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**EARLY MUSLIM RELATIONS WITH INDUS VALLEY AND
THE EXPEDITIONS DURING THE GUIDED CALIPHATE
PERIOD**

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ABSTRACT

The glorious past of the Indus valley has experienced a settlement of the civilization that was at its peak in the era before Christ. People had developed societies living with peace and prosperity. However, time changed and the decline of Indus valley civilization occurred. After that, up to the middle of the 7th century A.D many other nations came and captured the area. It is being perceived as a common concept that Islam came into the Indus valley by the conquest of Muhammad bin Qasim(d.96/715) at the beginning of 8th century during the Umayyad period and started spreading in the region with the effort of Sufi saints. But literature presents some evidence on the presence of Islam in Indus valley even before Muhammad bin Qasim. The purpose of this study is to find out the entrance and existence of Islam in Indus valley during the domination of the Guided Caliphate. To support the claim and analyze the issue the study follows the contemporary as well as the main Arabic sources of Islamic history. It has been found that, with the expansion of the Islamic state, the religion of Islam had also spread up to its vast boundaries along the cardinal directions. However, due to many unsuccessful military expeditions caused by the unfair policies and wrong strategies towards local masses, the impact of the spread went unnoticed. On the contrary, Muhammad bin Qasim was fair enough to the local people and gave them respect as well as high-rank positions in his administration resulting in his quick and comprehensive conquest of the region. It shows that Islam itself and the assimilation potential of people

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towards it was already there which became a part of Muhammad bin Qasim success in the region.

Key words: Sindh, Indus Valley, Islamic Conquest, Deybul, Caliphate

RAŞİD HALİFELER DÖNEMİNDE MÜSLÜMANLARIN İNDUS VADİSİ İLE İLK İLİŞKİLERİ VE ASKERİ SEFERLER

ÖZ

İndus vadisinin şanlı geçmişi, Milat'tan önceki çağda zirvede olan uygarlığın bir inşasını yaşamıştır. İnsanlar barış ve refah içinde yaşayan toplumlarını geliştirmişlerdi. Ancak zaman değişti ve Indus Vadisi uygarlığının çöküşü meydana geldi. Bundan sonra, 7. yüzyılın ortalarına kadar birçok kavim geldi ve bölgeyi ele geçirdi. Genel anlayış şudur ki İslam İndus vadisine 8. yüzyılın başında Emevi döneminde Muhammed bin Kasım'ın (d.96 / 715) fethi ile ve Sufilerin emeği ile bölgede yayılmaya başlamıştı. Ancak literatür, Muhammed bin Kasım'dan önce de İndus vadisinde İslam'ın varlığı hakkında bazı kanıtlar sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Raşit halifelerin hâkimiyeti sırasında İndus vadisinde İslam'ın girişini ve varlığını bulmaktır. İddiayı desteklemek ve konuyu analize etmek için, çalışmamız, İslam tarihinin ana Arapça kaynaklarının yanı sıra çağdaş çalışmalardan da faydalandı. İslâmî devletin genişlemesiyle birlikte İslam dini de dört bir yana kadar yayıldı. Ancak, yerel halka yönelik yanlış politikaların ve yanlış stratejilerin yol açtığı birçok başarısız askeri sefer nedeniyle İslam'ın yayılma etkisi fark edilemedi. Aksine, Muhammed bin Kasım'ın yerel halk için yeterince adil davranması ve onlara yönetiminde yüksek dereceli pozisyonları saygılı bir şekilde vermesi bölgedeki hızlı ve kapsamlı fetihlere yol açmıştı. Bu durum, İslâm'ın kendisinin ve ona karşı halkın asimilasyon potansiyelinin daha önceden bölgede bulunduğunu göstermektedir ki bu durum Muhammed bin Kasım'ın zaferine bir nevi katkı sağlamıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sind, Indus Vadisi, İslami fetih, Deybul, Hilafet

Introduction:

Throughout the history of the world, there have been many civilizations which had a very deep impact on the overall development of mankind. Among them, Egyptian civilization at the river Nile, Mesopotamian civilization at the river Tigris and Euphrates, and Chinese civilization in the Yangtze and the Yellow River are the considered to be

the oldest civilizations of the world.¹ In 1856, British colonial officials wanted to extend their trade activities from the northwest to the southwest of India through a railway track, currently operational in Pakistan from Lahore to Karachi. During the construction of that railway project, they discovered the ruins of Indus valley civilization first in Harappa, Punjab in 1921 and then in 1922 they discovered the ruins of Mohenjo daro in Sindh. Currently, the location of the ruins of Mohenjo daro is in the district of Larkana in the province of Sindh and the ruins of Harappa are in the district of Sahiwal in the province of Punjab.² In conclusion to this excavation, it was established that Indus valley civilization was a contemporary of the above mentioned ancient civilizations. According to the archaeological studies, these structures having brick houses were built in between 3300-1300 BC; they had a 90-degree cutting path, sufficient drainage, and water systems. Moreover, despite being built at that time, their ruins are astonishingly still sustaining and relate to us the tremendous stories of an ancient civilization.

Many ethnic groups including Persians, Scythians and Arabs have ruled over Indus valley throughout its history along with Alexander the Great; and it has also remained as a free and independent territory occasionally in the hands of Indians as well. In other words, the history of ancient times is evident of the fact that the Indus valley, known to Arab historians as “Biladu al-Sind”, is historically considered as a region that has never lost its essence and importance.

