

# THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND OF SINDH

Ahmed Abdullah

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# **THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND OF SINDH**

## **Historical perspective**

**By:**

**Ahmed Abdullah**

**Reproduced by**

**Sani Hussain Panhwar  
Los Angeles, California; 2009**



# INTRODUCTION

This material is taken from a book titled “*The Historical Background of Pakistan and its People*” written by Ahmed Abdulla, published in June 1973, by Tanzeem Publishers Karachi.

The original book covered the history of people of four provinces of Pakistan. I have reproduced one chapter which was related to the people of province of Sindh.

All views and opinions expressed are of the writer himself. I do neither endorse nor differ with his findings. I found the content very useful, brief and précised. After reading the book I was forced to reproduce it for the younger generation. Particularly for the youngsters and students who are fed with subject books (by text book boards) which are filled with lies and misrepresentations.

I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Sani H. Panhwar  
Los Angeles, California 2009

# THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND OF SINDH

The land of Sindh has a hoary past with some of the most striking episodes of history having occurred in its bosom. It has given a slightly different variation of its name to our neighbouring country and to the religious majority of its inhabitants. Both the words India and Hindu are derived from Sindhu, which, in Persian became Hind and Hindu (the letter H substituted for S) and in Greek and Roman, Ind (the letter S of (S)indh having been dropped). The meaning of the word Sindhu is water, referring to the great river. There is an old belief among Muslims that four rivers had sprung from Heaven: Neel (Nile), Furat (Euphrates), Jehoon (Juxartes) and Sehoon (Sindh).



The Aryans called the whole of Pakistan, Kashmir and East Afghanistan, Sapta Sindhu—the land of seven rivers. In Rigveda it is referred to as Sapta Sindhva, while India is named Bharat Varta (the land of the sons of Bharat, a legendary Emperor).<sup>1</sup> Thus, even for the Aryans there were two countries in this sub-continent: Sapta Sindhva and Bharat Varta. The Assyrians in the 7th century B.C. knew the north-western part of the sub-continent as Sindha.<sup>2</sup> However, when India began to be called Hind by Persians and Arabs, and Ind by Greeks and Romans, the local people continued to call their land, Sindh. This distinction continued for centuries. Arab geographers, historians and travellers also called the entire area from the Arabian Sea to the range of Kashmir mountains Sindh.<sup>3</sup> As such, there were always two countries in the sub-continent - Sindh and Hind. The present Pakistan (including Kashmir and a major portion of Afghanistan) constituting one country, and India, another.

As regards the composition of the population of Sindh Province (before Partition) the two main stocks that inhabit Sindh are related to, and common, one with the Punjab and another with Baluchistan. The majority stock is that of Rajputs and Jats who are the descendants of Sakas, Kushans and Huns who also constitute the majority of the population of the Punjab. During Kalhora rule a number of Jat tribes such as the Sials, Joyas and Khawars came from the Punjab and settled in northern Sindh. They are called Sirai *i.e.*, men from the north and speak Siraiki language.

The two main Rajput tribes of Sindh are: the Samma, a branch of the Yadav Rajputs who inhabit the eastern and lower Sindh and Bahawalpur; and the Sumra who, according to the 1907 edition of the Gazetteer are a branch of the Parwar Rajputs. Among others are the Bhuttos, Bhattis, Lakha, Sabetas, Lohanas, Mohano, Dahars, Indhar, Chachar, Dhareja, Rathors, Dakhan, Langah etc.<sup>4</sup> The Mohano tribe is spread over Makran, Sindh and southern Punjab. They are also identified with the 'Mallah' of the Punjab and both

<sup>1</sup> *The Wonder that was India*, By A.L. Bhasham.

<sup>2</sup> *The Peoples of Pakistan*, By Yu. V. Gankovsky.

<sup>3</sup> *Arab-o-Hind ke Talluqat*, By Sulaiman Nadvi.

<sup>4</sup> *The Gazetteer of West Pakistan: The Province of Sindh*, edited By T.H. Sorley.

have in common a sub-section called Manjari. All these old Sindhi tribes are known under the common nomenclature of Sammat.

The smaller stock is that of Baluchi tribes settled in various parts of Sindh mostly during the last five hundred years or so. Since they were martial people and ruled over Sindh for some time before the arrival of the British, they acquired vast lands in the province with the result that a large number of present-day Sindhi landlords are of Baluch origin. According to the 1941 census, which was the last one held before Partition Baluchis formed 23% of the total Muslim population of Sindh.

Among the Baluchi tribes inhabiting Sindh are the Rind, Dombki, Jakhrani, Leghari, Lashari, Chandio, Karmati, Korai, Jatoi, Burdi, Khosa, Jamali, Umrani, Bugti, Marri, Mazari, Talpur, Brohi, Nizamani, Buledhi, Karrani, Bordar, Nukharni, Magsi etc. These tribes are spread over Baluchistan, Sindh and the south-western districts of the Punjab.

Yet a third stock of Sindhi population comprises of the descendants of Muslim conquerors, administrators and missionaries who were mostly Arabs, Persians, Turks or Mughals. They are a small minority settled in cities and towns but so deeply absorbed and blended with the other components of the population that all the three together have evolved a distinct language and culture. Of this third element Arabs have contributed most to the development of Sindhi language and literature and to the advancement of its intellectual and cultural activities.

Since the early history of Sindh is intimately related to the history of the Punjab and other provinces of Pakistan it need not be dealt with at length. Only a brief account shall be attempted here, without mentioning the Indus Valley civilization which has already been discussed elsewhere.

Dawn of history reveals an Aryan dynasty in power in Sindh. In the Mahabharata (12th or 13th century B.C.) Jayadrath, King of Sindh appears as a partisan of Panduas against their cousins Kauruas. Next historical mention of Sindh is found about 575 B.C. during the time of Achaemenian dynasty. The Iranian General, Skylax, explored Indus in a flotilla equipped near Peshawar, conquered the Indus Valley and annexed it to the Empire of Darius the Great. The conquered province of the Punjab and Sindh was considered the richest and the most populous satrapy of the Empire and was required to pay the enormous tribute of fully a million sterling. Next historical record is that of Alexander's invasion in 326 B.C. A tribe called Mausikanos whose capital is usually identified with Alor (Rohri) is said to have submitted. According to Greek historians the territories of this chief were the most flourishing of all that the Greeks had seen. A few centuries later Roman historians have, mentioned Sindh as a rich country. Patala in lower Sindh was known to them as an emporium of trade.

Alexandrian period was followed by that of the Mauryas (3rd century B.C.) whose fall brought in Graeco-Bactrians (2nd century B.C.). They ruled over the whole of Pakistan with their capital at Taxila. Their coins are still found in the old towns of Sindh. The Graeco period was followed by that of the Scythian (Saka) invasion in the first century

B.C. “They settled here in such large numbers that Sindh became known as Indo Scythia and to this day a large proportion of the population is certainly Scythian and not Aryan”<sup>5</sup> Two Scythian tribes, the Jats and Meds, are mentioned as having invaded the Punjab and Sindh. Some of the present-day Mohanas of Sindh and Baluchistan call themselves Med. “In 60 A. D. Sindh was occupied by Scythians, ruled perhaps from far away Taxila.”<sup>6</sup>

The first century A D witnessed the arrival of the Kushans who, along with the Scythians (Sakas) and later Parthians, ruled over Afghanistan and Pakistan for about four centuries from Peshawar. The next great holocaust occurred in the 5th century A D with the Hun invasion which surpassed all previous records in its intensity and vastness Their invasion ushered in the Rajput era which lasted till the 7th century A. D. in Sindh (80 years before the, arrival of Mohd. Bin Qasim); till the end of lothcentury A D in the Punjab and NWFP (upto the arrival of Mahinud Ghaznavi) and till the end of 12th century in northern India when Mohammad Ghorī defeated Prītbviraj in 1192 A. D.

Before Imaduddin Mohammad Bin Qasim’s arrival here, Rajputs were the ruling race in Sindh and in the rest of northern India. The last Rajput ruler of Sindh was Raja Sahasi II whose dominions extended up to Kashmir. He was a contemporary of Prophet Mohammad and professed Buddhism as did his father Siharus. The rule of Raja Sahasi II ended in 632 A.D. the year Prophet Mohammad died. He was succeeded by his Brahmin chamberlain, Chach, who had become a favourite of Sahasi’s wife Chach ruled over Sindh for about 68 years from 632-700 A.D. His son Dahir was the ruler of Sindh when Mohammad Bin Qasim arrived here in 711 A.D.

