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# Arab's Islamic Expansion & Campaign Against Hind of Central Asia and subcontinent

Bipin R. Shah

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## Abstract

Early Koranic verses give us the impression that the prophet of Islam was a great man. The prophet himself was a simple man and the life he lived must have made a strong impression on his followers. He is said to have lived his life in austerity when he could have received anything from his followers for asking. The prophet himself was illiterate but he composed one of the great religion of the world if followed in right manner can emerged as a major religion of the world that is already revered by millions of his followers all around the world. He often said, **“One who leaves his own home in search of the knowledge, he follows the path of the god and the red ink of the writer is holier than the blood of the martyr.”**

The prophet himself never preached nor envisioned the bloody conflict that some of his followers of Islam undertook in the history of the mankind. The followers of Islam after the Great Prophet's death rationalized the mankind in to two camps:

1. One who believes in Islam's theology are believers.
- 2 One who does not believe in Islam's theology are kafirs or non-believers.

There was nothing wrong in identifying who believes in what if it stops there with full human rights for all and particularly for those non-believers who should not be required to follow Islamic sharia laws. This was done in total disregard of the prevailing facts that prior to Islam, some of the greatest and oldest religions have existed for centuries and those religions had millions of followers. They all chose peaceful coexistence with other religious beliefs. The prophets , their ancestors and the followers recognized them and paid homage to that principle. Al-Isrā' ('**The Night Journey**') or Banī Isrā'īl , (**The Children of Israel**) is the 17th chapter (**sūrah**) of the Quran, with 111 verses (**āyāt**). It is about Isra and the Children of Israel. This sura is part of a series Al-Musabbihat surahs because it begins with the glorification of Allah. This clearly indicates the prophet's reverence to Judaism and Great temple of Solomon that he believed he visited. So, why not coexist with a choice of faith and worship?

## Arab Expansion and Forced conversion

The deliberate Arab expansion and conquest during the middle Ages that brought untold death, forced conversion, sexual slavery, misery, devastation, and subjugation of women with massive displacements in other lands were major historical events of 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. The successors caliphate were driven by power, ambition, and domination that their prophet never wished during his lifetime.

The prophet himself was trying to escape the domination by two competing powers of his days: Sassanians of Persia and Christian empire of Byzantine. Both imperial powers were squeezing Arab nomads with double taxation and making their lives miserable. The birth and rise of Islam came from this underlying cause.

What has followed and remains a potent threat against the civilized world is a continuous political agenda of very few, who prefers to live and wish to throw the rest of the world in that dark Medieval period over the modern civilization of coexistence, peace and prosperity. The modern civilization in an interdependent world that can offer more robust opportunities to all who aspire for freedom and better life for their family . The extremist's primary goal of their agenda is to establish worldwide Caliphate of "believers" with the use of violence and force.

Most of the extraction of the writing derives from the ancient writers who were followers of Islam and had lived during those difficult times and recorded the events with certain degree of intellectual honesty. The judgment and learning of the lessons belong to the readers. As recorded and reported by Arabian and Persian historians and translated in English by western writers, here is the glimpse of India's history that I have reported here. This writing is not to be construed by anyone to offend their sensibilities of their faith. Islam in its right forms can be a true religion of peace that can coexist with rest of other religion without any problem. This historical facts are compiled by early Muslim Persian historians and translated by English authors. They are their firsthand account compiled since 8<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### Arab Incursion in east towards Asia 8<sup>th</sup> century AD.

#### Persia, Afghanistan, Sistan and India's Sindh Province

The first incursion of Islam to Indian sub-continent began when Muawiya became Caliph of Bagdad with his capital at Damascus. He became caliph less than 30 years following the death of the prophet Muhammad and very shortly after the reign of the four "rightly guided" (Rashidun) caliphs. Although considered to be lacking in the justice and piety of the Rashidun caliphs .His father had opposed the prophet until Mohammed captured Mecca and then he acted as a secretary to Prophet Mohamed he and his father lost a struggle against Mohammed and accepted Islam. He started Omayyad dynasty of Caliph in 661 AD. After assassinating Ali, son-in-law of Prophet, who Shia sect follows, Muawiya went on to annex Syria, Saudi Arabia, Armenia, Iraq, Kurdistan, Persia, Hind's(India) Makran Marsh Land (Gedrosia), Sistan, Egypt and Yemen. After that Hindu Shahi kingdom and India only stood in his way.

