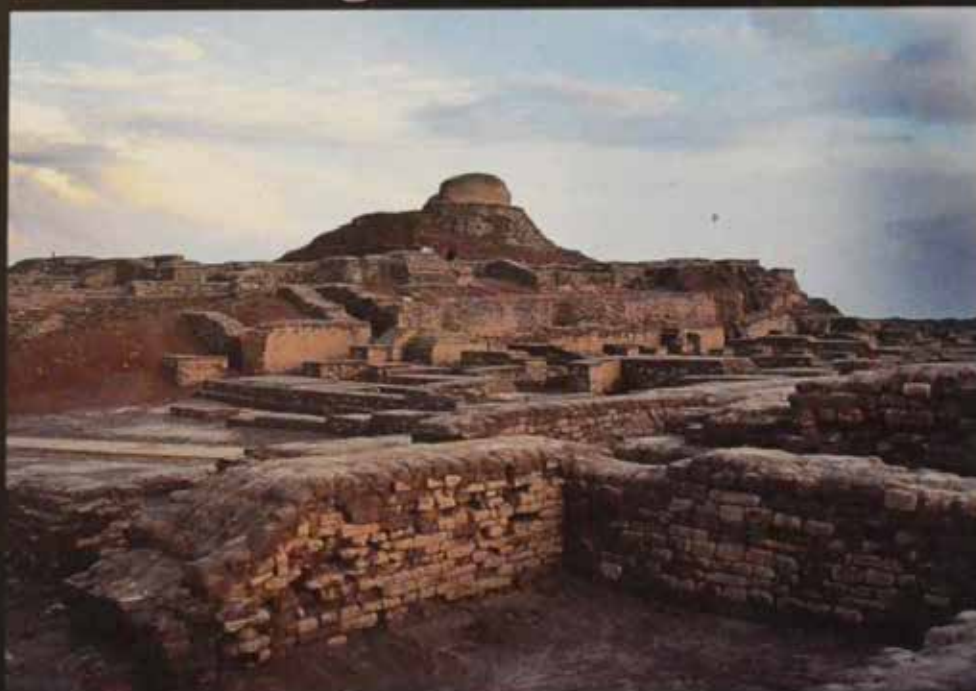


A Monograph on  
**SINDH**  
Through the Centuries



Muhammad Ali Shaikh

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**SINDH**  
Through the Centuries

By

Muhammad Ali Shaikh, PhD



SMI University Press  
Karachi  
2013



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Dedicated to the greatest persons in my life:

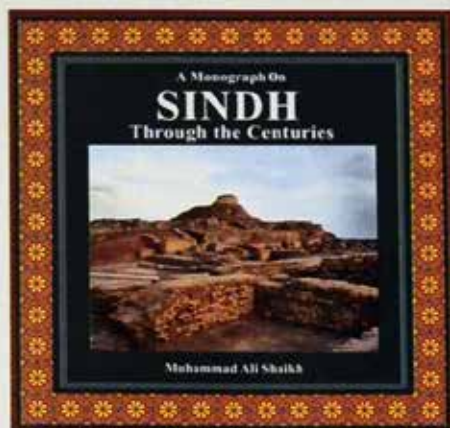
My mother, Ghulam Fatima, who taught me to write,

My father, Gul Muhammad Shaikh, who taught me to be considerate

And my father-in-law, Ali Ahmed Brohi, who introduced me to the colours of Sindh







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## Preface

Sindh is located between two great ancient civilizations, the South Asian and the Middle Eastern. There has been a degree of isolation due to physical barriers on three sides of Sindh; a vast desert in the east, an ocean in the south and mountain ranges in the west. Only in the north it is connected with plains of the Punjab through a bottleneck of the Indus. This geography has played a most important role in shaping Sindh's history and culture.

Again, due to its geographical location, Sindh has also been hub of overseas and overland trade and commerce throughout the course of history, providing it an opportunity to assimilate the colours of various cultures brought-in by traders and tourists. Sindh, being an island of wealth because of its trade, commerce and agriculture, has also been a target of invasions from East, West, North and South. As a result it has also absorbed various cultural traits of its invaders. Then, Sindh has been the destination of several great migrations in the history of mankind, mainly due to upheavals taking place in its surroundings.

All these factors have afforded Sindh to chart a peculiar course of history and to develop its distinct culture. Despite all these ups and downs, there has been a remarkable continuity in Sindh's course of history, which has given birth to a unique culture that has been able to survive through the centuries and is alive even to this day.

I worked on the subject of Sindh's history and culture while writing my PhD dissertation on the subject of satellite television and social change in Sindh. The first chapter of the thesis traced back the history of Sindh from the ancient to modern times. When my work was published in 2007, many friends suggested that the chapter on Sindh's history and culture should be published separately as it provided a comprehensive yet brief introduction to Sindh's past. It was also suggested that the text may be supported with photographs depicting the rich colours of Sindh. The result is this book.





Taking this opportunity, I thank my spouse Shaista for her active role in designing of the present book. She has inherited her love for everything belonging to Sindh from her father, Ali Ahmed Brohi, a great scholar of his times. She sat for hours with my artist friend, Abdullah Thebo, to fine tune the getup of the book. I thank Abdullah Thebo for all his contribution towards designing of the book.

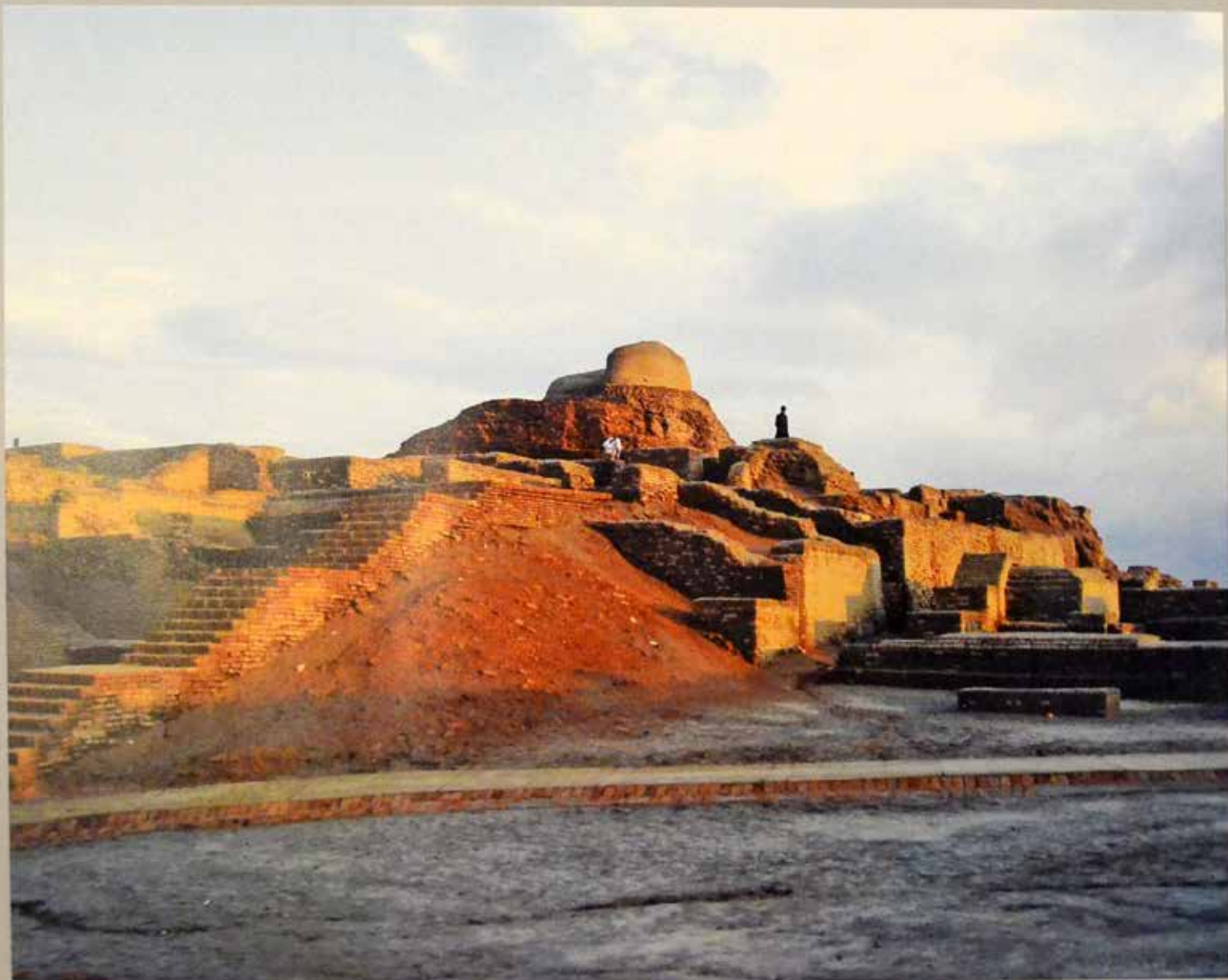
My children Hassan, Hina, Faria, Saba and Sadaf have been a source of strength and love for me; I thank them all for their affection and care. My regards are also due to Irfana, my brothers Ahmed Ali and Shoukat Ali, as well as my nephew Shafiq Ahmed for all that they have done for me.

My colleagues at SMIU were a great source of assistance. Zahid Islam did superb proofreading for me and Anwer Abro provided some very good photographs. I thank all of them for their help and cooperation. In addition, I thank all my friends and well wishers who helped me in various ways: whose names I am unable to mention here due to constraints of space.

Karachi: May 12, 2013

Dr Muhammad Ali Shaikh







## Chapter 1

# The Indus Valley Civilization

Most of the ancient civilizations have been found either in the valleys or in the vicinity of rivers. The reasons behind this universal phenomenon have been that the access to the river water provided the ancient man an opportunity to grow food and other commodities of his use in abundance in the fertile alluvial soils watered by the rivers. The rivers also provided another important source of food, fish. Additionally, except violent ones like the Tigris and the Yellow, the rivers have provided men of the ancient civilizations an easier means of communication and navigation<sup>1</sup>. This helped them immensely towards their prosperity through increased volumes of trade and commerce.

The rivers also facilitated the exchange of ideas and experiences, breaking down the culturally retarding barriers of isolation, helping development of the society and culture. It is thus no wonder that the ancient civilization of Egypt flourished on the banks of the Nile, that of Mesopotamia on the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris, the Chinese on the great Yellow River and the ancient Indian civilization on the Indus<sup>2</sup>.

Further to that, within the Indian subcontinent, different societal patterns and shades of culture evolved around different rivers. Accordingly, many archeologists and anthropologists have classified India in four distinct cultural divisions, "each dominated by its river systems. These are the basins of the Indus and of the Ganges, the Deccan Plateau, and Southern or Peninsular India."<sup>3</sup>

The River Indus rises north of Himalayas and after traversing a distance of about two thousand miles finally falls in the salty waters of Arabian Sea. On its way from the mountains to the sea, it is joined by four of its tributaries the Sutlej, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum in the plains of the Punjab, literally, the land of five rivers. South of the confluence of these streams lies Sindh, the land of "Sindhu", the Vedic name for the Indus.<sup>4</sup>

Since pre-historic times, Sindh has been the cradle of one of the world's oldest and most highly developed civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization.<sup>5</sup> It had been contemporary of the Egypt of Pharaohs. It was through Sindh that the Aryan and later the Arab invaders entered into India. In between, it was here where the great wave of Macedonian conquests under command of Alexander the Great finally exhausted itself, though it formally came to an end at Babylon.<sup>6</sup>

Geographically, Sindh is situated between the Iranian plateau and the Indian subcontinent, each representing a different cultural complex.<sup>7</sup> Due to its geographical position "Sindh has acted as a watershed of the two powerful streams of West Asian (or Middle Eastern) and South Asian history. In many cases the upper reaches of the Indus Valley and the plains of the Punjab have remained untouched



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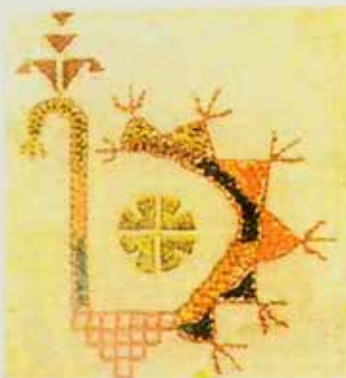






when Sindh and Balochistan became part of the great periods of West Asian history.<sup>9</sup> The location of Sindh has considerably influenced the evolution of society and culture in Sindh through the course of history from prehistoric times.<sup>9</sup>

Archeological evidences suggest that men lived in the region presently known as Sindh during the stone age, at least 500,000 years ago.<sup>10</sup> Alchin was able to find and date three stone age factories near Rohri, Ubhan Shah and a place near Kotdiji, the largest being spread over an area of about thirty-two acres of land. The stone tools found from these factories belonged to at least three different ages from 500,000 to 35,000 years ago<sup>11</sup>. However, most of Sindh submerged into sea through a gradual process that started about 100,000 years ago and lasted till about 50,000 years ago. It remained part of the sea for some millennia and then reappeared on the face of the world, again gradually, when sea receded to its present position near Karachi.<sup>12</sup>



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Apart from the stone age presence of human society in Sindh, the emergence of the great Indus civilization that emerged about the middle of the third millennium B.C. may fairly be adopted as a starting point of the history of Sindh.<sup>13</sup> The ruins of this powerful civilization were discovered by Sir John Marshal and R.D. Banerji during the excavations carried out by the British Indian Department of Archaeology in 1920s. The civilization was centered around the great city of Moenjodaro, on the bank of river Indus, in the present Larkana district of Sindh.

A unique feature of this civilization was that it covered a much larger area than any other of the known Bronze Age civilizations<sup>14</sup>. It was primarily based on agriculture and on both overland and overseas trade and commerce. The vast expanse and the efficient handling of the trade by the inhabitants of Indus valley civilization could be underscored from the fact that lapis lazuli and turquoise were brought from distant cities of Badakhshan and Khurasan, and then were not only locally used but were also exported to Sumerian and Akkadian cities<sup>15</sup>. In addition to that an extensive trade was carried on in such heavy cargoes as cotton bales and teakwood logs<sup>16</sup>.

The civilization had a fairly high standard and a uniquely hygienic and equitable way of living<sup>17</sup>. All the houses were planned in a such a way that the toilets in each of the house was serviced with sewerage drains running along the streets, which finally drained into a common covered sewerage line<sup>18</sup>. It was a society where class system was totally absent. There were neither any magnanimous buildings nor the tombs of the monarchs. There were simple houses made of brickwork, having a verandah in front of few rooms and a well in the courtyard. "Large number of substantial courtyard houses implies a wide distribution of wealth and a prosperous middle class during the period of Moenjodaro"<sup>19</sup>.

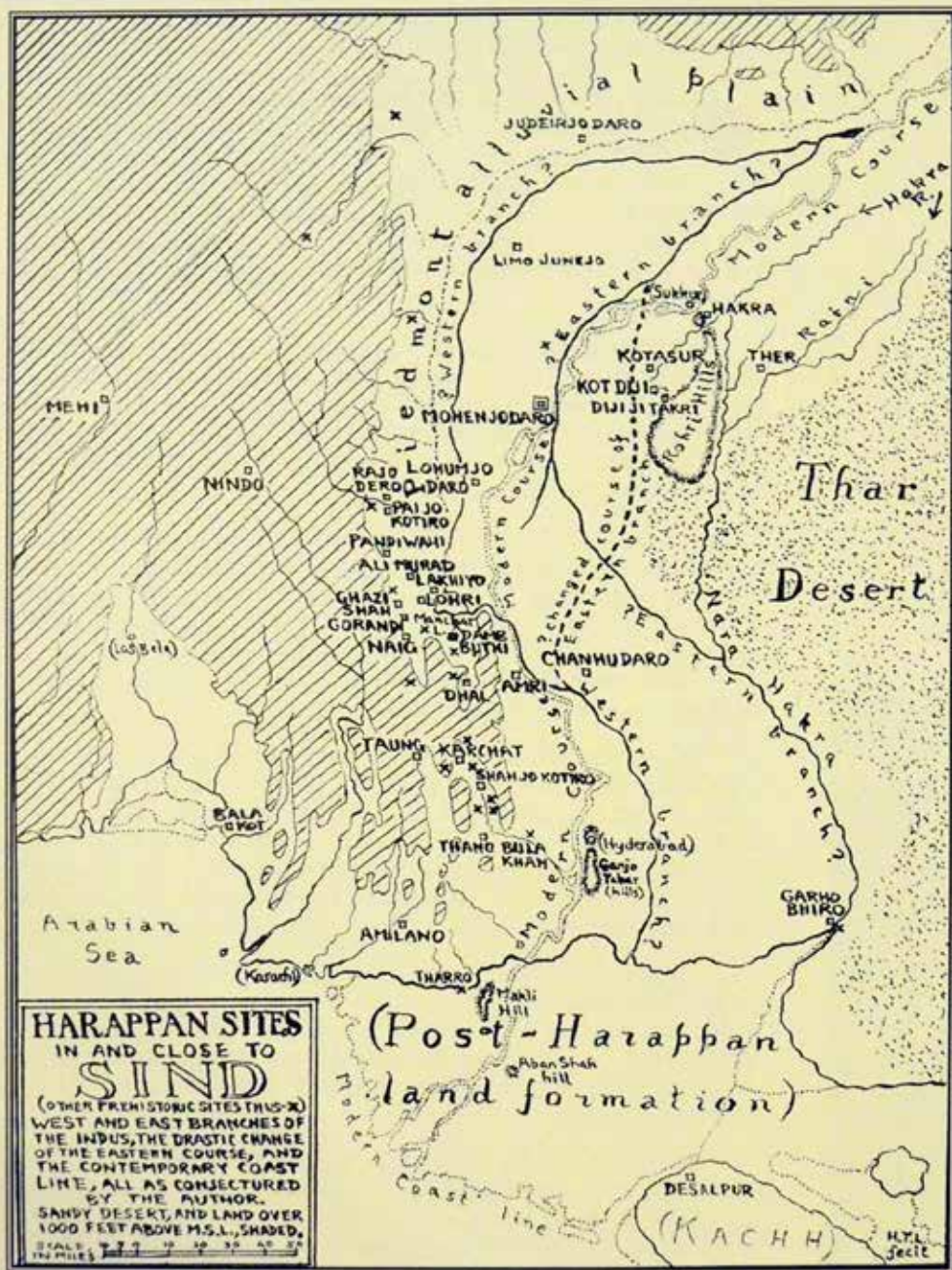
All the available historical evidences suggest that the inhabitants of this civilization were peaceful and peace-loving people. "Their arrival in the Indus valley seems to have been more of a mass migration than an invasion"<sup>20</sup>. So far not a single weapon like sword, spear or anything of that type has been found from the ruins of Moenjodaro, which shows that it was a safe place, where people lived peacefully. "Fighting, looting or killing was not their style, so they did not have armies and they never attacked any other country"<sup>21</sup>.