The line of rulership before Islam runs thus: Siharus, Sahasi II, Chach, Dahir. The first two were Buddhist Rajputs and the last two Hindu Brahmins. The new Brahmin rulers were extremely hostile towards the Buddhists who were in substantial numbers in Sindh at that time and they had ruthlessly suppressed the Jats and Meds who formed the bulk of the peasantry. Humiliating conditions were imposed on the Jats depriving them of many civil rights. “When Chach, the Brabmin chamberlain who usurped the throne of Rajput King Sahasi II went to Brahmanabad, he enjoined upon the Jats and Lohanas not to carry swords, avoid velvet or silken cloth, ride horses without saddles and walk about bare-headed and bare-footed.”<sup>7</sup> It was because of this background that Mohammad Bin Qasim received cooperation from the Buddhists as well as the Jats and Meds during his campaigns in Sindh. Among others who did not oppose Mohamrnad Bin Qasim’s advance and made peace with him was the Bhutto tribe.<sup>8</sup> In fact he was hailed as deliverer by several sections of local population. The humble position of the Buddhists in Sindh seeking support from outside can be read in the Chach Namah.

“Mohammad Bin Qasim’s work was facilitated by the treachery of certain Buddhist priests and renegade chiefs who deserted their sovereign and joined the invader. With the

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<sup>5</sup> *Gazetteer of the Province of Sindh*, compiled By E.H. Aitken.

<sup>6</sup> *Ancient Trade in West Pakistan*, By Sir Mortuner Wheeler Pakistan Quarterly Vol VII, No L 1957

<sup>7</sup> *Sindhi Culture*, By U.T. Thakkur.

<sup>8</sup> *Tareekh-e-Sind*, By Maulana Syed Abu Zafar Nadvi.

assistance of some of these traitors, Mohammad crossed the vast sheet of water separating his army from that of Dahir and gave battle to the Indian ruler near Raor (712 A.D.). Dahir was defeated and killed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *An Advanced History of India, Part II*, By R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Roychandra and Kalikinkar Ditta.

## THE JATS OF SINDH

Before commencing a review of the Muslim period of Sindh's history, we shall speak briefly of the Jats of Sindh (Pakistan) who were known all over Iran and the Middle East for their sturdy constitution and industrious nature. They have a colorful history and an adventurous past.

The author of *Mujmaul Tawarikh* has quoted an extinct Sanskrit work according to which the original inhabitants of Sindh were Jats and Meds. Early Arab writers on Sindh also say that Jats and Meds were important tribes in their time. Ibn Khurdabah mentions 'zutts' as guarding the route between Kirman and Mansura while Ibn Haukal writes: "Between Mansura and Makran the waters from the Mehran form lakes and the inhabitants of the country are the Indian races called Zutt. The Chinese traveler Yuan Chwang who visited this region in the 7th century A.D. also mentioned Jats.

"The Jats claim to be included in the 36 royal Rajput tribes. Some of them state that their forefathers came from Ghazni. But it is generally accepted that they are the descendants of the ancient Getae, or Jeutchi, from Scythia. Some authorities consider that they entered India some time in 1500 B.C. and are the same as the Jattikas mentioned in the Mahabharata, and also identical with the Jatti of Pliny and Ptolemy. Their original home was on the Oxus."<sup>10</sup> According to the Encyclopedia of Islam, the Jats of the lower Indus comprise both Jats and Rajputs, and the same rule applies to Las-Bela where descendants of former ruling races like the Sumra and Samma of Sindh and the Langah of Multan are found. At the time of the first appearance of the Arabs they found the whole of Makran in possession of Jats (Zutts).

According to a 'Hadis', Hazrat Abdulla Bin Masood, a companion of the Prophet saw some strangers with the Prophet and said that their features and physique were like those of Jats.<sup>11</sup> This means that Jats were present in Arabia even during the Prophet's time. Hazrat Imam Bukhari (d. 875 A.D. — 256 A.H.) writing about the period of the Companions in his book "*Al adab al Mufarrad*" has stated that once when Hazrat Aisha (Prophet's wife) fell ill, her nephews brought a Jat doctor for her treatment. We hear of them next when the Arab armies clashed with the Persian forces which comprised of Jat soldiers as well. The Persian Commander Hurmuz used Jat soldiers against Khalid Bin Walid in the battle of 'salasal' of 634 A.D. (12 hijri). It is said that since the Jats used to fight by tying chains to their feet, this battle is called Harb-e-Salasal (battle of chains). This was the first time that Jats were captured by the Arabs. They put forward certain conditions for joining the Arab armies which were accepted, and on embracing Islam they were associated with different Arab tribes.<sup>12</sup> This event proves that the first group of Pakistanis to accept Islam were Jats who did it as early as 12 hijri (634 A.D.) in the time of Hazrat Omar.

<sup>10</sup> The Land of Five Rivers and Sind, By David Ross (1883).

<sup>11</sup> Arab-o-Hind ke Tallukat, By Sulaiman Nadvi.

<sup>12</sup> *Tareekh-e-Sind*, Part I, By Ijazul Hag Quddusi, Markazi Urdu Board, Lahore.

The Persian King Yazdjard had also sought the help of the Sindh ruler who sent Jat soldiers and elephants which were used against the Arabs in the battle of Qadisia.

According to Tibri, Hazrat Ali had employed Jats to guard Basra treasury during the battle of Jamal. "Jats were the guards of the Baitul Maal at al-Basra during the time of Hazrat Osman and Hazrat Ali."<sup>13</sup> Amir Muawiya had settled them on the Syrian border to fight against the Romans. It is said that 4,000 Jats of Sindh joined Mohammad Bin. Qasim's army and fought against Raja Dahir. Sindhi Jats henceforth began to be regularly recruited in the Muslim armies.

"Some of the Zutt deserters from the Persian army were transplanted in 670 A.D. by Caliph Muawiya from Basrah to Antioch. When the Arabs conquered Sindh, another batch of Zutts whom the conquerors had up rooted from their native pastures seem to have been sent to Syria by Hajjaj (691-713 A.D.) and eventually sent on by the Caliph Walid I (707-15 A.D.) to join the previous batch of Zutt deportees at Antioch whence some, again, were sent on by the Caliph Yazid II (720-24 A.D.) to Massisah in Cilicia..... But the bulk of Hajjaj's deportees from Sindh seem to have been settled in Iraq. In the reign of Abbasid Caliph Mansur (813-33 A.D.) they broke into a rebellion which it took him and his successor Mutasim (833- 42 A.D.), the best part of 20 years to quell ..... Whether there had or had not been a voluntary immigration as well as a compulsory deportation of Zutt to Iraq from Sindh, we may take it that in the course of the first two centuries of Arab rule, manpower from western India (i.e., Pakistan) had in one way or another been pouring into a south-western Asia that, on the eve of the Arab conquest, had been depopulated by the two last and most devastating of the Romano-Persian wars."<sup>14</sup>

This statement of Tonybee is revealing in that it shows the close relations Pakistan had with the Middle East. Sindhis began to settle in areas as far away as Iraq and Syria which were depopulated by wars between the Persians and the Romans.

The origin of European gypsies is also traced to Sindhi Jats. Harun-ur-Rashid had recruited Jats to reinforce Cilician fortress. When the Romans descended on Ayn Zarbah in 855 A.D they carried off into East Roman territory the Jats together with their women, children and buffaloes. This detachment of the Jats was the advance guard of the gypsies of Europe.<sup>15</sup> They continued to pour into Europe in small batches at various stages subsequently.

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. Mohammad Ishaque in journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Vol. III, Part I.

<sup>14</sup> A Study of History. Vol. VII, By Arnold J. Toynbee.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## THE ARAB PERIOD

Turning to the history of Sindh, it may be divided into seven periods: (1) Pre-Muslim; (2) Arab Rule; (3) Middle Ages from Mahmud Ghaznavi to the establishment of Mughal Rule; (4) Mughal Period; (5) Kalhora period; (6) The Talpur Period; and (7) The British Period. We shall deal with them briefly discussing only certain salient features of each period.

We have already spoken of the Indus Valley Civilization and the pre-historic period in an earlier chapter. Between the fall of the Mauryan Empire and the arrival of the Arabs *i.e.*, roughly 200 B.C. to 700 A.D., a span of 900 years, Sindh and other parts of Pakistan experienced wave after wave of hordes from Central Asia settling down in these regions. The Bactrians, Sakas, Kushans, the Pahiavas and the Huns etc., came, conquered and settled here. From these stocks, mingled with indigenous blood, ultimately emerged the new Kshatrya ruling class of Hindus later called Rajputs and the peasant class of Jats and Gujjars.<sup>16</sup> The most outstanding aspect of this pre-Muslim period is that Sindh was intimately connected with the rest of Pakistan and not with India. It had either independent kingdoms or kingdoms in common with Pakistan.