The victory over Sasanian Persia was crucial for Islam to open central Asia. initially started as a freedom movement to wrest control of Arabian Peninsula from Sassanians suddenly morphed into an expansion through conquest. The Sassanian Empire that ruled over Persia and much of central Asia crumbled against the Arab armies of the Islamic state. The accounts of some of these Arab conquests are often contradictory, the exact course of events were unclear, precise dates for even major events

elusive, and the size of the armies difficult to determine but Arab armies still won. The Sasanian position in the Arabian Peninsula had been based on a system of military colonies and tribal alliances in the Yemen, Oman, and Bahrain; it collapsed when constant squabbling and strife with the Byzantines left them unable to support their garrisons and Arab proxies. The fall of Iraq had serious consequences for the subsequent conflict because it had been the most important part of the Sasanian empire.

On the ground, Sassanian armies have outnumbered Gazi soldiers of Muslim armies at key battles such as Qadisiya and Nahāvand; they fought bravely, contested the Arab advance fiercely with superior armors and repulsed the attack to normalize the situation. The fall of the Sasanians has been attributed to the class and religious strife within their Royalty and noblemen, the absence of popular support for an elitist regime, conflict among the nobles, dynastic instability, succession struggle and split in nobles, the cost of the long, and unsuccessful war with the Byzantines. The ultimate success of the Muslims has also been explained by their organization and determination to their cause and faith. They indoctrinated themselves as modern suicide bomber does that they are dying for a worthwhile cause with an ultimate reward from Allah. The effect of these faith-based belief of martyrdom on their morale was unexpected by the Sassanians. Their ability to recruit and replace depleted forces had expanded and large number of Arabian horses provided them greater mobility. Their Turkish converts became their first recruits towards their march to eastern central Asia.

According to Allahabad Prashati of Gupta Emperor Samudra Gupta, the rulers of outer states of Greater India were Hindu Turki-shahi often called them as "*Daivaputra Shahi-Shahan Shahi-Shaka-Murundahi*". They were group to gather as Kshatriyas tribe of Northern India that may have ruled extensive kingdom from Kapisa that controlled vast territories of Bactria, Khorasan, Afghanistan (Gandhara), Turkmenistan and North India at one time in history. Kalhana's "Rajtarangni" echoes the same history, except it adds the portion of later history that states that Turki-Shahi of Hindu faith was dislodged by a minister who was of Kashmiri Brahmin origin and the kingdom was divided and maintained a good relationship with Hindu Kashmir. The Greater Indian Empire that Mauryan acquired from Nanda that was passed on to Pushya Mitra, Marunda, Kushan and Gupta Empire is shown below.



Map of Greater India During Gupta Period 630 AD

### Capture of Siestan and Zabulistan and Turki Shahi Rulers of Kabul (Kapisa)

Al- Biruni, a Persian scholar, born in 973 AD was a linguistic, a chronologist and a scholar “Par Excellence”. He was familiar with ancient Persian and Hindu history and understood geography very well better than Early Greeks and Roman historians. He adopted Islam as his faith; his work is more reliable and dependable due to his objectivity and analysis than other Arabic and Persian writers who were writing history on “**The Glory of Islam**’ while being on payroll of the Muslim conquerors. Al- Biruni also travelled extensively in India and by far the most objective historian like Ferishta.

He writes:

**“The Hindus had kings residing in Kabul; they were part of “Turkish-Mongoloid-Tibetan” origin. The first of them, Barhatakin, brought these countries under his sway and ruled them under the title of Shahis of Kapisa (Kabul).”** Xuanzang thought they were Buddhist follower. Generally, Kshatriyas rulers of India from the start of Vedic age to British princely states were either a Siva or Vishnu followers but respected other religions like Buddhism and Jainism. Their political objective of keeping all their subjects under their own rule is paramount and the respect for the religion was one of the element. Asoka who primarily regarded as a Buddhist king supported other religions as evidence by his edicts. Similarly, Kumar Pala Solanki of Gujarat regarded by Jaina as Jaina king of Gujarat due his close friendship with Hemachandra, but he also rebuilt Shiva temple of Somnath temple and completed Shahstra Linga (Shiva Linga) water Storage Lake and other Hindu temples of Gujarat. So, there was no exclusivity of royal patronage for any religion. They practiced true secularism and there was a full freedom of religion. Sidhraj Solanki, predecessor of Kumarpala went out of his way to protect Islamic merchants of Persia who lived in Bharoach from Hindu radicals.

The suspicion of Turki-shahi origin falls on Kamboja people, who were later known as Tak-shak Rajput under Iranian and Indian influence and intermarried with all other kshatriya groups of Indo-Iranian tribes and adopted Buddhism (see below the people living in that area with Red hairs and blue eyes), whose descendants are still present in the Afghanistan.