Geographical Location and Characteristics of Indus Valley

According to “Chach Namah”, during the period of Rai Buddhist dynasty around 540 to 644 AD, the boundary of Sindh valley was marked up to Kashmir and Kanuj in the east and extended up to Makran in the west. It bordered on Gujarat (in present day India) and the Indian Ocean in the south and in the north up to Kikan and Kirdan mountains which are somewhere near Kalat and Quetta district in Baluchistan. In

¹ Sharma, Sehdev Kumar and Pahuja, Dmanjit Kumar, *Five great civilization of the world*, Educreation Publication, New Delhi (without date): p,1

² Mohan Gehani, *Brief Introduction:History of Sindh*, Indian Institute of Sindhology, Gujarat (India), 2008: pp,26-29.

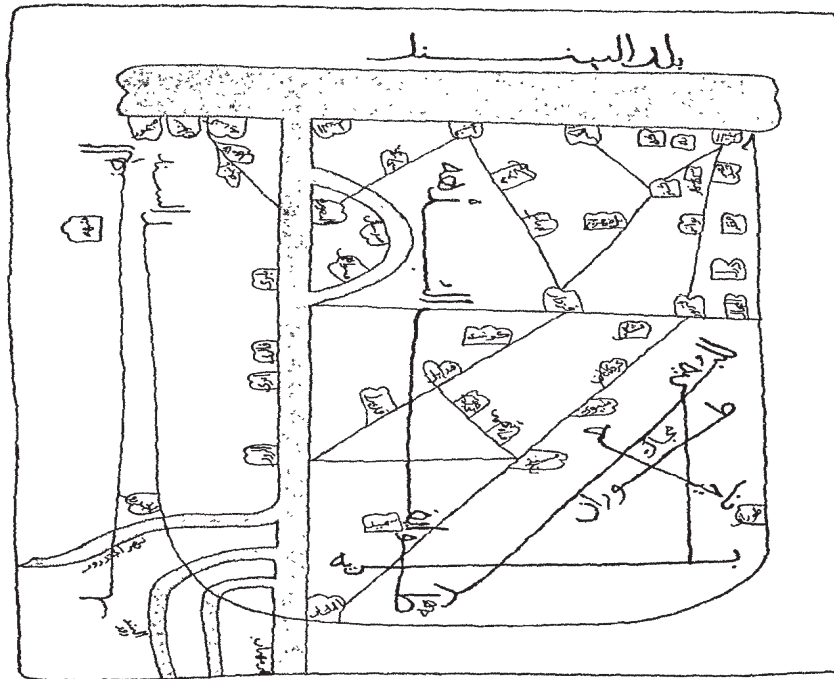
Rai Buddhist dynasty, the Sindh region was divided into four provinces. The first one was Brahmanabad and it contained four districts: Neyrun, Deybul, Lohana, and Lakha. The second province was Multan and it consisted of five districts: Brahmapur, Shahar, Saka, Karor, and Kambh, up to the border of Kashmir. The third province was Sivistan having four districts in it, namely Bodhiya, Chankan, Kohistan, and Rochiyan. The fourth province was Iskalanda with four districts, including Pabiya, Talvaria, Chachpur, and Jodhpur. All of these provinces were administrated by governors appointed by the king, who himself remained at “Alor” the capital of the Indus valley and fifth province of the region, having three more districts like “Kirdan”, “Kikan”, and “Barhas” directly under the authority of the capital city.³

An Arab historian Ibn Hurdazbih counted approximately 28 cities and towns of the region of Sindh.⁴ Ibn Hawkal was the first geographer who drew the map of Sindh as shown below in figure 1. Ibn Hawkal also gave the detailed information about the Sindh region. He divided it into four provinces: “Mansurah”, “Makran”, “Turan” and “Budha” or “Budhiya” and also described the distance between each of these provinces.⁵

³ Al-Kufi, Abu Bakr Ali bin Hamid(d.613/1217), *Fethu Sind* “*Chach namah*” th, Dr.Suheyl Zakkar Dâr-ul fikir- Beirut, 1st/Ed, 1992: pp,15-18.

⁴ Ibn Khordadbeh Abu al-Qasim Ubaydullah ibn Abdullah (d.280/894), *Al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik*, Dâr Sâdir, Beirut/1889: pp,56-57.

⁵ Ibn Hauqal, Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn Hauqal, al-Baghdadi, *Surat al-Ard*, Dâr Sâdir, Beirut/ 1938: 2/317.



صورة السند التي في الصفحة ٩٠ ظ من الأصل،

Figure1: Map of Sindh by Ibn Hawkal (d. 378/989)

Afterwards, another Arab historian and geographer Al-Maḳḍîṣî who visited the Sindh by himself described Sindh as having five provinces: “Mukran”, “Turan”, Sind (Mansurah) “Veyhend” and “Multan”.⁶

In general, the area of Sindh can be divided into various regions on the basis of their characteristics. The land is considered very fertile in the north and northeast of the Indus valley, with rain and canal system making it very productive as well. The middle part of the region is suggested to be agriculturally rich due to the availability of water from the Sind River. The east side of the region is a “Thar” desert and west

⁶ Al-Maḳḍîṣî, Shams al-Dîn Abu Abdullah Ahmed bin Abu Bakr, *Aḥsan al-Taḳâsîm fî Ma'rifaṭ al-Aḳâlim*, Dâr ul kutub al-ilmîyyah, Beirut/Lebanon, 1st/Ed -2003: pp,474-475.

