

Identification of Raja Deshraj Tyagi's then newly founded Capital City of 'Brahmabad' through its Royal Pond 'Raja Wala Talab'

Vighnesh Kumar and Vinay Bhardwaj***

During Mughal Emperor Akbar's reign, there existed a principality named 'Riyasat-i-Brahmabad' in the Sarkar of Sambhal in the Suba of Delhi. Its ruins stand on the right side of the Badshahi Rasta from Sarkar headquarters of Sambhal to the Suba headquarter of Delhi. It lies in the present tehsil of Hasanpur in Amroha District in Uttar Pradesh. A Royal pond larger in size named 'Raja wala Talab', still exists in the village of Brahmabad. This village has the ruins of the then newly founded capital city of Brahmabad founded by Raja Deshraj. He was son and successor of Raja Braham Singh. The name of the town after his father's name shows his intension to pay honour to his extra ordinarily brave father Raja Braham Singh. In revenue records, it has still an area equal to some more than 100 bighas, where Govt. of Uttar Pradesh has established a "Gaushala" in the previous year of 2019. On 07th June 2022, the "Amrit Sarover" scheme of the Government of U.P. was started within the area of Raja ka Talab.

* **Professor and Head, Department of History, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh (India) E-mail: <vighneshkmr@gmail.com>**

** **Associate Professor, Department of History, Sri Aurobindo College, Delhi University, Delhi (India)**

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In 1580, from the administrative point of view, Akbar restructured his empire into twelve *subas* or provinces.¹ Before 1580, the primary territorial unit, especially within the region was the same as was since the reign of Lodi dynasty. It was the *sarkar*. Akbar's *suba* of Delhi was delineated to encompass the territories of those five *sarkars* mentioned by Babur : Hissar-i-Firuzā, Sarhind, Delhi, Miyan-i-Doab, and Sambhal.²



In the *subah* of Delhi, there were eight *sarkars* namely, Hisar-i-Firuzā, Sarhind, Narnaul, Delhi, Saharanpur, Sambhal, Badaun and Kumaun.

Sambhal was the third largest *sarkar* in terms of yielding³ the revenue. It had 47 *mahals*, the unit later known as *parganas*. Sambhal is situated at 28° 35' N' and 78° 34' E. 23 miles south-west of Moradabad, The Sambhal-Moradabad road crosses the River Sot about 4 miles from the town and commanding the crossing is the large red brick fort of Firozpur built by Syed Said Feroz, *naib* of Rustam Khan Dakkhani⁴, during the reign of Shahjahan.

There were certain *parganas* having their boundaries adjoined at one side with the River Ganga and on another side with river Gangan forming a particular type of triangular cluster geographically. It is a matter of historical fact that these clusters played very important roles in general and from the point of view of armed resistance to the enemy in particular.

The most important *pargana* was held by the Amily branch of the Tyagi clan of Bhardwaj *gotra* having in possession the *mahals* of

Dhabarsi, Dhakka, and Ujhari in the family of the brave Amlis. To the upstream was the *mahal* of Kachha held by the Tyagis of Atri *gotra*.

Dabarsi⁵ *mahal* deserves notice principally as having been in the old days, at least as early as the days of Akbar, the capital of a *pargana*, which survived till 1844.⁶ Dhaka⁷ *mahal* has been mentioned as *pargana* since the time of Akbar⁸.

Hasanpur is the western subdivision of the district of Amroha in Uttar Pradesh and is made up of old *parganas* of Bachhraon, Kachha (Tigri), Dhakka, Ujhari, Dhabarsi, and of Azampur Basta. The only objects of interest are several old mosques and the shrine of Shah Bandagi, which stands to the west of the site on the high grounds overlooking the *Khadir* of the Ganga. One of the mosques bears an inscription dated the year belonged the reign of Akbar. It is a fine building, quite out of proportion to the present size of villages; while among the other traces of former greatness are the ruins of the house, said to have been the residence of Birbal⁹ and few times the halting place of Abul Fazl in oral tradition of History.