The Turki Shahi rule remained under Burhatkin's descendants for number of generations, judged to be at least sixty. The last king of this race was Lagaturman, who had a Kashmiri Brahmin minister named Kallar. Rajtarangni confirms this fact of the history. Through court intrigues, the minister took over the royal throne. After Kallar, the dynasty was continued to be called as Shahi dynasty. Later Brahmin rulers assumed more traditional Khatriya names such as Samanta, Kamlu, Bhim, Jaypal, Anandpal, and Trilochanpal. Al-Bruni states further "That in all their grandeur, they never slackened in the ardent desire of doing which is good and right and these rulers were of men of noble sentiment and noble bearing and defender of their faith."



The descendants of Tibetan-Turk Shahi-Kamboj Habitants of Afghanistan-Bactria Region

At some point, this Brahmin Hindu kingdom of Kabul was split up among the family members into western and eastern parts. Its western part included the kingdom of Zabulistan. Many Bhatti and Guajarati clan claims their migration from Zabulistan. The western part shared border with Persia, Siestan (Sakastan, Shivastan) that formed the frontier province of Zabul. Zabulistan of west and Kabulistan of east always maintained strong political and military relationship and kept the military alliance with Kashmiri kingdom of India.

However, the situation changed when Islamic hordes under Caliphate appeared on the world scene. Arab raiding parties often penetrated deep into Central Asia from their military bases in Persia and Azerbaijan. The raiding parties took back slaves and other booty. The annexation of territory was indeed slow and the vanquished could keep their kingdom and pay tribute. Then another term of surrender was added that they convert to Islam. Later, this appeared to frustrate the Arabs, who were used to rapid acquisitions against desert nomads of Central Asia that they start sending their Arabs governors. Off course, Ghazni in Afghanistan once known for its slave market openly traded captured slaves as featured in Turkish Ertađlu series.



Beheading of Non-believer



Captured women-child slaves

Battles during an invasion

In 698 AD, Muawiya ordered Hajjaj, his newly appointed governor of conquered Iraq and Persia to capture strategic province of Zabulistan that control the Silk Road Trade. Hajjaj equipped his army under his experienced general Ubaidullah "to lay waste" the Zabulistan, the land of infidels and non-believers ("Zutbil" to Arabs) and destroy the forts, kill and enslave its people". He was told not to come back empty handed unless he wants to risk his and his family's life.

Rattan Pal ("Rutbil" to Arabs) was ready and drew the Mohammedan army into the valley, while blocking Key Mountain passes to cut off Islamic arm's retreat. In this round, Hindu were victorious and compelled Ubaidullah to buy his liberation by payment of seven hundred thousand dirhams (dinars). He had to promise never to raid the Zabulistan's territory again. Arabic historian claimed that "He died of grief at the plight of his soldiers", he saw no future by coming back as ordered, so took his own life.

Another attempt against Rattan Pal with new commander named Abdur Rehman Ashta during 700-701 AD with 40.000 new fighters also failed. Abdur sacked and looted Zabul, but failed to hold on to the territories He was forced to enter a treaty with Rattan Pal. In return for fighting against his own master Hajjaj, Rattan Pal would give him the protection. This annoyed Caliph and his Governor Hajjaj.

Rattan Pal brought Islamic advance to a screeching halt into the central Asian territories albeit temporarily. Unfortunately, Siestan became the graveyard of warriors and many Hindu, Buddhist and Zoroaster followers had to run for the safety. Rattan Pal just like Gurjara Pratihara became the folk lore's of Arab writers. He fell defending Siestan and then Kapisa fell and Pal family headed to Kangra fort in India for refuge and protection.



**Battle during defense**



**Arab Attackers**



**Riders riding-Turki-shahi's coins Devnagri -Bhim**

**“Hindu battle ethics”** passed down from epic days of Mahabharata always continued through centuries, except it only worked among Hindu warriors. The victor always showed compassion and mercy, when the vanquished accepted victor’s suzerainty with tributes and or matrimonial alliance. During that epic period, the fighting stopped at sunset and began during a set time like a scheduled sport match. No longer true with rest of the world. When you are fighting with alien forces that do not understand or abide by this ancient but unique military ethics, it becomes a strategic military blunder of defeat. The Hindu kings of the history made several of these mistakes from time to time against the invading Islamic hordes. Prithviraj Chauhan of Ajmer after winning the first round against Ghori (Ghori) gave him a free pass to go back to Kabul, if he promised not to return. His promise only lasted for a little over a year and he came back with a larger force. Chauhan should have pursued him all the way to the gate of the hell when he was on a run.