This does not mean that they did not know metal work. On the contrary they used metal for peaceful purposes like making utensils, knives, axes and other articles of their domestic, religious, agricultural and artistic use. Their high caliber of craftsmanship in the vocation of metallurgy could easily be fathomed from the metallic figurine of the famous dancing girl from Moenjodaro. "The little figure is shown resting her right hand on the hip, left arm fully covered with bracelets and bangles hanging closely downwards over the bent left leg, a necklace with three pearls hanging on the breasts. She has a braided coiffure and the head is tilted back in a rhythmic pose"<sup>22</sup>.



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The other objects discovered from the ruins of Moenjodaro provide further information on everyday life in the early Indus valley civilization. For instance, it has been established that the men and women, both rich and poor, decorated themselves with ornaments. All known semi-precious stones at that time as well as metals were utilized for manufacturing various ornaments. "Women wore a fan shaped headdress, with small cones of gold. The forehead was decorated with a fillet or a headband. Earrings were made of gold, silver and copper. There were a variety of necklaces, finger rings, bangles and bracelets"<sup>23</sup>.

The prime achievement of this pre-historic society however has been considered its advancement in the textile industry. It is believed that they were the first who invented cloth. One reason for this advancement was that the climate of pre-historic Sindh well suited growing good quality cotton. They acquired skills at an earlier stage of first spinning and then weaving the cotton into cloth. "A large number of spindle whorls discovered at Moenjodaro could only have been used for spinning cotton thread and by a happy chance a fragment of woven material survived there"<sup>24</sup>.

The expertise in fine cotton making was such that the Sanskrit word for cotton was 'Sindhu' and Greeks called it Sindoon<sup>25</sup>. The people, both men and women, were fond of wearing embroidered and block printed flowered dresses. Sindh maintained its lead in the field of growing cotton for a considerable time so that when Greek historian Herodotus (484-485 B.C) came to Sindh, he was amazed to see a "unique plant in the Sindhu valley which bore silvery white flowers"<sup>26</sup>.

The information on the language spoken in this region in those times is still mostly in the dark. Unfortunately, the excavations have so far not unearthed any writing "on organic materials like paper, papyrus, leaves, or bark"<sup>27</sup>. The discovered written documents are small stamp seals with messages that seem to be names, titles, places of affiliation and the like. While efforts are still on to decipher the Indus script, there is a wide consensus amongst the scholars that literacy in this society was widespread. For instance, "there are thousands of examples of Indus messages scratched onto the surfaces of ordinary fired pottery. This indicates that ordinary people probably controlled some small part of the writing system and used it in their daily lives."<sup>28</sup>



P8a



P8b



P9a



P9b









## Chapter 2

### Sindh of Vedic Era

Apart from the archeological discoveries relating to ancient Indus valley civilization, the second important source on the earlier patterns of society and culture in Sindh has been the Vedic literature. Though the date of Rig Veda is a point of discussion and controversy, however, there is a consensus of opinion regarding its comparative antiquity and it is "universally accepted that the Rig Veda is older than the rest of Indian literature"<sup>29</sup>. Most of the authorities however, "starting from the date of Alexander's invasion and assigning a period of two hundred years for the development of each of the four literary strata discernible in the Vedic literature, have arrived at the date 1200 to 1000 BC as the beginning of Vedic poetry"<sup>30</sup>.

The earliest mention of Sindh in any form of literature is found in the Rig Veda where river Indus, named as Sindhu, has been termed as a mighty river. It has been described as a "self-moving river of golden hue, roaring down the snow-clad mountains rushing through pine forests, passing along fair fields and expanding into vast waters in which the sun sank. These are, more or less, the northern and southern limits of the Indus, the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean"<sup>31</sup>. One of the poems in Rig Veda, composed by a Sindhi sage of those times, describing and praising the river Indus has been translated as under:

Flashing, whitely gleaming in her mightiness,  
She moves along her ample volumes through the realms,  
Most active of the active, Sindhu unrestrained,  
Like to a dappled mare, beautiful, fair to see,  
Rich in good steeds is Sindhu, rich in cars and robes,  
Rich in nobly fashioned gold, rich in ample wealth,  
Rich in lush grass, rich in lovely wool, rich in sweet syrup<sup>32</sup>.

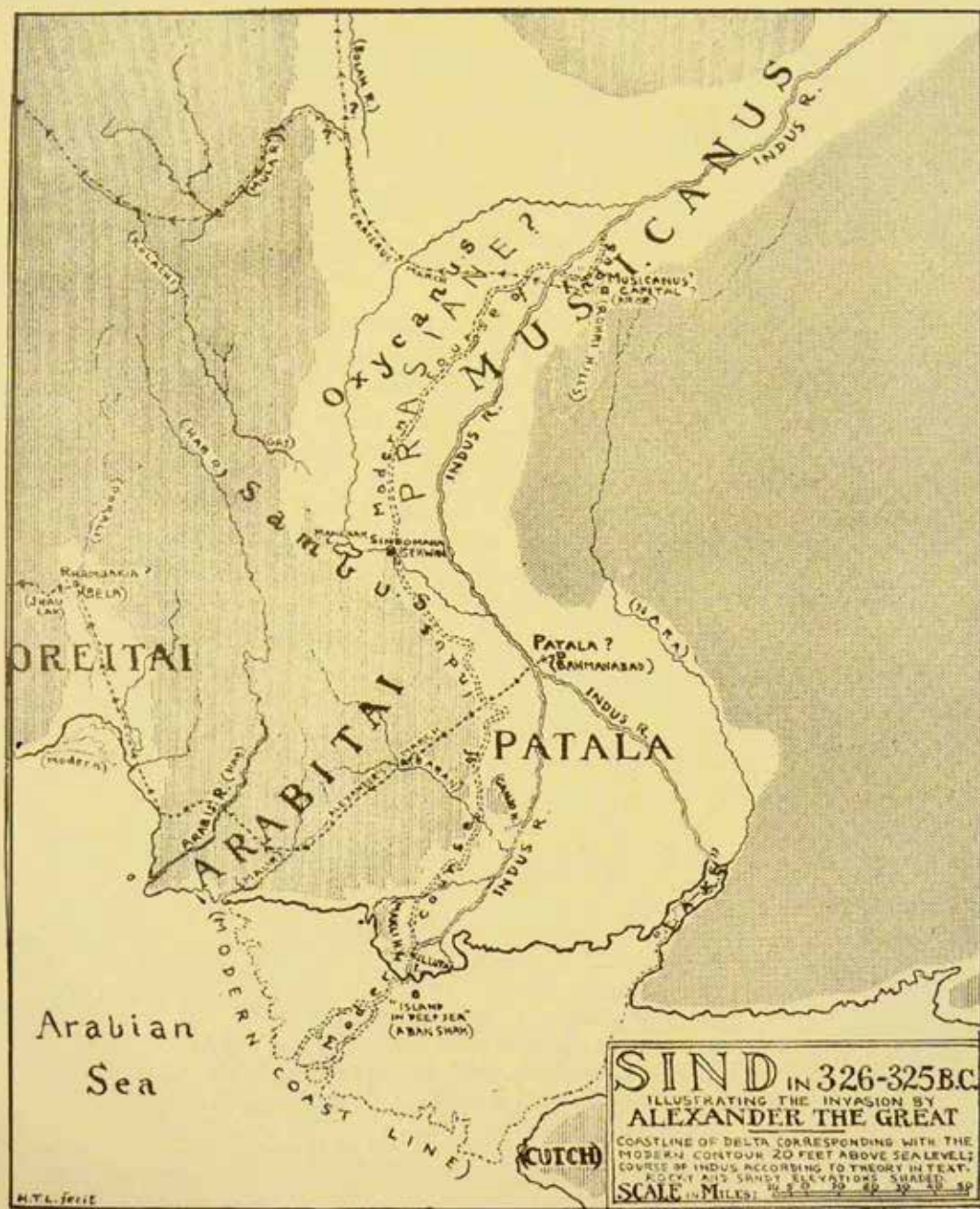
It appears from the Vedic literature that by the time when the Rig Veda was being composed the Aryans had very well settled in the Indus valley<sup>33</sup>. The entire society was reorganized on the Aryan pattern, which



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was divided into two broad classes, the upper class and the lower class. The upper class consisted of the sophisticated ruling elite, warriors, rich and wealthy merchants and religious leaders.

The raja or the ruler was "elected and controlled by a council. His wealth lay in his men, horses, chariots, cattle, gold, garments, arms and pomp. Occasionally he joined other raja to wage a collective war<sup>34</sup>. The warriors frequently indulged in wars with each other as well as other groups, forcing their way eastwards towards Ganges Valley. The religious leader in form of a poet-priest was always available to the raja to poetically laud his feats of bravery and gallantry as well as praise his gods in sacrificial ceremonies.

On the other hand, the lower class consisted of the manual workers, laborers and peasants "who toiled hard for their herds, flocks and field, as well as weavers, tanners, carpenters, smiths and itinerant tradesmen"<sup>35</sup>.

This distinction on the basis of class even continued to the realm of language. The language of the lower class was termed as prakrita, which was commonly spoken and understood. While, the upper class, particularly the priests' spoke a different dialect, called sanskrita, which was well formed and artificially polished<sup>36</sup>. With the passage of time, this language became totally unintelligible for the other sections of the society, except the priest class, which established a monopoly on the religious ceremonies through their hereditary command over the dialect.

A distinguished feature of this society was that the women enjoyed a high position in it. They were allowed to choose their mates through their free will. There is no mention of divorce as such. The concept of life-long companionship of the body and soul amongst the partners has been stressed. At this point in time still the practice of sati or the ceremony of burning alive of the wife of a deceased man had not yet started<sup>37</sup>.

In other aspects also, the society was quite liberal. There were no restrictions on the performing arts. Dance and music was much in vogue. So was drinking wine. The only distinction was that while the priests "ceremoniously consumed the consecrated juice of soma, the poor were happy with their sura, a kind of beer"<sup>38</sup>. The people also indulged fondly in racing and gambling as their spare time activities. Processions were taken out at the time of marriages and funerals.

Regarding the dress, the Vedic literature reveals that mostly the men and women dressed alike. Both of the genders wore "loin cloth and shawl-lengths of cloth draped around the body and over the shoulders, and fastened with a belt and pins"<sup>39</sup>. The only distinction between the dresses of men and women was that the women's clothes were more heavily embroi-



P14



P15





dered than the men's. The practice of wearing ornaments of gold, silver and precious stones was also quite common.

The religion of Indus valley civilization at this stage of evolution was based on polytheism. However their gods and goddesses represented "the finest human qualities – strength, kindness, nobility, love, tenderness, beneficence, helpfulness and friendliness, the ultimate paternal and maternal qualities"<sup>40</sup>. It taught them to be truthful, righteous and above all, optimistic.



P17



P18

What course did this civilization take onwards for a couple of centuries, has still been shrouded in mystery. The next mention of Sindh's society in the early recorded history comes through Greek historians, particularly Herodotus in relation to "Sindh's annexation to the Persian Empire under Darius I (reigned 522-486 BC)"<sup>41</sup>. Dr. Hamida Khuhro, quoting Herodotus, writes "The twentieth satrapy of the Persian Empire Sindhu was extremely prosperous and its revenues and population far exceeded those of any other satrapy of the Persian Empire"<sup>42</sup>. He further states the "Sindhis were good archers"<sup>43</sup>.

Nearly two centuries later to the Persian annexation, Sindh watched the march of the Greek armies of Alexander the Great through its length and breadth in 326 and 325 BC. The state of society and culture in Sindh at this juncture of time has been "highlighted by the accounts of Alexander's historians as preserved by later writers"<sup>44</sup>. Alexander's armies sailed down the river Indus and "Alexander is the legendary founder of the fort of Sehwan"<sup>45</sup>.

Alexander appointed Peithon as the viceroy of the region extending from the confluence of the Indus and to the shores of the sea, most part of the present region of Sindh. "The people dwelling along the river lands of the Indus are named Musicanus Sabus (or Sambus) and Porticanus. The capital of Sambus was Sindhimana. Musicanus was reported to be the most prosperous part of India"<sup>46</sup>.

Writing about the people of this region, the Greeks accompanying Alexander wrote that Sindhis carried two javelins and a small shield. "Their bows were as tall as the archers themselves and to shoot them, they rested them on the ground and tread on them with their left foot, pulling the bow-string a long way back. Their arrows were about four feet long and no shield or breastplate, however strong, could keep them off... All wore a broad sword, at least four and a half feet long. They wielded it with both hands. Their arrows were iron-tipped"<sup>47</sup>.







## Chapter 3

### Buddhist Rule

Shortly after Alexander's death, Sindh came under Chandragupta Maurya, "who had brought a vast part of India under his rule and for the first time gave some semblance of unity to the subcontinent"<sup>48</sup>. This way Sindh became part of an Indian dynasty that centered in Northern India but "stretched from Kabul in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the east"<sup>49</sup>.

Much more in significance for Sindh however had been, than becoming part of an Indian empire, its coming under the influence of Buddhism under Asoka, who reigned from 274-236 BC as the political heir and the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya. Subsequently, Sindh became part of the kingdom of the great Kushan ruler, Kanishka, who was a Mahayana Buddhist and who further strengthened Buddhism in Sindh<sup>50</sup>.

Henceforth, Sindh witnessed many political upheavals in the succeeding few centuries. Firstly, it came under Persian hegemony for the second time in the Sassanid Empire by the middle of the third century AD. It came under the White Huns, who reestablished Brahmanism in the fourth and fifth century AD. It again became independent under the Buddhist Rai Dynasty (550-644 AD)<sup>51</sup>. A politico-historical accident took place at this juncture in Sindh's history, which wedged a rift between the Hindus and Buddhist communities living in Sindh, ultimately paving way for Arabs to conquer Sindh about three quarters of a century later.