side is a mountainous area. Hence, both of these areas are not much productive for agriculture. But in terms of richness in natural resources, there are underground reserves of iron and coal in Sindh area.⁷ As it has been mentioned above that agricultural products are also somehow cultivated in almost every part of the region. Generally, two types of crops are grown annually, one of which is in autumn, for example, wheat, barley, oil seeds, mustard, saffron, garlic and onion. The other crops are sown in the summer season, including pearl millet, sorghum, rice, sesame and cotton and also fruits such as dates, orange, pomegranate, mango, banana, grapes and water melon are also cultivated.⁸ But this information has been collected on the basis of research analysis report completed in the 19th century.⁹

In the 10th century, Ibn Hawkal discussed the weather of Sind in his book “al-Masalik wa’l-Mamalik”. He mentioned, the general condition of the weather of this region being warm in nature. Agricultural products such as palm, sugar cane, mango were also cultivated in this region. It was also reported that grapes, apples, bananas, pears were not grown in this region. The overall reported prices of goods in that era were also very low¹⁰ According to Ibn al-Faqih, herbs for medicinal purposes were also cultivated in this region¹¹. Maqdisi (d.380/991) who lived in the same period, indicated the presence of many trees of walnut and almond in Veyhend province. Date and banana gardens have also been reported in this region. In the field of cattle farming, usage of camels, sheep, buffalos and horses, has also been mentioned.¹²

⁷ Nedvi, Seyd ebu zafer *Tarih-e Sindh*, Dâr al-Musannifin, Shibli Academy, Azamgarh,UP (India) pp, 319-320

⁸ E.H. Aitken, *Gazetteer of the province of sind*, Merchantile steem press Karachi/1907: pp, 34-36

⁹ Ibid: p, 34

¹⁰ Ibn Hauqal, *Surat al-Ard*: 2/321.

¹¹ Ibn al- Faqih, Abu Abdullah Ahmed bin Muhammed bin Is’haq al-Hamdâni (d.365/976) *Kitab al- Buldan, Âlam al kutub*, Beirut/1996: p,61

¹² Al-Maqdisi, *Ahsan al-Takâsim*: p, 347.

Subsequently, it can be suggested from the above-mentioned reports that the Sindh region has been very fertile throughout the ages with the exception of some territories on the east and west sides. Thus, the Indus River and the surrounding lands of the Indus valley were the preferred places of settlement for the ancient civilizations. The region having fertile land for agriculture, a center for maritime commerce, a compatible place for stockbreeding and underground natural resources were few of the most important political and economic reasons for the emerging state of the Islamic world in the 7th century.

Indus Valley under Rai and Brahman Dynasties

During the rising period of the Islamic state from the Arabian Peninsula towards Persia, the Buddhist Rai dynasty was the first independent kingdom of whole Indus valley. The boundaries of the overall territory covered the area from Kashmir to Indian Ocean, Cutch and Kathiawar (present-day Gujarat of India) and from Kanuj to Makran. According to “*Tuhfat al Kirâm*” the domain of these dynasties started approximately from the beginning of the 6th century with the King Diwayij and was carried on by four of his successors.¹³ However, according to “*Chach Namah*” three of them became kings of the Indus Valley afterward.¹⁴ During the Rai dynasty, Indus valley was divided into four provinces with Alor being the capital city of the kingdom. After the death of Sahres II, the last king of Rai dynasty, his minister Chach son of Selayij became the king. In the middle of the 7th century, the power of the kingdom went into the hands of the Brahman family with “Chach” being the first king of Brahman dynasty.

During his era, some insurrection activities led by the Buddhist people of Brahmanabad and surroundings started to rise up, which were countered by the capture of Brahmanabad by force. Subsequently, a lot of social and political restrictions were placed on the people of Brahmanabad in order to diffuse the situation. Those restrictions included: not being permitted to carry an original sword, no usage of precious fabric unless necessary, even then only black and red silk

¹³ Qâni, Mîr Ali sher (d.1203/1789), *Tuhfat al Kirâm*, Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad, 3rd/Ed, 2006: p, 13.

¹⁴ Al-kufi, *Fethu Sind* (chach namah): pp, 59-60

clothes were permitted, no horse riding with saddle, instructions to always remain bare-headed and footed, keeping their dogs with them, collection of fire woods for chief of the city and providing spying services as well. Chach carried his domain peacefully up to 40.H/660/661. A.D.¹⁵. These are some of the reported conditions which were obligatory to be conducted for the Buddhist people. These circumstances are proposed to have caused some hatred among the people of Brahmanabad against the Brahman government of Chach, as those obligatory conditions were forcefully implied and were against the freedom of that particular society.

“Chach” was succeeded by his brother Chander in 662 A.D who ruled the kingdom for about seven years. Subsequently, “Dahir” son of Chach, took the command of Alor and Chander son’s captured the Brahmanabad afterward. However, he ruled Brahmanabad for about one year and then the brother of Dahir named “Daharsia” or “Dahar Sain” took the control of Brahmanabad. During this era, Sindh was divided into two parts: the Northern Province having Multan and Alor became part of “Dahir” son of Chach monarchy and southern province having Brahmanabad and other southern territories beyond Brahmanabad went into the custody of “Daharsia” son of Chach. After the death of “Daharsia” in 700 AD, Dahir son of Chach became the only king of Sindh valley.