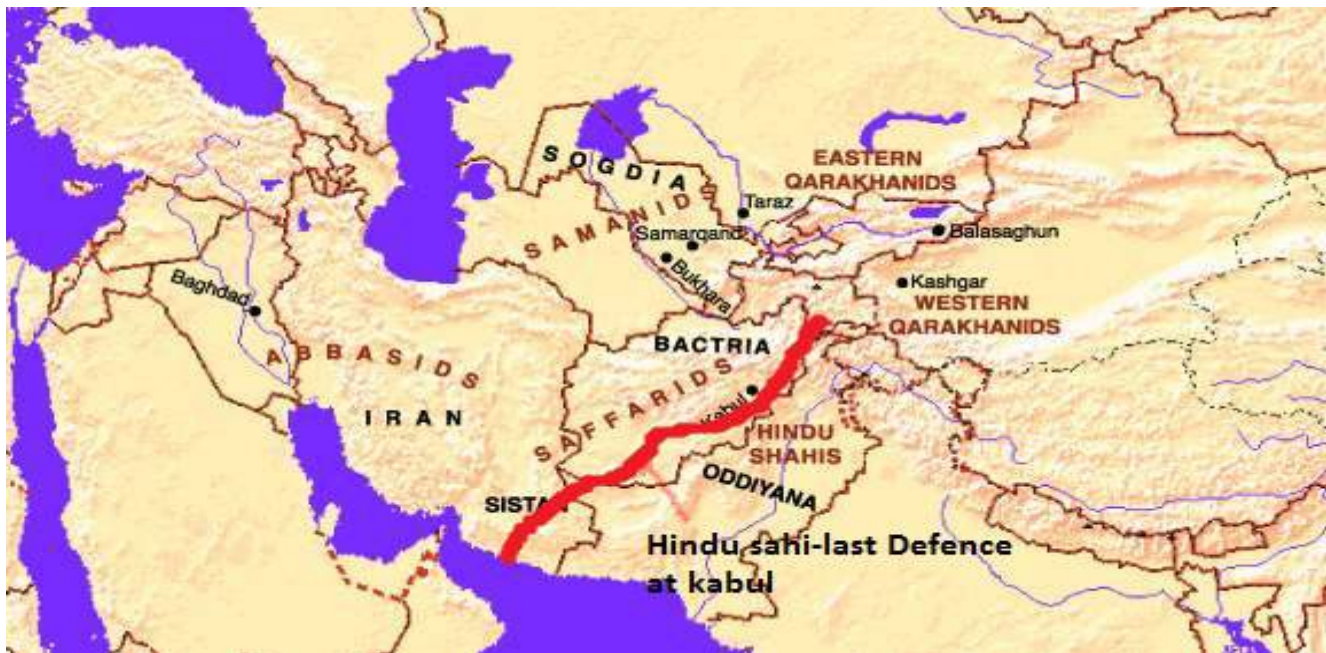
The mistakes were repeated with Humayun. Vaghela and Solanki kings of Gujarat, Jaichand Rathod of Kanauj and many others kept making the same mistakes that were always underestimating the enemy’s threat. Instead of judging this as a **“unitary”** and **“common”** threat to Hindu culture and civilization, they continue to maintain their own selfish narrow interest, quick to claim the victory without staying power to defeat the enemy permanently. Many Non-Hindu historians have made a general observation of Indian history as **“Afflicted by Debilitating pacificism and corroded by the idea of nonviolence”**, Hindus do not feel a sense of territorial loss or danger of impending menace as long as it does not happen to them. They are perfectly happy, if their placid existence is not threatened and convenient to ignore the surrounding disturbances”.

Anyone with proper military knowledge would tell you that When you have upper hands in the battle, you do not retire early or cutoff the winning momentum or maintain any illusion, until victory is secured. One must follow the enemies to the gate of the hell and then safely return to the earth. If the enemies are at your outer rim of defense, you do not take chance by hoping that they will keep their promises and never come close to your territory. These are the general lessons of military science and strategy and if not followed, one will face untold future suffering and losses. The first strategic blunder of Rattan Pal ultimately results into complete uprooting of Hindus culture from what was known as Greater Gandhara region of ancient India where many great Buddhist schools and Viharas were built. After few successive generation, Islam march eastward again through Gazanivad



and resulted into a massive loss of Hindu lives and migration of Hindu, Jains, and Bhatti tribes from extreme North of Indian empire to south of Indian heartland. These are the facts of the history and cannot be undone, but the lessons are left behind. No religion or civilization of the world ever sanctions the waiver of **“right of self-defense or survival”**. To accept tolerance towards the others does not mean the abdication of self-existence. This must be understood by democratic, secular minded Indians, when any part of the citizenry of India faces a common threat, every one’s life is in danger, irrespective of their religious faith or affiliation. To an enemy, you belong to the same group. A terrorist did not ask for your religion before they fire a shot to kill you. There were Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Hindus, who died during Mumbai attack or bicycle mounted crude explosives by terrorists.

For another 70 to 80 years, the ruling caliphs involved in their own political intrigues against each other’s ceased to be a powerful military force against Turkish Shahi rulers of Central Asia. But Arab’s attention turned elsewhere on western coast of India and Spain of Europe.