The ruling Buddhist Rai dynasty was brought to an end by a Hindu minister with name of Chach, "who ascended the vacant throne with the assistance of Queen Sunha Devi, the widow of Rai Sehasi II, the last ruler of Rai dynasty"<sup>52</sup>. This laid the foundation of Brahmin Chach Dynasty (644-711 AD), but alienated the Buddhist majority from its rulers, as they could not reconcile themselves with the illegitimate occupation of the throne by a Hindu combined with immoral connections with the wife of the deceased raja. However, Chach was a strong ruler, backed by a strong



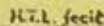
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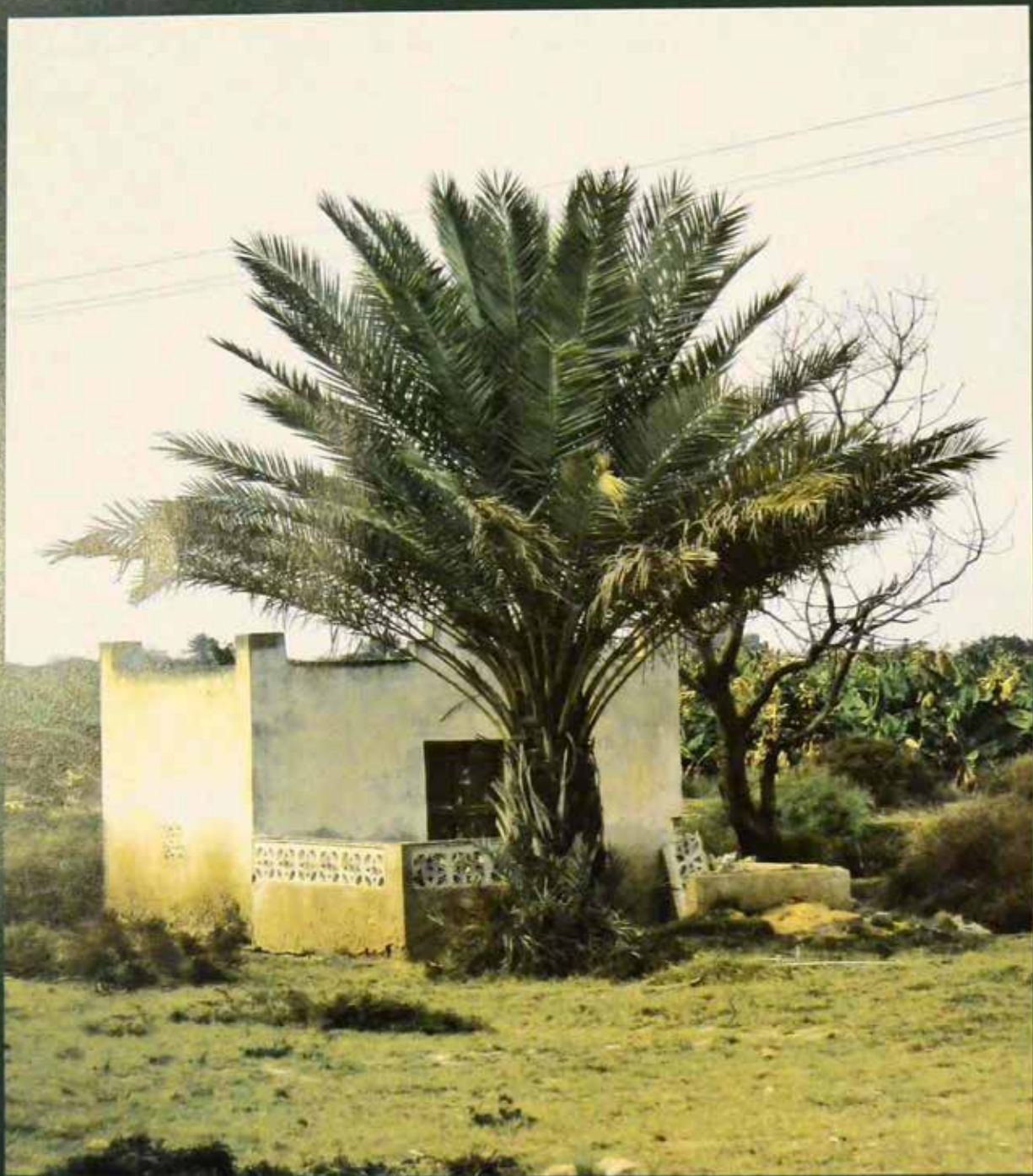
Hindu army that was able to put down all resistance with an iron hand.

Nevertheless, the society mostly retained the colors and composition of Buddhism. The "Buddhist were in majority in Sindh since Asokan times (272 BC) as were its rulers except for brief period under Vasudeva and Sassanians (183-256 AD). Chach's Brahmin dynasty (641-711 AD) and his successors accommodated Buddhists by appointing them as governors of southern Sindh, but retained Hindu governors in northern Sindh and Multan. In rural areas Buddhists formed the majority and in urban areas they formed a class of rich businessmen. They had a large number of stupas scattered all over Sindh"<sup>53</sup>.

The Buddhist Chinese pilgrim Heun Tswang, who visited Sindh in 642 AD, records that there were ten thousand Buddhist monks "living in this country in several hundred monasteries"<sup>54</sup>. These religious centers may not have been vast complexes of the size and magnitude of the universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila in Bihar, but the sheer number of the Buddhist stupas in Sindh at that time is definitely astonishing and speak of the influence and spread of Buddhism in this region.







## Chapter 4

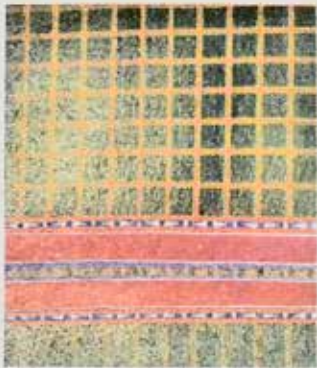
### Advent of Islam

Raja Chach was followed by his successors, Raja Chandur and then Raja Dahir. It was during the reign of Raja Dahir that the Arabs under Mohammed Bin Qasim invaded Sindh and introduced Islam in 711 AD. "The traditional and often quoted main cause of attacks on Sindh is reported to have been a piratical raid made on Arab vessels by the pirates of Sindh, while passing through off the coast of al-Daybul... This story it seems is a fabrication on part of the Muslim writers with the sole purpose of justifying the attacks of Arabs on Sindh"<sup>55</sup>.

The real causes for invasion of Sindh by the Arabs were of different nature. Firstly, the rulers of Sindh had earned the displeasure of Hujjaj bin Yousuf, Arab viceroy in Iraq, by giving shelter to his rebels. Secondly, Hujjaj was pursuing actively an imperialistic policy and had extended the limits of his domain to Seistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. With this policy in hand, the "conflict with the kingdom of Sindh was but a natural process and inevitable"<sup>56</sup>. Another objective of this singularly important event in the history of Sindh could be the "intention of diverting the energies of the Arabs to new enterprises rather than fighting among themselves"<sup>57</sup>.

Whatever the cause of invasion, Mohammed Bin Qasim had a relatively easy victory over his rival's armies. The reasons were obvious. The first and foremost was perhaps disunity amongst the adherents of two major religions, the majority Buddhist and ruling Hindu minority. Secondly, the majority Buddhists believed in the doctrine of non-violence and were against bloodshed hence could not offer a formidable defense to the invaders<sup>58</sup>.

With the conquest of Sindh, the Muslims brought a new set of beliefs, customs, traditions and way of living, introducing the first ever monotheist religion on the soil of Sindh, challenging the popularity and authority of the already prevailing Buddhism and Hinduism. This heralded



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the direct Arab rule in Sindh, which lasted for about three hundred years, bringing fundamental changes in the society and culture of Sindh. In the words of AK Brohi, this event proved to be "an event of considerable cultural significance"<sup>59</sup>.

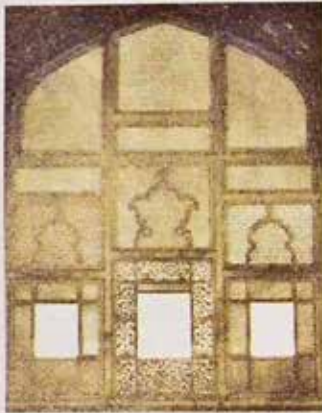
As a part of state policy in Sindh, the conquering Arabs did not encourage conversion to Islam of the adherents of native religions. Most of the population was granted Amman (or peace) on payment of Jizyah, a form of tax imposed on non-Muslims by the Muslim rulers. Going a step further, "Muhammad bin Qasim appointed hereditary Brahmans for rural administration and tax collection. Both Hindus and Buddhists were allowed to repair places of their worship. Caste system as existed among the Hindus was allowed to continue"<sup>60</sup>.

From the amount collected under the head of Jizyah, three percent was spent on the upkeep and maintenance of the non-Muslim's religious institutes. The "priests were allowed to solicit contributions from public. So long the public paid taxes to the Government regularly, they were allowed to observe their religious duties peacefully. The policy of Arabs in Sindh concerning conquest and governing was focused on submission of Sindhis and not on their conversion"<sup>61</sup>.

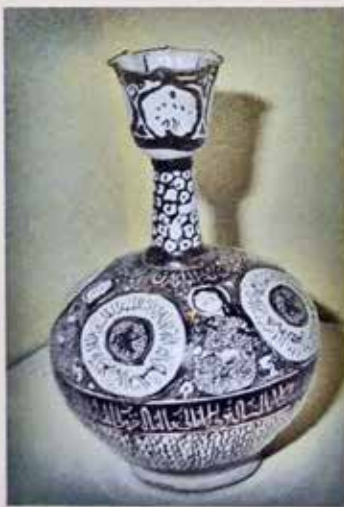
The state policy of Arabs towards Sindh's non-Muslims could be gauged from the letter of Hujjaj Bin Yousuf, which he wrote to Mohammed Bin Qasim regarding a petition of priests: "I have received my dear cousin Muhammad Qasim's letter, and have become acquainted with its contents.... I do not see what further rights we have over them beyond the usual tax, because, after they have become Zimmis (the payers of Jizyah) we have no right whatever to interfere with their lives or their property. Do therefore permit them to build the temples of those they worship. No one is prohibited from, or punished for, following his own religion, and let no one prevent them from doing so, so that they may live happily in their homes"<sup>62</sup>.

During the next three centuries, three major religions, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism coexisted peacefully on the soil of Sindh, as had been the case in the past with Buddhism and Hinduism for about seven centuries, before the advent of Islam. "As in Indonesia the changeover to Islam seems to have been a gradual process of acculturation, which took roughly three centuries. Muslim authors of the late ninth and tenth centuries tell us, for instance, that the chiefs of Sindh dressed like Hindus, allowed their hair to grow long and had rings in their ears. Sindh appears to have been a rich country those days, materially rich due to its flourishing trade and culturally rich on account of its diversified religious pattern"<sup>63</sup>.

During the period from 900-1250 AD, the world witnessed climatic changes in form of rise in temperatures in most of the world. This is called 'Climatic Optimum,' which resulted in more rainfall and consequently swelling of the Indus waters. The phenomenon brought more prosperity to the land of Indus. "There was enough agricultural surplus to support the



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government, soldiery and urban population besides the foreign trade”<sup>64</sup>.

But, then the wealth also brought misery in form of Mahmood of Ghazni, who after capturing Somnath in 1025 AD, “within a fortnight left for Sindh...he reached Mansura (Brahman Abad), the capital of Sindh. Its Ismaili ruler Khafif (Soomro) escaped to jungle. The city was sacked and burnt. On his way to Ghazni (via Multan and Gomal Pass) he was attacked by Jats (Boatmen) of the upper Sindh at the instigation of Khafif. He lost many men, animals and baggage. To avenge this, he returned to Sindh in 1027 AD and in a naval battle on the Indus, in which his boats were fitted with sharp steel spears, he attacked Jats, many of them were drowned and their families taken as prisoners”<sup>65</sup>.

This calamity proved to be short-lived as Mahmood retired back to the cliffs of Central Asia. The invasion also coincided with the change of gears in the political history of Sindh as the power finally shifted from the Arab chieftains to local Soomra clan, which ruled Sindh from 1011 to 1351 AD. The Samma clan, who ruled from 1351 to 1521 AD, followed them. These despots belonging to two dynasties sometime ruled as sovereigns and at other times as tributaries to the great powers ranging from Mahmood of Ghazni to the Sultanate of Delhi<sup>66</sup>.

Economically, by the end of the eleventh century, the people of Sindh were mostly busy in trade and commerce, in addition to growing crops in the fertile lands of the Indus. The Arab traveler Al-Bakri (d. A.D. 1094) states that Daybul was a busy port round that time. “Here the products of India were brought in large quantities for onward shipment. Among the commodities which were exported everywhere, from this port, sugarcandy occupied an important place... Sugarcane, mangoes and exceedingly sour lemon were the main horticultural products along with rice and other cereals”<sup>67</sup>.



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## Chapter 5

### Development of Folklore

It is this period in the history of Sindh that is credited with the creation of its most popular folklore. The most admired folk stories of Sindh like Umer Marui, Susie Punhu, Leela Chanesar, Momal Rano and Sorath Rai Diyatch are set in the settings of the Soomro dynasty period<sup>68</sup>, while Noori Jam Tamachi is set in the settings of the Samma period. The greatest Mystic poet of Sindh Shah Latif Bhittai later converted these folk-stories into poetic form. These stories throw light on the socio-cultural conditions of the society in the first half of the second millennium.

The story of Umer Marui relates to a "poor desert girl, betrothed to a rustic boy of her own area. Having caught the fancy of the ruler of the country, she found herself kidnapped and confined in the royal fort. Surrender of the original vow and virtue on her part would have elevated her at once to the position of queen of her country, with all the luxuries of life that went with it. But she spurned every temptation and remained loyal to her original word and world, the world of sand dunes, goats, and camels, the world into which she was born. Through her firmness, she thwarted the advances of the lecherous ruler successfully, and returned home, chaste and happy"<sup>69</sup>.

Similarly, the story of Susie symbolizes the hardships undertaken by a most beautiful and sought after damsel in pursuit of her husband Punhu, a prince from Makran, who has been "stealthily carried away to their country by his disaffected brothers. Susie set out in pursuit across frightful wild, deserts, and mountains and did not rest till she herself perished"<sup>70</sup>.

The tale of Leela Chanesar highlights the negative consequences of uncontrolled temptations for worldly things that may result in losing one's most valued beloved. Chanesar Soomro has been shown as a handsome and powerful king of a principality, and married to his beloved wife Leela. There was another princess with the name of Kunroo who wanted the company of Chanesar but could not due to Chanesar's love for his wife Leela.



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On her part, Leela had weakness for ornaments. When Kunroo, disguised as a common woman approached Leela with the proposal to give her a most precious necklace of pearls just for sharing one night with Chanesar, she could not resist her temptation and allowed Kunroo to share bed for a night with the heavily-drunk Chanesar in exchange for the necklace. When the reality about this 'barter deal' dawned on Chanesar, he lost love for Leela, who went through all sort of ordeals to reclaim his affection, but in vain. In the end Leela died of grief and guilt, followed by Chanesar<sup>71</sup>.

The story of Momal Rano is also a tragedy set in the Soomro period in the Northern Sindh environment. Momal was a most beautiful and sought after princess who devised a novel way to select her husband. She filled her palace with magic that frightened the persons entering into the palace. Rano was a minister and a brother-in-law of her suitor prince, Hamir. When Hamir failed in his efforts to get through the Momal's magical puzzle, he allowed his minister Rano to test his luck, who using his intelligence passed through the maze and got married with Momal. This infuriated Hamir who took him back to their place where Rano was kept under vigil. However, Rano truly in love with Momal used to traverse a long distance every night secretly to be with Momal. On the fateful night, he reached late at Momal's place who had, in order to punish him for his delay, decided to play hoax on him by dressing her sister in male attire and slept with her on the same bed. When Rano arrived, he mistook her sister as her paramour and left in disgust. Next morning, Momal realized her folly but Rano had gone. She left in his pursuit, did everything, but couldn't lessen his anger and disgust. Finally she decided to end her life by jumping into fire. When she did that Rano also joined her to be consumed in each other's company<sup>72</sup>.

The story of Sorath Rai Diyatch is that of a prince who unhesitatingly surrendered his head to a minstrel in order to keep the sanctity of his word. The heroine Sorath was a beautiful damsel, who was sought for marriage by two princes, Rai Diyatch and Ani Rai. Rai Diyatch proved to be successful and made Sorath his queen. This infuriated Ani Rai, who took it as his insult and attacked Rai Diyatch's kingdom. After a siege of one year, when he was unable to conquer the city, he set the musician Bijal to get the head of Rai Diyatch, knowing Rai Diyatch's love for music, on promise of giving Bijal half of his kingdom in case of his success. Bijal went to Rai Diyatch and played his violin so well that he offered to give 'anything' that Bijal desired. Bijal asked for his head. The king was astonished on his demand but decided to keep the sanctity of his words. Bijal took the royal head but realized that he had done an undignified job. He retraced back his steps to Rai Diyatch's city Girnar. On reaching there he saw a bonfire wherein the trunk of Rai Diyatch and Sorath were burning. He entered in the fire holding the head of Rai Diyatch and burnt himself to death<sup>73</sup>.

