

CHAPTER-I

INDO-ARAB RELATIONS

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CHAPTER - I

INDO-ARAB RELATIONS

1. Beginning of the Indo-Arab Relations :

From the very beginning of the mankind, the relations of the two great countries, India and Arabia, may be traced. Adam (Peace be upon him), the father of the human race, alighted on a mountain. (Later on named after him as Jabal Adam) of Lanka (Ceylon) in India. Allamah Jalaluddin al-Suyuti has mentioned regarding him as -

أول ما أهبط الله آدم إلى أرض الهند¹

It is also said that he received the first divine message from Allah in this land. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari mentions a Hadith (Tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad s.a.) as -

عن عبد الله بن عمر قال: لما أهبط الله آدم بأرض الهند ومعه غرس من شجر الجنة فغرسه بها²

The Arabs also claim that their contact with India goes much further back and that infact, they believe that India has been their father-land since the dawn of creation. Spices and various fragrant substances were exported from the southern part of India to Arabian Peninsula;³ and then these were supplied to the different parts of the world by the Arab traders. The Arabs believed that these important commodities were derived from the former gifts that Adam had brought with him from the paradise. And among these gifts, two fruits, lemon

1 AL-Durr al-Manthūh fī al-Tafsīr bi al-Mathūh vol. I Jalaluddin Abdur Rahman al-suyuti p. 55, Egypt - 1314 A.H.

2 Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī Abu Fafar Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari P P. - 82 Pub 1987.

3 History of the Arabs. P K. Hitti. P. 6, Hong Kong, 1985.

and banana are found in India. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari mentions another important tradition of the Holy Prophet as -

حدثنا سلمة عن ابن اسحاق، قال: هبط آدم عليه يعنى على الجبل الذى هبط عليه و معه ورق من ورق الجنة: فبثه فى ذلك الجبل، فمنه كان اصل الطيب كله، وكل فأكهتلا توجذ الأ بارض الهند⁴.

The Arabs took keen interest in India, because, it is fact that the Arabs of ancient times considered India as their holy father-land; and not merely as a country which they had come into subsequently. As a result, the Arabs arrived in India long before and established settlements in various parts of the country. Even long before the advent of Islam the Arabs visited the Maldiv~~e~~ islands, Ceylon and the coastal areas of the southern parts of ancient India for the purpose of trade, while the people of these lands also visited Arabia for the same purpose. The then king of Ceylon being in touch with Arabia, was the first man in these parts to hear about the rise of Islam and the way of the life of the followers of Islam. He was so fascinated by the new faith that he embraced. Islam in 660 A.D. (40 A.H.) when the companions of the prophet were alive.⁵ Ibn Batuta has mentioned a miracle of a Muslim saint, Shaikh Abul Barkat, who hailed from Morocco and chanced to visit the Maldiv~~e~~ islands⁶ The miracle of the Moroccan Shaikh Abu al-Barkat al-Barbari became the cause of the conversion to Islam of the whole inhabitants of these Islands and their king Ahmed Shanuraza also accepted Islam from the hands of the Shaikh. The king built a mosque which was known after his name. On the railed gallery

4 . Tarikh at Tabari: Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari P. 82 Pub. 1987.

5 . Tarikh Farishtah, M.Q. Farishtah vol.II, Ch. VIII, P. 311, Lucknow , 1884.

6 . Rehla Ibn Batutah, Dar Sadir, p-579, Beirut 1964 A.D.

of the congregational mosque Ibn Batuta saw the following inscription craved in wood-

اسلم السلطان أحمد شنورازة على يدأبى البركات البربرى المغربى 7.

On account of this Shaikh the Maldive islanders honour the westerners (i.e. the people of North-West Africa) upto now. The Arab traveller Ibn Batutah has left a detailed account of the Maldive islands. He also met here many scholars and sea-men who hailed from Yaman⁸

Excluding Ceylon and Maldive there were many Muslim enters like Malabar, Ma'bar, Gujrat and Sindh where the Arab travellers and the traders, during the third and fourth century Hijrah, settled down. The prominent historian al-Qazwini mentions a Prophetic tradition in which the prophet has attached great importance to Sarandip (Ceylon) of India.

(عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: خير بقعة ضربت اليها آباط الابل مكة، امسجدى هذا والمسجد الاقصى، وجزيرة سرنديب فيها نزل أبونا آدم عليه السلام بها جبل، أهبط عليه آدم عليه السلام وهو ذاهب فى السماء يراه البحرىون من مسافة ايام وفيه آثار قدم آدم عليه السلام، هى قدم واحدة مغموسة فى الحجر. ويرى على هذا الجبل كل ليلة مثل البرق من غير سحب و غيم ولا بدله كل يوم من مطر يغسل موضع قدم آدم عليه السلام 9.

About two centuries after the rise of Islam, it so happened that a big group of Arab and Persian faqirs was on its way to the sacred mount in

7. Ibid. P. 579

8. Ibid. P.P. 582, 583, 584.

9. Athar al-Bitad wa Akhbar al-'Ibad, Zakariya bin Muhammad bin Mahmud al-Qazwini, P.P. 43 Beirut- 1960.

Ceylon which bears Adam's footprint.¹⁰ A small group of Sahaba and Tabiun also came to India in connection with Arab expedition. As abul Fida Ismail bin Umar bin Kathir mentions.

كان الصحابة في زمن عمر فتحوا اوائل بلاد الهند وكان في عساكرهم وجيوشهم في
الغزو الصالحون والاولياء والعلماء من كبار التابعين¹¹.

Such type of Arab and non-Arab Muslims began to establish settlements and to build mosques in different places of southern India. Ibn Batuta, during his visit to the large city of Mangalore in Malabar, found most of the merchants of the city from Persia and Yaman.¹² During the reign of the last ruler Cheraman Perumal of Kerala of Malabiar, nine moques were built in nine different cities of Malabar - namely, Cranganore, Quilon, Hili, Jurfattan, Dahfattan, Fandarayna, Kanyarode, Fakanar and Mangalore.¹³ This holy raja was so enchanted by the Muhammadan faith that he became a convert to the same faith in 827 A.D. and gave up the throne, and went on pilgrimage to Mecca, and died in one of the ports of the Red Sea of Arabian Peninsula in 831 A.D. From his time the Muhammadans extended their religion and their influence in Malabar; and many of the princes and inhabitants embraced Islam. The rulers of the different ports like Goa, Dabul and Choul etc. did not prevent immigration from Arabia.¹⁴

10 . The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, Mahdi Husain, P. 207, Baroda 1953.

11 . Al-Bidayat wa al-Nihayah, vol. - IX, Abul Fida Ismail, p.87, cario - 1988.

12 . The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, Mahdi Hussain, P.P. 185, Baroda- 1953.

13 . Ibid. pp. 185.

14 . The History of the Rise of Muhammadan power in India, M.K. Ferishta, pp. 205, 206, New Delhi - 1981.

"Merchants from different countries flocked to the ports of southern India. With the growth of foreign trade new cities had sprung up. Trade with Muslim countries led to an increase in the population. The King and his officers never oppressed the Muslims. The chiefs and their soldiers were idol-worshippers. Nevertheless, they were considerate to the Muslims and respected their customs and religion. On the whole, the Hindu rulers were kind and just to the Muslims because they knew that the prosperity of their country depended on harmony.¹⁵ The settlements of pre-Muslim Arabs at the different places of Chaul, Kalyan and Supara are mentioned in the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency.¹⁶ Actually the first Muslim Arab traders appeared in Indian waters in 636 A.D. during the Caliphate of Umar bin Al-khattab.¹⁷ According to the prominent historian Rowlandson, the Muslim Arabs first settled on the coastal area of Malabar about the end of the seventh century. A.D.¹⁸ The famous Arab geographer al-Masudi paid a visit to India in the beginning of 916 A.D. and found over ten thousand Arab Muslims of Siraf, Oman, Basra and Baghdad at Seymore (i.e. the modern Chaul) and also numerous other Muslims who were the children of Arabs born there.¹⁹ At the time of Ibn Batuta's visit to southern part of India, all along the Malabar coast from the Sandabur island to Kawlam, he found the wooden houses of the Muslims at all stations of the road where other Muslim visitors could lodge. He also observed that the Muslims were

15 . Tuhfa-al-Mujahidin, Quoted by T.W.Arnold in his "Preaching of Islam." PP 382, 383. Delhi- 1990

16 . Influence of Islam On Indian Culture, Tara Chand, pp 30, Allahabad - 1946.

17 . History of India, Vol.-I, Elliot, pp. 115, London - 1873

18 . Tuhfa-al-Mujahidin, Rowlandson, Preface

19 . Influence of Islam on India Culture, Tara Chand, pp. 36 Allahabad - 1946.

the most highly respected people in that country. In the Sandabur city he saw a large congregational mosque which was built by the ship-owner Hasan, the father of Sultan Jamal-ud-din Muhammad of Hinawr in the Baghdad style. He also found the Muslim communities with their own Qazis and Muftis at Barcelore and Facanaeur. At Hinawr he met Shaikh Muhammad al-Naqauri, Ismail Qazi and local Qazi Nur-ud-din Ali and also there he observed the Muslim women of Hinawr city who knew the Great Quran by heart.²⁰

The pre-Muslim Arabs appeared on the eastern coast of India early. Their colonies settled in the early centuries of the Christian era in Ceylon and southern part of India. "Arab merchants passed along the Coromandel coast on their way to China, where remains of pre-Muslim Arabs are still found at Canton."²¹ In the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods the usual trade route from the ports of Arabia to China passed through the seven seas among which were the Gulf of Palk and the Bay of Bengal. The prominent Arab geographers Sulaiman and Abu Zaid Sirafi, in the ninth century, and al-Masudi, early in the tenth century, mention the route and the occurrences in these seas, as if they had been very perfectly well known for a long period.²²

Before the arrival of Malik Kafur's army into the southern parts in the eighth century, Muslims had established their settlements in the important cities and centres of trade; they had already developed connection with the local inhabitants living around them; and from this inter relationship of the Arabs and the local people a

20. Rehla Ibn Batutah pp. 553, 554, 555, 556, Beirut - 1964.

21. Ancient Navigation in the Indian Ocean. Edkins, J.R. A.S. 1886.

22. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Tarachand, pp. 39, Allahabad - 1946.

number of communities of mixed lineage had grown like the Ravutlans and the Labbes of the Tamil races.²³ Thus some other important accounts show that the Muslims appeared in South India on the western coast as early as the eighth century and on the eastern coast in the tenth century; that they soon spread over the whole coastal area and within a short time they made a great impact both in politics and society of India. In politics their intellectuals and leaders became ambassadors, admirals, ministers and farmers of revenue and in society they made numerous converts, propogated the Islamic ideas and erected the mosques and the tombs which became the centres of the activities of their saints and missionaries.

In the northern part of the India the Arabs made their earliest attempts on the ports of the northern coast during the Caliphate of Umar bin al-Khattab (634-644 A.D.). Many raids were made by the Arabs on the borders of Baluchistan and Sindh and the land routes were thoroughly explored during the seventh century A.D. This century was a period of political disruption and decline for India on the one side, and on the other- side it was a landmark in the history of the Arab people. In India the glorious eras of the Mauryas and the Guptas had already ceased. With the rise of Islam and the political expansion of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula changed the political atmosphere of the Middle Eastern regions completely. Their continuous political success brought them close to the boundaries of India.