## Capture of Sindh

“Chach nama”, an ancient History of Sindh written by a Persian and translated in English by Mirza Kalichbeg Fredunbeg from Hyderabad, published in Karachi, Pakistan serves as the basis of this narrative. The Chach nama describes well the condition of Sindh in 7th century and informs us that Buddhism was the dominant religion of Sindh. The word “samani” derived from shramna originated with the presence of Buddhism and other similar religious sects like Buddhism. Sindh at one time was dotted with Buddhist monasteries and Viharas. Most of the Buddhists living there had a pacifist attitudes and refused to take up arms against the invaders in self-defense. The invaders here were Musulmans from Arabia and their Gazi soldiers. A village in Sukkar district was still called Budhia once. Buddhists, Hindu Brahmanas ,Rajputs, Lohanas and other castes lived in peace. One of the most remarkable edicts mentioned in this book was the order issued to Mohammed Kassim by Governor Hajjaj that the subject population was not to be interfered with in exercise of their religion, if they

worshipped stones. The Musselman rulers will accept the convert if one choose to do so but never forced anyone. Those who do not convert will pay jizya tax. Islam would not have succeeded in central Asia or Sindh if the rulers were not divided within themselves. They had adequate means to defend themselves on this first round. The big cannons were invented later. Sindh's Muslim history is well documented by other chronicles written by Hindu and Arab historians but chach nama goes deeper into the history to explain how Hindu succumb to the defeat. Undoubtedly, Chach nama assign the blame of Hindu defeat by Kassim with barely 10,000 Gazi soldiers due to the betrayal of the nobles and excessive pacifism of Buddhist for self-defense and then Raja Dhir himself lacked the moral compass and fortitude in the eyes of public.

King Suhasin was related to Chittore dynasty. Suhasin's younger queen fell in love with handsome Chach, when he worked as his chamber maid and won king's trust, but in the end, he conspired against the king to the horror of public. The king Suhasin of Rai dynasty was a good king and was well respected by his people. Due to trust bestowed by King and perhaps with queen's recommendations, he managed to rise to the position of the chief minister of king Suhasin. King Suhasin was assassinated by Chach with queen's help. After King Suhasin's death, Chach as a king did very well with conquest and solidifying his rule and even reclaimed the boundary of Sindh kingdom that once established by his predecessors. Sindhu-Suvira extended up to Baluchistan, Makran, Siestan and Gedrosia to the west and Kashmir to the east.

However, after Chach's death his son elder son Dahir (Dhirsan) took over the responsibility of Northern half of kingdom from his ruling capital at Debal on Makran coast, **(north of present Karachi)**, while his younger brother was assigned responsibility as a governor of lower Sindh ruling from southern ruling seat at Brahamanavad. Both cities were well fortified but dependent on outside water supplies.

To add insult to the injury of his moral standard while eroding public confidence, Raja Dhir solemnized his marriage with his own sister **(Considered incest by Brahmins)**, that produced utter disgust and respect of the common people and nobles and the public trust was eroded to the point that they would like to see them gone. When Kassim invaded Debal, a Brahmin came forward to betray his countryman, A samani (Buddhist) of Nirankot entered a private treaty with Kassim to save his head and there were many others, who asked the people to lay down their arms.

We do not know if these information was known to Governor Hajjaj of Persia, when he dispatched only 10,000 cavalry men against large army of Sindhi fighters. The guess was just probing the strength of king's army and Kassim and Hajjaj were as surprised as anyone with such as easy victory. Ali Kofi was the original Arabian writer who collected this information, and, in some cases, he added tales to glorify the Islam, but those suspected narratives are omitted here because that was not the case.

The caliphate was always nervous in attacking Hind due India's ancient battle tanks (war elephants) and how they can turn the tide of a war. Arab merchants who traded with India for a long time provided some clues of the might of Hindu kings. Arabs were not very anxious to pick a fight with Hindu kings because they were always afraid of "Vallabha" kings with mighty armies. The experts disagree on who the Vallabha they refer to. Was it Maitraka Kings of Vallabhipur or Rastrakutas who had inscription referring them as Vallabha. Rastrakutas were powerful kings as well as their

predecessors Satvahana Satkarni who all may have claimed the title at one time or another including Gupta at different times in the history.