Islam, Muslims and Indus Valley

In 610 A.D approximately, a new religion, a new civilization started to emerge on the map of the earth in the Arabian Peninsula. Muhammad bin Abdullah “The Prophet” at the age of forty, got the noble message of prophecy from God, which became the core mystical moment of Islam. When the first verses of Quran were revealed on the Prophet with the message of education, research, meditation and contemplation, it transformed an ordinary man into a dynamic man who stood for social and economic justice in the Arabian society. During that particular era, the Arabian society was indulged in polytheism and idolatry. Social and economic control of the region was held by only the

¹⁵ Al-kufi, *Fethu Sind* (chach namah): pp, 48-51

leaders of the tribe or rich men with vast resources. Meanwhile, a voice for justice and equality in that society in the shape of Islam was raised. That voice of justice came across a strong resistance from those who had authority and power in the form of prosecutions and threats of murder. With the passage of time, the message of Islam began to spread across the country and even beyond the boundaries of Mecca. People became aware of Islam and started assimilating with this new religion. After 13 years of unbearable torture and cruelty in Mecca, Muslims started migration towards Medina. During those 13 years, Islam had never decreased in terms of the number of followers, rather it continued to increase and spread inside and outside of Mecca. The widespread allegation of the concept that “Islam spread across by sword” is proposed to be a totally unrealistic approach of thinking and is considered to be based on counterfeit Islamophobic fear.

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr was the first who started to rule as a caliph of the Islamic state. He successfully completed two years of his domain and by managing the political and religious challenges in this short period of rule. After his death, Umar bin al-Khattab became the second caliph of the Islamic state. The activities that led to the Islamic expansion started after the death of Prophet Muhammad, consequently through the conquest of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Persia during the caliphate of Umar bin al-Khattab up to the year 644 A.D. At the beginning of his caliphate, first expedition towards Sindh took place in 15-H/636/637 A.D under the leadership of Usman bin Abu al-As al-thaqafi as a governor of Bahrain and Oman with his two brothers.¹⁶

Arab-Sindh Relations

The maritime trade activities of Arabs with India, China, and Africa were well documented even before Islam. The Arabian Peninsula is situated on the important geographical position that links the European and Asian trade. The Arabs loaded their commodities from Egypt and Damascus and crossed the shores of the Red Sea in the Hijaz region, reaching Yemen and from there some of them took their way to

¹⁶ Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad Ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī(d.279/893), *Futūḥ al-Buldan*. Dār al-Kutub al ‘Ilmiyyah, 2nd/Ed Beirut/2014: p, 257.

Ethiopia or Africa, while others passed through Yemen and Oman, crossed the Arabian Gulf, reaching southern India. The other maritime commerce route was the Persian Gulf, started from the main seaport of Ubullah (later became Basra) towards Southern India and from there to Sri-Lanka, Bay of Bengal and then China. On the other hand, European traders imported the goods from the market of Egypt and Syria and took the route back to Europe by the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁷

Geographically, the nearest present-day location of the Arabian Peninsula to Indus valley is Oman, which is situated on the eastern bank of the Arabian Peninsula. Three sides of the country were surrounded by water, including east and southeast the region with the Arabian Sea and north by the Arabian Gulf. In view of these circumstances, it became a natural incentive for Omanians to deal in maritime trade both politically and economically. In this regard, they imported walnut trees and teak woods for production of ships or sometimes they went to India for production.¹⁸

Two of the famous pre-Islamic markets were also situated in Oman. Both markets were considered to be international commerce centers, where the international merchants from Sindh, India, Persia, China and Africa came for trading their products.¹⁹ It has been reported that after the incident of Khyber, the governor of Oman Jaifar bin Al-Jalandi and his brother Abd bin of Al-Jalandi along with their tribe's men accepted Islam by the effort of Amr bin al-Âs (عمرو بن العاص).²⁰ Meanwhile, in the Indus valley, there were tribes like Zut, Meyd, Siyabija, who were living there before the conquest of Muslims. In the Persian language

¹⁷ Nadvi, Syed Sulaiman, *Arab o Hind ke ta'allukat*, Dâr al Musannifin, Aazamgarh, (U.P) India, 2010: pp, 5-6.

¹⁸ Al-Naeem, Norah Abdullah: *El-va'd al-İqtisadi fi al- Ceziretil arabiiyeti fi al-Fetrati minal Karn al- Salis kab-lel miladi ve hatta al-karn' al-salis el-miladi*, Dâr al-Shawaf, and 1st/Ed, Riyadh / K.S.A: p, 248. See also: International Symposium: "Oman and India: Prospects and Civilization: p, 323 Muscat/2011

¹⁹ Al-Baghdadi, Abu Ja'fer, Muhammad b.Habib b. Umeyya b. Amr al-hashimi: *El-Muhabber*, Dâr al- Afak al-Jadidah-Beirut: pp, 265-266,

²⁰ Al-Sahari: Abul munzir Selma b.muslim b.İbrahim(d.511/1118), *Al-Ansab*, (without date) : pp, 257-258

“Zut” were called “Jat” and according to Ibn Manzoor, they were a dark-skinned generation of Sind with traditional dress named Zuttiya.²¹ Moreover, Istakhri reported the meaning of the term “Sindh” as “Mansurah” and “Multan” as the land of the Zut people.²² It is being suggested here that the people of Zut tribe or Sindhi merchants must have been present and aware of the incident of the acceptance of Islam by the governor of Oman Jaifar bin Al-Jalandi, his immediate family members and their tribe.