23 Ibid. pp. 43

At the command of Al-Hajjaj bin Usuf the then governor of Iraq, the young and brilliant Muhammad bin al-Qasim, son-in-law of al-Hajjaj, with a mighty force of 50,000 of which 6000 were Syrians, pushed on through Baluchistan and in 711-12 A.D. (93-94 A.H.) occupied Sindh, the country from the borders of little Kashmir to Cutch and frontier of Malwa.²⁴ The famous Arab historian Abul Fida Isma'il has also indicated that great invasion as -

و فيها افتتح محمد بن القاسم وهو ابن عم الحجاج بن يوسف مدينة الديبل وغيرها و من بلاد الهند وكان قد واه الحجاج غزو الهند وعمره سبع عشرة سنة، فسار في الجيش فلقوا الملك داهرو وهو ملك الهند في جمع عظيم ومعه سبع وعشرون فيلا منتخبة، فاقتتلوا فهزمهم الله وهرب الملك داهر، فلما كان الليل أقبل الملك ومعه خلق كثير جداً فانتتلوا قتالا شديداً فقتل الملك داهرو وغالب من معه، وتبع المسلمون من انهزم من الهنود فقتلوه. ثم سار محمد بن القاسم فافتتح مدينة الكبرج.....²⁵.

In other place he has mentioned as -

و محمد بن القاسم ابن أخى الحجاج يجاهد في بلاد الهند ويفتح مدنها في طائفة من جيش العراق وغيرهم...²⁶.

"Sind fell away from the central authority at Baghdad and became a small independent Moslem state."²⁷ During the time of

24 . History of the Arabs. P.K. Hitti, pp. 210, Hong Kong- 1985.

25 . Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihayah. Abul Fida Ismail, Vol. IX pp. 87, Cairo, 1988.

26 . Ibid. pp. 88.

27 . The Discovery of India. Jawaharlal Nehru, pp. 229, New Delhi. 1982.

Muhammad bin al-Qasim, peace and justice prevailed in the whole land. He had got the chance to remain in Sindh for three years only. Khalifah Sulaiman bin Abdul Malik after al-Walid bin Abdul Malik, immediately recalled Muhammad bin al-Qasim from his government and vindictively ordered him to be executed for being a nephew of al-Hajjaj, as the Khalifah had a grudge against al-Hajjaj and his relatives. After Muhammad bin al-Qasim many governors came to Sindh and succeeded in occupying the country but such occupations of the country did not last long. "Only two tiny Arabs kingdoms one in Multan, the other in the city of Mansura, lingered on a little longer. It is worthy to note that the Hindu kings who re-established their rule in Sind, were remarkably tolerant to their Muslim subjects, and refrained from demolishing their places of worship."²⁸ The influence of the Muslims extended over the coastal towns of Sindh, Kathiawar, Gujarat and Konkan where they settled as traders. Dabul, Somnath, Broach, Cambay, Sindan and Chaul became seats of small Muslim communities and there they were welcomed and treated with great hospitality. In the kingdom of then king of Gujarat, Islam and the followers of Islamic faith were respected and protected and its followers freely performed their five daily prayers in the splendid mosques.²⁹ During a long period of nearly three centuries after Muhammad bin al-Qasim, no Muslim invader came to Indian soil to occupy the country. But the Muslims already settled on the Indian soil, had attained an influential position in Western India, and they used it to propagate the Islamic religion among the common people. In pursuit

28 . Futuhal-Bukdan, Baladhuri, Chap. Conquest of Sindh Beirut - 1958.

29 . History of India, Elliot, Vol. 1, pp. 27, London - 1873.



of their aims they were considerably encouraged by the favour of the Hindu rulers. Even some Hindu rulers seem to have employed Muslim mercenaries. It is worthy to note that before the Arab conquest of Sindh finally, many efforts had been made earlier to conquer it. During the Caliphate of Umar at Madinah, a naval expedition was sent for the conquest of Thana near Bombay in 636-37 A.D. Caliph. Uthman sent another expedition in 644 A.D. under the leadership of 'Abdullah bin 'Amr by land through Mekran Coast into Western Sindh. In this expedition Abdullah bin Amr defeated the rulers of Mekran and Sindh. A successful invasion was launched in 659 A.D. by al-Harith, but he was ultimately defeated and killed in 662 A.D. Again in 664 A.D. another successful attempt was made under the leadership of al-Muhallab.³⁰ But the Arab conquest of Sindh by Muhammad bin al-Qasim sowed the seed of Islam in Indian soil forever.

To be brief Muslims of different races came India several times having different purposes. There is no doubt that the Arabs were the first Muslim conquerors to invade India. But the work started by the Arabs was completed by the Turks. The Turks were different from the Arabs in respect of bravery and energy. Moreover, they were highly ambitious. Subuktgin of Ghazni in Afghan territory entered into the plains of the north-western part of India through the Khyber pass in 986-87 A.D. According to the famous historian Sir Henry Elliot, Mahmud Ghaznavi made as many as seventeen expeditions to India. But the Ghaznavi (yamani) conquerors had no aim of permanent settlement in India.³¹

30. Muslim Rule In India, Vidya Dhar Mahajan, pp. 37, New Delhi - 1969.

31. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Tara Chand, pp. 135, Allahabad - 1946.

Muiz-uddin Muhammad bin Sam popularly known as Shihahuddin Muhammad Ghori was the real founder of the Muslim Empire in Indian territory. He built up a Muslim Empire in India on a secure footing. The important principalities like Delhi, Kanauj, Gwalior, Anhilwada, Deogir and Gaur of Bengal were replaced by the Muslim rulers during the time of Muhammad Ghori in the last part of twelfth century. Qutb-uddin Aibak, the real founder of the Turkish dominion in Indian soil, was so faithful to his master Muhammad Ghori that he was formally invested with viceregal powers by his master.³² He took up the reins of government in his hands in 1206 A.D. According to Dr. A.L. Srivastava, Aibak was the first de facto Sultan of the almost entire Hindustan.³³ He built two beautiful mosques one at Delhi soon after its capture which he named Quwwatul Islam (the Might of Islam) and the other at Ajmer. With the help of Iltutmish, his son-in-law, he designed the Kutb-minar of Delhi, the finest pillar in the world. He could not complete the construction of the pillar except a portion of the first storey in his lifetime.

In 1228 A.D. Iltutmish was recognized by the Caliph of Baghdad and this recognition greatly strengthened his political position among the Indian Muslims. He got the chance to reign India for no less than twenty years from his capital at Delhi.³⁴ The first lady ruler in the history of India Sultana Raziya, according to Minhaj-uddin Siraj, was a great sovereign, sagacious, just beneficent, the patron of the learned, a dispenser of justice, the protector of her subjects and of warlike latent. She was endowed with all the admirable attributes

32. Muslim Rule In India, Vidya Dhar Mahajan, pp. 74, New Delhi. - 1969

33. Ibid, pp. 76.

34. Advanced History of India, K.A.N. Sastri & G. Srinivasachari, pp. 343, Bombay 1970.

and qualities necessary for kings. But the brilliant career of that young lady did not last more than three and half years. Thus sultans of the slave dynasty maintained diplomatic relations with the caliphs at Baghdad.

Most of the Khaljis (1290-1320), the Tughlaqs (1320-1412) and the Lodis (1451-1526) were engaged either in fighting for the interests of religion, or in the exaction of tribute than doing the work of conversion to Islam³⁵ and the others encouraged their non Muslim subjects to embrace the religion of the Prophet. Such newly converted subjects were exempted from the jizyah (Poll Tax)³⁶ According to Ibn Batutah, the Khiljis offered some encouragement to conversion by making it a custom to have the new convert presented to the sultan, who clad him in a robe of honour and gave him a collar and bracelets of gold, of a value proportionate to his rank.³⁷

The various Mughals of Delhi Badshahate had a satisfactory relationship with the Caliphs of the Arab world during their reign. Under the Mughal dynasty the religious influences of Islam naturally became more permanent and persistent. Though the Mughals came to India as conquerors and foreigners, they set up traditions and conventions which were calculated to endear them to their Indian subjects.³⁸ They also became more tolerant, invited co-operations, and always tried to function not as conquerors from outside but as Indians born and bred in the Indian land.³⁹ The historian J.N. Sarkar, rightly

35. Asiatic Studies, Sir Alfred C. Lyall, pp. 289, London - 1882.

36. History of India, Elliot, Vol. III, p. 386, London 1873

37. Ibn Batutah, Tome III, p. 197.

38. Muslim Rule in India, V.D. Mahajan, pp. 248, New Delhi - 1969.

39. The Discovery of India, J.L. Nehru, pp. 257, New Delhi - 1986.

remarks, "The Mughal Administration presented a combination of Indian and extra-Indian elements; or, more correctly, it was the perso-Arab system in Indian setting."⁴⁰

Origin of the word 'Hindustan' or 'India'

India the whole country was divided into various provinces before the arrival of the Muslim army in this country. Every province was known by its own name or by the name of its capital. When a province of the country was conquered by the Persians, then they gave the new name 'Hindu'. In the old persian and Sanskrit languages, the letter 'S' and 'H' often interchanged. Hence the word 'Sindhu' became in Persian 'Hindhu' and 'Hind' derived from 'Hindhu', was known to mean the whole country.⁴¹ The Arabs also accepted this term for the whole country, though they restricted the word 'Sind' to a particular province, But the European people called the country as 'Ind' or 'India' dropping the letter 'H' of 'Hind'. Now this country is well known all over the world as India.

In the other hand, the northern races entered into this country through the Khaybar pass, called it as 'Hindu Istahan' which was pronounced by the Persians as 'Hindustan'. It is very strange that the word 'Hind' is too affectionate to the Arabs that they often chose it as a good name for their women. In Arabic love poetry, the name 'Hind' has the same fascination as 'Laila' in Arabic poetry or 'Shirin' in Persian Poetry.⁴²

40 . Muslim Rule in India, V.D. Mahajan, pp. 244, New Delhi - 1969.

41 . The Discovery of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, pp. 74, New Delhi. - 1982.

42 . Arab wa Hind Ke Ta'alluqat, S.S. Nadwi, pp. 8, Allahabad -1930.

2. Commercial Relations:

The Arabian Peninsula is surrounded by water on its three sides and its land is not fertile but dry. So the people of such a dry country become naturally compelled to depend on trade. Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Africa are its neighbouring countries. India is facing Arabia and Persia. The people of Arabia had commercial relations with these countries from very early centuries. The commercial relations of India with the Arab world may be traced back to the third millennium B.C.⁴³ Regarding this fact ample evidences are found in the history which indicates the presence of the Indian merchants from Makkan and Baluchistan in the cities of Elam and Sumer in early dynastic times. Bahrain, Amman, Hadramout, Yeman and Hijaz- these are lying on the coastal area of the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Red sea. Therefore, it became easy for the Arabs to enjoy the opportunities of sea borne trade. Arabia took part in the international commerce at very beginning of history. One of the oldest books of the world 'The Old Testament' gives us the actual informations about the relationship of the different nations in the ancient world. Before 3rd century A.D. the Arabs were the main agents of commerce between India and Egypt. They either fetched themselves or bought the precious stones, spices, incense sticks and muslin etc. from the Indian merchants at their ports on the Gulf of Aden, and supplied to Egypt to be offered at the altars of the ancient Egyptian goods.⁴⁴ "The great prosperity of South-West Arabia at this time was in large measure due to the fact that the trade from India

43 . Indo-Arab Relations, S. Maqbul Ahmad, pp. 78, New Delhi - 1978.