**The Trade relationship with Persia that existed and how it was upended with Arab’s takeover of Persia**

There has been a trade relationship with Arabs and Persians since Indus valley days and was accelerated under Kushan-Roman period, when Sindhi and Kuchhi sailors delivered silks, spices, Sandal wood, perfume, Ivory and other products to Persia, Yemen and Egypt and picked up the cargos back home through sea routes. Chach had two sons and two daughters with the Suhasin’s queen: Dahir and Daharsiah. Dahir ruled upper Sindh at Alor fort while younger brother ruled lower Sindh at Brahmanabad. Brahmanabad is identified as a site near the present city of Mansura, Pakistan. While Alor fort (also known as Arore or Al Rur in Arabic), was a large city on the banks of the Mehran river that was a tributary of the eastern side of Indus (Sindus). Now, it is a small town in Pakistan, but the fort was destroyed by successive Muslim invasion and earthquake. The word “Mehran” is derived from “Mehr” or “Mithra”, a clue to the early habitants of the Indus valley, who were sun worshipper Mitra-Mithra. The boundaries of their kingdom extended up to Kashmir in the north, Mekran in the south, and Kandahar to the west. An approximate position of the port near Alor was located north of Karachi. The city of the Brahmanabad was located near the city of Bhanbhore, Pakistan. A Rohri hill is the only remaining vestige of once ruined city of Indus delta that was Brahmanabad hit by a severe earthquake.



**Sindh During 8<sup>th</sup> century AD**



**Sindh after conquest by Arabs**



**Ruins Alor Fort nearby Rohri hill**

Walid-I became the caliph of Bagdad after the death of Muuwiya. Hajjaj still remain the Governor of the Persia, despite his commander’s earlier failures in Zabulistan. In next 60 to 70 years there were repeated clashes due to maritime trade disputes between Raja Chach and his successor Dahir with Arabs. Arabs were getting involved in sea trade after the capture of Yemen, Egypt, and Persia. In ancient time, the sea passages often involved sailing the ship with cargo along the coastal routes (**hugging the coastal waters**). This was considered safer in absence of modern navigational devices or

using monsoon winds. This method of travel took a long time but avoided sailing through the rough and choppy Indian Ocean that is always subject to wild storms and winds.

The major disadvantage of **“hugging the coast- sailing”** was the ships were subjected to piracy and subjected to pay port taxes to all the local sea jurisdictions, it passed or diverted by pirates who were in some cases were working for kings. The Arabs now enjoying the supremacy in the Middle East and not believing in paying any taxes (**based on Islam’s teaching**) considered the sea trade itself very hazardous and subject to natural calamities and should not be taxed and viewed that as a challenge to their supremacy they had established in Middle East and Central Asia. The vassals were constantly subjected to harassment and merchants were lodging complaints to Caliphate. The one originating in Sindh and Kutch was a **“state sponsored”** and designed to extract the huge taxes for a free passage. When the goods were transported over the silk road through land route, the merchant paid reasonable taxes. Arab traders felt that such dispute over water resulted in huge loss of cargo and sometimes ship. The caliph repeatedly warned Chach through Persian intermediaries and requested help and relief but to no avail. The Arab version of events that you receive from Persian and Arabic sources does have some merits. Jaina sources also confirm that in the beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century Sindhi pirates struck Vallabhipur, an ancient and thriving port of Saurashtra. They identified them as Sindhi-Kutch pirates. So, the piracy was quite a common form of instruments to collect wealth through piracy. Either foolishness or the lust did not make Dahir understand the risk he was facing given that Persia had already fallen to Islam and that represented present and clear danger to his kingdom and survival. The failure to understand these geopolitical changes facing India have a number of historical precedents. The lack of attention ultimately destroys the kingdom and the people living in that kingdom. Anyway, his neglect allowed the first entry of Islam to the subcontinent that influenced the history of the subcontinent for over a millennium and it continues to haunt us.

Some Sindhi historians claimed that the real objective of Raja Dahir was to continue the game of piracy to enrich his treasury. The loot, plunder and spread of Islam that followed Kasim’s invasion of Hind became the norm after 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. The experts still debate that how much impact the piracy added to the impetus of Arab invasion as Arabs would have preferred to consolidate their gain against the Christians after defeating the Sassanians as Christians were their next target.

Therefore, it is believable that as per Arabian records, the caliphate repeatedly advised Hajjaj to be careful in his ambition after his experience in Central Asia. The Papacy of the Christian world was getting more alarmed with the rise of Islam with the loss of Jerusalem, Syria, and other places. The caliphate did not want to lose the gain it had made or to open more fronts than it can handle. Whatever was going through the heads of Islamic caliphate rulers, we will never know. Dahir had ample opportunity to prevent the piracy or prepare himself for such a reprisal attack. He did neither but continued to enjoy his luxurious life and indulgence that his subjects did not approve. What followed was a sheer chaos and massacre of innocents of an epic proportion. Some historians blame some nearby Hindu states not to come to the aid and that may be true due to disgust of King Dahir’s conduct. On the other side of the equation, the neighboring Rajput states were highly displeased with Chach’s governance and expansion. But the main facts remain that Dahir was totally unprepared and was living a lifestyle totally detached from the common people. Dahir and other Hindu kings should have anticipated this coming.