Another folktale Noori Jam Tamachi relates to the Samma period. Jam Tamachi, the Sama sovereign of Sindh, found his fulfillment in the love

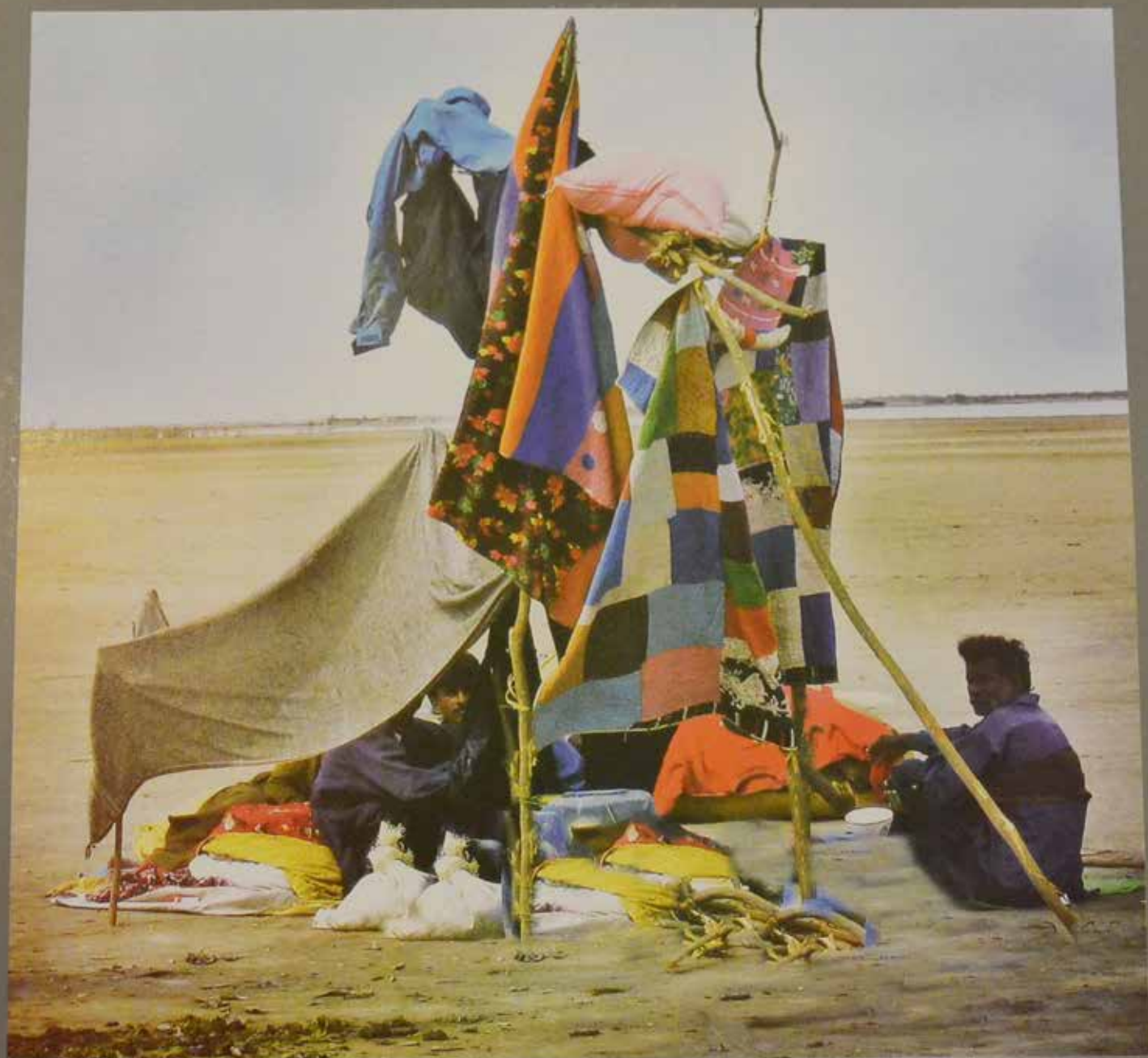


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of a fisherwoman Noori. Her humble background could not stop him from marrying her. He remained "faithful to her and hereby became the first to break the ancient inflexible Indian caste system and introduced the principle that all human beings are born equal and what counts in life are human qualities"<sup>74</sup>.

These folktales help us a great deal in understanding the nature of society and culture in Sindh at that time. As stated earlier, all these folktales were taken by Shah Latif as the themes of his poetry, which is preserved in form of Shah Jo Risalo. "The image of women in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif will enable us to understand their status in Sindhi society, and so it is essential that we study each female character presented by him in his poetry. Each of this character is distinct, having different attributes and qualities. His presentation of these qualities, be it her loyalty, her patriotism, her endurance, her fearlessness, steadfastness or her intellect, is a spectacular example of his grasp and understanding of human nature.... His work provides a complete picture of a woman's individuality, which aids us in our efforts to understand her role in Sindhi society"<sup>75</sup>.

Adherence to the Islamic concept of Purdah or seclusion between two genders was also minimal, more perhaps out of compulsion than conviction. Being an agricultural society, Sindh could hardly afford to spare one half of its population from taking part in economic chores. "The agriculture in Sindh has always been combined with raising animals for milk, meat and draft. In arid environment, animals have to be stall-fed during most part of the year and they are taken out for grazing when natural or cultivated or post-harvest residual grasses are available in the fields. This needs extra manpower and women and children have to help in all indoor and outdoor jobs. Women of farming community therefore could not be kept in seclusion at any cost"<sup>76</sup>.



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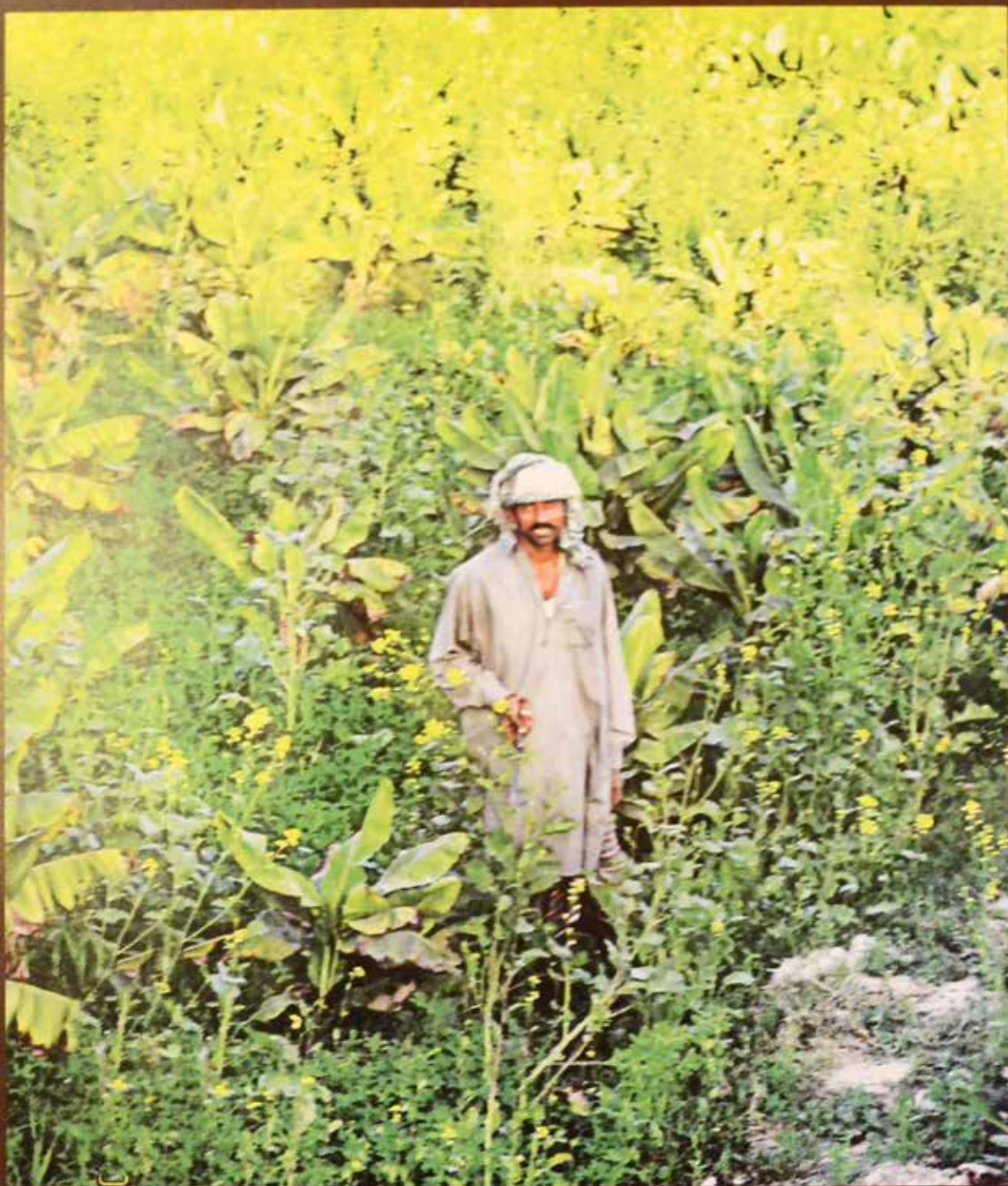


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## Baloch Migrations

Sindhi society faced a magnanimous wave of migration from adjoining lands of Balochistan, in the thirteenth century AD, which highly impacted its nature and composition. It was related to the invading armies of Mongols, who occupied Central Asia, Afghanistan and Balochistan. Though, the Mongols did not occupy Sindh, but their occupation of the neighboring lands created a sort of tremors that changed the colors of indigenous society. The Mongol invaders in Balochistan "attempted to throw out settled people and take over their possessions and house, etc. They burnt juniper forests in Ziarat valley where no juniper tree more than 700-year old is found. The Mongol pressure forced Balochs to migrate to Sindh"<sup>77</sup>.

Here it is pertinent to discuss the origin of this group of migrants to Sindh, as they were destined to stay here for long and change the structure of the society on almost permanent basis. "Balochis of Balochistan are an admixture of Brahuīs, who migrated to Balochistan and southwest Afghanistan from the south of Ural Lake around 3,000 BC, along-with other tribes of Afghanistan and Iran bordering Balochistan, who kept migrating specially due to political upheavals rising there from time to time"<sup>78</sup>.

Even prior to the Mongol invasion, Balochis used to migrate to the lands of Indus, however on seasonal basis, for about four months of severe winter. "Essentially living on cattle, goat and sheep herds and facing shortage of grazing pastures in winters in the hills bordering Sindh, they migrated with their animals each winter in various talukas of Sindh from Garhi Khairo to Sehwan on the right bank of the Indus, spent four months from November to February and migrated back as winter rains from January to March produced fresh pastures." The Sindhi society readily accepted these seasonal migrants as they were "poor but honest, (and) usually helped in harvest of Sugdasi rice in the late October and November as paid labour, leveling of land with the help of their oxen and a wooden leveling blade and undertaking many other odd jobs"<sup>79</sup>.

In the pre-mass exodus of Balochi periods also, this seasonal interaction between the people of the river and the people of the hills resulted in a strange course of influencing Sindh's society. "In those days exchange of marriageable-age girls was common among Sindhis and in the absence of

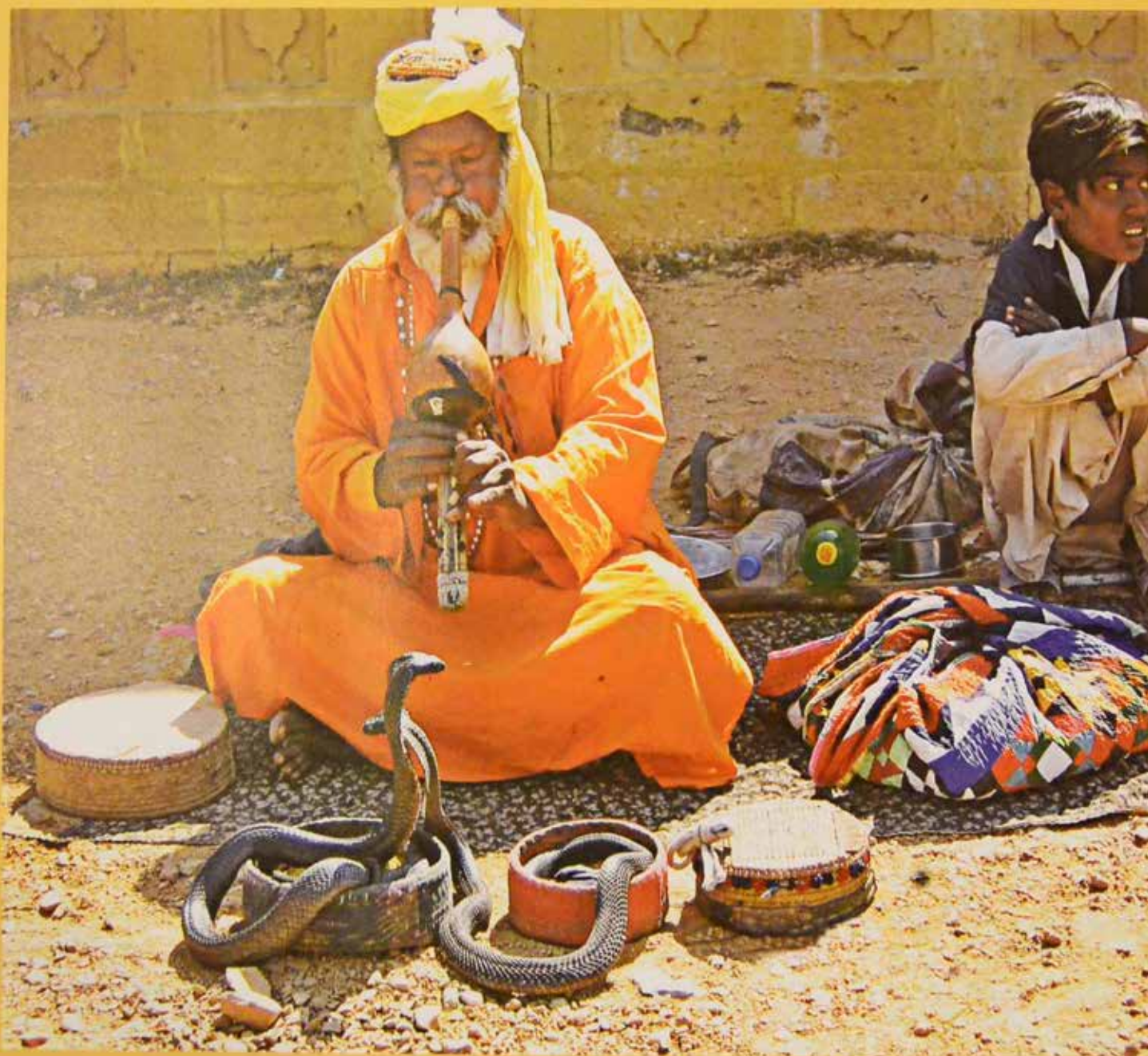


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exchangeable girls, the bride price was settled. There was a shortage of girls as many were killed by neglect and Brahuīs used to sell their girls taking care that family would look after the girl properly. In Sindh's culture purchased wife has the same social status as the one married from the own clan. This way many Brahui superstitions entered Sindh's culture through future mothers.... The customs, ceremonies and superstitions among the Brahuīs... are exactly the same as those prevailing among the Sindhis from Garhi Khairo and Sehwan"<sup>80</sup>.

While this slow process of assimilation between the two cultures was on that the circumstances arising out of the Mongol invasion forced the exodus of Balochis to Sindh, starting in the thirteenth century and continuing till about the seventeenth century. The migrating clans and tribes settled in different parts of the province, like "Magsi, Lashari, Rind, Dinari Domki, Kaluhar while Buledi were settled in Jacobabad district and Chandios in the hilly areas of Khairpur Nathan Shah, Johi and Sehwan talukas. Dal and Babar, also calling them Balochis, were settled in the present Kotri taluka in the seventeenth century"<sup>81</sup>.



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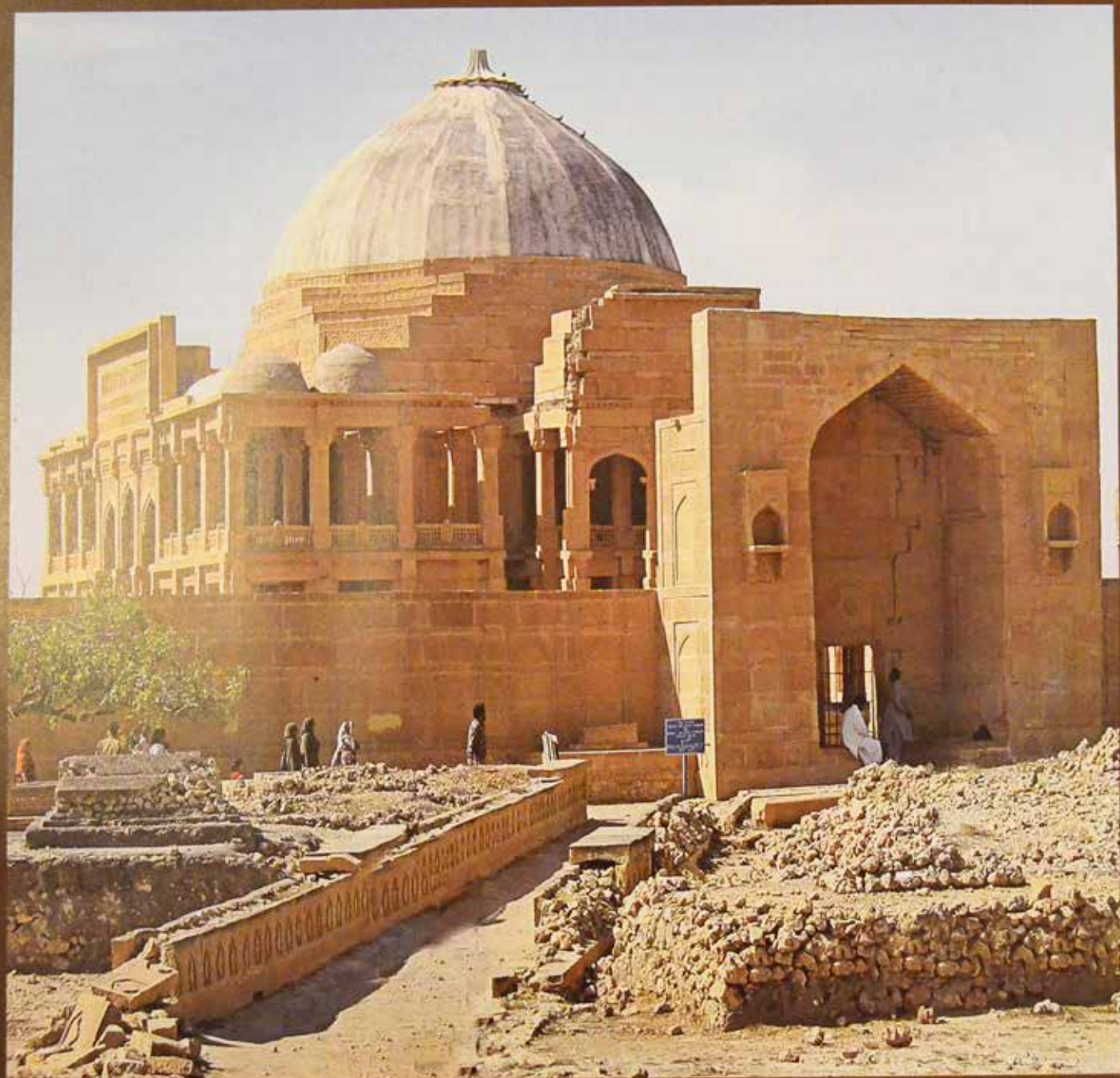


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## Local Dynasties

In the earlier half of the fourteenth century AD, famous Moroccan traveler Ibn Battutta commenced his thirty-year travels around the world and reached Sindh in 1333 AD. His narration and observations are considered an important source on the society and culture of Sindh. He has mentioned about existence of postal services system, based on both horses and men. Sehwan has been mentioned as a large town surrounded by desert, "where the only shrub or tree was acacia." The melons grew in abundance on the banks of river. People consumed sorghum and peas. There was also plenty of fish coming from Munchhar, Kinjhar, Kalri, Chotiari, Drigh and other lakes as well as from the River Indus. The buffaloes provided plenty of milk. He mentions that climate at Sehwan was so hot that "people used to moisten sheets of cloth in water and wrap around their upper torso to cool themselves. These sheets had to be moistened as soon as they dried up"<sup>82</sup>.