44 . Ibid, pp. 79.

with Egypt came thereby sea and then went by land up the west coast.. This trade, however, was lost during this period, as the Ptolemies established an overland route from India to Alexandria.⁴⁵ The trading ships from Indian Coastal Area first came to the Arabian port Saba (Yeman) and after a halt there the ships proceeded to Egypt.⁴⁶ The trade relations between India, Egypt and South Arabia during 271-270 B.C. may be realized from the fact that when Alexander the Great, built the city of Alexandria, it affected the economy of both India and South Arabia. Sea traffic between the parts of East Arabia and India was very early established, and Indian products, especially spices and rare animals (apes and peacocks) were exported to the coast of 'Uman. Thence, apparently even the tenth century B.C., they went overland to the Arabian Gulf, where they were shipped to Egypt for the use of the Pharaohs and Grandus..... The difficulty of navigating the Red Sea caused the land route to be preferred for the traffic between Yemen and Syria.⁴⁷

The Persian Gulf was an alternative sea route to India for the Arabs and that route always remained open. On the coastal area both the Arab and Persian traders often transported their goods to India and back, both by sea and land. Setting out from any part on the Persian Gulf, they sailed to Indian Ocean en-route, they rounded the Cape Camorin and passed on to Bengal and Assam and further to China.⁴⁸ In the past days the sea-route between Europe and India was always under the control of the Arabs. The second sea-route

45 . Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Ed. Vol. II pp. 264.

46 . History of India, Elphinstone, Vol. 1, pp. 182, London- 1866.

47 . A literary History of the Arabs, R.A. Nicholson, pp. 5, Cambridge - 1969.

48 . Arab 'O Hind Ke Ta'alluqat, S.S. Nadwi, pp. 30, Allahabad - 1930.

between India and Arabia through the Persian Gulf was also under the control of the Arabs. Uballah was the most important port⁴⁹ of the second sea-route of the Arab traders on the Persian Gulf near Basra, which was the halting place of Indian and Chinese sailing ships for trade. When Uballah was destroyed in a battle then the Arabs had built Basra as an alternative port; but Basra became less important than Uballah and during those days trading vessels from India, China and Abyssinia very often came Uballah instead of Basra. After Uballah the important port on the Persian Gulf for Indian traders was Sirof which attracted the merchants who were engaged in sea-borne trade. Unfortunately it was demolished partly by an earthquake and partly by a revolution in the kingdom of the Dailamis. Qais a small island, developed as an important trading centre for Indian merchants on the Persian Gulf of Oman after Sirof. In later times Qais became the chief mart for Indian sea trade and the main port for Indian ships. All the Indian valuable products were brought here directly.⁵⁰

On the other hand, all the important ports of India were well acquainted with the Arabs. The most important Indian port for Indo-Arab trade were Tez in Baluchistan, Dayabul in Sind, Thana, Khambayat, Sobara and Jaimur in Maharashtra and Gujarat, Kollam Mali and Malabar in South-East part of India and finally cape Camorin, Orrho Calliana and Male in the different Coastal areas of South - West India.

49 . Ibid, pp., 32.

50 . Atharul Bilad, Qazvini, pp. 161 Beirut - 1960.

The period from the seventh century A.D. upto about tenth century A.D. may be considered as the "golden age" of Indo-Arab trade and commercial relations.

Mainly the Arabs of Southern Arabia and the Arabs of Hijaz were inland-traders who brought the Indian goods from Yemen and then sold them in Makkah and other towns.⁵¹ During this time Makkah was the sole centre of cultural and commercial activities of Hijaz and the message of Islam arose and spread from this town only. The Indian swords called by the Arab people 'al-Muhannad', were famous among the Arabs of those days. The Arabs imported the swords from India and Yemen. The swords manufactured in Yemen were also made out of the iron imported from India. The poets of pre-Islamic period in some particular references mentioned the Indian swords and some other goods in their poetry.⁵² Among the Beduins, the Indian camels were popular.

On the other hand, the Arab traders and merchants, who came to India for commercial purpose only, made a deep Islamic influence on the Indian natives. "The trade in spices, ivory, gems etc. between India and Europe, which for many hundred years was conducted by the Arabs and Persians, caused a continual stream of Muhammadan influence to flow in upon the west coast of Southern India."⁵³ Such continuous arrival of the Arabs and the Persians created a Indo-Arab or Indo-Persian mixed population in the commercial places of coastal area. A very friendly relationship developed between the Muslim

51 . Indo-Arab Relations, S.M. Ahmad, pp. 81, New Delhi - 1978.

52 . Ibid, pp. 82.

53 . The Preaching of Islam, T.W. Arnold, pp. 263, Delhi 1990

traders and the Hindu rulers. As a result of which the Hindu rulers extended protection to the Muslim traders and merchants, because the prosperity of the kingdom depended upon the presence of the Muslim traders. Their relationship led to proselytism to Islam a large number of the natives. The native converts also received the same consideration and respect as the Muslim traders and merchants got from the Hindus.⁵⁴ It is well-known that the Persian and Arab traders settled in large numbers at the different ports on the western coast of India and they married the native women of the country and these settlements were specially large and important in Malabar where from a very early time it seems to have been the policy to afford every encouragement to traders at the ports of the area.⁵⁵ In the ninth century the Muslims evidently had acquired great importance, on the other-hand under the patronage and encouragement of the king Zemoirein of Malabar the Arab traders settled down in large numbers in his dominions. These people materially increased his power and wealth by their trade.⁵⁶ Al-Idrishi reports that in the eleventh century the town of Anhilwara was frequented by a large number of Arab traders who went there on business. They were protected and highly respected by the Hindu king as well as his officials.⁵⁷ The trade in Arab horse so developed on the coastal part of India during the thirteenth century that an agency was established at Kayal by the ruler of Kis Malik-ul-Islam Jamal-uddin who later became former general of Fars. About ten thousand

54 . Ibid, pp. 264.

55 . Influence of Islam on Indian Culture. Tarachand, pp. 32, Allahabad - 1946.

56 . Ibid, pp. 35.

57 . History of India, Elliot, Vol. 1, pp. 88, London, 1873.

horses were exported per year from Fars to Ma'bar and the Indian ports and the sum total of their value amounted to 2,200,000 dinars.⁵⁸

In the Manjarur (Mangalore) city there was an abundance of pepper and ginger and the merchants of these goods were from Fars and Yemen disemark.⁵⁹ Kuwayl, King of Jurfattan, was one of the most powerful rulers of Malabar coast. The king possessed many ships which went to Oman, Fars and Yemen for trade.⁶⁰ In Quilon, a very beautiful place of Malabar country, lived a good number of Muslim merchants whose head was Ala-uddin al-Awachi from Awah of Iraq.⁶¹

Upto the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian seas, the Arab merchants were undisputed masters of the trade of Ceylon where they had developed the commercial establishments centuries before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. In every sea-port and city of Ceylon the Arab traders were found in large numbers. The facilities for commerce in the area attracted the other fresh arrivals in large measure from their settlements in Malabar Coast. In all the sea-ports and cities the Arab Muslim traders married the native women. The Muslims of Ceylon at present times appear mostly to be of Arab descent.⁶²

During the 11th century the Arab merchants reached upto Kashmir and in the northern parts of India the Gurjara-Pratiharas was supposed to be the boarder for Arab-trade. Al-Masudi (d. 956 A.D.) mentioned in his book that thousands of Arab traders settled in Chaul

58 . Ibid, Vol. III pp. 32, Vide, The Discovery of India, J.L. Nehru pp. 239, New Delhi - 1982

59 . The Rehla of Ibn Battuta (Eng tr.), Mahdi Husain, pp. 185., Baroda 1953.

60 . Ibid, pp. 186.

61 . Ibid, pp. 193.

62 . Ceylon, Sir James Emerson Tennent, Vol. I, pp. 631-3. London-1860.

and other towns of Konkan region of Bombay during 10th century. During the time of Ottoman Empire the Arab merchants do not seem to have acquired trading rights for themselves. They settled down in Indian soil as merchant communities peacefully and they inter-married with the natives. The children of such intercaste came to be recognized among the Arab people as bayasira.⁶³ Different Gujara rules like the Rashtrakutas of Deccan welcomed the Arab merchants giving them all trade facilities.

Traders carried on their trades of uncommon goods like gold, diamond, ivory, horn of rhinoceros, pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, camphor, sandal-wood, aloes-wood, perfumes etc. and some essential fruits like mangoes, jack-fruit, lemons and citrons, coconuts, jamans etc.⁶⁴ Among the precious stones, diamonds of Kashmir took an important part like gold in the Indo-Arab trade. Gold was found in Kamrupa (ancient name of Assam) only and from Kamrupa the Arab merchants imported it Arabia, and other countries like Iraq, Egypt and Syria.⁶⁵ "After the foundation of Baghdad in A.D. 762 direct trade relations between India and Arab countries seemed to have improved and lasted roughly until the 16th century."⁶⁶

The Portuguese appeared in the Indian Ocean at the time of decline of the Indo-Arab sea-trade during the fifteenth century. In 1498 A.D. Portuguese ship carried a group of Portuguese royal travellers under the commandership of Vasco da Gama to Calicut of

63 . Muruj al-Dhahab wa-Ma'adin al-Jauhar, Vol. II, Masudi, Edt. By Barbier de Maynard, pp. 86, Paris- 1861.

64 . Indo-Arab Relations, S.M. Ahmad, pp. 86, New Delhi - 1978

65 . Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik , Ibn Khuradadhbih, (edt. De Goeje), pp 67/1889.

66 . Indo-Arab Relations, S.M. Ahmad, pp 85, New Delhi - 1978.

present Kerala. The most experienced Arab sailor Ahmad bin Majid, who was Known as 'Asadul-Bahr' (sea tiger), piloted the Portuguese ship to the Indian coast. Several important books were written by Ahmad bin Majid on navigation about the Indian Ocean.⁶⁷ Among the later Indian rulers Tipu Sultan was the only man who realized that a country could be developed only by its trade-industry. During his reign he cultivated good relations with the Arabs. "He established factories in foreign countries, the one at Muscat exported to Mysore saffron seeds, silk worms, horses, pistachio nuts, rock salt, pearls, raisins, sulphar copper. Tipu's relations with the Imam of Muscat were cordial and the Mysore merchants were granted special concession by him."⁶⁸ After the British domination on India during the middle of the nineteenth century both politically and economically, the Indo-Arab trade and commerce was badly affected and gradually decreased.

As a consequence of Indo-Arab trade and commercial relations we may observe a stock of arabicized words of Indian origin found in the Arabic dictionaries for different exported commodities. That stock is always a source of information as well as a reasonable proof of Indo-Arab relations on trade and commerce. A list of such Arabic words, but originally Indian, is attached herewith.

Arabic words	Indian origin	English meaning
Sandal	Chandan	Sandal wood
Misk	Mushka	Musk
Tambol	Tambol	Betel

67 . Arab 'wa Hind Ke ta'alluqat, S.S. Nadwi, pp. 53, Allahabad - 1930.