Futuhu-I Bulda'n by Ahmad bin Yahya, bin Jabir, who chronicled the history during the middle ninth century AD of the conquest of Sindh by Arabs describes the invasion of Sindh in considerable details.

“Hajjaj now appointed his own 17 years son-in-law, Mohamed-Bin-Kassim as a commander of expeditionary force to attack hind.



Kassim arrived at Debal on Friday, where ships brought to him a supply of men, arms, and warlike machines. He dug an entrenchment which he defended with spearmen, and unfurled his standards, the flag of crescent moon. Each warriors was arrayed under its own banner, and he fixed the “Manjanik” (a war machine like a propeller to bust the door of a castle or flame throwers) and required five hundred men to work it. Debal, was ancient seaport, North of Karachi while the fort of Dahir was located on eastern side of Indus River nearby. Debal had lofty temple (Arab called all idols “budd”) surmounted by a long pole as seen from the approaching vassal, and on the pole was fixed a red flag (saffron), which when the breeze blew was unfurled over the city. The “budd” is a high steeple, below which the idol or idols are deposited, as in this instance. “

Kassim directed his Majnik Master to aim at the temple and bring down the saffron flag. Once the flag staff was brought down, the infidels were sore afflicted. The idolaters (Hindu) advanced to the combat but were put to flight; ladders were then brought and the Musulmans escalated the wall. The first who gained the summit was a man of Kufa, of the tribe of Murad. The town was thus taken by assault,

and the carnage endured for three days. The governor of the town, appointed by Dahir, fled, and the priests of the temple were massacred. Muhammad marked out a place for the Muslims to dwell in, built a mosque, and left four thousand Muslims to garrison the place.” Ahmad bin Yahya bin Jabir continues, and I summarize this for readers while omitting possible exaggeration and boast by Arab historians.

Kassim then went to Nirun (another town), the inhabitants of which place had already sent two Buddhists, or Hindu priests, to see Governor Hajjaj in Persia to seek peace treaty. The residents of Nirun furnished Kassim with desperately needed and depleted supplies and admitting him to enter the town, while capitulating to submission. Kassim conquered all the towns successively which he met on his route, until he had crossed a river which runs on this side of the Mehran [Indus]. He then saw approaching towards him **“Buddhist monks”**, who came to demand peace in the name of the inhabitants. Kassim imposed tribute upon them, and then went towards Sahban, and took it. Then he went to the banks of the Mehran, and there remained. When this news reached Dahir, he prepared for battle. Kassim dispatched a group, with men mounted on horses and asses, at whose approach the inhabitants solicited peace, the terms of surrender was negotiated by the priests. Kassim after imposing fines and capturing four thousand Jats for compulsory service as slaves granted them peace. Kassim sought the means of crossing the Mehran (Indus), and effected the passage in a place which adjoined the dominions of Rasil, chief of Kassa, in Hind, upon a bridge which he had caused to be constructed. Dahir had neglected every precaution, not believing that the Muslims would dare to advance so far. Muhammad and his soldiers encountered Dahir’s forces. Raja Dahir mounted on his elephant, and surrounded by many other elephants, and his Takaras (noble men) were near his person. A dreadful conflict ensued, such as had never been heard of. Dahir dismounted and fought valiantly, but he was killed towards the evening, then Dahir’s forces fled in confusion with full retreat, and the Muslims glutted themselves with massacre. The wife and sister of Dahir committed self-immolation (Johor), up on hearing the news of the death of Dahir. Kassim captured two young daughters of Dahir and decided to send them to Caliph’s harem as a gift, along with thousands of men and women captured as slaves. The fort of Alor was ransacked for days. Every live young woman were raped and killed. The temples, places and homes were looted for anything of value.

Kassim then went to old Brahmanabad, two parasangs from present Mansura. Mansura the current town did not exist during Kassim’s time. The remnant of the army of Dahir’s brother who ruled there rallied at Brahmanabad and resistance was finally offered. Kassim was obliged to resort to force. As much as 8,000 Hindus laid their life. According to some Arabian historians, but it was close to 26,000 people. In a conflict like that both sides lost men. Hindu lost more and number could be in between two numbers counting dead on both sides. Kassim then approached Alrur and Baghrur, where the people of sawandari(**Sundari**) came out to meet him. He again plundered as he wished, imposed the term of peace, and spared their **“budd” (temple)**. Kassim stated that this temple **“shall be unto us, like**

as the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews, and the fire temples of the Magians (Zoroaster)." Here, it seem to suggest he followed the order of Hajjaj.