Several reasons are ascribed to the Arab desire to conquer Makran<sup>17</sup> and Sindh. Firstly, Sindhi Rajas had helped the Persians in their wars against the Arabs. Sindhi forces participated in the battles of Nehawand, 'Salasal', Qadisnia and Makran and fought against the Arabs. Secondly, when after the conquest of Persia by the Arabs some of their rebel chiefs began to seek refuge in Sindh, its Raja refused to surrender them to the Caliphs in spite of repeated requests. Thirdly, since Arab traders were being constantly harassed by pirates from the Makran and Sindh coasts, a foot-hold in these areas was considered necessary to safeguard Arab maritime interests.

The first naval expedition undertaken by the Arabs in this ocean was during Hazrat Omar's caliphate in 636 A.D. —15 A.H. under the command of Osman bin Abi'Aas, the Governor of Bahrain and Oman. He attacked Thana, a port near modern Bombay. A little later he sent another naval expedition to Debal in Sindh under the command of his brother Mughira. Raja Chach was the ruler of Sindh at that time and his kingdom was well defended. Mughira was defeated by the Raja's forces and killed in action.

During Hazrat Omar's caliphate the Governor of Iraq also sent an expedition by land to Makran under the command of Rabi Bin Ziad Hans. Though Makran was conquered but the victory was short-lived, as the locals recaptured the country. Makran was, however, permanently conquered during the last days of Hazrat Omar's caliphate in 642 A.D. — 43 A.H. under the command of Hakam Taglabi. Hazrat Osman, the third Caliph had sent Hakim bin Jabala to Sindh in 650 A.D. to collect information. Before him Sahar-al-Abdi

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<sup>16</sup> *Sind: A General Introduction*, By M.T. Lambrick.

<sup>17</sup> A greater portion of the area now called Baluchistan was then known as Makran. The word Baluchistan came into vogue much later.

had visited Sindh for the same purpose in 643 A.D. during Hazrat Omar's last days.<sup>18</sup> The next Arab general to enter Pakistan by land was Muhlib bin Sufra who came through the Khyber Pass in 665 A.D. —65 A.H.

The real story, however, begins with Hajjaj Bin Yusuf who was Governor of Iraq. The story of Arab merchants returning from Ceylon to Basra having been looted by Sindhi pirates is well—known. It is related that some of the women who were being carried away by the pirates implored Hajjaj to rescue them.

Hajjaj took serious notice of the incident and wrote to Dahir, the ruler of Sindh, for the release of captives as well as the goods which were being sent to the caliphate as presents by the ruler of Ceylon. Not receiving a favourable reply, Hajjaj, with the permission of Caliph Walid, sent a force to Debal under the command of Abdulla bin Nabhan. This force was annihilated by Dahir's army and its commander killed in battle. (According to Dr. Daud Pota the tomb of Abdullah Shah at Clifton in Karachi is of this General, Abdulla bin Nabhan).<sup>19</sup> Again, Hajjaj sent a bigger expedition to Debal, to oppose which Dahir sent his son Jaisia with a fairly large contingent. For the second time Arabs were defeated and their commander Badil bin Tuhfa killed in action at Debal. (According to the British historian Eliot, Karachi and the island of Manora constituted the city of Debal).

Hajjaj was infuriated and perturbed at the developments. Having realised that the ruler of Sindh was a powerful monarch, he started making large—scale preparations and took personal interest in the matter since the issue had now become one of prestige. The selection of a commander for this expeditionary force had also to be made with due care keeping in view all the aspects of the problem. Hajjaj's choice fell on the young 20-year old (according to some 17) Mohammad Bin Qasim. The army and its Commander were given rigorous training for over one year in the desert of southern Iran which had similar climatic conditions to those of Sindh. Through intelligence reports, all the strong and weak points of the enemy and details of their weapons and defences were collected, studied, and the Arab army equipped accordingly. Hajjaj bin Yusuf went through the minutest details and after thorough study of the maps of Sindh, guided Mohammad Bin Qasim on the strategy to be followed. Not content with this, Hajjaj made arrangements to convey his messages and orders to Mohammad Bin Qasim from Basra to any point in Sindh within a week. Orders were that Mohammad Bin Qasim should not attack any city or fort or engage his forces in any large-scale battle with the enemy without getting orders from Basra. Even instructions concerning the day and time of attack a weapons to be used in a particular place or battle were sent by Hajjaj.

This time Arab armies triumphed and the triumph proved permanent. I shall not go into details which are available in all histories and mention only a few points which have not been high-lighted.

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<sup>18</sup> Journal of Pakistan Historical Society, Vol. III, Part I.

<sup>19</sup> Tauzechat-e-Tareekh-e-Masoomi.

## MOHAMMAD BIN QASIM'S RULE



As mentioned elsewhere, Sindh had a large Buddhist population at this time but the ruler, Dahir, was a Brahmin. It is said that the Buddhists of Sindh had been receiving constant information from their co-religionists in Afghanistan and Turkistan about the extremely liberal treatment meted out to them by the Arab conquerors of those regions. In view of these reports, the Buddhist population of Sindh decided to extend full cooperation to Mohammad Bin Qasim and even acclaimed him as liberator from the Brahmin tyranny. Several principalities in Sindh were ruled by Buddhist Rajas. The Buddhist ruler of Nerun (Hyderabad) had secret correspondence with Mohammad Bin Qasim. Similarly, Bajhra and Kaka Kolak, Buddhist

rajas of Sewastan, allied themselves with Mohammad Bin Qasim.<sup>20</sup> On similar grounds, Jats also joined the Arabs against Dahir.

Secondly, it is generally believed that Mohammad Bin Qasim conquered areas only up to Multan. No, he conquered almost the entire Pakistan which then formed part of the Kingdom of Sindh. According to Chach Nama, after conquering Aror (near Rohri), Mohammad Bin Qasim advanced towards Bhatia, an old fort on Beas which was under the command of Chach's nephew. After conquering Bhatia the Arabs laid siege to Iskandla on River Ravi and took it. Chach Nama further states that Mohammad Bin Qasim proceeded to the boundary of Kashmir called Panj Mahiyat, at the upper course of Jhelum just after it debouches into the plains.<sup>21</sup> "With a force of 6,000 Mohammad Bin Qasim, a youth of 20, conquered and reorganised the whole of the country from the mouth of Indus to the borders of Kashmir, a distance of 800 miles in three years 712-15 A.D."<sup>22</sup>

"Waihind (near Attock) which was one of the oldest cities of the sub-continent was included in the kingdom of Sindh."<sup>23</sup> "Mohammad Bin Qasim made Multan the base for further inroads and garrisoned Bramhapur on the Jhelum, the modern Shorkot, Ajtabad and Karor; and afterwards with 50,000 men marched via Dipalpur to the foot of the Himalayas near Jhelum."<sup>24</sup>

It is recognised by all historians that Mohammad Bin Qasim's rule in Sindh was most liberal and his treatment of non-Muslims extremely just and fair. He not only appointed Hindus to senior administrative posts but left small Hindu principalities undisturbed. Brahmins had become so loyal to him that they used to go from village to village and

<sup>20</sup> *Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent*, By Dr. I. H. Qureshi.

<sup>21</sup> *Tareekh-e-Sind*, Parr I, By Aijazul Hag Quddusi.

<sup>22</sup> *The Making of India*, By Dr. Abdulla Yusuf Ali.

<sup>23</sup> *Jannat-us Sind*, By Maulai Shaidai.

<sup>24</sup> Imperial Gazetteer of India.

urge people to support the Arab regime. When Mohammad Bin Qasim was recalled from Sindh by the Caliph in very unhappy circumstances, the Hindus and Buddhists of Sindh wept over his departure; and when he died they erected a statue in his memory and worshipped it for a long time. Mohammad Bin Qasim's two Sons had a distinguished career. Amroo became Governor of Sindh and Qasim was Governor of Basra for fifteen years.<sup>25</sup>

But the early Arab period is not one of peace and tranquility. With the recall of Mohammad Bin Qasim the province returned to chaos and confusion. After a few years of anarchy Governor Junaid restored normalcy. A short while later, due to bad administration, chaos prevailed again. Arabs began to leave the province and converted Muslims returned to their old faith. Conditions were so critical that the next governor, Hakam bin Awanah established a new city called 'Mahfooza' (place of safety) in 732 A.D. — 113 A.H. where all the Muslims collected for safety. Later on, after restoring order and reorganising most of the Province, Hakam's general Amroo (the son of Mohaminad Bin Qasim) built another city called Mansoorah (victory) near Shahdadpur in 737 A.D. — 119 A.H. which became the capital of the Arab kingdom. Because of these unsettled conditions Sindh had to be conquered again and again.