When Islam was in its early stages, the anticipation of trading in the markets of Syria, Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula by the Zut people has also been proposed. This claim can be brought into practical discussion by the evidence from the event of Miraj Journey. It has been commonly established that when the Prophet Muhammad experienced the Miraj journey, he also reported the sighting of Prophet Moses, whom he resembled with the Zut people of Sindh.²³ Moreover, it is estimated that Prophet Muhammad must have known or have seen the Zut people in the region of Hijaz and might have encountered them on one of his journeys as a merchant before being tasked with the prophet-hood. The direct evidence of existence or communication of Zut people with Arabs has also been reported from an event which is related to the sickness of Aisha Bint Abu Bakr, one of the wives of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). According to Bukhari, one of her relatives consulted with a Zut doctor for her medical condition, who is then reported to have replied with her being affected by some kind of magic.²⁴ Furthermore, the sighting of Zut

²¹ Ibn Manzur, Muhammad bin Mukrim bin Ali, Abu al-Fadl(d.711/1312): *Lisân al Arab*, Dâr'u sadr –Beirut/ 3rd/Ed,1414: 7/308,

²² Istakhri, Abu Ishak Ibrahim bin Muhammad al-Farisi(d.346/958): *Al-Masâlik wa'l-Mamâlik*, Dâr'u Sâdir, Beirut: p, 35

²³ Tabarani, Abu 'l-Qâsim Sulaymân ibn Ayyûb ibn Muṭayyir al-Lakhmî (d.360/971): *Al Mu'jam Al Kabir*, 2nd/Ed, Maqtaba Ibn Taimmiyah, Qahira(Cairo),1994: 11/64, No/11057.

²⁴ Bukhari, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail (d.256/970): *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 3rd/Ed, Dar al Bashair al Islamiah, Beirut, 1989: p, 68

people of Sindh with the Prophet Muhammad by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud has also been reported.²⁵

These are some of the recorded historical proofs that showed the existence, interaction and relations of Sindhi people with Arabs and Muslims. Meyd, another tribe belonging to the Indus Valley, were considered to be different from Zut people in regard to social as well as political life. Murtaza Zubeydi reported Meyd or Meyz being an Indian nation or a generation similar to "Turks", who fought battles against Muslims at the Indian ocean.²⁶

On another occasion, during the period of Abu Bakr at Yamama, when the incident of apostasy occurred, Khalid bin Walid was ordered to follow and resolve the matter with Musaylimah, who claimed the prophethood. Subsequently, Khalid defeated the opposing forces and collected the booty including Sindhi women. On the other hand, the mother of Muhammad al-Hanafiyah (son of Ali bin Abu Talib), Khawlah bint Ja'far al-Hanafiyah or Khawlah bint Iyas bin Kayis al-Hanafiyah was also reported to be a Sindhi woman. It was further proved from the sighting of Muhammad al-Hanafiyah's mother and her being a Sindhi woman by Asma, bint Abu Bakr.²⁷ Tabari also mentioned the battles of Zut and Siyabija against Muslims, the instance being the battle of Yamama.²⁸ In addition to that, Zayd bin Ali bin Husain's mother was also reported to be originally from Sindh.

²⁵ Al-Fakihi, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn al-'Abbas (d.272/886) *Akhhbar Makkab fi Qadim al-Dahr wa-Hadithuh*, 2nd/Ed: Dâr'u Khadir -Beirut: 3/394, Hadith no/2321.

²⁶ Al-Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī: Abu al-Feid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Abdurrazak al-Huseyini (d.1205/1719) *Taj al-'arus min Jawahir al-qamus*, Dâr al-hidayah: 9/479 See also: Ibn Manzur: 3/511

²⁷ Ibn Sa'd, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Manī' al-Baṣrī al-Hāshimī (d.230/845), *Tabakat al-kubra*: 1st/Ed: Dâr'u Sâdir, Beirut/1968: 5/91. See also: Al-Dīnawarī : Abū Muhammad Abd-Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawarī al-Marwazī (d.276/890), *Kitāb al-ma'arif*, 2nd/Ed: Al-Hey'ah al-Mistriyyah al-Āmmah, Al-Qahira/1992: p, 210,

²⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d.310/923) *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, 2nd/Ed – Dâr Al-Turas- Beirut/1968: 3/304

In light of the aforementioned reports, trade can be considered as the first source of interaction between Arab and Sindhi People. The main factor that provided the incentive for the appropriation of exchange of trade was the suitable geographical position of both of these regions. This, in turn, yields the evidence for the existence of Sindhi people in the Arab region as being undoubtedly established. However, trade was not the only factor that connected the two regions as Sindhi people were also reported to have worked in different fields in the Arab world too.²⁹ Awareness of Islam, muslim society and their values in Sindhi people are also proposed to come from the fact that Sindhi people played an important role in military activities as well.