68 . Indo-Arab Relations, S.M. Ahmad, pp. 91, New Delhi, 1978

Kafur	Kapur	Camphor
Qaranfal	Kanakfal	Clove
Filfil	Pili Pipta	Pepper
Zanjabil	Zaranjabira	Ginger
Qarfas	Kirpas	Muslin
Futa	Pat Lungi	Loin cloth
Qirmiz	Kirmaj	Crimson
Mauz	Mosha	Banana
Narjeel	Nariyal	Coconut
Ambaj	Ambuj	Mango
Laymun	Limo	Lemon etc. ⁶⁹

Teak wood of India, supplied to the Arab world, was used for house-building and ship building. Silver and the precious stones like diamonds and crystals were exported from India. Another rare and precious commodity the horn of Indian rhinoceros was also in great demand among the Arabs. Ibn Khurradadhbih has mentioned a list of some precious commodities which were exported from Ceylon to Arabia and its neighbouring country Iraq - "Different kind of sweet smelling wood, sandal wood, camphor, cloves, nutmegs, cubebs, coconuts, flaxen and cotton, fabrics and ivory, pepper, lead, kutla drug, crystals and sanbazaj (used for polishing precious stones), were exported from Ceylon."⁷⁰ Among exported materials a kind of some potent poison was

69 . Arab'wa Hind Ke Ta'alluqat, S.S.Nadwi, pp. 14-42, Allahabad - 1930

70 . Kitab al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik, Ibn Khurradadhbih pp. 71, 1889.

also exported to Arabia. Qazvini named it as 'bish' which apparently appeared in the Hindi word 'bis' which means poison.

Arab Traders in Bengal and Assam :

From the very beginning of international commerce, the Arab traders were engaged in trade and commerce. They naturally enjoyed the opportunities of engaging themselves in land and sea trade. Yemen has been a cradle of trade - culture from ancient times. On the eve of the rise of Islam, most of the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad of Makkah were traders with Syria and Egypt. Even the prophet himself was engaged in foreign business by his uncle Abu Talib. We have on record the accounts of the Arabs trading with India, and China for long periods. At the beginning of the seventh century of the Christian era the trade with China, through Ceylon, received a great boost, so that in the middle of the eighth century Arab Travellers were to be found in great numbers in Canton; while from 10th to 15th Century, until the arrival of Portuguese, they were undisputed masters of the trade in the East.

The development of Indo-Arab sea trade obtained the greatest importance when Baghdad was occupied by the 'Abbasid Caliphs. Essential goods imported from India, China, Egypt, East Africa and other countries were stocked at Basra and then distributed to the various centres of the Arab empire; similarly, goods of export were carried from here to another port in the Persian Gulf, called Sirof, and there loaded onto boats bound for India, China and other countries of the east.⁷¹ During the 10th century A.D. a large number of Arab

71. Indo-Arab Relations, S.M. Ahmad, pp. 82, New Delhi - 1978.

merchants had settled down along the coastal regions of India. "It is difficult to judge how far Arab trade extended into the interior of India, but all evidences lead to the conclusion that it was restricted mainly to the coastal regions and to the southern peninsula of India, and of course to Sind, parts of Punjab, Bengal and Assam."⁷²

It is due to the prosely-tising efforts of the Arab and Indian merchants that the native Muhammadan people who have been mentioned in the earliest historical documents of Islam in these parts, owe its existence. Setting up the centres of commerce, they married with the native women of the land, and these non Muslim wives and the slaves of their households thus formed the nucleus of a Muslim community. This community made every effort to increase the number of its members in course of time. The following description of the methods adopted by these merchant missionaries in the Philippine Islands, gives a picture of what was no doubt the practice many preceding generations of Muhammadan traders. In their attempt to introduce their religion into the country, the Muhammadans adopted the language and many of the customs of the natives, married their women, purchased slaves in order to increase their personal wealth (property), and succeeded finally in incorporating themselves among the chiefs who held the foremost rank in the state. Since they worked together with greater ability and harmony than the natives, they gradually increased their power more and more, and having numerous slaves in their possession, they formed a kind of confederacy among themselves and established a sort of the monarchy, which they made

72. Ibid, pp. 83.

hereditary in one family. "Though such confederacy gave them great power, yet they felt the necessity of keeping on friendly terms with the old aristocracy, and of ensuring their freedom to those class whose support they could not afford to dispense with"⁷³. It must have been in some such way as this that the different Muhammadan settlements in the Malaya- archipelago⁷⁴ laid a firm political and social basis for their proselytising efforts. They did not come as conquerors, like the Spanish in the 16th century, nor used the sword as an instrument of conversion; nor did they arrogate to themselves the privileges of a superior and dominant race so as to degrade and oppress the original inhabitants, but coming simply in the guise of traders they employed all their superior intelligence and civilization in the service of their religion, rather than as a means towards their personal aggrandizement and amassing of wealth. According to Malaya chronicles, Islam was first introduced into Atjih, on the extreme north west promontory of the island (Ceylon), about the middle of 12th century, by an Arab missionary named Shaikh Abdullah 'Arif. He wrote that by 1177 the preaching of one of his disciples, Burhanuddin, had carried the knowledge of the faith down the west coast as far south as Priaman. Another name Johan (Johan) Shah has been handed down as traditional founder of the Muhammadan dynasty of Atjih who was hailed by them as their king under the half Sanskrit, half Arabic title of Sri Paduka Sultan.

Another missionary preacher was Shaikh Jalaluddin, a Persian, who came into India about the later half of the 14th century and settled down at Silhat in lower Assam, in order to convert the people of these

73 . Padre Gainza, Quoted by C. Sember, pp. 67

74 . The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, Mahdi Hussain, pp. 187. Baroda 1953.

parts to Islam. He achieved a great reputation as a holyman and his proselytising labours were crowned with brilliant success.⁷⁵

During their heyday, the Arabs hardly left any region in India which they did not visit including such remote places as Bengal and Assam. It is reasonable to believe that they visited these regions both by land; and sea, atleast during the latter part of the period of their commercial developments. This is inclusively proved by their visits to East Indies, Java, Sumatra etc.; as it was impossible in those days to reach these regions by land. Moreover, it was the Arab merchants who in most cases played the role of missionaries also, by whose efforts people of these countries were converted to Islam. It is now easy to understand that as a sea faring race they visited Bengal and Assam and must have lent Arabic words to native languages. But at a subsequent time they clipped by their fellow Muslims, the Persions⁷⁶ and more particularly by the Portugues, heir bitterest enemies who dealt a death-blow to their commercial activities in India and adjoining lands. They (Arabs) lost their dominant position as a commercial and economic power in these countries. Their visit to India, Indonesia and other adjoining lands remained confined to non-commercial and religious matters only.

In 1498 A.D. a Portuguese royal fleet under the command of Vasco da Gama, reached Malindi on the east coast of Africa and it was, as if performing an act of self annihilation, an Arab navigator by the name of the Ahmad Ibn Majid who was known as 'Asadul Bahr' (sea

75 . The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, Mahdi Hussain, Baroda 1953 pp. 239

76 . By the Persians we have always meant not only the Iranians but also any Persianized people who spoke Persian like the Afghans or the Turanians.

tiger), piloted the boat of Vasco da Gama to Calicut of Kerala. On the authority of 'Al-Barqul' Yamani fil Fathir Uthmani' which is a history of Yaman, We come to know, how the Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean, and how far long they wandered in research of the Indian Coast, and how, finally, these foxes inveigled the sea tiger (Asadul Bahr), when drunk, who showed them the way leading to the coast of India.

Although the invasion of Assam was undertaken by the Muslims at a much later date than that of the rest of India, but that does not mean that the Muslim merchants either Arabs or Persians were not visiting other states of India which had been under the purely Hindu rule. We have sufficient evidences that Muslim merchants, preachers and sufis were frequent visitors to Ceylon and carried on their commercial activities in that state. Another instance that we can point out in this connection in India, is the Malabar Coast, which was not far from the Arabian sea. It was one of the nearest land point to Arabia; but inspite of the sea and hazardous nature of the sea voyage in those days the Arabs came down to Malabar Coast and settled therein.

Even before the Muslim conquests of these eastern regions specially Assam there had been missionary activities by Muslim preachers quite independently at the political centres of the Muslim rulers which explain well the existence of quite a large Muslim elements in the population of Assam. The credit of converting this section of the population of Assam entirely goes to the activities of the sufis who visited a large part of Assam very frequently as well as of a

large part of West Bengal during 14-15 th centuries. After their establishment first in Bengal the geographical, cultural and religious conditions of these regions encouraged them to carry on their activities in the neighbouring Assam. Some of the legends narrated about the propagation of Islam in Indonesia or China. For instance the sending of Sad bin Waqqas by the Holy Prophet to the later century may be near fictitious, but sometimes fictions prove to be facts. No authentic Arab writer has anywhere mentioned the fact. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that Islam was propagated in these centuries by Arab traders who acted as missionaries also, and the names mentioned in this connection have been discovered by the historians or later generations to give weight to stories concocted by them.

We have already shown that Bengal and Assam had been the fields of commercial activities. The Arabs as well as the Persians, who did not hesitate to penetrate into the remotest parts of the country, visited these in spite of the dangers associated with such journeys. The Arabs being an adventurous people by necessity and a trading nation, by nature carried on their commercial enterprises as far as China. It is a well known fact that the Indonesians embraced Islam through the efforts of the Arab traders.

When Ibn Batutah paid a visit to Indonesia, he found it a Muslim country ruled over by the Muslim merchants. These had attracted the notice of the Arabs not only as the halting station in their voyages to China but also as spice producing countries. Similarly Bengal and its adjoining territories which include Assam, attracted the notice of the Persians as well as the Arabs. These territories of the

regions were famed for the fertility and abundance of 'blessing of God'. The Persians, therefore, used to refer Bengal as a hell full of good things due to its excessive rain and troublesome heat and existence of all sorts of dainties. The Arabs did not lag behind the Persians, but not as officials of a government like the Persians but as the traders and merchants. We came across in the books of travels composed by them, the arabicised forms of importing towns like Sadjan (Chittagaon), Salahit (Sylhat) Kamru and Kamrub (Kamrup). These regions were frequented and scoured by them and thus as the result of their frequent contact with the native peoples of these lands, they passed a number of words of their language to that of the natives.⁷⁷

Trade Route through Bengal and Assam to China: ✓

Commercial relations by sea had been established between Arabia and China long before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (570 A.D.). It was through Arabia, in a great measure, that Syria and the ports of lavent received the produce of he East. In the 6th century, there was a considerable trade between China and Arabia by way of Ceylon, and at the beginning of the 7th century the commerce between China, Persia and Arabia was still further extended to the town of Sirof on the persian Gulf being the chief emporium for the Chinese traders. It is at the period, at the commencement of the Thang dynasty (618-907 A.D.), that mention is first made of the Arabs in the Chinese annals. The Chinese chroniclers speak of the arrival in

77 . Rihla Ibn Batutah, Dar Sadr,pp 610-614, Beirut, 1964 A D. (1384 A H)

Canton of "a great number of strangers from the kindgom of Annam, Cambodge, Medina and several other countries."⁷⁸

Mc Cosh refers to no less than five roads leading from Sadiya, the frontier station of the Brahmaputra Valley into Tibet or China proper. (On the various lines of overland communication between India and China) they are : The pass of the Dihong, the Mishmi route, the Phungan pass to Manchee and China, the route through Manipur to the Grawaddy and the Patkai pass to Bhamo on the Irrawaddy. The most important and easy route was on the north-eastern side over the Patkai to the upper districts of Burma and thence the China. Through this route Shan invaders came to the Brahmapurta valley. In 1816 during the Burmese invasion, some 6000 Burmese troops and 8000 auxiliaries crossed Patkai into Assam.⁷⁹

Numerous passes and ways, known as Duars, still exist between Assam and Tibet through Bhutan. The route of Tibet runs across the Himalayan mountains parallel with the course of Brahmapurta, "The (author of) *Tabaqat-e-Nasiri*, says that between Kamarupa and Tibet there are thirty five mountain passes through which horses are brought to Lakhnauti (Behar)"⁸⁰. Lieutenant Rutherford stated that the Khampa Bhoatlas or Lhass merchants, just before the Burmese invasion, had unreserved commercial intercourse with Assam. The commercial transaction between the two countries was carried on in the following manner. At a place called Chauna, two months journey from Lhassa, on the confines of the two states, there was a mart

78 . Bretschneider (2) p.6

79 . A cultural History of Assam, B.K. Barua, pp. 111,112/Ghy-1986.