“In Sindh the recall of Mohammad Bin Qasim was followed by a Hindu reaction which almost wiped out the results of the first victories. When Hakam bin Awanah was appointed Governor of Sindh, he found that the Indians had rebelled and apostasized. He built two cities, Mahfuzah and Mansurah in the north and south of Sindh, to provide places of security for Muslims.”<sup>26</sup>

From the departure of Mohammad Bin Qasim in 715 A.D. to the fall of the Umayyad caliphate in 750 A.D., a period of 35 years, Sindh had nine governors. They were Habib Bin Mohiab, Amro Bin Muslim Bahili, Bilal Bin Ahwaz, Junaid Bin Abdur Rehman Marri, Tamim Bin Zaid Atbi, Hakam Bin Awanah Qalbi, Amroo Bin Mohammad Bin Qasim, Yazid Bin Arrar and Mansur Bin Janthur Qalbi. During this period “Governor Junaid again conquered all the territory up to Beas and Ravi in the north-east, Kashmir in the north, Arabian ocean in the south, Malwa in the south-east and Makran in the west.”<sup>27</sup>

When Umayyad caliphate was replaced by that of the Abbasids in 750 A.D., Sindh became part of the Abbasid dominions. It remained under Baghdad's control during the Abbasid Caliphs Saffa, Mansoor, Hadi, Haroon, Mamoona, Mutasim, Wasiq and Mutawakkil. In the reign of the last mentioned Caliph, the Governor of Sindh, Umar Hibari, became practically independent owing nominal allegiance to the Caliph. Earlier, during the caliphate of Mamoona-ur-Rashid, Sindh Governor Bashar Ibn-e-Dawood had revolted and withheld the payment of revenues, but the revolt was quelled judiciously. It may be of interest to note that the postal and intelligence services of Sindh were directly controlled by the Caliphs.

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<sup>25</sup> Imperial Gazetteer of India.

<sup>26</sup> *Indian Muslims*, By Prof. M. Mujeeb.

<sup>27</sup> *Tareekh-e-Sindh, Part I*, By: Aijazul Haq Qudusi.

The man who governed Sindh (then covering major portion of present-day Pakistan) for the longest period was Dawood bin Yazid bin Hatim Mahiabi who died in 821 A.D. Two members of the famous Barmaka family of Abbasid Prime Ministers ruled over Sindh as Governors during this period. One was Musa Barmakh and the other his son Omar Barmakh. The Barmaka family were said to be originally Kashmiri Buddhists who had migrated to Balkh (now in northern Afghanistan) and after accepting Islam, went to Baghdad where several member of the family had a distinguished career. Two of them, Yahya and Jafar, became Prime Ministers of Haroon-ur-Rashid (The word Barmakh is derived from the Sanskrit word '*par mukh*' meaning sardar).

During the 105 years of Abbasid period when Sindh formed part of their dominions (750-855 A D) thirty-one Governors were appointed The Hibari dynasty which had become independent lasted from 855 A.D — 240 A.H. to 1010 A.D.—401 A.H. *i.e.*, till the annexation of Sindh by Mahmud Ghaznavi. It was the last Arab government. One of its rulers Abdulla bin Omar Hibari (d. 893 A.D.) ruled for about 30 years and made great contribution to the cultural and economic development of the Province. It was during the Hibari period that Sindh severed its relations with the caliphate; and it was during this period that two separate states emerged in Sindh: one had its capital at Mansura and the other at Multan. In addition, several small Hindu states had also sprung up. It was again during the Hibari rule that the Fatimid Caliph Obidullah—al—Mahdi sent the first Ismaili missionary, Haisham, to Sindh.

## MISSIONARY WORK

Sindh being the eastern-most province of the Umayyad, and then of Abassid Caliphates with loose control from the centre, its political as well as religious life was highly perturbed. In the political field due to internecine quarrels, Muslim governments in the area were divided into two sections: The upper region had Multan as its capital and the capital of the lower region was Mansura near Shahdadpur. Sindh also became an arena of religious acrimonies because of the large number of Ismaili missionaries who visited this country and the heretics who took refuge here. The first Ismaili missionary to visit Sindh was Haisliam who came to Sindh in 877 A.D. — 270 A.H. He was sent by the founder of the Fatimid caliphate, Obaidullah-al-Mahdi. Among other prominent Ismaili missionaries to visit Sindh were Hazrat Abdullah (1067 A.D.), Pir Sadruddin (1430 A.D.), his son Kabiruddin, his brother Tajuddin and Syed Yusufuddin, all of whom gained considerable following in Pakistan. Pir Sadruddin had his grand lodge in Sindh and it was he who conferred on the new converts the title of Khwaja (Khoja), meaning honourable. According to Dr. Arnold a number of Ismaili missionaries were sent to Sindh from the famous “Alamut” fort which was the headquarter of Hasan Bin Sabbah who lived in the late 11th and early 12th century A.D.<sup>28</sup> Abdullah-al-Ashtar Alvi, a great grand son of Hazrat Ali was among those who had religious differences with the Caliph, was considered a heretic and took refuge here. Because of sheltering him, the Governor of Sindh, Omar bin Hafs was transferred to North Africa by the Caliph. Hazrat Abdullah Ashtar’s tomb at Clifton on the sea-shore near Karachi is still visited by devotees.

A large number of Sunni missionaries also visited Sindh during the Arab period. The Omayyed Caliph Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz is said to have sent a number of them who were successful in converting several Sindhi landlords. The Abbasid Caliph Mahdi also sent some missionaries who converted a number of Rajas and prominent Hindus up to Peshawar. Mohammad Alfi who came with Mohammad Bin Qasim and was among the most successful missionaries, later became adviser to the Raja of Kashmir and settled there.

As already stated, during the major portion of Arab rule, Sindh and southern Punjab were rent by political as well as religious rivalries. Since every development in the Middle East had its direct impact on this region, the Fatimid—Abbasid political rivalry with its religious manifestation in the Ismaili—Sunni controversy, found its full echo here, particularly in the 10th century A.D. (early 4th century hijri). Ismaili, or according to some, Carmathian rulers were installed in the upper region whose capital was Multan. It is related that the Fatimid Caliph Imam Abdul Aziz Billah had sent a missionary Jalam bin Shaiban from Cairo to Multan with a sizeable army in 372 hijri (985 A.D.) to establish Ismaili rule which he did, and himself became head of the state. At this time the rulers of Makran and Mansura were also Ismailis. The Sumra family of Sindh which had accepted Ismaili Islam owed allegiance to the Fatimid Caliphs of Cairo, sent them presents and zakat and read their name in Friday ‘Khutba’. After the fall of the Fatimids, Sindhi Ismailis attached themselves to the Mustali branch of the Ismailis who were

<sup>28</sup> *The Preaching of Islam*, By Sir Thomas Arnold.

functioning from Yemen. (Members of the ‘Mustali’ branch are called Bohris in the sub-continent). The history of this period is so confused that it is difficult to state with any certainty as to when and how long Ismaili and Carmathian rulers held sway at Mansura and Multan. There were frequent changes accompanied by enlargement or shrinkage of territories. Ferishta speaks of Shaikh Hamid Lodhi as the first ruler of Multan converted to Carmathian faith. Haig says that Multan was seized by Abdullah, the Carmathian, about 287 hijri (900 A.D.). Ibn-e-Haukal visited Multan in 367 hijri but does not mention the Ismailis and says that the rulers of Multan and Mansura recognised the authority of Baghdad. Al Maqdasi visited Multan in 375 hijri and wrote that the people of Muhan were Shias, presents were sent to the Fatimids of Egypt and Ismailis were daily claiming an increasing number of converts. Al Beruni writing about 424 hijri says “the rise of the Carmathians preceded our time by almost 100 years *i.e.*, in 324 hijri.” Whatever the fortunes of the rulers, there is some ground to believe that Ismaili form of Shiaism continued to be dominant in Sindh and southern Punjab for a considerable time.

“Propaganda under the Fatimid ‘Dawat’ in India is traced back to the time of Fatimid Caliph al Mustansir. Ismailis had indeed been sent to India at a much earlier date. Their field of labour was in Sindh, in a district of Multan. Their chief dai was in correspondence with Caliph Muizz (953) and the community had not only increased in numbers, but it had attained power in Multan during his Imamate. The community recognised the Fatimids as Imams but the initiative in Sindh may have been taken by the Carmathians. Later history links Multan and Sindh with the Nizarian dawat.”<sup>29</sup>

“Ivanow describes the Ismaili population in India as the most ancient and interesting. Sons of Mohammad Ibn Ismail had sought refuge in Qandahar, then a part of Sindh. Sindh early became a district or Jazira, of the Ismaili ‘dawat’. During the Imamats of Al Muizz (953) its chief dai was in direct communication with the Imam.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Shias of India*, By John Norman Hollister.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

## SINDH'S PROGRESS UNDER ARABS

However, in spite of political chaos and religious confusion, Sindh made great progress in the literary and economic fields during this period. Sindhi scholars and doctors made a mark not only in their own country but in the entire Muslim world. Mathematicians and philosophers from Sindh visited Baghdad in large numbers and made outstanding contribution to the promotion of learning among the Arabs. Several physicians were called from Sindh for the treatment of Caliphs among whom were Ganga and Manka who treated Haroon-ur-Rashid. The latter was a member of the Bait-ul-Hikmat of Haroon-ur-Rashid. Another Sindhi doctor who made a mark in the Muslim world was a newly converted Muslim, Saleh Bin Bahia (Bhalla).