Next to it was the ancient township of Bachhraon headed by the descendants of one Bachhraj Tyagi. It is believed that the township of Bachhraon¹⁰, was established during the reign of Prithviraj III of the Chauhan Dynanty. Evidence of this is apparent through the presence of a mosque in the town, constructed in 1288 C.E. during the rule of Muiz-ud-din Kaiqubad. In the days of Akbar, one Tyagi *Zamindar* was given 156 villages in his *jagir*.¹¹ During the period around 1617-27, the villages around Bachhraon were either eliminated or forcefully converted to Islam¹² which is evident from the *Sati ki madaiyan*¹³ nearby.



Interview with the residents of Malakpur (Dhanaura *tehsil*, District Amroha)

The upstream *mahal* of Azampur¹⁴ belonged to the same Tyagi caste of Kashyap *gotra*. During Akbar's reign, Azampur *mahal* gained recognition as the headquarters of the Mirzas¹⁵, who were notorious

for causing significant disruptions by rebelling against Emperor Akbar. This is a fact well documented in the historical records.

Further upstream were the *mahals* of Chandpur, Daranagar-ganj, Bijnor, and Mandawar in the present district of Bijnor. The *pargana* of Azampur, Bachhraon, Kachha (Tigri), Dhakka, Dhawarsri and Ujhari were inter-correlated because of the same blood fraternity. *i.e.*, the Tyagi Bramins mentioned as 'Taga' in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

It is the *mahal* of Dhakka which was given the maximum importance. During the Mughal Emperor Jahangir's period, the *riyasat* of Brahmabad was attacked and Raja Deshraj Tyagi was slain in the battle field while fighting against the Mughal Forces. He was a big Raja and the word *Rahes*¹⁶ was mentioned for Dhakka *mahal* which substantiates it as the *riyasat*. The king of Brahmabad seems to be powerful enough to control a large tract on an area roughly of 40,000 sq. kms.

Usually, the revolts were launched by the big *zamindars*, rich enough to raise and maintain an army to meet the military strength of, at least, the Deputy *Faujdar*¹⁷. It is important to highlight that in nearly every instance, and Mughal officials, were targeted in the raids conducted by the *zamindars* for more than merely collecting the revenue. It was usually taken as a pretext by the local *faujdar*s to convert or eliminate the local population which is evident by the sectarian attitude of the people like Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi¹⁸. The Mughal rulers usually worked under the pressure of the *Ulemas* and the nobilities. As an illustration, in October 1711, an Afghan *zamindar* from Hasanpur assembled a force of more than 2,000 individuals within the fortress called "Raja Deshraj ka Darbar" and proceeded to pillage villages on the outskirts of Badaun¹⁹.



Old well along the Badshahi Rasta

Not even a single trace of architecture or literature is found except a well²⁰ opposite Brahmabad on the Badshahi Rasta connecting the *Sarkar* headquarters of Sambhal to the *suba* headquarters of Delhi and the “*Raja Wala Talab*” (Google map 28.70 78.35). In present Brahmabad, now reduced to a small village having 2 mounds (*kheras*) from which golden coins (*Asharfis*) and silver coins (Rupees) are said to be recovered during the rains.

In the entire stretch of Badshahi Rasta²¹, there are numerous small villages like Dawoodpur *Jageer*, Hebatpur Banjara, and Andherpuri leading to Dhakka and just after Andherpuri village, there is a *semi-pucca* road leading to Brahmabad mostly occupied by Tyagis.



Badshahi Rasta

The “*Raja wala Talab*”²² is the most significant source to prove the Brahmabad *riyasat* as it was probably built by Raja Brahm Singh, the eldest surviving son of his father or by Raja Brahm Singh’s son and successor Raja Deshraj Tyagi. Its larger size shows the larger number of king’s horses, elephants and other animals both the cows, buffaloes and oxen. In oral traditions Amlī Rajas are told to be both brave warriors as well as the seasoned cavalymen.

While interviewing the local residents of Brahmabad and the on-the-spot photography, it was revealed that the area of ‘*Raja Wala Talab*’ is roughly 150 *bighas* with specifically solid high *pallets* made of comparatively compact and solid clay. It is roughly higher on one side and lower on the other of its diagonal side.



