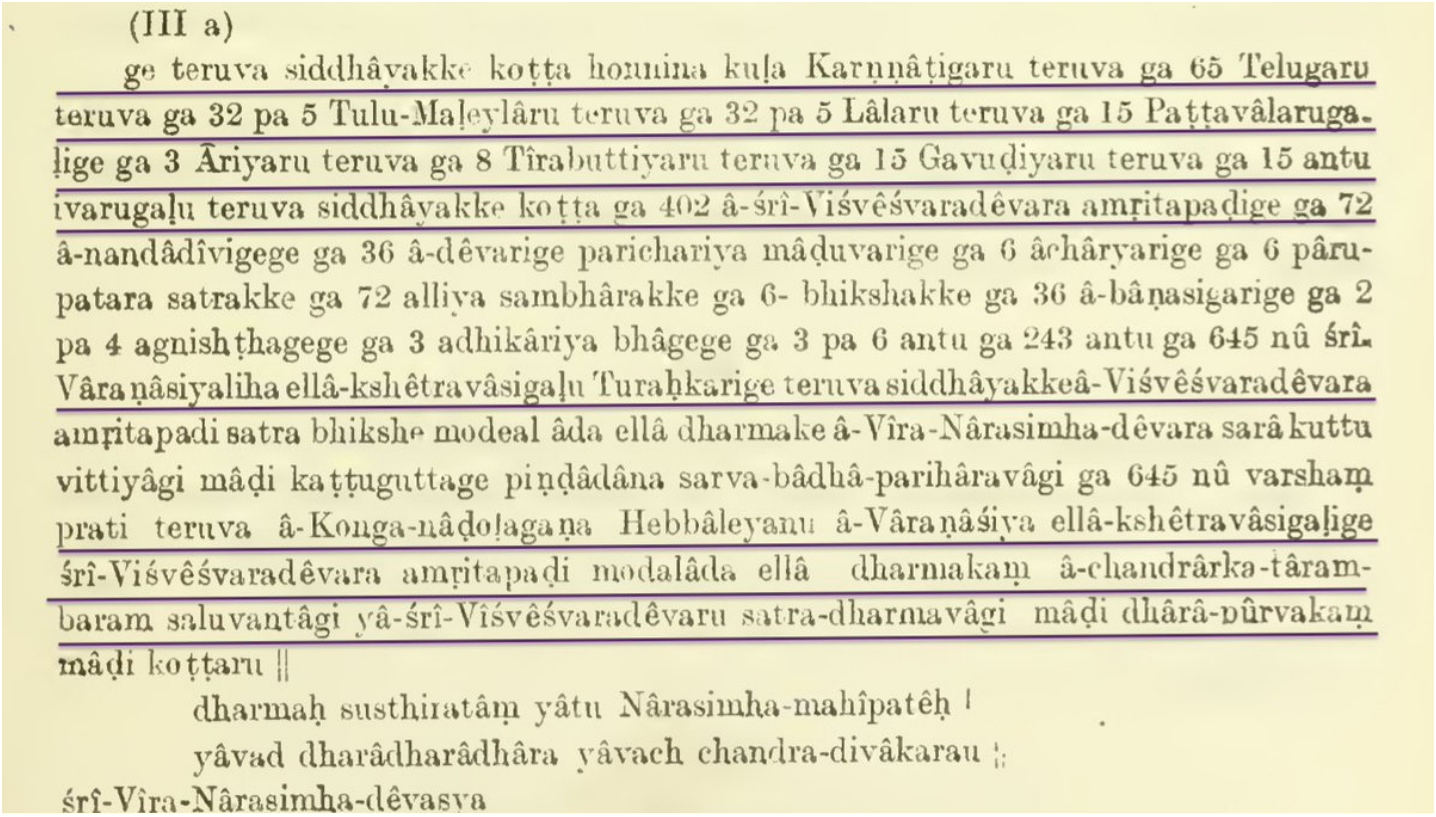
5

Hindus recaptured Kashi, so in 1197 CE Kutubuddin attacked again. But he lost control once more by 1212 CE, when Bengal's Visvarupa Sena erected a Yupa & Vijay Stambh of victory at the center of Varanasi, declaring it the "Kshetra of Shiva Visveshwara".