Among the notable Sindhi ulema were: Maulana Islami who hailed from Debal, accepted Islam during Mohaimad Bin Qasim's days and was sent by him as envoy to Raja Dahir for negotiations. Abu Maashar Sindhi was Muslim world's noted scholar of 'seerat' and 'fiqh'. He lived at Medina for a number of years and later shifted to Baghdad where he died. He was so much respected that on his death Caliph Mehdi led the funeral prayers. His son Abu Abdul Malik was also an eminent scholar and had settled down in Baghdad. Hafiz Abu Mohamniad Khalaf bin Saalem who was a 'hadees' scholar had migrated from Sindh to Iraq where he attained fame. Abu Nasr Fateh Bin Abdulla Sindhi was known for his proficiency in 'hadees', 'fiqh' and Ilm-e-Kalaam. He wrote 'Tafseer' in Sindhi and rendered Islamic teachings in such beautiful and forceful Sindhi verse that it gained immense popularity both among Hindus and Muslims. Another 'aalim', Ishaque Sindhi, was among the most revered muftis of the Abbasid period. Imani Auzai of Sindh was considered an authority on religion in the Muslim world. Mohammad bin Au Shwarib, the Qazi of Mansura and his son Au bin Mohammad bin Au Shwarib were also renowned scholars.

Among the Sindhis who earned eminence in the Muslim world as Arabic poets during this period were Abul Ata Sindhi, Haroon bin Abdulla Multani, Abu Mohammad Mansuri who hailed from Mansura, Mansoor Hindi, Musa bin Yakub, Saqafi, Abu Zila Sindhi, Kashajam bin Sindhi bin Shahak etc. Sindhi bin Sadqa was a 'Katib', a writer as well as a poet. Some of them wrote in Sindhi as well as in Arabic. It is said that at the request of a Sindhi Raja, Mabrook, who had embraced Islam, the Quran was translated into Sindhi during the reign of Abdulla bin Omar Hibari. Due to the patronage extended by early Abbasid Caliphs and their Baramaka Prime Ministers, a number of Sindhi Pandits and Veds went to Baghdad and engaged themselves in scientific and literary pursuits. They translated a large number of Sanskrit books on mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine, literature and ethics into Arabic. Prominent among them were Bhalla, Manka, Bazeegar (Bajaikar), Falbar Ful (Kalap Rai Kal), IbneDahañ, Saleh Bin Bhalla, Bakhar, Raja, Makka, Daher, Anko, Arikal, Andi, Jabbhar, etc. Some of these Pandits taught the Arabs, numerals.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Arab-o-Hind ke Tallukat*, By Syed Sul Nadvi.

In about 780 A.D. — 154 A.H. when a deputation of Sindhi Pandits visited Baghdad, they carried with them a Sanskrit work known as ‘Siddhanat’ which, after translation in Arabic, became known as Al—Sindh-Hind.

Sindhi accountants were also popular in the Arab world. According to Jahez (d 874 A.D. — 255 A.H.) all the ‘Sarrafs’ (money-changers) in Iraq had Sindhi treasurers. They were proficient in accounting and exchange business and were also honest and loyal servants.

The Arab rulers of Sindh-Multan were extremely liberal, spoke Sindhi and treated their subjects well. They never encroached upon the religious liberties of the Hindus and Buddhists and appointed them to positions of responsibility. Mohammad Bin Qasim had appointed Sisakar, the Prime Minister of Raja Dahir, his own Prime Minister, and Kiska, another Hindu; his Revenue Minister The entire history of Sindh under the Arabs is replete with instances of Hindus holding positions of great responsibility and honour. Three percent of the country’s revenues were given to Brahmans as stipends. When some of the district administrators informed the Government that they were experiencing shortage of cows and bulls which were needed for agriculture and transport, Government prohibited cow slaughter.

In the economic field also Sindh made considerable progress. Agriculture received great impetus with food grains being exported to the Middle East. A number of new varieties of fruits were cultivated among which the bananas of Sindh were extremely popular in the neighbouring countries. Camphor, neel, banana, coconut, dates, sugarcane, lemon, mangoes, almonds, nuts, wheat and rice are mentioned by almost all visitors as grown in plenty in Sindh. Bishari Maqdasī writes that there were innumerable gardens in Sindh and the trees were tall and luxuriant. The whole city of Mansura was covered with almond and nut trees.

The cities established by the Arabs “flourished as great centers of trade and learning. A busy trade grew up and the merchants of different nationalities carried Indian goods through Sindh to Turkistan and Khurasan and imported horses into Sindh.”<sup>32</sup> Debal, Nairun Kot, Sehwan, Khuzdar, Aror, Multan and Mansura were flourishing commercial centers. Arabs had more trade with this country than with Gujrat, Malabar and Bengal. A large proportion of merchandise was transported from the Punjab by rivers. 700-800 maunds of goods were sewn in jute cloth, put in leather bags oiled from outside to prevent water penetrating and put in the rivers.<sup>33</sup>

“On account of their favourable geographical position the ports of Sindh played a vital role, even before the Arab invasion, in the commercial intercourse between the countries to the west (Iran, South Arabia, Ethiopia) and to the east of the Indus delta, as well as in the export of commodities manufactured in Sindh itself. This role gained momentum after Islam had reached Sindh. The author of Hudud al’Alam mentions that there were plenty of merchants in Sindh, stressing that many a citizen of the coastal areas were engaged in sea trade. The cities of Daibul and Mansura were major trade centres of

<sup>32</sup> *Sindhi Culture*, By U.T. Thakur.

<sup>33</sup> *Tareekh-e-Sind*, By Maulana Abu Zafar Nadvi.

Lower Sindh at the turn of the first and second millennia. In the first centuries of the second millennium, Thatta came in the fore as another major economic and political centre of the country: in the opinion of some scholars, the city in its prime had a population of 280,000.”<sup>34</sup>

Leather and leather goods industry also made great progress during this period. The coloured and soft leather of Sindh was known all over the world markets as Al-Sindhi. According to ‘Muruj-uz-Zahab’, the shoes of Mansura were very popular in Iran and the Arab world. Imam Hanbal relates that a large number of shoes were imported from Mansura into Baghdad where they were in great demand among the royal family and the gentry. But, he remarks, they were very showy.

Arabs also took keen interest in animal husbandry. They improved several breeds of camels, horses, cows, bulls and buffaloes. Sindhi buffaloes were so popular that Arabs used to carry them to their home towns when returning from Sindh.

Building of cities and construction of roads and houses was a hobby with the Arabs. They built several new cities such as Mahfooza (in 732 A.D.), Mansura (737 A.D.), Baiza (835 A.D.), Jundrore near Multan (in 854 A.D.) and several others. They also improved and expanded the existing cities by constructing satellite towns. A bridge called “Sukkar-al-Maid” was built over the Indus near Sukkur.

A number of Arab tribes of Quraish, Kaib, Tanieem, Saqeef, Harris, Aal-e-Utba, Aal-e-Jareema and Asad, and several prominent families of Yemen and Hejaz had settled in Sindh. Masudi (915 A.D. — 302 A.H.) writes that he met many descendants of Hazrat Ali in Mansura who were in the line of Omar bin Ali and Mohammad Bin Ali. He also mentions that there was fertility and opulence here and people were healthy. Some authorities have expressed the view that the wife of Hazrat Imam Hussain, who was the mother of Hazrat Imam Zainul Abidin from whom the line of Hussaini Syeds is traced, was not a Persian as is generally believed, but a Sindhi lady of a noble family.”<sup>35</sup>

Bishari writes that the people of Multan were prosperous, they did not drink wine and their women did not use cosmetics. Both Arabic and Sindhi were spoken. Regarding Mansura he states that the people were very well-read, courteous and religious. The city had a large number of scholars and the general standard of morals and intelligence was high. Mansura remained the capital of Sindh from 737 A.D. — 120 A.H. to 1026 A.D. — 416 A.H. for about 300 years till its conquest by Mahmud Ghaznavi. In late 3rd century Hijri when Multan became the capital of the northern kingdom, Mansura remained the capital of only the southern region *i.e.*, modern Sindh. It survived till the Tughlaq period in the 14th century A.D. when it disappeared due to change in the course of River Indus.