With the passage of time, changes took place on the religious front as well. By the end of the thirteenth century, Buddhism was totally wiped out. The Ismaili sect of Islam, which was a dominating sect in the initial centuries, was reduced to just a small minority. The only survivors of these changes were Sunni Islam and Hinduism<sup>83</sup>. But both of them appear to be quite liberal. The folklore of this period "makes one thing clear that during the period caste was no barrier to the selection of partners even in fictional literature... They also allowed the queens and women of royal families to come in Darbar regularly, participate in deliberations concerning statecraft and administration and give advice, a custom alien to Islamic dynasties. Their opinion usually counted in decision-making"<sup>84</sup>.

Politically the Samma rule ended in 1521. Then came Arghuns, who were originally Mongols and had come from Central Asia, but had moved towards Balochistan when Akbar conquered Kabul<sup>85</sup>. They ruled briefly, just for over three decades, till 1554 AD, but many important developments took place during their rule, which considerably influenced the course of Sindh's history and culture in the following periods. The most important aspect of their period was "large number of Sufis,



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Syeds and men of letters migrating to Sindh and influencing the local population, spreading Sufism and allied institutions<sup>96</sup>.

This period also saw the growth in the military muscle of a European power, Portuguese, in Sindh to such an extent that they burnt Thatta, the capital city of Sindh. The "Portuguese were the first Europeans to establish contacts with Sindh. They had their factories in Sindh for nearly two centuries and due to these contacts some Portuguese words were absorbed in Sindhi language... The power of Portuguese was recognized early and also crept in local feuds in 1555 AD resulting in looting of Thatta and hauling gold worth a crore [ten million] of rupees by Pedro Barreto Rolini<sup>97</sup>.

During the rule of another succeeding dynasty of Tarkhans, from 1554 to 1591 AD, the royal armies of the great Mughal emperor, Akbar, conquered Sindh in 1591-2 AD. Akbar was born at a desert town in Sindh, during the flight of his father emperor Humayun from Delhi while being pursued by Sher Shah Suri in 1540s. "Though in trying to conquer Sindh Khan-e-Khanan was defeated, thus losing his great reputation; Sindh was subsequently added to the Mughal Empire by treaty. Thus during the height of Mughal power Sindh was part of the empire asserting its independence again after the death of Aurangzeb. It became independent again in the early eighteenth century under the Kalhoras<sup>98</sup>.

Despite these political upheavals, the societal progress in the realms of economy and culture continued unabated. "By the eighteen century, therefore, the modern pre-industrial age civilization of Sindh was in full flower. Sindh had a richly developed language a distinct architectural style; the capital city of Hyderabad had replaced the mediaeval capital of Thatta, and Shikarpur in upper Sindh was a trading emporium for central and South Asia. The first independent Sindhi dynasty since the sixteenth century was then reigning. The end of the eighteenth century saw the Talpurs replacing the Kalhoras but its culture and prosperity remained undiminished through their reigns<sup>99</sup>.



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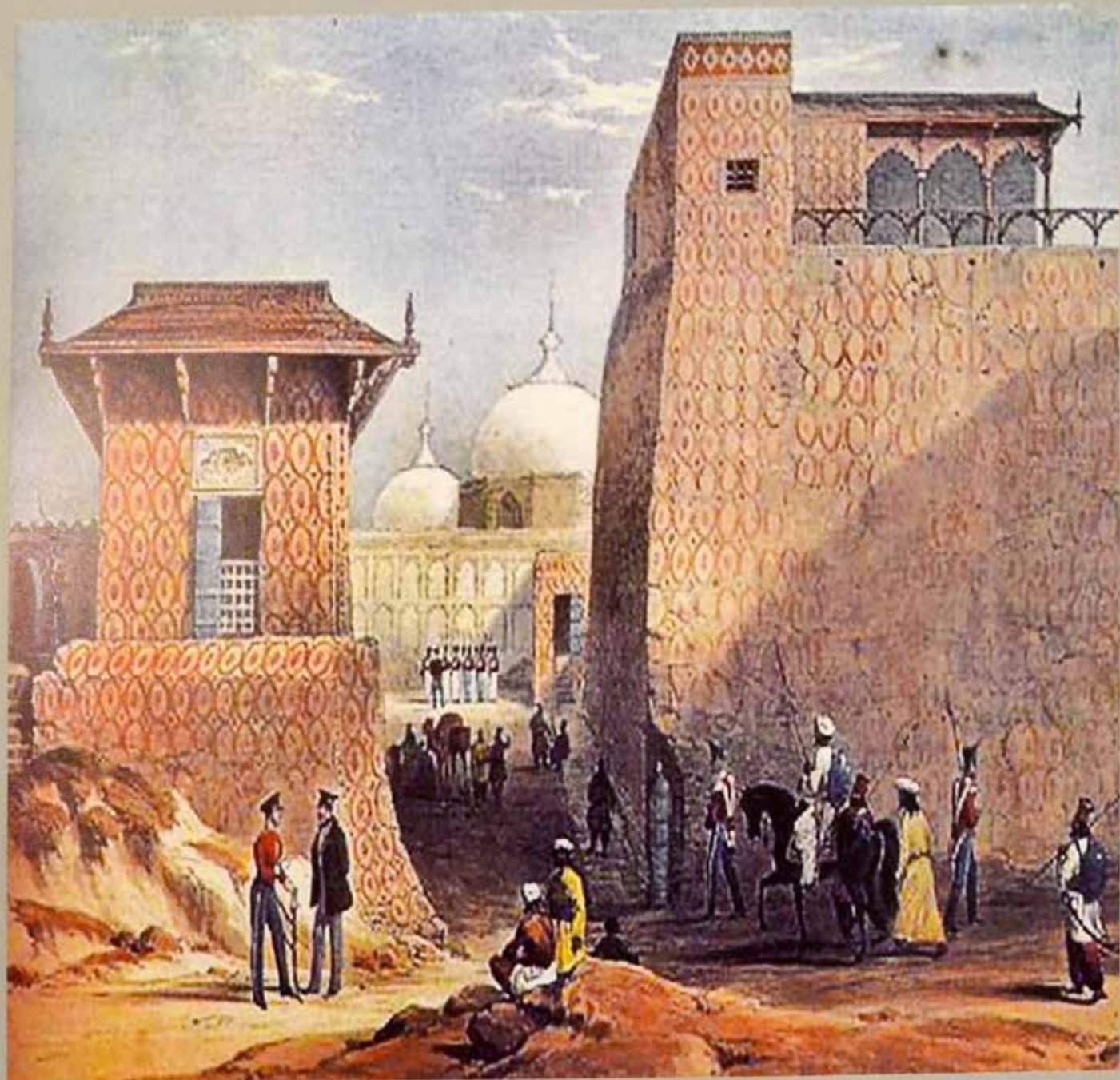


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## Chapter 8

### On Eve of the British Conquest

A great source on Sindh's society and culture, before the conquest of Sindh by British in 1843, comes through written accounts of several European travelers, who visited India as missionaries, merchants, envoys, spies and adventurers. "For them, the country was not only strange and mysterious but a source of profit and wealth... These accounts are a great source of history and culture of India because as travelers they recorded their observation for such things, which were usually ignored by the local historians"<sup>90</sup>. Another important source of information on this era are the "records of East India Company during two stages of its career when it maintained a factory in Sindh (a) 1635-62, and (b) 1758-75"<sup>91</sup>.

Amongst the earliest missionary travelers, "Manrique was a prominent missionary who visited Sindh in order to repair a church at Thatta. His account pointed out the presence of the Christian missions in Sindh. He met at Thatta Father Jorge de la Natividad, who was the superior of the mission whom he showed the Farman [proclamation], which he had, from Asaf Khan [d.1641] for the repair of the church. The church was later on reconstructed under the supervision of the governor of Thatta"<sup>92</sup>.

Another earlier traveler to Sindh had been Alexander Hamilton (1688-1723), who writing in his book "A New Account of the East Indies" published in London in 1744 describes the fertility of the soil of Sindh and agricultural practices in these words: "This country abounds richly in wheat, rice and legume, and provender for horses and cattle; and they never know the misery of famine, for the Indus overflows all the low grounds in the months of April, May and June, and when the floods go off, they leave a fat slime on the face of the ground, which they till easily before it dries, and being sown and harrowed, never fails of bringing forth a plentiful crop"<sup>93</sup>.

Mr. Nathan Crow undertook a visit of Sindh in 1799-1800. His travelogue is preserved in the Institute of Sindhology, Jamshoro, wherein he has given very interesting observations on the society of Sindh. He writes that the "inhabitants of Sind are a strong and hardy race of men, rather more



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fitted for fatigue than activity, and are mostly tall and dark complexioned... The Scindians (sic) are excessively fond of singing and have good performers, vocal and instrumental, but they are diminishing with other marks of the former prosperity of the country... Their drawers are shaped like those of the Turks. Turbans are worn of a monstrous magnitude... There is no zeal but for the propagation of the faith; no spirit but in celebrating the Ede (sic); no liberating but in feeding lazy Seyuds (sic); and no taste but in ornamenting old tombs.... The Hindoos (sic) are the most industrious and intelligent of the natives"<sup>94</sup>.

The travelers were generally impressed with the spirit of religious tolerance amongst the native Sindhis. H. Ellis writes in 1809: "A spirit of toleration, very unusual in Mohammedan Governments, prevails in Sind and the followers of the Prophet and of Brahman (sic) equally enjoy the confidence of their Prince and the free exercise of their religion. The Ameers belong to the sect of Sheyas (sic), but their subjects are generally believers in the Soonee doctrines"<sup>95</sup>.

Visiting Sindh same year, Henry Pottinger praises Sindhi women's beauty in glowing terms. "I do not remember to have seen one who was not distinguished by loveliness of face, or the symmetry of her figure, and in most instances, both these requisites to beauty were strikingly combined... The beauty of their women is proverbial, and deservedly so."<sup>96</sup> About Sindhi men he states: "The men of Sinde are dark in colour, but taken collectively, may be called exceedingly handsome; they are above the medium height of Asiatics, have good features and well formed limbs"<sup>97</sup>.

Henry Pottinger has also given details about the attire of the two genders. "The men's dress consists of a loose shirt, a pair of trousers puckered at the ankles, and a quilted cotton or cloth cap, in shape like the crown of a hat, ornamented with flowers of silk or gold round the bottom. That of the women is very similar, with the exception of the cap, beside, underneath their shifts they wear a silk jacket, made to fit the form, that laces behind, and when abroad, a Saree (sic) or cloth that wraps round the body, having one end brought over the crown of the head, whereby it serves as a veil to cover up the face when they meet strangers"<sup>98</sup>.

The Syeds in Sindh, claiming their origin to the descendents of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), enjoyed a remarkable high status in Sindh from the very beginning. James Baker visiting Sindh in 1927 has compared the Syeds' social position amongst Muslims with that of Brahman amongst Hindus. "The religious awe evinced by the Hindoo for his Brahmin priest is not more profound or abject than the veneration in which this tribe [Syeds] is held in Sinde. The meanest wretch, who can boast his origin from the holy stock, enjoys a place in society higher than temporal rank can bestow.

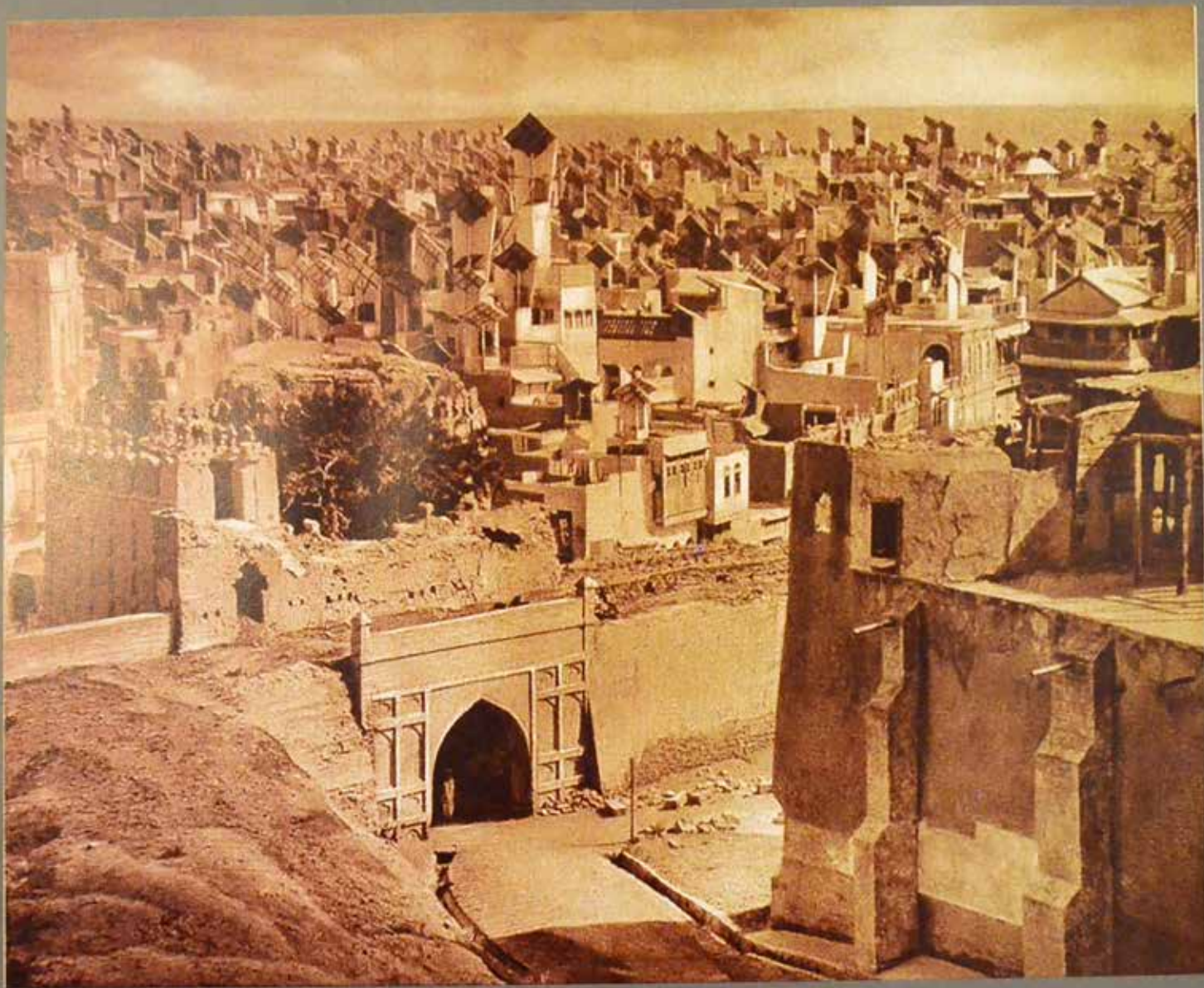


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Amongst the crowds who came to me for medicine, all readily gave place to a Seyuid (sic); and the only persons, I ever saw admitted to any degree of intimacy with the Ameers were of that privileged class. No person under any provocation would dare to abuse or strike one, unless at the risk of being torn to pieces by the populace"<sup>99</sup>.

And Syeds were not the only ones exploiting the innocence of Sindhi Muslims. They were joined in this oppression by so called Pirs [spiritual leaders] and Faqirs [Godly men]. Visiting Sindh in 1830, Charles Mason states: "Sindh also swarms with pirs, or spiritual guides of the higher class; and as they in common with Saiyads and faquirs enjoy grants of land, and frequently whole villages, much of the revenue of the country is diverted to their support. The number of resident faquirs subsisting upon the charity of the community is also very remarkable in Sindh: no village is without them, and in towns they abound, their residences, generally huts or sheds, are distinguished by a lofty pole surmounted by a flag and secured with ropes, in the manner of a flag-staff"<sup>100</sup>.