However, after destroying one temple and collecting tribute, he built a mosque on the ruined structure, quite common practice followed through the history of Islam. The Byzantine church of holy Roman emperor in Istanbul "**Hagias Sophia**" was similarly converted to a mosque by Turkish sultan. Kassim continued his advanced to the town of Alsaka, on this side of the river Biyas (Beas), which was captured by him, and is now in ruins. He then crossed the Biyas, and went towards Multan, where, in the action which ensued, the infidels retreated in disorder into the town, as Kassim commenced the siege.

Since the supplies for the troops were being exhausted, the Musulmans were forced to eat donkeys, probably common diet of Arabia then. Then came forward a traitor, who sued for peace, and pointed them an **aqueduct**, by which the inhabitants were supplied with drinking water from the river. The aqua duct supplied the water to reservoir in the city itself that file the well. Kassim destroyed the water supply to the city to induce surrender. The inhabitants, oppressed with thirst, surrendered at discretion. He massacred the men capable of bearing arms, but the children were taken captive, as well as the ministers of the temple, to the number of six thousand. The Musulmans found in the temple as much gold in a chamber ten cubits long by eight broad, and there was an aperture above, through which the gold was poured into the chamber. Hence, they call Multan "**the Frontier of the House of Gold**," The temple of ("**budd**") of Multan (**Sanskrit-Mulastan**) received rich presents and offerings, and to it the people of Sind resorted as a place of pilgrimage. They circumambulated it and shaved their heads and beards. They conceived that the image was that of the prophet Job, God's peace be on him! Multan has been in existence from the Vedic time and had various name as Kshayapapura, Hamsapura, and finally Mulastan named after a sun temple. Most of the temple ruins in Pakistan are gone. The stones have carried off to build Mosque and no traces left, other than references from ancient travelers and Hindu puranas.

Ahmad bin Yahya, bin Jabir states that "**We are told that Hajjaj caused a calculation to be made of the sums expended in fitting out this expedition of Muhammad Kassim, and the riches which resulted from it. He had spent sixty millions (of dirhams) and that which had been sent to him amounted to one hundred and twenty millions. He said, "We have appeased our anger, and avenged our injuries, and we have gained sixty millions of dirhams, as well as the head of Dahir."**

Hajjaj then died. Dahir's two beautiful young daughters that were captured made to Caliph's harem. Caliph's made inquiries about their travels. The daughters of Dahir were smart and devised an elaborate ploy for revenge against Kassim. After promising pleasure and marriage to caliph, they both accused Kassim of violating their honors. Hearing this Caliph was enraged, and he dispatched his guards to bring the head of Kassim. The guards obliged. They summoned Kassim to Persia and killed

him and sent his head to the caliph. Caliph then decided not to marry Dahir's daughters anyway, but Arabs never reported their fate. Dahir's brother who was on a run after the fall of Brahmanabad tried to seek peace with Kasim's replacement. He was tricked and subsequently killed by Arabs.

Next two governors and commanders of Caliph makes several attempts on Gujarat and Saurashtra but meets its match with rising power of Pratihara-Gurjara known to Arabs ruler of "Jurz". After several years of war fares and attack on Bharoach, Vallabhipur and Shrimal at the end of 8th century AD, the Arabs were driven out of India. However, the Sindh was lost forever as overwhelming population accepted Islam and abandoned their ancestor's faith of millennia either under threat or under unusual circumstances of choosing life over death.



The milder forms of Islam that spread later in Medieval ages is called Sufism and many Sindhis converted to that brand of Islam. Sindh was a unique province of ancient India. Since it acted as a passageway to migrants from the North over thousands of years, it developed its unique culture and mixed ethnicities of borderland tribes. Ancient Sindh had many habitants from Siestan, Persia, Baluchistan, and other areas of North. When Islam came to Sindh, Buddhism was immensely popular along with Hinduism and Jainism. Raja Dahir was not immensely popular and likable person, so he never received the mandate a pious king receives.





Xuan Zang Chinese Pilgrim

Ruins of Sun temple-Pakistan

Arab soldier

Defending warriors on horses

Michael W. Meister, the Edmund J., and Louise W. Kahn Professor in the History of Art Department, at the University of Pennsylvania, are a specialist in the art of South Asia. His research focused on temple architecture, the morphology of meaning, and other aspects of the art of the Indian sub-continent. This article first appeared in *Expedition*, the magazine of University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. He took a clue from Buddhist Kingdom of Travel of Xuan Zang and travelled to Sindh to discover any remains of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist temples in Sindh, Pakistan that were described in his texts and their team found many. Some of them are shown below from their publication.

“The Chinese pilgrim, Xuan Zang, visiting Gandhara and noted hundreds of Hindu structures along with many Buddhist sites then in decline (Watters 1904-05).”



Temple Ruins In salt range-Sindh



Temple at the bank of Indus (Sindhu)



Ruin of Temples at Thar (southern Sindh)  
Courtesy DEMOTIX Images

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