As during the time of Darius when Sindh constituted the 20th Satrapy of the Achaemenian Empire and considered an extremely rich province, so also during the Arab

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<sup>34</sup> *The Peoples of Pakistan*, By. Yu. V. Gankovsky.

<sup>35</sup> *Arab-o-Hind ke Tallukat*, By Syed Sulaiman Nadvi.

rule Sindh was regarded a prosperous part of the Caliphate and paid a million dirham per annum as revenue to the Government at Baghdad.

## GHAZNAVID PERIOD IN SINDH

With the conquest of Pakistan by Mahmud Ghaznavi (1000 — 1030 A.D.) Arab rule came to an end in Sindh and also the first chapter of its Muslim period. It is believed that about half a century before Mahmud appeared on the scene, Ismailis had become the rulers of both the Arab Kingdoms of Multan and Mansura. No Muslim historian gives a definite date or year of the actual take—over by the Ismailis and the circumstances under which it occurred, as stated earlier. However, what made Mahmud destroy the two dynasties was the constant support the Amir of Multan gave to Jaipal and his son Anandpal, rulers of northern Punjab and northern Afghan territories, against him, and the inimical attitude adopted by the Amir of Mansura towards his forces when they entered Sindh chasing the Raja of Gujrat. When having been defeated several times by Mahmud Ghaznavi, Raja Anandpal led a united force of the Rajas of northern India to meet him at Peshawar in 1008 A.D. — 399 A.H., the ruler of Multan, Amir Shaikh Abul Fath also took part in the battle as a confederate of Anandpal. But the entire confederacy was defeated. Again, in 1025 A.D.— 416 A.H. when Mahmud Ghaznavi reached the Indus in pursuit of the Raja of Gujrat, the Ismaili ruler of Mansura incited the Jats and Meds to attack Mahmud's forces which suffered considerable losses.

These two incidents were serious enough to bring the wrath of any conqueror. Still, Mahmud Ghaznavi was extremely considerate and did not take any punitive action against them for several years. He annexed Multan as late as 1026 A.D. and next year sent his Wazir, Abdur Razzak to conquer Sindh. After the defeat of the Ismaili rulers of Mansura, Sindh was also annexed to the Ghaznavid Kingdom, their collaborators were driven out and new officers from among the Arabs were appointed to administer the province. It is believed that since Mahmud Ghaznavi was quite harsh with the Ismailis, henceforth their creed began to lose ground in Multan and Sindh and the number of their adherents began to diminish; several families adopted Sunni faith and many left the country. But still, strong pockets remained in some places.

When about a century and a half later Ghaznavid rule in Pakistan became weak and ineffective, Ismailis again asserted themselves and became *de facto* rulers in Multan and Sindh. Mohammad Ghorī, who replaced Ghaznavid rule in Pakistan in about 1187 A.D., also adopted the policy of breaking Ismaili power and influence. Qutbuddin Aibak was sent to conquer Sindh which he did in three months and the Ismailis were again heavily punished. After the Ghorid period, Ismailis could never muster their strength nor reassert themselves in Pakistan. They met a similar fate about the same time in Iran at the hands of the Saijuqi Turks, while their (Fatimid) caliphate in Cairo was eliminated by Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi in 1187 A.D. Finally, when their last stronghold in Alburz mountains in northern Iran was destroyed by Hulagu Khan's forces in the middle of the 13th century A.D., Ismailis ceased to count in the political life of Islam. Henceforth they concentrated on business.

With the conquest of Multan and Mansura by Mahmud Ghaznavi in 1026 A.D., these areas again were united with the Punjab and N.W.F.P. and the entire Pakistan came under

Ghaznavid rule. It may be recalled that previously also both in the pre-Arab and during most of the Arab period, Pakistan was under one government. But some time after the establishment of the Hibari dynasty which had severed its relations with the caliphate, two independent states emerged, one had its capital at Multan and the other at Mansura. This happened about 871 A.D and the pattern lasted for about one and a half centuries till the establishment of the Ghaznavid rule in 1026 A.D.

## NAASERUDDIN QUBACHA

Details of the Ghaznavid period are not available. However, the bright period of Sindh's history revived after the arrival of the Ghorids when Naaseruddin Qubacha was appointed governor of Multan and Sindh. The period of governorship as well as of independent rule by Qubacha was one of great development for Pakistan. When Shamsuddin Altamash succeeded Qutbuddin Aibak as ruler at Delhi in 1210 A.D. — 607 A.H., Waaseruddin Qubacha, the governor of Multan and Sindh, declared independence and ruled in that capacity for about two decades with his capital at Uch (in Bahawalpur).

During this period the northern route into India from Khyber, Peshawar, Jhelum and Lahore was infested with the Ghakkars who were in constant rebellion. There were also frequent Mongol attacks on this front during this period. This proved a blessing for the southern areas of Pakistan. Trade from Iran, Afghanistan and Turkistan was diverted through the southern route of Qandahar, Multan, Sindh, Bahawalpur and on towards Delhi, bringing in considerable prosperity. Similarly, all the great scholars, poets and missionaries who came in large numbers during this period either passed through Multan, Sehwan and Uch or settled down in these areas.

Several histories were written during Qubacha's reign. Ali Bin Hamed Koofi translated an Arabic work "Minhaj-ul-Masalik" (Fateh-us-Sindh) into Persian in 1216 A.D. — 613 A.H. and named it 'Chach Nama'. This is the first Islamic history of Sindh in which one finds details of Arab conquest. Minhaj-us-Siraj wrote his famous history "Tabaqat-e-Naaseri" which gives a detailed account of Naaseruddin Qubacha's reign. Syed Badruddin Aufo produced 'Labubul Albab' containing the literary activities of the Ghaznavid period while Naaseruddin Mohammad Aufo wrote "Jame-al-Hikayaat", a work of great merit.

Shamsuddin Altamash did not disturb Naaseruddin Qubacha as long as Mongol threat was imminent. But once it subsided with the return of Jalaluddin Khwarizm Shah and his pursuer Changez Khan, Altamash attacked Sindh. In the ensuing battle Qubacha was killed and Sindh, Multan and Bahawalpur were annexed to the Delhi Sultanate in 1227 A.D.

Next begins the period under the slave dynasty of Delhi when the capital of Sindh was shifted from Uch to Bhakkar. The happiest, though short-lived span for Sindh under this dynasty was the governorship of Prince Mohammad, son of Ghyasuddin Balban. During this decade there was again an eruption of Mongol activity on the frontiers of Northern Punjab, resulting in diversion of trade through Multan and Sindh. Since Mongols had run over the entire land route of Central Asia and Iran by this time, Sindh's maritime trade also received great impetus. Following these development Sindhi businessmen spread from Granada in Spain to 'Canton in China.

Prince Mohammad was among the most brilliant and cultured persons ever born in a royal family. Himself learned and pious, he had great respect for ulema and sufis. He zealously encouraged education and set up a large number of educational institutions at

Bhakkar and Sehwan. Ibn-e-Batuta who visited the sub-continent during this time says that he met a number of ulema from Shiraz, Baghdad and Egypt at both Bhakkar and Sehwan.

Prince Mohammad made Multan the capital of Sindh and Punjab and also the focal point from which defence operations were conducted against the Mongol inroads. It was during Prince Mohammad's governorship that most of the great sufis now buried in Pakistan migrated to these areas and settled down at different places. Among them were Hazrat Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria (Multan), Hazrat Fareeduddin Masud Ganj Shakar (Pak Pattan), Hazrat Shaikh Osman Marwandi Lal Shah Baz Qalander (Sehwan), Hazrat Amir Hasan Sanjari etc. The great sufi poet Hazrat Amir Khusro had also settled down in Multan but returned to India after Prince Mohammad's death. In one of the several battles fought by him against the Mongols, this young Prince was killed near Multan. It was a great loss to the empire, to the sufis and to the cause of Islam in this sub-continent. Amir Khusro, who was accompanying the Prince in this battle, is said to have been captured by the Mongols and released after considerable effort. Multan city was saved from being ravaged on the intervention of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria.

It is believed that during the rule of the Delhi Sultanate, some time in the 13th century, Multan and Uch (Bahawalpur) were separated from Sindh, joined with the Punjab and put under a strong Warden of Marches to prevent the incessant ravages of the Mongols. The defence strategy of Multan-Lahore front had to be planned on a different line from that of Bhakkar-Sehwan-Thatta region. The southern areas of Pakistan which were comparatively peaceful were put under a separate Governor, ultimately leading to the present provincial boundaries of Sindh.<sup>36</sup> This practice continued uninterrupted. In 1296 Jalaluddin Khilji put Multan and Uch under his son Askoli Khan and appointed a separate Governor, Nusrat Khan, for Sindh with Headquarters at Sehwan. Though Sindh was constituted into a separate province, the hold of Delhi became more firm, particularly during the reign of Alauddin Khilji.