80 . History of Burma, Arthur Phayre, pp. 15.

established, and on the Assam side there was a similar mart at Gegunshi four miles distant from Chauna. An annual caravan would repair from Lhassa to China conducted by about twenty persons, conveying silver bullion to the amount of one lac of rupees, and a considerable quantity of rock salt, for sale to the Assam merchants.

P.C. Bagchi, in his work "India and China", asserts the existence of routes connecting Pataliputra and China through Assam.

There was an ancient high road from Assam to China across the Lohit frontier division and several British and the other European adventurers, having tried to explore this road, undertook journeys through it and reached Rima. This road passed through Danning, Hayading and Wallang and reached Kibitho, a frontier out post in eastern NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh).

Till recent times Bhutia horses or Tangan horses were brought through those hilly routes for sale in Kumarikata, Daranga Mela and other trade centres and fairs in the Kamrup and Darrang districts.

Ralf Fitch observed in 1583 that there were merchants who came from China and probably from Masco..... to Assam Even today the Monpas of Tawang attend the winter fairs at Udalguri, Diwangiri and Godam in the plains of Assam (S.Johri, P.-147). It is noted that Diwangiri and Godam are now in Bhutan which is an independent country.

Like-wise the author of *Tabaqat-e-Nasiri* Maulana Munhajudin Siraj mentions in details the different routes from India to China through Kamrupa (Assam) and from China to India, Arabia and Persia

through Kamrupa (Assam) in different incidents.⁸¹ To be very brief prominent historian N. N. Acharyaya mentions the trade route through which Arab traders went to China and Tibet through Kamrupa (Assam). He states, "In 763, the tibetans captured the Chinese capital, Changan. Thus the boundary line of Tibet touched those of the Arabs and Turks across the Pamirs; Turkestan and Nepal seem to have been subject to her, while the victorious Tibetan armies overran the western part of China."⁸² In another place of his historical work he denotes,- "These (Ahom rulers stopped the Muslim flood from penetrating into Burma, Siam and Indo - China. The Arabs and later on the Indian Muslim merchants from western India, found a direct line of access by sea to Malaya and Indonesia, but a land-route for aggressive advance was denied to them through North-Eastern India by the Ahoms. Otherwise, the history of Burma and Siam and Indo-China might have been different".⁸³

In the Pre-Islamic period in South China, near Canton, there was a colony of Arab merchants and traders.⁸⁴ Perhaps they entered China through the above mentioned routes. From the port Cape Camorin, the Arab traders either sailed to the islands in the Indian Ocean, or they rounding the Cape Camorin, proceeded to Bengal, and then to Kamrupa (Assam), and finally they proceeded to China.⁸⁵

The old Kamrupa state was really a link place to China. The modern prominent historian of Assam H.K. Barpujari indicates that

81. *Tabaqat-e-Nasiri, Minhaj-ud-din Siraj* (Engtr. By M.G. Raverty) pp. 535 (Footnote), 554, 557, 560, 561, 561-571, 589, 701, 764, 765, 765-766, 1081, London, 1881.

82. *The History of Medieval Assam*, N.N. Acharyay PP. 11, Guahati, 1966.

83. *Ibid*, pp.44.

84. *The Discovery of India*, J.L. Nehru, pp. 228, New Delhi-1982.

85. *Arab 'O Hind Ke Talalluqat*. S.S. Nadwi, Allahabad 1930, pp. 34.

important trade link - "It was also not unlikely that Qutubuddin Aibak or Ibn Bakhtiyar must have quite aware of the fact that Kamrup was an important link in China world of commerce".⁸⁶

It was from Kamrupa (ancient name of Assam) that the Indian cultural influence began to penetrate into the Muslim world. From the trade route as mentioned above it is clear that long before the conquest of India by the Muslims, the Arab Traders has found their way into Bengal and Assam and had begun extending a cultural influence with the result of which Arabic words began to find their way into the Assamese language. The Arab Muslim traders who had been carrying on trade with India included the Persians also maintained their connection with Bengal, Assam and every state of India even during the British regime when the Indian Muslims had lost their political power. Besides the traders, Muslim missionaries and saints had established themselves in Bengal and Assam as it is clear from the description of travels of Ibn Batutah.⁸⁷

It was not so much through the official or government agencies that Islam owes its propagation in Assam. It was the Muslim traders and the missionaries through whom the Assamese people came to know about the Islamic faith. These traders and missionaries had nothing to do with nationalistic feelings and they frequently came in contact with the native population either in connection with their commercial or missionary activities. As these missionaries or traders were absolutely

86. A History of Mughal North - East frontier Policy, S.N. Bhattacharyya, pp. 52, Calcutta - 1929.

87. Rihla Ibn Batutah, Dar Sadir, Beirut - 1964 A.D. (1384 A.H.) pp. 611-612.

free from any chauvinistic feelings, they were in no way anxious to teach the native people their own language or to impose on them their culture as it is fully illustrated by the Muslim population of Malabar which is the off-spring of Arab traders from native women. The Malabari Muslims or Muslims of other regions of the South India, had completely adopted the native language and culture and such are hardly distinguishable from their Hindu brethren or neighbours. It is but natural that some words of the foreign traders and missionaries found their way into the languages of the native people. The native inhabitants too, who were impressed by the broad outlook and the toleration of those foreign traders, made no effort to resist the influx of the foreign words into their own languages. It was, in this way, that the foreign merchants or the missionaries gladly adopted the culture and ways of life of the native people as well as the languages of the natives who in their own term almost unconsciously assimilated a large number of foreign words from Arabic and Persian languages spoken by the Muslim missionaries or merchants. Assamese too was no exception to this general rule.

3. Linguistic Relations:

Relations of the Indians with the Arab people were known to have existed since the 3rd millenium B.C. and most of such relations were supposed to have been of a commercial nature, although some cultural exchanges might have resulted in the process. Arabic was a highly developed language during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, with a mixture of Persian and even some Indian words (i.e. Sanskrit

words).⁸⁸ One of the proofs of such cultural exchanges is found in the Holy Quran. The origin of certain words used in the Holy Book is not Arabic. Dr. Arthur Jeffery, Professor of Semitic languages, School of Oriental Studies of Cairo, has traced the origin of some 318 Arabic words found in the Holy Quran. Many of such words have come from Indo-European stock and they entered into the Arabic language through the medium of either Syriac, Aramaic, Ethiopic languages or Middle Persian language.⁸⁹ Dr. Jeffery has shown the origin of sixteen out of such words as Sanskrit in his book "The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran." But thirteen of them, according to our research, are believed to be of Sanskrit origin. They are as follows:-

Arabic words	Sanskrit origin	Quranic Verse	English meaning
استبرق, Istabraq	रथविह	Al-Quran:18:31	Thick, compact, solli
جند, Jund	वृन्दा	A-Quran: 36:28	Host, army, Troop, force
رزق, Rizq	रोच	A-Quran: 2:60	Bounty
روضة, Rauda	रोद	A-Quran: 30:15	A rich, well-watered meadow
زنجبيل Zanjabil	शृंगवेर	A-Quran: 76:17	Ginger
عبرى, Abqari	आभा और कार	Al-Quran:55:76	A kind of rich carpet
فلق, Falaq	परशु	Al-Quran:21:33	To split or cleave

88. The Discovery of India, Jawahar Lal Nehru, New Delhi-19, pp 228.

89. Indo-Arab Relations, S.M. Ahmad, pp.4, New Delhi - 1978.

فيل , Fil	पील	Al-Quran:105:1	Elephant
قلم , Qalam	कलम	Al-Quran: 68:1	Pen
كافور , Kafur	कर्पूर	Al-Quran: 76:5	Camphor
كنز , Kanz	गज्ज	Al-Quran:11:12	Treasure
مسك , Misk	मुषकं	Al-Quran:83:26	Musk
نمارق Namariq ^m	नमरा	Al-Quran:88:15	Cushions

Dr. Salahuddin Umri, Deptt. of Arabic, AMU, has found some more Sanskrit or Indian origin words used in the Arabic language. For example we can mention them as follows:-

ARABIC WORDS	SANSKRIT OR INDIAN FORM
الارجوان ?	Ragavat (रामः)
الارز ?	Arch
الانج ?	Aam (आम, अम्ब)
الانك)	Naq (नग)
الاج ?	Ounch (ऊंच)
الاهليج (هليج) ?	Haritaki or Harra (हरीतकी, हरी)
البيبر ?	Byaghra, Bagh (व्याघ्र, बाघ)
البند ?	Band
البهار ?	Bhar, Bihar (भार, बिहार)
تفنى	Tap, Tapasya (ताप, तपस्या)

90. The Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran, Dr.A.Jeffery, Baroda- 1938. Pp. 58-60, 102-103, 104-105, 142-143, 145-146, 153-154, 210-211, 230-231, 242-243, 246-247, 251-264.

الجاموس	Gumhisha (गोमहेषा, गोमहिषा)
الحب	Kumbha (कुम्भा, कुंभ)
الدارصيني	Dar and Cheen (चीन)
الزط	Jat (जाट)
الساج	Shal, Samon (शाल, सामोन)
السندري	Sundar (सुन्दर)
الشطرنج	Saturadra, Saturang (चतुराद्र, चतुरंग)
الصندل	Chandan (चन्दन)
الفلفل	Pippal (पिप्पल)
الفوفل	Pungifal (पुंगीफल)
القرنفل	Qaranfal
الكرباس	Karpas (कर्पास)
لك	Laksha, Lakh, Lah (लाख)
الماش	Mashak (माषक)
المج	Mad, Mudg (मद, मद्ग)
الملاب	Tamal Patram (तमाल पत्रम)
النيرنج	Naurang (नौरंग)
النيل	Nila, Nilika (नील, नीलिका)
النيم	Nimba, Neem (निंब, नीम)
اطريفل	Trifala (त्रिफला)

بلاد	Vallat, Vallatak (भल्लात, भल्लातक)
بارجة	Baira (बेडा)
بردج	Pardah (परदा)
جزر	Grinjan (गुंजन)
شیت	Cheet, Kkhipt (छीत, क्षिप्त)
ليمون	Neebu, Nimbuk (नीबु, निबुक)
هيل وایل	Elaichi (इलाइची)
المندل	Mandal
نیلوفر	Neelutapal, Neelkamal (नीलोत्पल, नीलकमल)
تباشیر	Tabaksheer (तबकक्षीर)
شلب	Shali (शालि)
تنبول و تامبول	Tambulam (ताम्बुलम)
البیش	Tish, Vish (तिष, विष)
الكاس	Kalash (कलश)
جرة	Ghat, Ghara (घट, घडा)
النارجیل	Naryal, Narkeel, (नारिकेल)
بلیج	Bahera (बहेड.र)
أمج	Aonla (आंवला, अस्लाक)
المهتار والمهتر	Mahat (महत)

كأنج	Kanak (कनक) ⁹¹
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In addition to the above mentioned words Abdul Majid al-Nadwi has also shown following words as Sanskrit or Indian words commonly used among the Arabian people.