Raja wala Talab

With such a magnitude, the *Talab* had a capacity to cater the needs of the time and ample supply of water whole the year. Being connected with a rainy seasonal stream proves that its construction was a result of a high planning. The evidence is also supported by the revenue records of *Khatauni* in the *tehsil* office. There are clearcut mentions of the names or royal pond as “Raja wala Talab”, “*Rani wala Talab*” (Queen’s pond) and “*Bandi wala Talab*” (Queen’s favourite Female Assistant- cum-friend’s pond).

Notes and References

1. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama* (ed.), *Abdul Rahim*, Calcutta , 1879, Vol. III, 282.
2. Babur, *Baburnamah* (ed.), Annette S. Beveridge, Gibb Memorial Series 1, London, 1971, f, 292 a-b i See also English Translation by Annette S. Beveridge, Reprint, Delhi, 1970, Vol. II, 521.
3. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol II, Translated by H. S. Jarrett, Calcutta, 1891, 289; Sambhal contains 4,047,193 Bighas, 2 Biswas. 66,941,431 Dams. Suyurghal 2,892,394 Dams. Cavalry 4,375. Infantry, 31,550. Elephants, 50.
4. H. R., Nevill, *Moradabad : A Gazetteer being Volume of the District Gazetteer of the United Provinces*, Allahabad : Govt. Press, 1911, 253 – 254.

5. Abul Fazl, *op. cit.*, 295; It was a *zamindari* controlled by *Rahes* that originated *Riyasat*, the principality or small kingdom of the Tyagi caste having Infantry of 200 and Cavalry of 25 horses.
6. H. R., Nevill, *op. cit.*, 211.
7. Abul Fazl, *op. cit.* 295. It was a *zamindari* having infantry of 200 and cavalry of 25 horses.
8. H. R. Nevill, *op. cit.*, 211.
9. H. R. Nevill, *op. cit.*, 216-17.
10. Abul Fazl, *op. cit.* It was a *zamindari* controlled by Tyagis having infantry of 200 and cavalry of 50 horses. The Tyagis, the residents of the village *Malakpur Shumali, Nandnaur, and Bihapuri* in the *tehsil* of Dhanaura in Amroha District; the same of Kashyap *Gotra* of village Dholagarh near Nurpur in the district of Bijnor; the royal family of 'Raja ka Tajpur' and those of converted Muslim *Zamindars'* descendants of Sahaspur, the township situated on Bijnor-Moradabad road claim to be of same ancestors i.e., their common ancestor was the Chaudhary of Azampur, the *pargana* headquarters mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. Historically Bachhraj Taga, the Governor of Amroha during the reign of Prithviraj III of the Chauhan dynasty is considered their family head during the Chauhan rule. He was entrusted to administer and have both the political and diplomatic relations with the Katehars to pacify them, and so, he is considered to build a strong fortress at the village of Ronda Ghonda situated at the *sangam* of two rivers named the mighty Ramganga, and Gangan still held by the Tyagis who are considered superior to them by the nearby Katehr Rajputs.
11. H. R. Nevill, *op. cit.*, 194-95.
12. *Interview* : 25. 09. 2023 with the residents of Malakpur village, Dhanaura *tehsil*, District Amroha, UP.
13. A ruined Sati site exists near village, Dhanaura *tehsil*, District Amroha, UP.
14. Abul Fazl, *op. cit.*, 294. It was a Tyagi *zamindari* having infantry of 300 and cavalry of 30 horses; *Itivritta : A Multi-disciplinary Peer Reviewed International Journal of History and Culture*, Volume-8 Part I Summer, 2020, Vighnesh Kumar, "Azampur : Old house of the Tajpur Estate", 5; *Itivritta, op. cit.* Volume 8 Part II Winter, 2020, Vighnesh Kumar, "Raja Pratap Singh Bahadur and the Tajpur Estate : A Reappraisal", 21; F. H. Fisher, *Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India*, Vol. Part-II-Moradabad, Allahabad : Government Press, 179; Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, translated into English by J. Sarkar, Vol. II, 294-96; E. B. Joshi, *Uttar Pradesh District Gazetteers- Morababad*, Allahabad : Government Press, 1968, 38, 314.