But, from the commencement of the Tughlaq period in 1321 A.D. to its annexation by Akbar the great in about 1591 A.D. for a period of 270 years, Sindh enjoyed *de facto* independence. The first local tribe to declare independence was the Sumras or Sumros who were then concentrated around Thatta and were already ruling over this area since the middle of the 11th century A.D. during the Ghaznavid period. When the Ghaznavid hold weakened, Sumros had extended their dominions in the north to include Multan.

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<sup>36</sup> Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, Edited By E. H.. Aitken.

## THE SUMRAS AND THE SAMMAS

Mohammad bin Tughlaq, in pursuit of some rebels, died near Thatta before conquering the town. His successor Firoz Tughlaq also could not succeed in wresting the town from the Sumras and went back frustrated. Sindhis attributed their success to the blessings of a saint, Shaikh Pittha. On this occasion a saying expressed in Urdu, became very popular among the local people. This is considered the first Urdu prose sentence known in the early literature of this province. This saying was “Barkat Shaikh Pittha, aek mova aek nittha” *برکت شیخ پٹھا ایک موا ایک نٹھا* which means that due to the blessings of Shaikh Pittha, one (Mohammad bin Tughlaq) died and one (Firoz Tughlaq) went back unsuccessful. When Firoz Tughlaq returned next year to conquer Thatta, a settlement was arrived at with the Sumras on the intervention of Hazrat Jalal Bukhari of Uch Shareef. Thus the Sumras continued to rule the country, extending only formal allegiance to Delhi.

**In the 14th century A.D. a certain person, Bhutto, who was a descendant of the Sumra ruler Doda, had become extremely popular and was installed as ruler by the people. His reign lasted 30 years. Both “Tuhfatul Karim” and “Daulat-e-Alia” make mention of his benign and popular rule—the latter giving his full name as Sirajuddin Fateh Khan Bhutto.<sup>37</sup>**

Here, a few words about Sumras. As already stated in the beginning of this chapter, this tribe is considered a branch of the Parmar Rajputs. Mir Tahir in his book “Tareekh-e-Taheri” has stated that the Sumras were a Hindu tribe professing Hindu religion. Dr. Nabi Bakh is also of the view that the Sumras were old inhabitants of Sindh professing either Hinduism or Buddhism. He says that after Mohammad bin Qasim’s conquest of Sindh the Samma, Saheta and Lohana tribes of Hindus accepted Islam and the Sumras also, long before they became rulers of Sindh, had embraced Islam. In the Sindh Gazetteer, Mr. E.H. Aitken states: “it is generally agreed that the Sumras were a Rajput tribe and the names of their first rulers Sumra, Doda, Sanghar, Bhangar betray their extraction.” These writers also point out the Indian origin of the name Sumra which they say, is composed of two parts: Som and Rai. The former meaning moon and the latter ruler.

But, most of the Sumras do not agree with this view. They connect their origin with the Sumereans of the Middle East and the Samri of the Beth Israel. Even if it is true, the tribe must have settled in Sindh long before Arab arrival. They had first accepted the Ismaili creed and adopted Sunni faith at a much later date.

The next tribe to emerge into power in Sindh were the Sammas or Sammos who ruled from the middle of the 14th century A.D. to early 16th century, for a little over 170 years. They replaced Sumras during the reign of Firoz Tughlaq. According to the author of Chach Nama, the Sammas are old inhabitants of Sindh and when Mohammad bin Qasim entered their region, they greeted him warmly giving a performance of folk music and dance. The Sammas were a larger tribe than the Sumras and extended their dominions all over Sindh. Their first four rulers were Unar, Juna, Mani and Tamachi and had their

<sup>37</sup> *Tareekh-e-Sind*, By Maulana Abu Zafar Nadvi and *Tareekh*. By A Haq Quddusi.

capital at Thatta. They used the word Jaam before their names which, according to some authors, is derived from the Persian word Jamshed. After Taimur's invasion of India in 1398 A.D. and the consequent weakening of the Delhi government, they became powerful. Their rule lasted from 1351 A.D. to 1521 A.D. Their ruler Jam Nizamuddin Alias Jam Nindo founded Thatta in 1495 A.D. — 900 A.H.

Since the foundation of this city was laid at the foot of the Makli Hills, it was called (Tahet) Taeh Taeh *i.e.*, below, and in the course of time began to be pronounced Taheta, and then Thatta. Regarding the name Makli, it is related that a saint on his way to Mecca incidentally stayed on this hill. He was so captivated by the beauty of this place that he fell in a trance and began to shout in Arabic “haza Makka li; haza Makka li” *i.e.*, this is Mecca for me. The saint's words began to be pronounced Makli by the people by which name it continues to be known to this day. Today the importance of this place rests on the fact that it is considered the biggest cemetery of the world. From the Sammas, Arghun and Tarkhan rulers and members of their families, down to the governors of Mughal period and all the men of importance who died at Thatta during a span of 600-700 years are buried on the Makli Hills. “Ten miles west of Thatta near the village of Gujro in Mirpur Sakro Taluka is the tomb of one Abu Turab which bears the date 191 Hijri (788 A.D.) and must be the oldest historical record of any kind in Sindh. Abu Turab took the important fortress of Bhakkar and is known for other deeds of valour.”<sup>38</sup>

The Samma rule was one of great prosperity and advancement in every field of life. Trade, industry, art and education made tremendous progress and Thatta, the capital, became one of the leading cities of Asia. With Jam Nizamuddin's patronage of poets, ulemas and men of literature, a large number of learned persons from all over the Muslim world gathered here. At one time Thatta city had about 300 educational institutions and was classed with Cordova and Baghdad. Because of the devotion of its people to religion and their piety, Sindh was called “Little Arabia” and “Bab-ul Islam” of the sub-continent. “It was during the days of the Sammas and their successors the Arghuns and the Turkhans that Thatta, being the capital, became the opulent and magnificent chief city of Sindh.”<sup>39</sup>

A word about the origin of Sammas. They are the chief of the group of Sindhi tribes called Sammat and are believed to be a branch of the Jadava Rajputs and were probably the same tribe who were known to Alexander as Sambos. Samma Nagar on the Indus was their ancient capital and is probably represented by modern Sehwan. ‘When they seized authority in the 14th century, their first capital was Samui, a few miles north of Thatta.

The 1931 Bombay Presidency Census says that: “The name Samma is used specifically (1) for a particular tribe; (2) the dynasty from that tribe which once governed lower Sindh and built Samui and Thatta; and (3) that now-a-days it is used chiefly in the form Sammat, comprising seventy-five per cent of the specifically Sindhi tribes, now known to have come from the Punjab and be not of Baluch, or Arab, or Pathan origin. It is highly

<sup>38</sup> Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, compiled By E.H. Aitken—1907.

<sup>39</sup> Gazetteer of West Pakistan Province of Sind.

unlikely that all these were ever really sub-sections of the Sammo tribe. Some are clearly sections of Rajput clans; probably the Samma too were of Rajput origin, or status, though perhaps not pure. Sammo tribes may be considered generally to have been the followers and supporters of the Sammo dynasty, and probably of equal status and similar origin. Even the Sammo are Sometimes said to be Sammat. The Chach Nama mentions Sammo, Jat, Lakho and Lohano as pre-Arab tribes in the Indus Valley of nomadic and barbarous habits who were crushed by Chach, the Brahmin King of Alor. At present the Samma, calling themselves such, are almost all in east and lower Sindh region and also in Bahawalpur. They occur only sparingly in the upper Sindh tract.”

## THE ARGHANS AND THE TURKHANS

With the arrival of Baber on the Indian scene the whole complexion of this sub-continent changed. Sindh was the first to be affected. When Baber commenced his operations from Kabul southward capturing Qandahar in 1521 A.D., the ruler of that city, Shah Beg Arghun escaped and came over to Sindh to try his fortunes here. He succeeded in capturing the province from the now declining dynasty of Sammas. But the Arghun rule lasted hardly 33 years with only two rulers, Shah Beg Mirza and his son Mirza Shah Hussain. Two incidents are of particular importance during this brief period. Mirza Shah Beg is said to have ordered the general slaughter of Baluchi tribes who had started spreading over Sindh during Samma period and were creating unrest; while it was during the reign of his son Mirza Shah Hussain that Humayun passed through Sindh on his way to Iran and a son (Akbar) was born to him at Umarkot in 1542 A.D.

The Arghuns were succeeded by a family of their nobles called Turkhans who were also of the same origin. Turkhans ruled for only 37 years from 1554—1591 A.D. When Akbar conquered Sindh, Turkhans were not displaced but appointed governors of this newly annexed province of the Mughal Empire. Even otherwise both the Arghuns and Turithans had recognized Delhi's sovereignty during Baber's and Humayun's reigns. However, under both the dynasties Sindh was fairly well ruled and was comparatively free from internal dissensions. One of the Turkhan rulers Shah Beg was a brave, bold and generous person.