The religious observance of the Muslims of Sindh was an act of astonishment for many Western travelers. Visiting Sindh in 1831, Alexander Burnes recorded his observations: "Nothing more arrests the notice of a stranger, on entering Sindh, than the severe attention of the people to the forms of religions, as enjoined by the Prophet of Arabia. In all places, the meanest and poorest of mankind may be seen, at the appointed hours, turned towards Mecca, offering up their prayers. I have observed a boatman quit the laborious duty of dragging the vessel against the stream, and retire to the shore, wet and covered with mud, to perform his genuflections"<sup>101</sup>.

The best of the best place even in a poverty-stricken village was the mosque. "The Masjits [Mosques] were in all of them the better buildings, and were well tended, the people being, while simple in manners, equally devout as Mussalmans. Each of them was provided with a mullah (sic), and other attendants; and at this time of the year, it being their winter season, warm water was prepared for the ablutions of those who attended prayers"<sup>102</sup>. All the Muslims in a settlement very well responded the call for prayer for five times a day. "In the smallest villages, the sound of the "Mowuzzun," or crier, summoning true believers to prayers, may be heard, and the Mohammedans within reach of the sonorous sound suspend, for the moment, their employment, that they may add their "Ameen" to the solemn sentence when concluded. The effect is pleasing and impressive"<sup>103</sup>.

This observance of Islam on part of Muslims was not the cost of curtailing independence of any other religious minority. The Hindus were living peacefully along with Muslims all over Sindh. Mr. T. Posten, who visited Sindh in 1940-41, observed: "Hindoos (sic) are dispersed over the



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whole of Sindh: in the wildest fastnesses of the Biluchi (sic) mountains, in the deserts and smallest collection of huts in the jungles of the plains; a Hindoo (sic) and his shop of tobacco, spices, groceries, or cloths, is sure to be found; but their principal localities are in Northern Sindh at Shikarpur, and in Southern at the port of Karachi"<sup>104</sup>.

Apart from running shops in almost all the parts of Sindh, the Hindus of Sindh were also working as the most trusted bankers of those times, having agents in the remote possible areas, where they provided the facility of transaction of money to the traders and travelers through *Hundi*, a practice that prevails even to this day in this region, though now the operators have changed. "The Hindu merchants of bankers have agents in the most remote parts of Central Asia, and could negotiate bills upon Candahar, Kilat, Cabul, Khiva, Hirat, Bokhara or any other of the marts in that direction"<sup>105</sup>. Being a merchant class, they were mostly concentrated either in the port city of Karachi or the northern hub trade and commerce, Shikarpur. "At Karachi the principal port of Sindh, and therefore of the Indus and countries beyond it the Hindus are very numerous and influential: here and at Shikarpur they enjoy greater protection than in any other part of the Sindhian dominions"<sup>106</sup>.

Till early 1840s, still the slavery existed in Sindh, where the people from the African regions were brought and sold. But the practice was in a very mild form where the slaves enjoyed almost equal rights to that of the natives. In some instances they enjoyed more influential position than the ordinary natives, because of their close association with the ruling Talpur Ameers, who confided in them sometime even more than their family members. "Slavery in a very mild form exists in Sindh: the natives of Zanzibar are brought to the country when very young, and are sold to the wealthier classes; but in Sindh, as elsewhere in the East, the term slavery does not imply a state of cruelty or degrading bondage. Slaves are treated with great consideration, and often become the most influential members of a family"<sup>107</sup>.

The people of Sindh were famous for their aesthetics and love for flowers. The affluent classes were very fond of having their private gardens. "At the beginning of the hot months the whole country is well supplied with flowers, particularly roses. All classes take great pleasure in having large gardens, wherein are passed the hours of relaxation; Mohammedans and Hindus alike spend much money, and bestow great attention on this pursuit. At Shikarpur wealthy Soucare [Richey rich] vie with each other in their pleasure grounds: fruits and flowers are alone cultivated"<sup>108</sup>.

Another distinction at this stage was their expertise in the production of handicrafts. Their specialties included textiles as well as lacquered

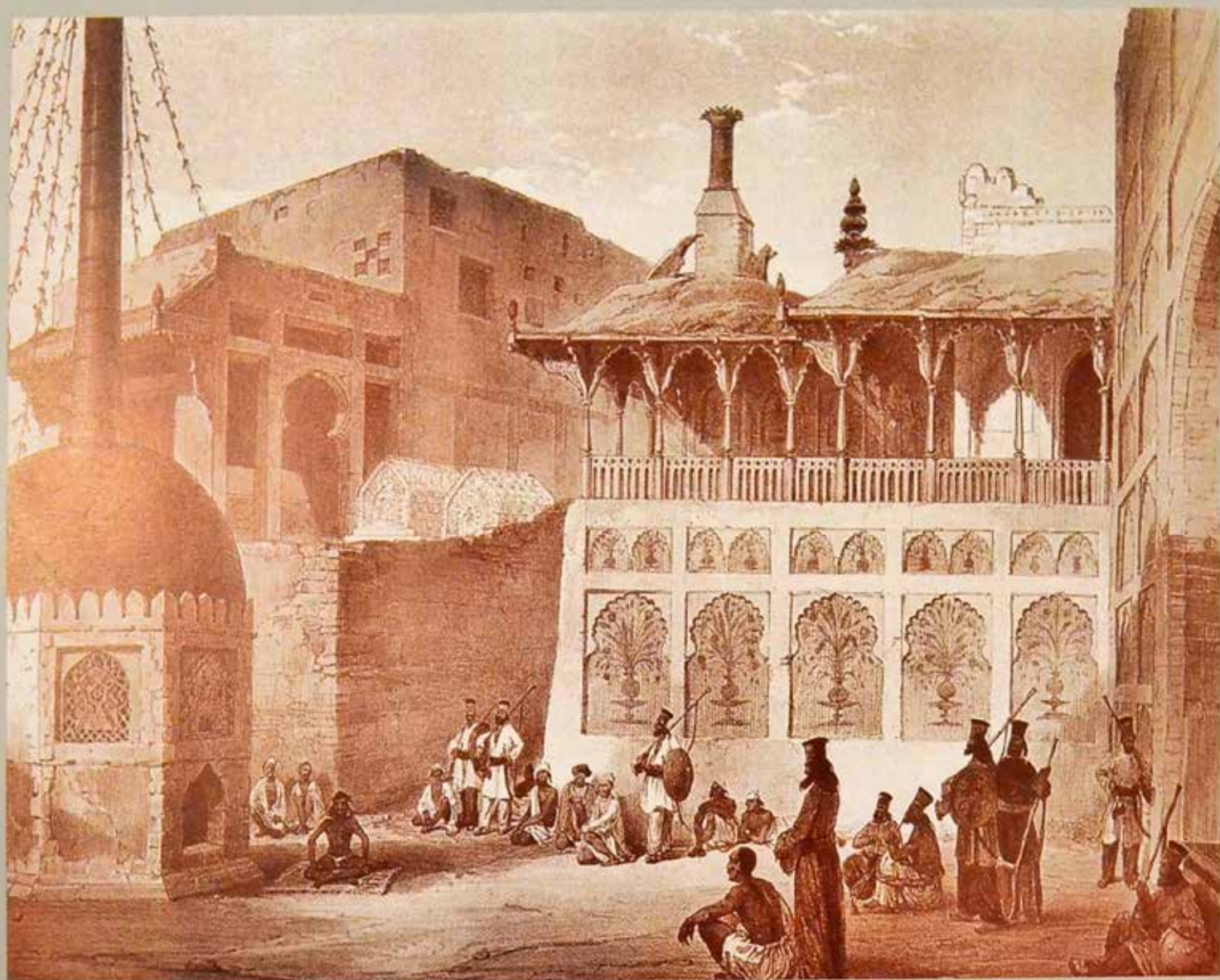


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woodwork. "The natives are particularly ingenious as weavers, turners, and artisans, and are noted for a very curious description of wooden lacquered work, which has attained for them a great reputation through India"<sup>109</sup>. Their artistic qualities also earned them name in the ornamental ivory work as well as production of arms and ammunition. "They produce beautiful ornamental work in wood and ivory, admitting of a comparison with that of China. The arms of Sindh are very superior to those of most parts of India, particularly the matchlock-barrels, which are twisted in the Damascus style... The Sindhian sword-blades are large, curved, very sharp and well tempered. The sheath also contains a receptacle for a small knife, used for food and other useful purposes. The belts are of leather or cloth, richly embroidered"<sup>110</sup>.



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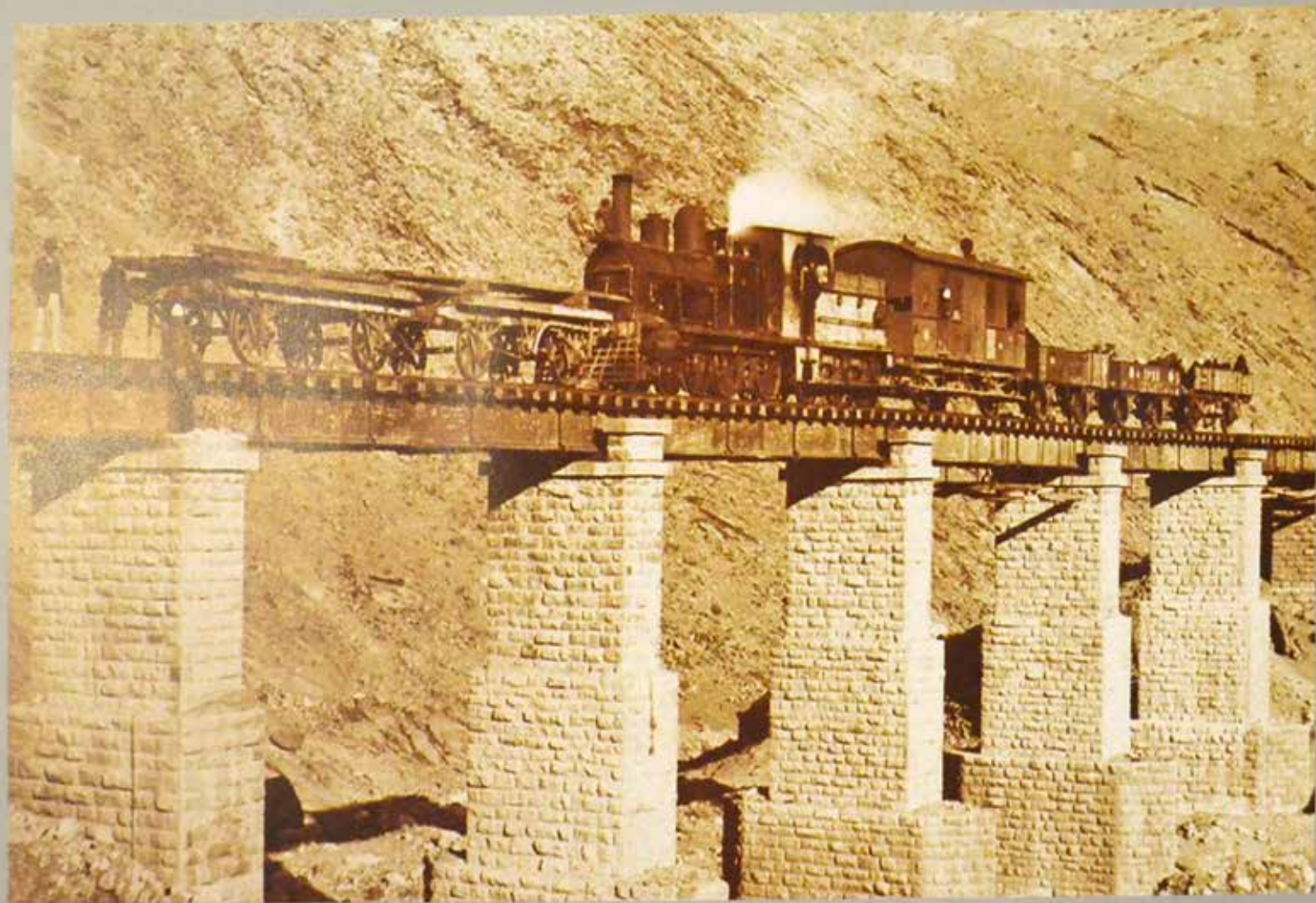
About a year before the British conquest of Sindh in 1843, another traveler Leopold von Orlich undertook a visit of India and also visited Sindh. His travelogue, published in London, also throws ample light on the state of society and culture of Sindh before its undergoing through a sea change. About their attire, he writes: "The men wear a coloured cap of cotton or silk, embroidered with gold and silver, an open shirt, a yellow or red silk waistcoat, wide pantaloons, and pointed shoes... They consider the beard a great ornament, and pay much attention to it... The women wear wide pantaloons, and a garment which reaches to the ground and fits close to the body, a kerchief loosely wound round the head, and their hair falls in long plaits"<sup>111</sup>.

A considerable population of Sindh at that time was also engaged in fishery and other vocations related with river and lakes. Both the genders worked together, women contributing as an equal partner in the economic pursuits of the family. "The Miani are employed in navigation and fishery; they live as much upon the rivers and lakes as on shore—nay, some of them have no other dwelling than their boat. The women are as vigorous, and muscular as the men, and share in their hard labour; and while the husband is mending his nets, or smoking his pipe, and the child is suspended in its network cradle to the mast, the wife guides the boat with a large oar"<sup>112</sup>.



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## Chapter 9

### British Rule



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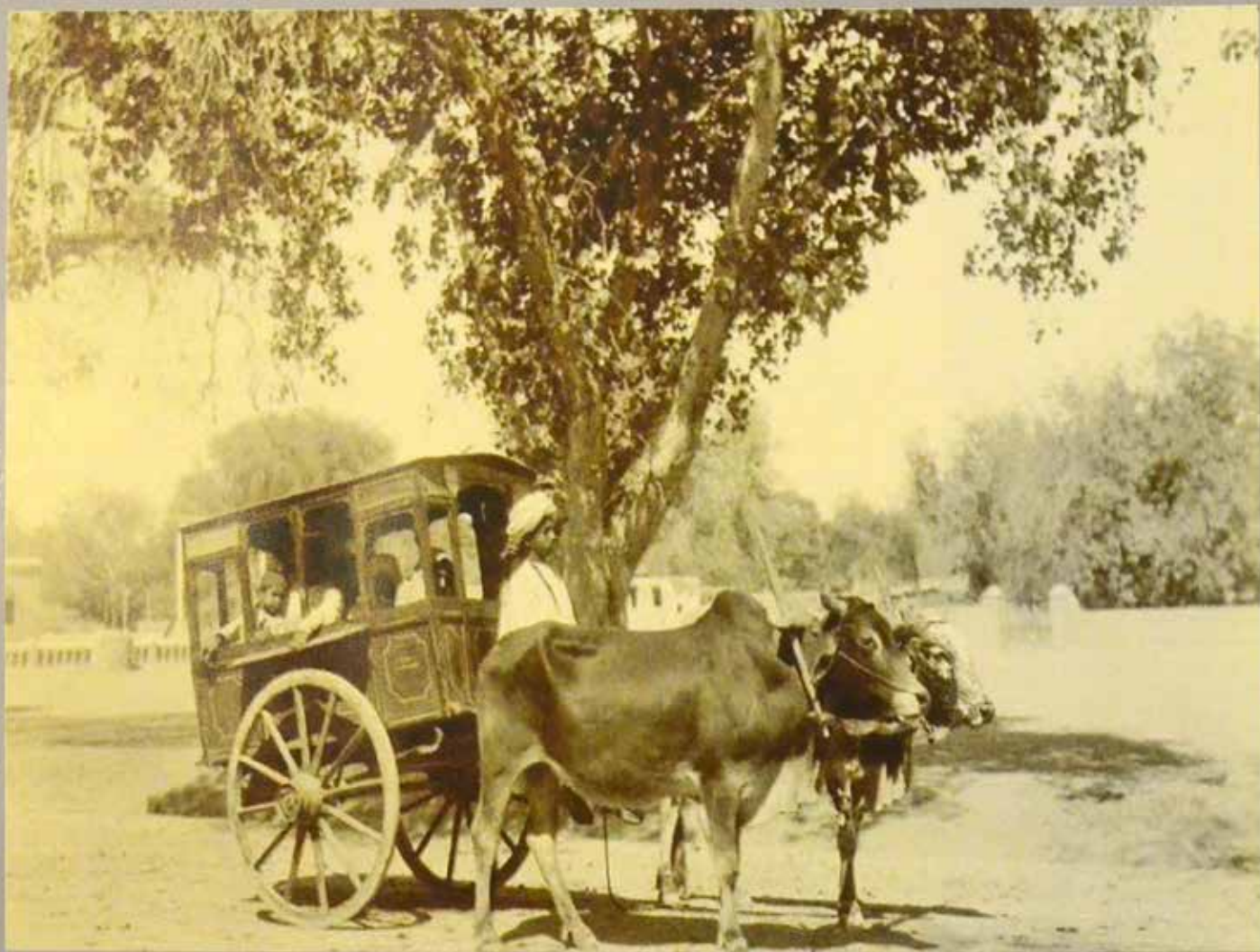
The stage was set for another cultural intercourse in Sindh, this time with the Europe's leading maritime power, Great Britain. As earlier stated, the first European people that came to Sindh were the Greeks. A little less than two millenniums of Greek invasion came the Portuguese, who established their factory near Thatta and pioneered Sindh's trade links with Europe. The Dutch followed suit and "came to establish trade with Sind in 1631, but were not serious to trade"<sup>113</sup>. They stayed here for a brief time.