15. *Ibid.*, 290.
16. H.R. Nevill, *op. cit.*, 194.
17. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Muzaffar Alam, "Zamindar Uprisings and the Emergence of the Rohilla Power in Sarkar Muradabad", 1977, Vol. 38 (1977), 221-230 Published by: Indian History Congress Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44139074>
18. Ahmad al-Faruqi al-Sirhindi (1564 - 1624), also recognized as Imam Rabbani and *Mujadid Alf-i-Sani* (Reviver of the second Millennium), was an eminent Indian Islamic scholar and Hanafi jurist, prominently associated with the Naqshbandi Sufi order. Some of his devotees regarded him as a *Mujadid*, signifying a "reviver", acknowledging his efforts in reinvigorating Islam, and opposing the recently introduced religious system of *Din-i-Ilahi* and other controversial beliefs of the Mughal Emperor Akbar.

In the famous 534 letters of Ahmad Sirhindi, which were lithographed several times and also translated into Arabic, Turkish, and Urdu were written by Ahmad Sirhindi to a prominent *mansabdar* of Jahangir named Farid Bukhari: "The king bears the same relation to the world as does the heart to the body; if the heart is the healthy body will be fit and fine but if the heart is unsound the body will also be weakened. To cure the king is to heal the world and to cripple him is to corrupt the world."

In the times of old, Islam and the Muslims had never put up with such trouble and humiliations despite the weakness of Islam; then the Muslims were, at the most, constrained to follow their faith and the infidels their own. 'Unto your religion and unto me my religion' was the motto in the days gone by, but during the days afore the disbelievers used to force Muslims to follow their custom. The Muslims were even compelled not to disclose the rules of their religion and if anyone had the nerve to do so, he was condemned to death. Alas! what a pity! Woe betides! The followers of Muhammad were humiliated and those who denied his apostleship were honoured! The Muslims were bewailing with their bleeding hearts and their opponents were laughing to scorn them. The sun of guidance had been enveloped by wickedness and the light of truth was concealed by the veil of untruth.

Now that the glad tidings of removal of these impediments in the way of Islam's glory have reached everyone, high and low, and they have come to know that a son of Islam has mounted the throne, they consider it their duty to assist the king and show him the way of enforcing the shari'ah and strengthening the millat. They look forward to assisting him in this task, whether it can be accomplished by raising their voice or giving him a helping hand...

The affliction during the precious era emanated from the un-virtuous scholars. They led the king astray from the right path; the seventy-two

sects within the millat, which failed into error, were groomed by these very evil scholars. There would hardly be a profane scholar whose unsoundness had not a corrupting influence on the others. The ignorant Sufis of these days exert the same influence as the undutiful scholars; the corruption of these scholars is communicated like a contagion. Now, if anybody has the capacity to assist in the virtuous act of promoting the faith, but he fails to discharge his duty, and thereby Islam is weakened, then he would be held responsible for his inaction. It is for this reason that even this humble and incompetent fellow desires to be enlisted in the group lending support to the kingdom of Islam and do whatever is possible for him. Since one who goes together with the majority of a class of people is taken one of them, it may qualify this incapable person to be included in that virtuous group. He considers himself no better than the old woman who twisted strands of hemp to be reckoned as one of the purchasers of Yusuf. (The old woman referred to was one of the auctioneers gathered to purchase Prophet Yusuf in Egypt, although she did not have any chance to purchase him). This paroling hopes to call upon your honor soon. He is also confident that since you enjoy the company of the emperor and have his ears, you would do your utmost to promote the shari'ah of the Prophet and extricate the Muslims from their present predicament."

19. *Akhbarat* (Sitamau transcripts) Bahadur Shah, 5th Regnal Year in the volume entitled *Akhbarat-i-Aurangzeb*, I, 421.
20. An old well is located on the right side of the Badshahi road while moving toward Brahmabad to the old Hasanpur Cantonment of Raja Deshraj Tyagi. (Photo)
21. The 'Badshahi Rasta' was the royal road connecting the *Sarkar* headquarters of Sambhal to the *Suba* headquarters of Delhi. It has been rebuilt many times and the old fragments of bricks and stones were found during its reconstruction. at a level upto 5 feet below the surface.
22. The '*Raja wala Talab*' is located in Brahmabad, presenting a village of Hasanpur *Tehsil*, District Amroha, U.P. ★