ARABIC WORDS	SANSKRIT OR INDIAN FORM
الهند	Sindh
قرمز	Qarmaj
الموز	Maushah
القسط	Katah or Kist
العود	Aud
الجوزبوا	Jaiphal
الغضارة	Gadarah
العنبا	Aam
الرخ	Rath
القار	Tarkul
الهرد	Haridar ⁹²

It is clear that a word has been rarely borrowed directly from Sanskrit language . The fact is that such words, which were used both in the Quran and ancient Arabian poetry, even though borrowed

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91. Al-Kalimah al-Sanskritiya wa al-Hindiya al-Musta'mala fi al-Lughat al-Arabiyah, Dr. Salahuddin Umri, An Article, Published in *Thaqafatul Hind*, New Delhi.
92. Namadij min Ta'thir al-Lughat al-Hindiyah fi al-Lughat al-'Arabiyah, Abdul Majid Al-Nadwi, An Article, Published in *Thaqafatul Hind*, New Delhi.

through the media of the west Asian and Iranian languages, had affinities with Sanskrit. "Although no direct relationship to or borrowing from Sanskrit is likely to be proved, the fact that these examples belong to the Indo-European family is in itself evidence of the long process of social and commercial intercourse that must have taken place between India and the West Asian countries in the centuries immediately preceding Islam."⁹³ The prominent historian Jurji Zaidan has remarked about the Sanskrit words used in the Arabic language likewise -

ولا ريب في أنّ العرب اقتبسوا كثيرا من الالفاظ السنسكريتية ممن كان يخالطهم من الهنود في اثناء الاسفار للتجارة أو الحج، لأن جزيرة العرب كانت واسطة الاتصال بين الشرق والغرب فكل تجارة الهند المحمولة الى مصر او الشام او المغرب كانت تمر ببلاد العرب، وكان للعرب في حملها أو تروجها شأن. وقد عثرنا في السنسكريتية على الفاظ تشبه الفاظا عربية تغلب أن تكون سنسكريتية الاصل لخلواخوات العربية من امثالها كقولهم "صبح" و "بهاء" فانهما في السنسكريتية بهذا اللفظ تماما ويدلان على الاشراق أو الاضاءة. ولا يعقل أنّها مأخوذتان عن العربية لان السنسكريتية دونت قبل العربية بزمان مديد ونظن "سفينة" سنسكريتية ال اصل ايضا وكذلك "ضياء" ولعنا بزيادة درسنا اللغة السنسكريتية ينكشف لنا كثير من

93. Indo-Arab Relations, S.Maqbul Ahmad, pp. 5, New Delhi, 1978.

In the old Arabic books on astronomy, besides Siddhant, the term Kardaja' (SSK. form Karmajia) is found. The popular Arabic word 'Jaib' is nothing, but the arabicized form of the Sanskrit word 'Jaiwa' and its derivatives jaibut tamam, juyubi mankusa, juyubi mabsuta and mujib are formed according to the rules of the Arabic grammar. The Indian word 'ouch' was changed by the Arabs to suit their habits of speech into Arabic 'auj' in the sense of zenith. But its origin 'ouch' is known to a few Indians only. The original Sanskrit word 'adhmasa', which means the lunar months, is found as 'bazmasa' in the old Arabic books on astronomy.⁹⁵

Direct and deeper relations took place between India and Arab world a century after the rise of Islam in Arabia; and it was the period of the beginning of the Abbasid empire in the middle of the 8th century A.D. During the beginning of this period the Indians had a close relations with the Arabs. Sind and some parts of Lower Punjab had come under the Arab political influence and formed the eastern part of the Abbasid kingdom whose capital was at Baghdad. A large number of Arabian merchants, travellers, missionaries and men of learning migrated to this region and made their permanent residence and from this region Arabian religious thoughts, cultural things, language and philosophy spread to the other parts of India, and the Indians also got the first hand knowledge about the Arabs from these places. "Arab

94. Tarikha Adab al-Lughat al-'Arabiyah, Jurji zaydan pp. 38, Daru al Hilal, Cairo.

95. Arab-O-Hind ke Ta'alluqat, S.Sulaiman Nadwi, pp. 80, Allahabad - 1930.

travellers, among the greatest of their kind, go to far countries to find out what other peoples were doing and thinking, to study and understand their philosophies and sciences and ways of life, and then to develop their own thought".⁹⁶ During the 8th century many Indian scholars, scientists and physicians sojourned' to Baghdad which was a great centre of intellectual and cultural activities. Moreover many Indian prisoners of war or immigrants decided to settle down permanently in Arabian regions and they were treated there as Arabs.⁹⁷ The ancient Indian scientific literature was introduced to the Arabs directly or indirectly at Baghdad most probably during this period. Towards the end of the 8th century the Arab scientists became well acquainted with Indian astronomy through the astronomical book 'Surya Siddhanta' (Arabic - Sindhind). At the same time the Sanskrit astronomical works were introduced to the Arabs through 'Aryabhatia' (Arabic Arjabhad or Arjabhar) by Aryabhata and 'Khandakhadyaka' (Arabic-Arkand) by Brahmagupta. Later on, the basis of 'Siddhanta', 'Kitabul Zij' by Ibrahim bin Habib al-Fazari, 'al-Sindhind al-Saghir' by Muhammad bin Musa al-Khwarizmi, and 'al-Sindhind' by Habash bin Abdullah al-Marvazi were written. Among others al-Biruni had also been keenly interested in Indian astronomy and translated several Sanskrit works on astronomy into Arabic. At the same period the Arabs became acquainted with the Indian mathematics with Indian numeral system and concept of zero through the translation of the Sanskrit mathematical treatises into Arabic rendered by al-Faizari. But in trigonometry the Arabs were vastly superior to the Greeks and

96. The Discovery of India, Javaharlal Nehru, pp, 232, New Delhi - 1982.

97. Indo -Arab Relations, S. Maqbul Ahmad, pp.8 New Delhi-1978.

the Indians. The Indian medical science (Ayurveda) was properly introduced to the Arabs only after translating several classical Indian works on medical science into Arabic under the patronage of the early Abbasid Khalifahs. "The study of Indian learning and science in Baghdad was greatly encouraged by powerful Barmak family (the Barmecides) which gave viziers to Harun-al-Rashid."⁹⁸ An interesting story is related with the Khalifah Harun al-Rashid, which proves how Indian medicine became able to gain popularity among the Arabs. Once he suffered from a serious disease; the Arab physician of Baghdad, who was an expert in Greek medicine failed to cure him. Then according to the suggestions of the courtiers, an Indian vaid (physician) was called upon to treat the Khalifah. He treated the Khalifah and cured him completely. After rewarding him amply Khalifah Harun at-Rashid appointed him as the head physician to the largest hospital of Baramika. Manka (most probably in Sanskrit it is Manikya and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has mentioned the name of Manka as Manak⁹⁹) translated several important works from Sanskrit into Arabic. Besides Manka, as Arab writers mention, six other Indian voids were living in Bagdad at that time¹⁰⁰ Ibn Dahn and Salih (Sali) were famous voids (Physicians) among other Indian physicians of Baghdad. Among the important works translated from Sanskrit into Arabic on medicine were : Charaka Samhita, Susrud (SSK. Susruta), Astankar (SSK. Ashtanghradaya), Nidan (SSK Nidana), Sindhastaq or Sindhasan (SSK Siddhayoga) and Kitabul Suman (the book of poisons). A book written by an Indian female physician, Rusa, dealing with women's diseases,

98. The Discovery of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, pp. 232, New Delhi-1982.

99. Ibid. pp. 232

100. Ibid. pp. 232

was also translated into Arabic.¹⁰¹ She wrote her book on gynaecology. The famous Indian Vaid Manka himself translated the most important book 'Sisru' (SSK. Shishru) into Arabic that contained ten chapters of a full account of the symptomatology of diseases, of their treatment and of the medicines to be given in each case. The most curious word for medicine in Arabic is 'Itrifal' (a medicine) which is known to every physician and every patient. Muhammad Khwarazmi writes about Itrifal : "It is derived from the Hindi expression 'triphal' (three fruits) and designates the drug which is prepared from three fruits, 'Halela' (Hydryobalanusarula), 'Balela' (Belleric myrobalan) and 'Amla' (Emblic myrobalan)."¹⁰² Kanka was not only a vaid but also a great astrologer. He wrote several important books on astrology. Two of his famous books mentioned by Ibn Abi Asbia are :- (1) The book of delusions and (2) The book of cycles of happenings in the universe and in conjunction of the stars. Ibn Nadim has mentioned three great Indian astrologers who contributed sufficient works to the science of astrology. They are Jaundar Hindi, Nahak (or Nayag) Hindi and Sanghāl (Sanjhal) Hindi.

Though the Arabs were advanced both in prose and poetry of Arabic literature and had developed various forms and styles, yet some impacts of Indian literature were seen on the Arabs. The Arabic rendering of the Pahlavi version of the Sanskrit book 'Panchatantra' which was entitled in Arabic as 'Kalila wa Dimna', was well known to Arabic speaking people. The great epic 'Mahabharata' was translated into Arabic first by Abu Salih bin Shu'ayb and later by Abul Hasan 'Ali Jabali in 417 A.H. (1026 A.D.) from Sanskrit origin.¹⁰³ After the

101. Indo - Arab Relations, S, Maqbul Ahmad, New Delhi - 1978, pp. 16.

102. Mafita al - Ulama, Muhammad Khwarazmi, pp. 177.

103. Iran and India through the Ages, F.C. Davar, pp. 141. Bombay 1962.

conquest of Sindh in the early eighth century, the Arabs developed close contact with the Buddhists as they were generally the governors of the Brahmin king of the province. As a result of it many Arabic works like 'Kitab al-Budd', 'Kitab-al-Balawhar wa Budhasaf' and 'Kitab Budhasaf Mufrad' were produced on the life of Gautam Buddha.¹⁰⁴

Upto the eight century the north region of India had been the main centre of religious activities. But from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries, the south region became an important centre of religious reforms and activities. The Vaisnava and the Saivite saints started to establish the school of Bhakti, and Sankara and other religious pundits like Madhava, Nimbarka (12th century), Ramanuja and Visnuswami (13th century) expounded their philosophical system. The influence of Islam on the Bhakti schools was "in the first stage direct and selective. It was not the result- so far as can be ascertained of a study of Muslim literature, but of the teaching from the mouth of religious ascetics or of observation of their rites and customs".¹⁰⁵ Almost all the great religious reformers of the northern part were influenced by the Bhakti movement during the time of Sultanate and Mughal empires. Several great thinkers and saints like Ramananda, Kabir, Tulsidas, Sant Tukaram and Mirabai preached the emancipation of the human soul through devotion and love and complete dedication to the Guru. "The concepts of the Sufis and their practices like wisal, dhikr, pir, murshid and faqr can be discerned in the thought and practices of these reformers".¹⁰⁶ From the beginning of the eight century upto the end of ninth century the Arab scholars, merchants and travellers visited

104. Indo Arab Relation, S. M. Maqbul Ahmad, pp. -20, New Delhi 1978.

105. Influence of Islam on Indian culture , Tarachand, pp. 108 Allahabad - 1946.

106. Indo - Arab Relations, S. Maqbul Ahmad, pp. 26, New Delhi-1978.

other parts of the country like Gujrat, Maharastra, Kerala, Bengal and Assam.