Aibak's blitz did not appear to have served as a deterrent for long. An inscription, dated 1212 CE, recorded the erection of a sacrificial post and a pillar of victory at the centre of Varanasi, designated the holy field (*kshetra*) of Shiva Visveshvara, the 'Lord of All,' by a Sena king of Bengal, named Visvarupa. He perhaps lacked the resources and time to construct a larger structure like a temple (Bakker 1996: 39-42).[1]

6

In 1279 CE, the Hoysala king Narsimha 3 donated an entire village to pay Jizya tax on behalf of Varanasi. The money was funded by residents of Karnataka, Telengana, Talvi (Tulu), Tirhut (Bihar) & Gauda (Bengal) regions. Donations from Gujarat also poured in.



(III a)

ge teruva siddhâyakke koṭṭa homina kuḷa Karṇṇâṭigaru teruva ga 65 Telugaru teruva ga 32 pa 5 Tulu-Maḷeyḷâru teruva ga 32 pa 5 Lâlaru teruva ga 15 Paṭṭavâlarugaḷige ga 3 Âriyaru teruva ga 8 Tîrabuttiyaru teruva ga 15 Gavuḍiyaru teruva ga 15 antu ivarugaḷu teruva siddhâyakke koṭṭa ga 402 â-śrî-Viśvêśvaradêvara amṛitapaḍige ga 72 â-nandâdîvigege ga 36 â-dêvarige parichariya mâḍuvarige ga 6 âchâryarige ga 6 pârupatara satrakke ga 72 alliya sambhârakke ga 6- bhikshakke ga 36 â-bâṇasigarige ga 2 pa 4 agnishṭhagege ga 3 adhikâriya bhâgege ga 3 pa 6 antu ga 243 antu ga 645 nû śrî Vâraṇâsiyaliha ellâ-kshêtravâsigaḷu Turaḥkarige teruva siddhâyakkeâ-Viśvêśvaradêvara amṛitapadi satra bhikshe modeal âda ellâ dharmake â-Vîra-Nârasimha-dêvara sarâ kuttu vittiyâgi mâḍi kaṭṭuguttage piṇḍâdâna sarva-bâdhâ-parihâravâgi ga 645 nû varshaṃ prati teruva â-Konga-nâḍoḷagaṇa Hebbâleyanu â-Vâraṇâśiya ellâ-kshêtravâsigaḷige śrî-Viśvêśvaradêvara amṛitapaḍi modalâda ellâ dharmakaṃ â-chandrârka-târambaram saluvantâgi yâ-śrî-Viśvêśvaradêvaru satra-dharmavâgi mâḍi dhârâ-pûrvakaṃ mâḍi koṭṭaru ||

dharmaḥ susthiratâṃ yâtu Nârasimha-mahîpatêḥ |
yâvad dharâdharâdhâra yâvach chandra-divâkarau ||

śrî-Vîra-Nârasimha-dêvasya

7

By 1353 CE, 2 grand temples - Padmesvara & Manikarnikesvara were built. In 1376 CE, Firoz Tughlaq demolished the Atala Devi Mandir to build the Atala mosque at Jaunpur. Demolished Hindu temples were used to build mosques at Arhai Kangara, Chaukhambha, Golaghat & Bakaria Kund

Early in the fourteenth century, two grand temples were built in Varanasi – Padmesvara near the Visveshvara temple, and Manikarnikesvara at Manikarnika ghat. The Padmesvara inscription of 1353 CE recorded the construction of the Padmesvara (Vishnu) temple on the north-side entrance of the Visveshvara temple at Kashi by Padma Sadhu. The inscription recorded,

> Om! Glory be to Ganapati. In Ayodhya lived formerly Sadhesadhu, the speaker of truth, beloved of good men, whose delight consisted in the welfare of all beings. His son was the famous Sadhunidhi, whose son Padmasadhu, of steadfast virtue, on the north side of the entrance to the Visvesvara temple at Kasi built a solid and lofty temple of god Padmesvara, on Wednesday, the twelfth day of the waning moon of the month of Jyaishtha, in the year of Plava: Samvat 1353, on which day this eulogy was written (Fuhrer 1889: 51).