However, lasting contacts came through the East India Company of England, who established their first factory in Thatta and an outpost at Lahri Bunder in 1635. This experiment did not prove to be successful and the English factory had to be closed down in 1662 due to various reasons. About a century later in 1758 the Company tried for second time to establish its factory under the parwana [permission] of Ghulam Shah Kalhora<sup>114</sup>. This also did not prove to be a successful venture and the attention of the Company shifted to other parts of the subcontinent, where it had launched its policy of annexation in order to pursue its commercial interests.

The East India Company and the Government of Sindh under Talpur Ameers had developed quite friendly relations on the basis of live and let live. They had come to certain agreements that suited both the parties well and both were contented to observe the treaties. "The East-India Company had been contented with the establishment of friendly relations and the exclusion of the French, Americans and Europeans from Sind, under the treaties of 1809 and 1820. The conditions however changed considerably after 1830 as the British decided to establish an effective foothold in the area"<sup>115</sup>.

The basic factor for change of heart on part of East India Company regarding Sindh was the Russian expansion in Central Asia and Russia's increasing influence at the Persian Court after 1826. "The British suspected that Russia intended to launch an invasion upon India through Persia and Afghanistan. As they had already established friendly relations with the ruler of the Punjab which could serve as a useful buffer state between Afghanistan and India, they therefore decided to take more interest in the





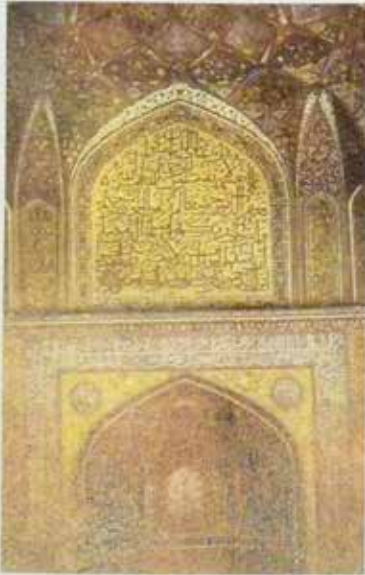
affairs of Sind and explore the possibilities of developing navigational facilities on the Indus in order to use it as a strong defensive barrier against an invasion through the Bolan Pass, and as a foothold for acquiring information on the activities of Persia and Afghanistan, as well as to counterbalance the Russian trade activities in her newly acquired territories in Central Asia"<sup>116</sup>.

On the other hand, Raja Ranjit Singh of the Punjab had set his eyes on annexation of Sindh, which made the Ameers of Sindh increasingly vulnerable. For the first time, "in 1823, Ranjit Singh marched towards Sind with the object of preparing ground for an invasion of Sind and chastising the 'turbulent' Balochs. The expedition was not very successful and the Sikh monarch returned after occupying the border village of Buttee and exacting tribute from its Zamindars"<sup>117</sup>.

He made his second effort two years later with the objective of "occupying Shikarpur, in view of its commercial and strategic importance. He, therefore, set out in 1825 with a large and fully prepared army to conquer it and at the same time to punish the Balochis who had attacked the Sikh soldiers near Multan, but was obliged to return due to the food shortages in Sind"<sup>118</sup>. He was quite open about his ambition of annexing Sindh, when "in 1830, while talking to the French traveler Jacquement, he had expressed his desire to occupy a rich and fertile country like Sind"<sup>119</sup>. All these declarations and exercises of Ranjit Singh were making Ameers restless who were asking the East India Company, being a big power by then, to come to their rescue, thus exposing fully their soft belly.

The biggest weakness of the Talpur rulers, however, was their disunity. They had divided the entire Sindh into various principalities, which were being ruled by different families of Talpur clans. These families had their own sets of disputes and their own vested interests. The most significant factor that contributed towards their easy downfall was that "they did not possess a unitary government or a strong defensive system and had their own mutual jealousies and animosities"<sup>120</sup>. The result of all these factors came in form of British conquest of Sindh when Sir Charles Napier defeated the Talpurs at the battle of Miani on 17 February 1843 and at Dubba on 26 March 1843 and formally announced the annexation of Sindh in August 1843<sup>121</sup>.

The country that the armies of East India Company had conquered was "largely tribal and almost wholly agricultural and pastoral by occupation. There were a few important urban centers... The majority of the wealthy merchants in these cities were Hindus of the bhaiband caste and government employees mostly Hindu Amils by caste. The court nobility in Hyderabad and, at the other end of the social scale, the artisan class, which



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had flourished through the patronage of the court, were mostly Muslims. The rest of the towns in Sind, apart from the harbour town of Karachi and historical towns of Sehwan, Thatta, Sukkur, Bukhur and Rohri, were small market towns such as characterize a peasant economy. Political activity was confined to court circles and was largely in the nature of court intrigues"<sup>122</sup>.

The new rulers decided not to interfere at micro level for the time being in the social and cultural set up of the society they had taken hold of. Their immediate concern was recovery of revenues from the land-owning classes. "The only concern of the British was to establish their sovereignty over the land and to realize taxes. With these objects accomplished, they left the people free in very many fields. They did not interfere with their traditions. They neither imposed their own religion, language, poetry or literature, nor indeed, their way of life upon us. They not only allowed but also actively assisted in the growth of local institutions, customs, language and literature. In fact, it was the British who provided the local language with a revised and enlarged alphabet. Through copious works compiled with great industry and care, it was they, who first introduced the country's national poet, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, to the western world"<sup>123</sup>.

It is in this background that many people in Sindh still consider the British most benevolent, compassionate, generous, kind, benign and just rulers Sindh ever had in its history. It was in this context that Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi wrote: "The British proved themselves to be the best among all those who, at different times, had occupied Sindh"<sup>124</sup>.

However, the long-term policies of the British, particularly in the realm of education, civil, revenue and taxation laws, introduction of journalism and new ways and means of communication were destined to change the complexion of Sindhi society for all times to come.

The most important change took place in the educational system of Sindh, where the old system of Muslims' education based on Mulla Maktabas and Madressahs was replaced with a modern educational system based on a new school and a new curriculum. "The old Muslim education with its village Mulla schools (Maktabas) at the lowest level and Madressahs at the top died out through lack of financial support from the government. The new schools that replaced the old were confined to urban centres and geared to providing personnel for lower-grade government offices in the revenue, judicial and other departments. The new schools were thus out of reach of the majority of the Muslim population and did not provide the kind of education Muslims were used to"<sup>125</sup>.

While the Muslims were a bit reluctant to adapt to the new system of education that they feared would dislocate their religious and moral values, the other segment of the society, the Hindus, readily adopted the



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new system. In coming years this created an economic disparity between the Hindu minority and Muslim majority. Most of the Hindus settled in urban areas, after getting necessary education under the new system, joined the lower rungs of British government service, and came in contact with the Muslim majority mostly living in the rural areas as agents of the new masters. The individual corruption and unkind attitude of most of these petty officials laid the first brick in the wall of alienation between two communities<sup>126</sup>.

The first one to notice the emergence of a new class of Hindu Amils or government functionaries and ignorant Muslim populace was Richard Burton, who visited Sindh in 1848-9 "The Amils or government officers, a class, created by the ignorance and inability of the Moslem rulers, are the most influential, and, conventionally speaking, the most respectable body of Hindoos in Scinde"<sup>127</sup>.

The second most important factor that contributed towards separating the paths of the Muslims and Hindus in Sindh at this stage was the role of Baniya or Hindu moneylenders in the nook and corner of the province. Though, the Baniya used to charge interest on money lending even during the times of Muslim rulers, but the intensity and the severity of the system had considerably increased under the British rule. Richard Burton writes: "The Hindoo's reed pen is a rod of iron, and abjectly the unhappy Scindian trembles before it"<sup>128</sup>.

The Baniya could establish such inhuman system based on usury under the patronage of Hindu petty government officials. Then, most of them also used to manipulate their being literates and their Muslim clients being illiterate and uneducated. "Besides receiving an enormous rate of interest, the creditor who can read, write, and compute, turns the ignorance of his debtor to profit by keeping his accounts in a state of confusion most advantageous to the only one that understands them, himself. The wretched ryot, after paying off his liabilities a dozen times or more, is still as deeply indebted as ever," noted Richard Burton<sup>129</sup>. These were the basic causes that separated the future course of political and ideological development of the Hindus and Muslims in Sindh, though it became more visible by the second quarter of twentieth century.

The basic cause for all these economic ills was lack of modern education amongst Muslims. Though this state of affairs was not only confined to Sindh, but to the entire subcontinent as the Muslims, almost everywhere, were initially reluctant to go for English education. But severity of the situation in Sindh was due to the fact that Sindh was the only province in the British subcontinent that was "over-whelming Muslim in population. In Sind 75 percent of the population were Muslims, whereas in the



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Punjab and Bengal, other Muslim majority provinces, little over 50 percent were Muslims<sup>130</sup>.

The Muslims of the subcontinent, though a little late, finally came up with a solution of this problem by establishing a new type of educational institutions that imparted a happy mix of their religious education and modern English education. This experiment proved successful in Anglo-Oriental Mohammedan College in Aligarh under Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. In Sindh, Hassanally Effendi replicated this experiment by establishing Sindh Madressah at Karachi in 1885<sup>131</sup>.

The establishment of this institution proved to be a turning point not only in the history of Sindh, but of the subcontinent, as major part of the leadership that demanded for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent and helped create Pakistan in the following century were alumni of Sindh Madressah. The most prominent of them was Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah who not only studied here for four and a half year, but also revered his alma mater to such an extent that he bequeathed one third of his personal property to Sindh Madressah through his last will<sup>132</sup>.

Elaborating Sindh Madressah's role in political awakening of the Muslims, historian Hamida Khuhro writes: "the Madressah did very valuable service. Built with care and affection on the quadrangle pattern reflecting not only the style of the ancient western universities of Oxford and Cambridge but also the essence of Islamic architecture, the Madressah was to become a center for intellectual and political activity in Sind. Its teachers established a tradition of devotion to their profession and the alumni of the Madressah include many of the most distinguished names in the history of Sind"<sup>133</sup>.

Slowly and gradually, the economic realities compelled the spread of modern English education amongst the Muslims in Sindh. "Since the only way out for them was employment with the colonial administration, there arose the desire to obtain a British education without which it was impossible to achieve a clerical position"<sup>134</sup>.

On the other hand the British government was busy in developing infra-structural facilities and had introduced the modern means of communication like telegraph, telephone, roads and specially railway. The railway had replaced the age old navigational system based on the Indus and had introduced an economical, efficient, comfortable and faster mean of transportation for goods and passengers. It had connected the cities and towns of province with each other but also with those of entire subcontinent. Sindh's maritime location further helped in promotion of import and export trade. Construction of Sukkur Barrage brought under plough many thousand acres



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of land, creating a new wealthy class of Zamindars.

All these measures helped in emergence of modern urban centers and an urban Muslim class in Sindh. "Railway construction and extensive irrigation work in Northern Sindh, as well as the progress of export and internal trade, contributed to the growth of cities, in the first place Karachi, which became Sindh's largest economic, administrative and cultural center, and also Hyderabad, Shikarpur, Sukkur, etc"<sup>135</sup>.

This was the time when Sindhi literature also came out of its teething problems with a standardized alphabet. Before this, there were several different scripts in which Sindhi language was written. Through active interest of the colonial rulers a standard alphabet of 52 letters was formed. Mirza Qalcech Beg (1855-1929), a Muslim government official, took it upon himself to write and translate from English into Sindhi hundreds of books. "The later half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the birth of modern Sindhi literature whose development owed much to Mirza Kalichbeg, founder of Sindhi modern prose and author of many popular novels"<sup>136</sup>.

Development of literature coupled with technological advancement in printing processes gave birth to Sindhi journalism. "Several Sindhi newspapers and magazines began to awaken the Muslims in Sindh. Major among them were Mueenul Islam (1881), Aftab-e-Sindh and Patra (1895), Al-Haq (1899), Al-Waheed (1920), Sindh Zamindar (1923), and Mussalman (1935). Al-Waheed was the brightest star of them all... It was undoubtedly the power of the Muslim press in Sindh, which electrified the environment"<sup>137</sup>.

This pioneered the process of consolidation amongst various sections of Sindhi society, that had heretofore maintained their separate identity. "The growth of literacy, the spread of journalism and the expansion of cities were the major factors responsible for a more vigorous interaction between literary language and vernacular dialects.... As Sindhis advanced on the road of ethnic consolidation, they assimilated non-Sindhi elements (Balochis, Rajasthanis, Arabs, Brohis and Iranians). Sindhi ousted the languages of these isolated ethnic groups and became a dominant language at the close of the colonial period. One of the indicators of the ethnic transformation at work is that the number of the speakers of Sindhi was much higher than those who consider it a mother tongue"<sup>138</sup>.

Besides the spread of journalism, the Muslim society in Sindh also witnessed the intensification of political activity at various levels to safeguard their interests. It started with Zamindars taking active interest as their agricultural lands were falling prey to the Hindu moneylenders due to policies of the British government and practices of the Baniya community. "As



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a result, many of the landowners (peasants as well as low level landlords) found themselves entangled in money lenders loans and thereby lost their estates: money lenders possessed over forty two percent of all arable land in Sindh in the early twentieth century"<sup>139</sup>.

To stop this onslaught on the only available economic source available to the Muslims in Sindh, i.e. the agricultural production, after already losing trade and commerce as well as opportunities in government services to Hindus, the Muslims began the "politics of associations." Under this strategy, they formed at the district level "zamindari associations and at the provincial level the Sind Zamindar Association, Sind Mohammedan Association, the Sind Provincial Conference and the Sind Educational Conference were among the more important organizations in which Muslims preponderated and which advocated their point of view"<sup>140</sup>.

Politically, though Sindh was part of the Indian British Empire, but administratively, it was attached to the Bombay Presidency, with its provincial seat of governance in Bombay, hundreds of miles away from Sindh. The affairs of Sindh were, from 1847 to 1936, entrusted to a 'Commissioner-in-Sindh' assisted by a set of 'collectors' all being career public servants. This could not help in getting resolved the acute problems being faced by the society. "The problem of being a remote and neglected part of the Presidency had troubled the conscious Sindhi practically since the union had been effected in 1847"<sup>141</sup>.

How the affairs under Bombay Presidency were being run in Sindh in the earlier part of twentieth century could be comprehended from this passage of Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi's account: "Quite often the Viceroys from Delhi and the Governors from Bombay would come down. Until 1936, Sindh was a part of the Bombay Presidency and therefore, it was but a matter of course for the Governors to pay yearly visits. While in Sindh, they utilized their time mostly in hunting ducks at the dhands [freshwater lakes] of Larkana and Sijawal. The neighboring landholders served as their hosts and they went to the ends of the earth to make their distinguished guests comfortable. Near their lakes, they constructed bungalows where prior to proceeding to the shooting-lodges, their guests had a wash and nashta. The nashta (literally meaning breakfast) actually used to be a twenty-five-course feast in the style of the ancient royal banquets. The caterers for the occasion came from Karachi, if not from Bombay; and cutlery and crockery, sometimes directly from England. The furniture and furnishings in the bungalows were replaced every year. The gubernatorial shooting lodge itself, in a corner of the lake, was furnished as a luxurious living room. It had Persian carpets, velvet-upholstered so fast, and a number of broad tables, supporting piles of the choicest victuals, and of course, the inevitable drinks"<sup>142</sup>.



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Armed with newly acquired arsenal of education, journalism and politics, the Muslims of Sindh launched their first political struggle: for separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency. This move was against the interests of the British government as well as the influential Hindu minority due to different reasons. The British "official opinion was firmly in favour of keeping Sind within Bombay. The province provided the crown of a Bombay civilians' career. It was the exclusive and untrammelled post where the Commissioner ruled supreme and irresponsible"<sup>143</sup>. The Hindus wanted to retain connection with Hindu majority Bombay Presidency rather than Muslim majority autonomous province of Sindh.

But the Muslims accepted this challenge, and went ahead with this struggle that was to test their substance. "The most important battle fought by the Muslims of Sind before the struggle for independence and one in which the burden was exclusively on them and which was to test their initiative, organizing ability, firmness of purpose and skill in debate, was the battle for separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency"<sup>144</sup>. They won their cause when finally after decades of struggle Sindh started functioning as an autonomous province with effect from April 01, 1936.

Armed with confidence from this victory, the Muslims of Sindh, enjoined by the Muslims of other parts of the subcontinent, laid their eyes on creation of Pakistan, a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. Many of the leading figures of this struggle like Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Sir Abdullah Haroon, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ayub Khuhro and several others came from Sindh. It was in Sindh that the Muslim League, in October 1938, passed the resolution asserting the status of a 'separate nation' for the Muslims of the subcontinent. This resolution "became the precursor for the future 1940 Pakistan Resolution passed in Lahore eighteen months later"<sup>145</sup>. The provincial legislature of the autonomous Sindh passed the resolution demanding for creation of Pakistan thus fulfilling a prerequisite for consideration of the proposal by the British government.