First Contact of Muslims with Sindh

It has also been recorded that after the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, around 6th Hijri year, the Prophet Muhammad sent his messengers to different kings around the world. According to Molvî Bukhârî, five companions of the prophet in the form of a delegation carrying the message of Islam also traveled to the region of Sindh. Their last recorded destination in Sindh has been accepted to be the fort of Neyrun, located near Hyderabad (present-day Pakistan). As a consequence of their preaching activities, some of the residents of that region accepted the message from the prophet and learned the directives of Islam. Moreover, two of those travelers returned back to Arabia afterward, while the remaining three decided to stay in that area. Those three companions of the prophet lived the remainder of their lives in Sindh and were buried there as well.³⁰

However, the main source books of the Islamic history (Tabari, *Tarikh e Yaoubi*, *Fatu ul buldan*, *Al kamil*) have not reported any authentic evidence regarding such an incident in Sindh during the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, there is no other evidence or

²⁹ Bukhari, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*: p, 68 and see also. Nadvi, Seyed Suleyman, *Arab o Hind ke Ta'allukat*, Dâr al-Musannifin, Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, UP (India)2010: p, 261

³⁰ Molvî Bukhârî, *Majmû'atü Kelimât wa Resâil* (Manuscript): p, 190. Quoted from Qazi Athar Mubarak Puri, *Arab aur Hind Ahde Risalet mein*, Nadwat al-Musannifin, Delhi 1965: p, 191.

intimation regarding any graves of any of these companions in Sindh. In contradiction to the authentic evidence of Islamic history recorded in historical literature, local (Urdu and Persian) books still record the aforementioned incidents; religious scholars and preachers are still witnessed relating them in their sermons. As mentioned in the earlier sections of this study, Sindhi tribes (Zut and Siyabija) were already trading goods with Oman, where the presence of Islam had been recorded during the life of the prophet Muhammad. Afterwards, in 15.H/636-637 during the caliphate of Umar, first Muslim expedition from Oman towards Indian subcontinent and Sindh was launched under the leadership of Usman ibn Abu-al-Aas Al-thaqafi.³¹

First Expeditions of Muslims to Sindh Valley

It is being opinionated in this study that the first muslim expeditions or military contact with the Indus Valley, could be considered as a result of the sequence of conquests in Persia, that occurred during the caliphate of Umar. Those conquests led to the events in which the governor of Bahrain and Oman, Usman ibn Abu-al-Aas Al-thaqafi, dispatched a navy fleet towards the south of Indian subcontinent. However, these expeditions were addressed without the permission from the reigning Caliph of Islam. It is being understood that those fleets were not ordered to engage in battles, instead the perceived objective was to collect information regarding any anticipated resistance in case of war and to hinder the activities of sea pirates. In addition, this surveyal approach by the governor could not warrant the permission as not being a matter that necessitated any direct orders from the head of Islamic state, who at the time as engaged in battles with the Roman empire (present-day Syria).

“Ubullā” being a main port in Persian Gulf, was under the influence of Persian rule. The importance of this particular port can be established as being a point of international trade hub, which further enhanced the influence of Persian Empire to all other ports up to south of India. However, a year earlier in 14.H/635-636 A.D, “Ubullā” was captured by Muslim army, which further elevated Islamic presence on

³¹ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: p, 257

this international trade route as well. Furthermore, significance of “Ubulla” can be understood by one of the narrations from Caliph Umar, in which he, while sending Utbah bin Ghazwan to Ubulla, addressed him as the governor of the land of India. Afterward, when Utba bin Ghazwan captured the area of Ubulla, he also narrated its importance by describing it as a port of Bahrain, Oman, India and China as well.³² This description of Ubulla, has been assessed as the realization of the significance which conferred Muslims with the responsibility and authority of all maritime trade routes in the region from Arab-Islamic to the ports of Indus Valley and south India.

In correlation with above-mentioned arguments, the expeditions of Usman towards Sindh, Bharos and Thana afterward, were proposed to be due to already mentioned reasons of security and monitoring the activities of sea pirates. After successful completion of the initial expedition, Usman informed the Caliph Umar about his activities in those regions, who in turn has been reported to be not pleased about this situation and described it being a risky action as well.³³

According to Ali kufi, Mughira bin Abu al-Âs who was the platoon commander dispatched to the port of Deybul in Sindh, was killed in a battle with Sindhi people.³⁴ However, this report is in contradiction with Al-Balādhurī, who has mentioned the successful return of Mughira bin Abu al-Âs.³⁵ Additionally, Yaqut al-Hamawi has also mentioned his presence with his brother Usman (governor of Bahrain and Oman) in the conquest of Fars and him living in Basra afterward as well.³⁶ During the governance of Abu Musa al-Ash’ari at Basra during the caliphate of Umar, many people of Sindhi tribes including Zut, Siyabija, Esavire and Endigar had already accepted Islam.

³² Tabarī: *Tarikh*: 3/593

³³ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: p, 256. See also: Ibn Qudama, Abu al-Faraj qudama ibn qudama ibn ziyad al-Baghdadi(d.337/949), *Al-kharaj wa-sina'at al-kitabah*, Dār Al-Rasheed, 1st/Ed, Baghdad, 1981: p, 413.

³⁴ Al-kufi, *Fethu Sind (chach namah)*: p, 72

³⁵ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: p, 257

³⁶ Yāqūt al-hamawi: Yāqūt ibn-'Abdullah al-Rūmī al-Hamawī(d.626/1229), *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, Dār'u Sadir-Beirut/1995: 4/227 and 1/435

Prior to their acceptance of Islam, those Sindhi people were actually an imminent part of Persian army and were reputed as good soldiers.