Among the great Muslim scientists, philosophers and mathematicians, Al-Beruni was the first to visit India in the beginning of the 11th century A.D. Having possession of a profound knowledge of Greek, Roman and the ancient Iranian sciences, he visited India eagerly to study Indian sciences. He rendered a great service to the Indians by presenting faithfully and carefully Indian's ancient cultural and scientific legacy to the Arabs of his time through his monumental work 'Taḥḥiq mā li al-Hind'. After staying a few years in India he completed his another great work 'Qanun Masudi' where he mentions the longitude and latitude of all the chief towns of India. Prof. Sachau rightly remarks on his work, "His work as a translator was a double one. He translated from Sanskrit into Arabic and from Arabic into Sanskrit. He wanted to give Muslims an opportunity of studying the sciences of India and on the other hand, he feels called upon to spread Arabic learning among the Hindus".¹⁰⁷ He learnt sincerely the Sanskrit language and acquired such good proficiency in Indian astronomy that the Indian Pundits would not believe that his knowledge was his own, but requested him to mention the name of the Indian Pundit from whom he received such knowledge. When he began to point out the deficiencies of their knowledge, they were amazed and called ^{him} Δ 'Vidya Sagar' (the ocean of knowledge).

Al-Beruni translated the following Sanskrit books containing different subjects into Arabic : Samkhya, Paulasasiddhanta, Brahma

107. Al-Beruni's India (Arabic Text) Etd. By Prof. Sachau, Preface P.XIX, London 1887.

Siddhanta, Brihat Samhita and Laghujatakam. A book let of astrology, translation of the 'Almagesta' of Ptolemy, the books of Euclid and book on astronomy etc. Among the other works of al-Beruni written for the Arabs, 'Tarikh al-Hind', which contains brief accounts of the beliefs, sciences and researches of the Indians, is notable.

As time passed the long process of cultural exchange between India and Arabia in the fields of science and education, religion and philosophy began to be changed in the latter periods. From the eleventh century onwards an increasing number of Arab travellers, merchants and scholars in India visited the south region as they had done from ancient times. On the basis of structure, syllabi and courses of studies of the educational institutions of Baghdad during 11th century A.D. the Ghaznavid Sultans introduced the new pattern of Muslim educational system in India. "It was Nizam al-Mulk (died. 1092) with whom Al-Ghazzali (died 1111) was closely associated and who founded the Nizamiya colleges not only in Baghdad but in Naysapur, Isfahan and many other centres of Islamic learning. He chalked the syllabi and courses of studies".¹⁰⁸ During the Ghaznavid period when Lahore became their capital, madrasa education was introduced there and it was established as the centre of learning, "The pattern of education which found its culmination in Ghazni was adopted in Delhi from where it spread all over of the country".¹⁰⁹ At the early stages of such institutions in India, mainly the theological education was imparted there to the students, though there had been the little provision of studying secular education and exact sciences.

108. Indo - Arab Relations, S. Maqbul Ahmad, pp. 36 New Delhi 1978.

109. Glimpses of Madieval Indian Culture , Y.H. Khan, pp. 72 Bombay, 1962.

These madrasahs aimed at stabilizing a body of beliefs and a discipline prescribed by the Islamic scriptures around which the entire social structure revolved¹¹⁰. However the Delhi Sultan Sikandar Lodhi (d.1517) established madrasahs in all parts of his kingdom and appointed the qualified teachers and learned men who were invited from Arabia, Persia and Central Asia. He also founded madrasahs at Mathura and Narwar which were open to the people of all communities with out any discrimination of caste or creed.¹¹¹ In the madrasahs founded by Mughal Emperor Humayun in Delhi, special provision was made for teaching rational sciences like mathematics, astronomy and geography. Akbar's liberal policies in education and introduction of the rational sciences resulted in education becoming popular both among the Muslims and the Hindus. Some of the Hindu scholars excelled in rational sciences and were appointed as teachers in the madrasahs.¹¹²

Such madrasah system of education with slight modifications from time to time, during the period of Mughal emperors, prevailed all over India till the second half of the 19th century when many Muslim reformers like Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan emphasised the need of the modern educational system for the Muslims and he incooperation with some Muslim reformers founded the Mohamadan Anglo - Oriental College at Aligarh (e.g. the Present Aligarh Muslim University). Unfortunately, only a few of the Muslims responded to it while on the other hand the Darul 'Uloom Deoband (Madrasah) at Deoband and Nadwatul 'Ulama' (madrasah) at Lucknow had gained the popularity among common Muslims; since their establishment the ancient pattern

110. Ibid, pp. 71.

111. Ibid, pp. 76.

112. Ibid pp. 84.

of Islamic education continued to be followed. In the present time also inspite of introducing the new modern courses and syllabi, the madrasahs are exercising the old courses and syllabi with slight change in them.

The Indian people, in general, and the Muslims, in particular, of different places of India had been influenced by the Arabic language deeply in two ways : religious and linguistic. Again, the common Indian Muslims in general, and the more religious Muslims, in particular, were considering the Arabic language as a sacred language since the Quran was revealed in Arabic, and even today they consider it as their forefathers did in the past. To read the Holy Quran in translation was considered irreligious, though the Arabic language could not acquire the status of their mother-tongue in any part of India. So the large number of Indian Muslims, for centuries, had been reading Quran without understanding its meanings, except for those few who mastered the Arabic language or had taken keen interest in understanding the book with meaning. Now in the modern times a good number of Indian Muslims have felt the importance of modern Arabic language and have come forward to learn it seriously. In many Indian educational institutions for higher education like the present colleges and the universities, the subject of Arabic language and literature has been introduced and such institutions have produced many prominent scholars, well versed in Arabic, who are contributing to the modern Arabic language directly.

Among the Indian languages, some indigenous languages like Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Assamese and Sindhi have been

affected by the Arabic vocabulary and grammatical forms, e.g. nouns, adjectives, singulars and plurals, and masculine and feminine gender.¹¹³ Some other languages like Sindhi, fully adopted the Arabic scripts. Sindhi language carries a definite impress of Arabic. But it has not been influenced by Arabic grammar and syntax. The Gujrati speaking Isma'ili community of Gujrat adopted the Arabic scripts for their mother tongue Gujrati, in which many religious terms and phrases, borrowed from Arabic, were freely used.¹¹⁴ The Arab travellers and traders influenced the South Indian languages directly by their mother tongue Arabic. Mainly the Tamil and Malayalam Languages were affected through Arab contact before the rise of Islam. Once upon a time the Malayalam language was written in the Arabic script.¹¹⁵ Even today the Malabari Muslims speak Arabic in exactly the same way as the Arabs do. The Assamese language (which will be discussed in detail later on) of north east part of India was also deeply influenced by Arabic and Persian languages after it had come into contact with Perso-Arabic speaking Muslim invaders, traders and missionaries.

4. Religious Relations:

The frequent intercourse between the Indians and the Arabs led to Indians getting to know about the new religion, Islam. The Ismailic missionaries were welcomed in India and they got the opportunity to spread the Islamic faith. Mosques were built in different parts of India. The Muslims got no obstruction from the people as well as from the state and no religious conflicts took place between the Muslims and the

113. Indo-Arab Relations, S. Maqbul Ahmed, pp. 45 New Delhi-1978.

114. Ibid. pp. 46

115. Ibid

Indians. The old Indians had the tradition to be tolerant to all faiths and forms of worship. Thus Islam came as a religion to India several centuries before it came as a political force.¹¹⁶

The Arab Muslims were exceptional and when they secured a foothold in Sindh promptly decided the category to which the Hindus belonged. Muhammad bin Qasim declared, "The Hindu temples are on the same footing on the Christian churches, the Jewish synagogues and the Zoroastrian fire-temples."¹¹⁷ During the reign of Muhammad bin Qasim, a Buddhist monk once advised a Hindu Raja, "we know that Muhammad bin Qasim has received orders from Hajjaj to spare the life of everyone who sues for peace. We, therefore, believe that you will be well advised to make peace with him, as the Arabs are honest and never break their promises."¹¹⁸ After conquest of Sindh, a deputation of Brahmins came to Muhammad bin Qasim and begged to be permitted to retain the higher social status which they were holding under the Hindu king. Muhammad bin Qasim made proper inquiries and found the claim valid. He, then accepted their request and appointed them to the higher posts in his kingdom. The Brahmins were fully satisfied and they praised the new ruler in all the places through which they went.¹¹⁹ During the Arab occupation of that province, the Arabs were in close contact with the Hindus and began to take a keen interest in the Hinduism. Among the Arab scholars of that time, there was a good demand for deeper study of the religious thought of the

116. The Discovery of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, pp. 229 New Delhi, 1982.

117. Futhre-Buldan, Baladhiri, chapter, conquest of Sindh, Beirut-1958.

118. Tarikh-e-Farishla M.Q. Farishtah, vol. I, pp. 29-32 Lucknow - 1884.

119. Arab 'O Hind Ke Ta'alluqat, S. Sulaiman Nadwi, pp. 109, 1930

Indians. An Arab scholar of Jerusalem has recorded a detailed account of Indian religions in his book 'Al-Bada Wa al-Tarikh'.

During the seventh and eight centuries the Arabs made many descents upon the coast of Gujrat, the gulf of Cambay and the Malabar coast and acquired some informations regarding the Hindu sects which were described in their books of religion compiled in the later centuries. These books shed an interesting light on Indian religious and social customs. Ibn Haukal and Istakhri after visiting the splendid temple of Multan, beautifully described it in their book. The famous historical book Kitab al-Fihrist mentions the Soma worshipers who had an image of Soma on a chariot drawn by four horses, holding a stone of the colour of fire.¹²⁰ The Muslims in the Malabar coast were welcomed as traders and were given facilities to settle and openly practise their religious activities. Soon after setting down in different places they must have started missionary efforts, for Islam itself is essentially a missionary religion and every Muslim himself is a missionary of his faith. Many of these Muslims were undoubtedly held in respectful esteem in that coast¹²¹ and they had spread over the whole of the western coastal area. Islam became well-known to the Indian people only through the missionaries and the people were able to know the real teaching of the Islamic faith from them. The missionaries had no touch with the government rulers either Muslims or Hindus, but they established close connection with the common people either Muslims or Hindus. As their main target was to preach the essence of Islamic faith among the common folk. Most of

120. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Tarachand pp. 12 Allahabad - 1946.

121. Ibid. pp. 33

the Indian Muslims were the converts made by the missionaries in different parts of the country. The Muslim saints and dervishes were the missionaries who followed wherever the Muslim army led or wherever the traders, merchants and common Muslims settled down¹²² and started there the missionary activities. Their pure and positive religious activities with miracles always attracted the minds of the common people. For example we can mention some of them as proofs.