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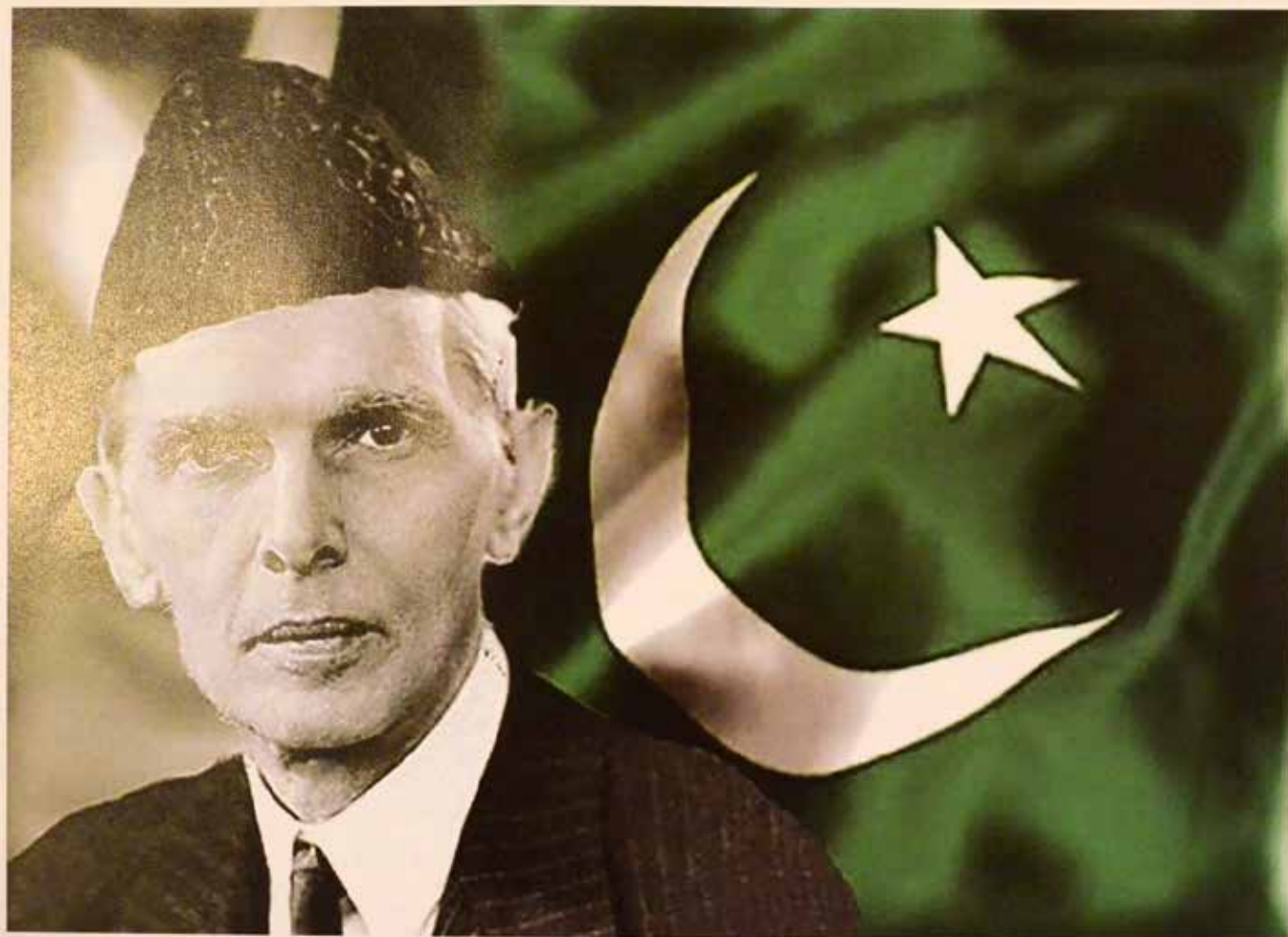


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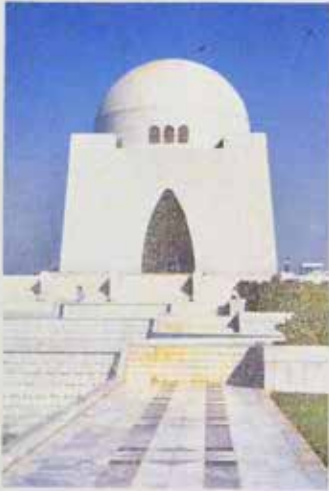


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## Chapter 10

### Part of Pakistan

Pakistan came into being on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947, with Sindh constituting as one of its five provinces, in addition to the Punjab, North Western Frontier Province, Balochistan and East Pakistan (or East Bengal) that later became Bangladesh. On the eve of creation of Pakistan, the society of Sindh faced one of the greatest transformations it ever had. Most of the Hindu population of Sindh, who had been an integral part of Sindhi society, decided to migrate to India, creating a vacuum in trade, commerce, banking, teaching and other urban vocations.



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In their place came a large number of Muslims from Muslim minority provinces of India, speaking different languages and coming from different professional and cultural backgrounds. They were to be absorbed in parts of Pakistan, but most of them preferred Karachi, Hyderabad and other urban centers to settle. They were called Mohajirs or migrants and spoke Urdu, which became the language of Sindh's cities. "Sindhis welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees from the strife-torn provinces of India and settled them in their midst in the towns and villages of Sindh. The partition of India and its aftermath meant a great upheaval in the traditional pattern of life in Sindh"<sup>146</sup>.



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The new Government of Pakistan had also to be provided with a seat of government, as it had none. Then there were no finances to run the government. These were also, for most of the part, provided by the Government of Sindh. "With the creation of Pakistan, Sindh, the oldest Muslim region within the subcontinent, the land of Sufis and saints and of the ancient Sindhi language, was pitch forked into the maelstrom of partition and its attendant problems of mass migration, law and order and immense economic difficulties. Sindh had to undertake the financial burden of the Central Government of Pakistan and to house it physically in its own capital of Karachi. It had to provide immediate relief for hundreds of thousands of refugees and eventually to resettle them permanently"<sup>147</sup>.

At the time of partition, Sindh had no industry, as the Hindus of Sindh were mainly involved in trading than in manufacturing capacity. The only industrial units were large-scale cement manufacturing plant, a textile unit and some other small to medium scale industrial units. "Large-scale







manufacturing started to show signs of development only in the early fifties when, following the Korean War, the great slump resulted in the imposition of quantitative controls on imports which at that time consisted predominantly of manufactured consumer goods. Karachi, because of its location and the investment in energy production, the development of port facilities and other infrastructure elements, and the presence of a successful entrepreneurial class, witnessed a vigorous growth in the field of manufacturing and textiles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals<sup>148</sup>.

The rapid rate of industrialization created need for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The native Sindhis could not meet this demand. The result was that the workers were to be brought from the other provinces, particularly from the Punjab and NWFP. This further changed the complexion of the urban centers of Sindh from where Sindh's traditional culture and Sindhi language almost disappeared. "Rapid industrialization took place in the urban areas of Sindh and consequently migration from different regions of Pakistan into the industrialized areas of Sindh has been continuously taking place since independence"<sup>149</sup>.

Most of the native Sindhi speaking population, particularly in the initial two decades of Pakistan's emergence, confined themselves to the rural areas. In numerical terms native Sindhis have maintained their majority over the migrants. According to 1972 census "The population of Sind was 14 million. Approximately 60 percent of the population lives in the rural area and 40 percent in the urban"<sup>150</sup>. Though the population of Sindh has swelled to about 30 million according to 1998 census,<sup>151</sup> the rural-urban ratio has remained same for all these years with small variations. Sindh is officially a bi-lingual province, where both Sindhi and Urdu enjoy the status of the official languages of the province. Sindhi language as well as Urdu is the medium of instructions at schools and college level.

In the meantime, many Sindhi speaking families have also settled in Karachi, Hyderabad and other urban centers. These cities are also center of Sindhi journalism, which is thriving with ever increasing number of dailies, weeklies and monthlies. Despite this, most of the Sindh's traditional society and Sindhi language is confined to the rural areas and adjoining towns.

This rural society of Sindh is fundamentally an agriculture-based society. There are four "main types of land holding systems [which] characterize the land tenure system: Jagirs, state ownership, private ownership, and ryotwari lands. According to the 1958 land reform returns, about half of the landowners of West Pakistan with over 500 acres of land belonged to Sind. This group represented less than 1 per cent of the landed people but owned more than 29 per cent of Sindh's farm acreage. A little more than 7 per cent of the landowners had 100 to 500 acres and controlled more than



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25 per cent of the land under cultivation"<sup>152</sup>.

Though, with passage of time, the size of the land holdings has been declining because of two basic reasons: introduction of land reforms by the governments in 1959 and 1972, thereby fixing the upper limit of landholdings; and distribution of land, through inheritance, amongst the larger number of heirs. The cumulative effect of both these phenomena has been that the average size of land holding has decreased in Sindh<sup>153</sup>. However, this decline in the landholdings on part of the Zamindar has not proportionally decreased his influence over his Haris, or tenants. "The most important services, which the landlord provides to the tenant are credit and 'protection' and the dependence of the tenant upon his landlord is greater in Sindh than in the Punjab"<sup>154</sup>.

Then, there are certain other ways through which the landowners in Sindh retain their influence in their respective areas. He may "wield influence with the superintendent of police. He and the district commissioner will be received in the landlord's guesthouse when they visit the village and not in the hari's household. The landlord shelters the tenant from the unsympathetic and little understood world outside the village. He writes letters of recommendation on behalf of his tenants to the official world. He adjudicates marriage disputes deals with cases of theft and the like. It is to his Zamindar (landowner) that the tenant first turns in cases of illness, insolvency or other disaster"<sup>155</sup>.

The most popular method of Pakistan's big land-owning families, including those of Sindh, has been to send one family member into politics. "The politician's role as a mediator between the public and the establishment is as important as his taking his seat in the legislative assembly. Hamza Alavi has explained political support in the rural areas of Pakistan as deriving from vertical links of dependency. The aspiring leader has a ready-made following in his sharecroppers, and he enters into alliances with other landlords who also bring along their core of dependents. The sharecroppers do not unite along class lines because of their personal dependency on their landlords. Small owner-peasants, however, organize along biraderi lines"<sup>156</sup>.

In addition to Zamindars, an equally influential class in the rural society of Sindh has been that of Pirs or spiritual leaders and the descendants of the holy men of yore. "Many of the rural people of Sindh are the followers of Pirs. A Pir is a spiritual leader, revered as a saint. From time to time he may tour the villages of his mureeds (disciples) to collect their offerings and bless them with his presence... Since his mureeds consider it a moral duty to execute the will of their Pir, he may if he wishes to call upon a large faction to support a particular political candidate. Whichever the



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party in power, therefore the landlords can be expected to be represented in strength and their interests voiced"<sup>157</sup>.

The political and economic vested interests of powerful groups in Sindh have been maintaining the status quo since the inception of Pakistan. "The landlords hold the power at the local level within the boundaries of the village, and beyond the village boundaries they share power with closely allied interests"<sup>158</sup>.

This coupled with other factors have subjected rural Sindh to a vicious circle of poverty. A comparison of some economic indicators, taken as an index of modernization, forms an interesting study of Sindh in 1972. "The figures available indicate that Karachi had 21.8 motor vehicles per thousand population, 130 students per thousand population, 534.54 kwh per capita electricity consumption, one hospital bed per thousand population, 28.1 miles of all-weather roads per 100 sq. miles, and a literacy percentage of 38.1. In contrast the rest of the province had 2.9 motor vehicles per thousand population, 85 students per thousand population, 63.9 kwh per capita electricity consumption, 0.38 hospital beds per thousand population, 4 miles of all-weather roads per 100 sq. miles and a literacy percentage of 14. Nine districts out of 10 enjoy per capita income, which is less than the provincial average"<sup>159</sup>.

Besides peasantry, the other class that has been suffering the most in rural Sindh under the prevailing conditions has been women. Almost every-day a number of women are killed under the practice of Karo-Kari or so called 'honor killing.' "After getting independence in 1947 they [women] became more active in every walk of life. Like India, this should have happened in Sindh (Pakistan) as well, but here was a lack of enlightened and broadminded people. Though the Hindu traditions started disappearing but they were replaced by rigid rituals of the Arabs of the pre Islamic era. They claimed this proudly to be their culture"<sup>160</sup>.

These disparate and unequal sections of the society have been bonded together through religion, language and cultural traditions. Unlike many other societies, where the elite and the ordinary folk speak different languages, in rural Sindh the persons constituting the highest and the lowest strata of the society speak Sindhi. "Whereas in Sind, as elsewhere in the subcontinent, the political and religious elites have been socially apart from the 'common man', the use of one common language, Sindhi, and the absence of a separate elite language represents a common cultural bond between the social classes"<sup>161</sup>.

The bond of language is further strengthened through sharing of centuries of old music traditions. "The music tradition in Sindh goes back to early times. The large variety of musical instruments confirms the exis-



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tence of a long-standing musical tradition. The renowned poet Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit founded a new music tradition of Shah jo Rag in which thematic music primarily based on popular themes was interpreted by folk melodies"<sup>162</sup>. This music, based on Islamic mysticism, is enjoyed as well as revered by all the social classes. "The cultural bond between social classes also extends to music hence we do not find a gulf between classical and folk music but rather a continuum. At the center of this continuum, linking folk and art music, is the music of Sindhi Sufism"<sup>163</sup>.



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The continuity of history from ancient times coupled with an isolated geographical location has helped Sindh to evolve its distinct society and culture. In the words of the editors of Encyclopedia Britannica: "Separated from the rest of the subcontinent by a vast desert belt on the east, by ocean on the south, mountain ranges on the west, and a bottleneck of the Indus on the north, Sindh long remained an isolated and self-contained region... Sindh has therefore stamped its arts and crafts, games and sports, music, and folklore with a typical originality. The continuity of the ancient artistic tradition is manifest today in superb pottery, in work with glazed tile, lacquer, leather, and straw; and in carpet making needlework, embroidery, quilt making, the making of hand prints, and the designing of textiles"<sup>164</sup>.

This is a glimpse of the journey that the society and the culture of Sindh has been through the centuries, developing the people's peculiar way of living in Sindh, their tastes and traditions, art and the architecture, music and manners, customs and institutions, and everything else called "culture".



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### Captions and Credits

- P1. A photograph showing Mohenjo-Daro, an archaeological site belonging to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, located in Larkana district. Courtesy: Anwer Abro
- P2. Picture of a statuette belonging to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, excavated from Mohenjo-Daro. It is believed that the statuette related to some prominent person of his times. Courtesy: National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi
- P3. Fabric pattern resembling present day Ajrak, wrapped around the bust in the sculpture shown in picture P2, denotes continuation of 5000 year old fabric traditions in the region.
- P4. One of the several seals discovered from Mohenjo-Daro, belonging to 2000 BC or earlier period. It depicts a unicorn with some inscription. Courtesy: National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi
- P5. A sample of Sindhi embroidery.
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P95. A picture of "Parsi Virbaiji School", established in 1870s by Zoroastrian community in Karachi

P96. An old picture showing Karachi during Raj period

P97. An embroidery motif depicting a peacock

P98. Tram service in Karachi was one of the most popular means of transport in the city during the Raj.

P99. The affluent classes, like the European family in the picture, maintained cars: a novelty in those days. Courtesy: KMC Archives

P100. Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a born Sindhi, led the movement to found Pakistan in 1947. The new country included Sindh as well as most of the Indus Valley.

P101. The mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in Karachi is considered an icon in Pakistan's architecture.

P102. Dhol (drum or dhol) beating is performed to mark merry moments in life, ranging from marriage ceremonies, births of a child or any other happy occasion.

P103. After creation of Pakistan in 1947, a migration at the largest scale in the known history of mankind ensued. A large number of Muslims living in Indian territories migrated to Pakistan, mostly to Sindh. Different dress codes and cultural patterns are visible in the picture showing a bazaar in Karachi after partition.

P104. Picture shows a train bringing Muslim Muhajreen from Indian cities to Sindh in the early days of partition.

P105. The picture shows prayer of first Eid-ul-Azha being offered, in October 1947, after creation of Pakistan, on a road in Karachi.

P106. Karachi is capital of Sindh and has emerged as one of the largest cosmopolitan cities in the world.

P107. A traditional tile pattern of Sindh

P108. Musical instrument 'Yaktara' has been peculiar to Sufi music of Sindh

P109. Benazir Bhutto belonged to Larkana, a district of Sindh housing Mohenjo-Daro. She achieved the distinction of being the first Muslim woman Prime Minister in the world in 1988 after winning elections in Pakistan.

P110. A beautiful design of Ajrak

P111. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, father of Benazir Bhutto, born in Larkana, became the first popularly elected Prime Minister of Pakistan in 1971 following elections. He was removed from power by a military dictator and was subsequently sentenced to death. He left deepest marks on Pakistan's politics and his political philosophy still command following in Pakistan.

P112. A view of a fertile agricultural field in Sindh. Picture by the author

P113. An artisan at work

P114. A typical Sindhi face in traditional costume

P115. Another view of fertile lands of Sindh. Picture by the author

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