When the Muslim army conquered Persia, many of those people wanted to convert to Islam with certain conditions that were implemented in an agreement made between the governor of Basra and them. The conditions of that agreement with the governor included fighting against enemies of Muslims, no interruption in military matters among Muslims, protection from Arabs in case of fighting. Furthermore, their demands included a place for living and higher shares from booty. Abu Musa is reported to have written those demands and inquired to Caliph Umar for further consultation regarding the matter. The caliphate replied with orders to accept all the demands placed by the Sindhi people, therefore a place in Basra was provided to them consequently.³⁷ It is being suggested here that, this acceptance of Islam during that period of time, by the people of those tribes must have impacted other Sindhi people in Makran as well, especially the Buddhists, who were living under the pressure of Brahman dynasty.

Caliph Umar is then reported to dispatch another expedition later, to the region of Makran under the leadership of Hakem bin Amr-Al-Taghlibi, who was joined by another commander named Shihab bin Makhariq. This expedition has also been reported to be joined by two volunteers, commander Suhayl bin Adiy and Abdullah bin Abdullah bin Utban for assistance in battles. All of these commanders and volunteers reached Makran and established a battle field.

The ruler of Makran demanded military assistance from the king of Sindh, who provided him with an army of good strength that reached the region of Makran as well. According to Dr. Pathan, Rasil, a commander from the eastern side of river, crossed the river of Helmond. However, the name of this river is still unclear from different sources.³⁸ According to Al-Tabari, the person mentioned above as “Rasil” was “Malik al Sind”, which is translated as the king of Sindh.³⁹ However,

³⁷ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūh*: pp, 222-224

³⁸ Pathan: mumtaz Husain: *Sind Arab period: History of Sind series vol 3*: Sindhi adabi board-Hyderabad, 1st/ed, Pakistan-1978: p, 160

³⁹ Tabarī: *Tarikh*: 4/181, 182

Rasil has also been reported by Al-Balādhurī as the governor of “Kach” a southern region of Sindh, during the kingdom of Dahir, who was later defeated by Muhammad bin Qasim after the conquest of Deybul, Neyrun and Sadusan.⁴⁰ In light of above mentioned reports, it is also being opinionated that the person “Rasil” being mentioned by Al-Tabari, is an unknown person, as he has not been mentioned elsewhere as a kind of Sind. Accordingly, preference should be given to “Chach Namah” and other Persian source books.

Sindhi army is reported to have been defeated heavily and followed up to the river by the Muslim army, who remained in Makran afterward. Subsequently, after the conquest, Hakem dispatched one-fifth of the booty Estate Bayt ul-Mal through Sahar al-Abdiy, who was tasked to inquire about the elephant to the Caliph as to what should become of it afterward. Sahar al-Abdiy, then explained the situation of the region to the caliph Umar as being not suitable in terms of scarcity of water, unavailability of food and military resistance. Caliph Umar, upon hearing the situation, replied with orders that maintained the military positions of Muslims as being passive as far as his government is concerned. Furthermore, he is also reported to have ordered them to sell the elephant and distribute the wealth among the soldiers of their army.⁴¹

Thus, this is considered to be the earliest approach of Islam into the Indus valley through the muslim army by the expansion of the territories of the Islamic state. Afterwards, western part of the Indus Valley mostly remained under the part of Islamic state until the Ummayah caliphate. According to W.H. Moreland and Atul Chandra, after the death of the prophet Muhammad in 650 AD, muslims from Arabia had already established themselves in Baluchistan as well. Within the timeframe of sixty years after that, they had captured the whole region of Brahman Dynasty too.⁴²

⁴⁰ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: p, 260

⁴¹ Tabarī: *Tarikh*: 4/181, 182 and see also: Ibn al-Asir, Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ash-Shaybani(d.630/1233) *al-Kāmil fī al-tārikh*, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1st/ed, Beirut/1997: 2/424, 425.

⁴² W.H. Moreland and Atul Chandra Chatterjee, *A Short History of India*, 3rd/ed, Longmans/Green & co, London/New York, 1953: p, 112

It has also been reported that the first mosque in the Indus valley was built during the government of Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan, when Umar bin Ubaidullah Ma'mar al-Qurashi completed the conquest of Makran.⁴³ The presence of a mosque in this region has been considered as an ultimate sign of the existence of the Islamic culture and civilization in the western part of Indus valley. However, the relevance of the mosque to Abdullah bin Umar cannot be accepted as a result of some scrupulous research because none of the Arab historians mentioned any of his journeys towards east.

In 29.H/649.A.D during the reign of Caliph Usman, Abdullah bin Amir bin Kurayz was appointed as the governor of Basra, who replaced Abu Musa al-Ash'ari. Caliph Usman addressed him to dispatch someone for investigation of the border region of the Indian sub-continent. Thus, he designated Hukaym bin Jabillah al-Abdi, who returned successfully after the survey of the area. He reported the Caliph about the circumstances of the region as having drought and unproductive, lack of water and food and difficult climate. According to this report by Hukaym bin Jabillah al-Abdi, a large army in that region could not have sustained their activities for a longer period of time, further complicating the survival in a difficult environment due to the existence of bandits.⁴⁴ Consequently, Caliph Usman in response to this unfavorable report stopped any further incursions into the kingdom of Sindh.