After annexing Sindh, Akbar incorporated it in the province of Multan and left the Turkhan ruler Mirza Jani Beg in charge of the Thatta region. Mughal rule lasted 148 years from 1591 A.D. to 1739 A.D. when Sindh was annexed by the Persian ruler Nadir Shah. After the death of Mirza Jani Beg till the end of Mughal period Sindh had 40 Governors. Mughal period, however, was not very eventful. Sindh was one of the outlying provinces of the Empire hardly receiving any special attention. Since Shah Jehan had taken refuge at Thatta when he rebelled against his father, he built a Jame-Masjid in the town. During the early years of Aurangzeb's reign, Daudpotas asserted themselves, established their rule over a part of Sindh and set up their capital at Shikarpur which they founded after cleaning thick forests where 'shikar' was played.

## THE KALHORAS AND TALPURS

As a result of Nadir Shah's attack on India in 1739 A.D. and subsequently of Ahmed Shah Abdali in the fifties of the same century, Central rule weakened. Though Sindh was annexed to Nadir Shah's empire, his rule was short-lived and his control over this province feeble. Again local forces asserted themselves and a branch of the Daudpotas known as Kalhoras rose to power in parts of Sindh. Their most powerful ruler was Nur Mohammad Kalhora. Another ruler of this line Ghulam Shah Kalhora founded the city of Hyderabad in 1768 A.D. on the left bank of Indus where there had been an ancient town of the name of Nerun.

As a ruling house the Kalhora may be said to date from 1736, but members of the tribe had been prominent in Sindh affairs at least half a century before that date. There is no adequate history of the Kalhoras. The best account of them was written by Nathan Grove, an Englishman, in 1799 who knew by personal experience conditions in Sindh at the end of the eighteenth century. The chief stages in the life of Kalhora power may be briefly summarized. There are five such stages: First, the acceptance by the Mughal Emperor of members of the Kalhoro tribe as Viceroys or Governors in Sindh, a period which began in 1701 during the last days of Aurangzeb.

Yar Mohammad Kalhora may be regarded as the real founder of the Kalhora dynasty. About 1701, Yar Muhammad succeeded in wresting Shikarpur from the Daudpotas, a weaver tribe who had founded it in 1616 after a conflict with the numerous tribe of Mahars then powerful in Upper Sindh. Yar Muhammad made Shikarpur his court and obtained from Aurangzeb a grant of the tract between the Indus and the Nara and the right to call himself Khudayar Khan.

Second, the extension and consolidation of the local power of the Kalhora Governors. Delhi had, by 1736 recognised them as semi-independent rulers of the country. Third, after the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739, the transfer of political sovereignty over Sindh from the Mughal Empire to the Persian Kingdom, which resulted in the Kalhora becoming subordinate to the Persian monarch and liable to pay tribute to him. Fourth, about 1747 the transference of this sovereignty from the Persian King to the Durrani Kingdom of Afghanistan, by which change the Kalhoras became feudatories of Kabul and had to pay tribute to that power. Fifth, the struggle between Kalhoras and Talpurs which began in 1778 and lasted more or less continuously till the end of the century — a period of civil war in which the Talpurs (themselves of Baluch origin), with the aid of the Baluchis then settled in Sindh in considerable numbers, were at last able to destroy the failing powers of the Sindhi ruling family. But throughout the whole period from 1737 onwards the Kalhoras were never actually full masters in their own house.

The date usually accepted by historians as the end of the Kalhora regime is 1783 when the Afghan King, Timur Shah settled the indecisive Talpur— Kalhora tussle by sending Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur a robe of honour, some Arab horses and a 'sanad' appointing him ruler of Sindh. As such, the rule of the Talpurs may be reckoned from 1783 A.D.

The government of the Talpur Mirs, which began in inauspicious circumstances ended sixty years later after the battles of Miani and Daubo in 1843, when the victories of Napier led to the annexation of Sindh by the British. Thus the Talpurs ruled over Sindh for only 60 years. An important event of their rule is that in 1795 Talpur Mirs recovered Karachi which had been ceded to the Khan of Kalat by a Kalhora ruler in compensation for the death of a member of the Kalat ruling family.<sup>40</sup>

From the middle of the 18th century A.D. till the inception of Pakistan in the middle of the 20th century A.D. for a period of two hundred years which covers the Kalhora (partly), Talpur and British rules, Sindh had the most painful period of its history. Internally, the struggle between the Kalhoras and Talpurs for power consumed the energies of the people and wrought havoc with life and property. With the final victory of the Talpurs, Sindh was divided into small principalities and exposed to attacks from outside. The refusal by the Talpurs to pay tribute to the Durrani Kings caused frequent incursions of Afghan troops, some of which were devastating to Sindh's economy. "In this country which would seldom have the like in India in vastness, size and population, not a single human dwelling was left."<sup>41</sup> Productive forces diminished to an alarming extent undermining the entire economic life of the province. Most of the flourishing cities were ruined. The population of Thatta which was 300,000 at one time declined to 20,000 in 1809 and 7,000 in 1851 A.D.<sup>42</sup> Sukkur was almost desolated; Shikarpur which was northern Sindh's largest trade centre was nearly deserted; Karachi's income went down from Rs. 616,000 in 1793 to Rs. 99,999 in 1808.<sup>43</sup>

Agriculture met a similar fate. Because of incessant forays and anarchy, and exploitation by zamindars, the cultivated area was almost halved in half a century and both revenue and profits from agricultural lands were seriously reduced. Added to this was the crushing burden of paying Rs. 15 lacs annually to the Durrani of Afghanistan as tribute.

The one class of people who benefited during this period of general decline in Sindh were the Hindu merchants. They first amassed wealth by financing the military campaigns of Afghan rulers in the province and by obtaining supply contracts for their army; and then by engaging them selves in foreign trade. Thus, while Sindhi Muslims were gradually impoverished, Sindhi Hindus became prosperous and gained economic ascendancy in the province.

Decline of economy and absence of political stability was followed by pessimism, frustration and loss of self-confidence among Muslims. They began to lean heavily on *pirs* and *murshids*, indulge in the use of drugs and take to either nomadic life of stock—breeding or at best some sort of cultivation. Finally, Baluchi tribes formed the landed aristocracy and Hindus dominated trade. Since they lived mostly in urban areas, most of the cities of Sindh began to have Hindu majorities. With wealth and urban life, Hindus acquired education and sophistication while the once assertive, active and energetic

<sup>40</sup> *West Pakistan Gazetteer*, By T.H. Sorley.

<sup>41</sup> *Nawai Alamarai Nadiri*, By Mohammad Kazim.

<sup>42</sup> *Sind and the Races of the Indus Valley*. By R.F. Burton.

<sup>43</sup> *Travels in Baluchistan and Sind*, By H. Pottinger.

Sindhi Mussalman who was fond of education and learning, art and culture, became lethargic, meek and docile and disappeared in the recesses of the rural areas.

British conquest of Sindh in 1843 A.D. increased the misery of the Muslims. Hindu domination in both economic and educational fields was strengthened leaving the Muslims completely at the mercy of the Hindus by the beginning of the 20th century. But the Sindhi Mussalmans have proved that they possess immense power of recuperation as they can draw on their glorious intellectual and spiritual heritage. Moreover, Sindh is distinguished among the provinces of this sub-continent for having enjoyed political independence or autonomy from every central government for a much longer period than any other region.

It is indeed an irony that these very Sindhis should be regarded meek and docile in our time while their entire history belies this view. It must have been observed by the reader that before the arrival of the Muslims, Sindh had its own rulers and was mostly independent. Even during the Arab rule it severed its relations with the Abbasid Caliphate from as early a date as 870 A.D. and set up an independent kingdom under the Hibari dynasty, extending only formal allegiance to Baghdad. After its conquest by Mahmud Ghaznavi in 1026 A.D. to its annexation by the British in 1843 A.D., for a period of over 800 years, Sindh mostly had its own rulers. The Sumras, Sammas, Daudpotas, Kalhoras and Talpurs though not entirely or always independent, enjoyed considerable autonomy and were accorded recognition by various governments whether based in India, Afghanistan or Iran.

It were the adverse circumstances of the 18th to 20th centuries that made them sloven and sluggish and deprived them of powers of initiative and traits of valour.

It is a glowing tribute to their inherent capabilities that within a quarter of a century after the establishment of Pakistan, they have regained political consciousness and are steadily recapturing their past greatness. This augurs well for the future of this country since a strong, vigorous Sindh would mean a strong, vigorous Pakistan.

**THE END**