It has been reported that during the time of Caliph Usman, a Muslim lady came to him for resolving a family matter involving his husband, who was in Kandabil in Sindh at that time.⁴⁵ This report further increases the evidence that before the conquest of Kandabil (happened during the government of Muawiyah), presence of Muslim people in that region has been recorded. The reason for their presence in that region, though, cannot be found in literature. However, it can be

⁴³ Yāqūt al-hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*: 2/338. But the relevance of the mosque to Abdullah bin Umar could not have been correct, because none of the Arab historians mentioned any of his journey towards east region.

⁴⁴ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*: p, 257

⁴⁵ Ibn Sa'd, *Tabakat*: 8/344

proposed here that, those people could have travelled for trade during or after the expedition towards Sejistam (or Sistan). Furthermore, according to Ibn Asakir, the incident of the lady mentioned above, occurred in the caliphate of Caliph Ali, who presided over the matter.⁴⁶

After the death of Usman the 3rd Caliph of Islam, the political situation of the Islamic state has been reported to have become extremely critical as Ali bin Abu Talib became the Caliph. Meanwhile, a civil war has been reported to have broken out among different Muslim groups as well. During that period, 40 personnel from Sindhi tribe of Siyabijah in the leadership of Abu Salim Zutti were appointed to deal with the responsibilities of Bayt al-Mal. Usman son of Hanif al-Ansarî has been reported to be appointed as the governor of Basra by the Caliph Ali. However, prior to Caliph Ali's arrival in Basra, members of the opposition party including Talha and Zubayr had killed the whole staff of Bayt al-Mal and had already took control of it.⁴⁷ Afterward, when Caliph Ali had taken control over Basra, approximately 70 people from Zut tribe of Sindh came to him and criticized the actions of the opposition party in Sindhi language.⁴⁸ Afterwards, during the year 39.H/659 AD, Caliph Ali has been reported to have dispatched Al-Haris son of Murrah al-Abdi to the frontier of the kingdom of Sindh, who captured several slaves and immense booty and eventually got killed in his subsequent expedition.⁴⁹ Additionally, during the suzerainty of Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan, a commander named Umar bin Ubaidullah Ma'mar al-Qurashi conquered Ermail and built a mosque at the location of Hashek, the mention of which, can be observed in other source books as well.⁵⁰ Therefore, it can be compiled from the aforementioned reports that, the western part of the Indus Valley (Kingdom of Sindh) or the region which comes inside the territory of present-day Baluchistan

⁴⁶ Ibn Asâkir: Abu al-Qasim, Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Hibat Allah ibn `Abd Allah, (d.571/1176), *Tarikh Dimashiq*, Dâr al-Fikr li'tiba'at wa al-Neshr, Beirut/1995: 24/257

⁴⁷ Al-Balâdhurî, *Futuh*: p, 365

⁴⁸ Al.Tarîhi: Fekhruddin: *Maj'ma ul Bahrain wa Mat'la un-Nairen*, *Maktaba al-Murtaza*-2nd/ed, Tehran/Iran-1908: 4/250

⁴⁹ Al-Balâdhurî, *Futuh*: p, 257

⁵⁰ Yâqût al-hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*: 2/338.

(the largest province of Pakistan), had somehow remained a remote area of the Islamic state during the era of guided Caliphs except Abu Bakr.

Meanwhile, the political situation of the Indus Valley remained almost identical and only its western part remained under the influence of the Islamic state until al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf became the governor of Iraq. There have been several reported reasons for these circumstances including inappropriate policies and strategies of the designated officers towards the local communities, which triggered unexpected resistance too. Another important reason which can be proposed is the difficult climate and distant center of the government, which hindered their proceedings further into the Indus Valley. After some unsuccessful attempts, Hajjaj bin Yusuf appointed Muhammad bin Qasim as a governor of Sindh, who is reported to have stepped in and successfully accomplished the conquest of Deybul, the main sea port of Indus valley. He is reported to have been fair towards the local people of Sindh as he treated them with respect and honor and also managed to win their trust by providing them with high-rank positions in his administration.⁵¹ And, within only a few years, the whole Indus Valley had officially become a part of the Islamic state. These reports further augment our hypothesis that a convincing section of Sindhi people were aware of Islam much before the conquest of Muhammad bin Qasim; hence, within only a few years of the conquest of Deybul and Multan, the ninety percent of the muslim army comprised of the local people.⁵²

Conclusion

Throughout the history, maritime trade was an important factor for the development of the Indus valley. The main source of the relations between Arabs and the Sindhi people was their trade activities. The trade route of Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula to the Indus valley and then to India played a key role in exchanging the social and cultural values and information between both societies. The existence of Sindhi tribes and people in the Arabian Peninsula, in Iraq and in Persia was

⁵¹ Masumi: Mir Muhammed Masum bhakhari: *Tarib Masumi*, Sindhi adabi borad, Sindh/ Hyderabad. Pakistan-2006: pp,7-11 and 29 -31

⁵² Al-kufi: *Fethu Sind* (chach namah): pp, 239-240

another source of expansion of the religious influences towards Sindh. The expansion of Islamic state as a result of military expeditions during the time of Caliph Umar up to the western bank of Indus River has been recorded as the third source of spreading of Islam in Indus valley. Presence of Muslim people in “Kandabil” during the period of Caliph Usman also verifies the existence of the religion of Islam in the region to some extent. Such initial successes in the western part of the Indus valley made the way easier for Sindhi people to come forward for acceptance of Islam without any tyranny or oppression. This amplifies the researchers’ claims that the spread of Islam in Sindh, owed generally to Muhammad bin Qasim, has its roots in much older presence of Islam and its followers in the region.

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