Abu Hifs Rabi bin Sahib al-Basari (a well-known Muhaddith and an ascetic of his time) came to Sindh in the ninth century and he died there in 160 A.H.¹²³ The Ravuttans of Madura and Trichinopoly believed that they were persuaded to change their religion by Nathar Shah Wali whose tomb had been found at Triichinopoly. Nathar Wali of Turkey, an ascetic and missionary of Islam, wandered through Arabia, Persia and Northern India until he reached the city of Trisura and Trichinopoly where he settled down and passed the remaining period of his life in prayer and missionary works. He converted there a large number of Hindus to the Islamic faith. He died in 1039 A.D. (417 A.H.)¹²⁴ Mansur al-Hallaj travelled to India by sea in the tenth century and went back from India through Northern India.¹²⁵

The prominent historian Masudi visited India in 916 A.D. and then he found over ten thousand Muslims of Sirof, Baghdad, Basara, and Oman at Seymore (the modern Chaul), besides numerous others who were descendants of the Arabs. Their own chief was Hazama who

122. Ibid, pp. 46

123. Ma'asir al-Kiram, Mir Ghulam 'Ali Azad, p. 6

124. South Indian Musalmans, Qadir Husayn Khan, (an Article) Madras Christian College Magazine (1912-13) pp. 294.

125. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Tarachand pp. 46,

received his authority from the Hindu king.¹²⁶ Baba Rihan appeared at Broach of Gujrat with a group of dervishes from Baghdad in the eleventh century.¹²⁷ The religious head of the Shi'ah trading community of Bohras (a sect of Gujrat) settled in Gujrat coming from Yemen.¹²⁸

Farid Uddin 'Attar (in the twelfth century) visited India and Khwajah Mu'in Uddin Chisti (1197 A.D.) and Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi (thirteenth century) came to India.¹²⁹

Among others Sayyid Jalal Uddin Bokhari, Baba Farid, Abdul Karim al-Jili, Sayeed Muhammad Gisudaraz, Pir Sadr Uddin, Sayyid Usuf Uddin, Imam Shah of Pirana, Sayyid Shah Mir, Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baha Uddin Zakaria and Jalal Uddin Surkhposh were busily engaged in missionary work of Islamic faith.¹³⁰ Abd-al-Razzaq reached Calicut for missionary task in 1441 A.D. and after remaining there for six months made his way back to Khurasan.¹³¹ Shah al-Hamid (1532-1600) spent most of his life in missionary tours chiefly throughout southern India.¹³² Baba Fakhr al-Din, originally a king of Sistan, also joined in a proselytising mission at Penukonda. On seeing his miraculous activities the king of that area with a large number of inhabitants adopted the Islamic faith.¹³³ Ali bin Uthman al-

126. Ibid, pp. 36-37, Allahabad - 1946.

127. Ibid, pp. 46.

128. Ibid, pp. 46.

129. Ibid, pp. 47.

130. Ibid, pp. 47-48.

131. The Preaching of Islam, T.W. Arnold, pp. 266, Delhi - 1990.

132. South Indian Musalmans, Qadir Husayn Khan, (an article) Madras Christian College Magazine (1912-13) pp. 36-8).

133. Ibid. pp. 39-42.

Hijwiri the author of *Kashful Mahjub*, who was a famous saint of Ghazna, came to reside in Lahore for missionary works.¹³⁴

In India the Muslims started their religious propaganda as soon as they had settled down in some numbers. Moreover, we undoubtedly find that Islam had gained its greatest and most lasting missionary triumphs in times and places in which its political power had been weakest.¹³⁵ Most of the Muslim communities of the South India trace their origin to these Muslims.¹³⁶ During the reign of the Hindu Raja Aryi Shakarwati in Ceylon Ibn Batutah visited Ceylon and found several marks of Muslim influence in the island.¹³⁷

The famous traveller Abu Rayhan al Beruni (in the 11th century) affirms in his book '*Kitab al-Hind*' that the educated persons have scant respect for idolatry. Qazi Sayeed, a historian who never visited India, has recorded his appreciation of Indian religious thoughts in his important book '*Tabaqat al-Umam*.' The footprint of Adam (father of the human being) on a rock of a hill (named as Jabal Adam) in Ceylon, is well known to all communities of India. The followers of three different religions - Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, consider that hilly place as a sacred place. The Muslims regard it as the foot print of Adam, the Buddhists consider it as containing of Sakya Muni, and the Hindus think to be the foot print of a tiger. The followers of different religions may consider it in different ways, but they unanimously revere it as a holy mark.

134. *Kashf al-Mahjub* (Urdu translation), M.A. Nairowi, pp. 21 (introduction), Delhi 1992.

135. *Asiatic Studies*, Sir Alfred C., Lyall pp. 236, London- 1882.

136. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Tarachand, pp. 40, Allahabad - 1946.

137. *Rehla of Ibn Batutah*, Mahdi Husain, pp. 219, Baroda - 1953.

We have also seen the impact of Islam, during the 14th century, on the Bhakti movement of Hindu religion, which was a new interpretation of Hinduism in terms of Islam's monotheism and egalitarianism. "Ramananda settled in Banaras where he gained numerous followers, the most remarkable of whom was a Muslim weaver by name Kabir (1398 A.D.). Kabir's influence on the thought of the Hindus in the fifteenth century is something most remarkable."¹³⁸

After discussing the activities of the different Muslim missionaries that had no connection with the political power, we shall give a very brief account of the official view of Islam and of the part played by some of the Muslim rulers in the spread of the Islamic faith.

Though the Turks, Afghans and Mughals of India were Muslims, yet it will be wrong to hold Islam responsible for all their deeds - good or bad - certain aspects of their deeds are condemned in the course of their rulers or invasions of India. "The great culture could hardly be represented by Turks and Afghans who entered India in the wake of Muhammad Ghorī. They, no doubt, represented the religion of Islam, but the civilization associated with the Muslim empires of Baghdad or Cairo or Cordova found no echo in the hearts of the Turkish Malikis in whose hands political power was vested."¹³⁹ The principles of such Muslim rulers and the methods of their government had nothing in common with the political philosophy and modes of governance of Islam. The Turkish leaders of the common people were mostly emancipated slaves, newly converted to Islam, and had practically no knowledge of the Islamic laws governing peace and war.

138. Survey of Indian History, K.M.Panikkar, pp. 180 Bombay - 1962.

139. A survey of Indian History, K.M.Panikkar, pp. 161 Bombay - 1962.

Actually the religion of Islam was itself the main contribution of the Muslim dynasties of Delhi. But one thing is very clear that Islam had a profound effect on Hinduism during the Muslim rule in India.¹⁴⁰ Sir Alfred C. Lyall describes the Muslim rulers of Delhi, "The military adventurers, who founded dynasties in Northern India and carved out Kingdoms in the Dekhan, cared little for things spiritual; most of them had indeed no time for proselytism, being continually engaged in conquest or civil war. The usually rough Tartars or Mughals, were themselves ill-grounded in the faith of Muhammad, and untouched by the true Semitic enthusiasm which inspired the first Arab standard bearers of Islam. The empire which they set up was purely military, and it was kept in that state by the half success of their conquests and the comparative failure of their spiritual invasion."¹⁴¹ The rulers of the Khilji (1290-1320 A.D.), Tughlaq (1320-1412 A.D.) and Lody (1451-1526 A.D.) dynasties were generally engaged in fighting for the interests of religion, and concentrated their attention more in the collection of tribute than in the work of conversion.¹⁴² Under the Mughal dynasty the Muhammadan power became consolidated and particularly the religious influences of Islam naturally became more permanent and persistent. The Islamic influences were quite apparent in the Hindu theistic movements that occurred in the period of fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the positive character of the Islamic teachings deeply attracted some of the Hindus who were already dissatisfied with the vagueness and subjectivity of a Pantheistic system of thought. Bishop Lefroy has rightly remarked,

140. Ibid, pp. .

141. Asiatic studies, Sir Alfred C.Lyall, pp. 289, London - 1882.

142. The Preaching of Islam, T.W. Arnold, pp. 257, Delhi - 1990.

"When Muhammedanism, with its strong grasp of the reality of the Divine existence and, as flowing from this, of the absolutely fixed and objective character of truth, came into conflict with the haziness of Pantheistic thought and the subjectivity of its belief, it necessarily followed, not only that it triumphed in the struggle, but also that it came as a veritable tonic to the life and thought of Upper India, quickening into a fresh and more vigorous life many minds which never accepted for themselves its intellectual sway."¹⁴³ During the reign of Babar the Hindus and Muslims lived and thought so much alike that the emperor was forced to notice their peculiar Hindustan style. His successors so gloriously adorned and so marvellously enriched this legacy that India might well be proud today of the heritage which they have left behind. ¹⁴⁴ The Mughal Emperor Akbar, the Great, was very compassionate towards Hinduism and he respected even the state endowments of that religion. During his rule many Rajputs became converts from Hinduism to Islamic faith for the fulfilment of their self-interest and very liberal policies of the emperor. A large number of such converted Muslims (with some exceptions) still retained their old Hindu titles and Hindu customs in all domestic matters and prefix a Hindu honorific title to their Islamic names.¹⁴⁵

Lastly, we shall very briefly discuss how Islam had influenced the whole Indian Muslims either original or converted. The Islamic law (e.g. Shari'a) mainly based on the Quran and Hadith and later developed on the basis of qiyas (analogy) and ijma' (consensus of

143. Mankind and the Church, Bishop Lefroy, pp. 286, London - 1907.

144. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Tarachand, pp. 142, Allahabad - 1946.

145. The Preaching of Islam, T.W. Arnold, pp. 260, Delhi - 1990.

opinion among jurists), was first introduced in India by the Turkish Sultans. The Turkish were the ardent followers of Islam, and as Muslims they enforced the Islamic law in the country they ruled, "The later rulers, the Afghans and Mughals and other Muslim rulers of India, all looked at the Shari'a more or less from the same angle."¹⁴⁶ So the subjects of such rulers were generally compelled to follow the Islamic law and even today at present the deep impact of Shari'a can be seen among the Indian Muslims.

The Hanafi and Shafi'i schools became popular among the Indian Muslims. The Mughal rulers introduced the Hanafi law first in India and it was administered by the Qazis. "The large Arab merchant communities hailing from Basara, Baghdad, Siraf and Oman and different regions of South Arabia like Yemen and Hadramaut, or from Egypt who settled down along the eastern and the western coasts of peninsular India seemed to have followed the shafi'i school from early days."¹⁴⁷ As a result of association with these communities most of the converted Muslims of Southern India followed the Shafi'i law. In recent times a large number of Hanafi and Shafi'i Schools have been established among the Muslims of the different parts of India and different Islamic organisations have been set up to preach the teachings of Islam. As a result of such activities the different Islamic terms for different functions are being used among the Indian Muslims of different languages of different states till today. For instance we may mention the following ones -

الله (Allah) Allah, God.

146. The Administration of Justice in Medieval India, M B. Ahmad, pp. 25, Aligarh, 1941.

147. Indo-Arab Relations, S.Maqbul Ahmad, pp. 51 - New Delhi - 1978.

مولی (Maula) Master, Lord.

مولانا (Maulana) Title of respect for Muslim religious scholar.

مولودشريف (Maulud Sharif) Meeting celebrating the Holy prophits nativity.

مغرب (Maghrib) Sunset, west.

مظلوم (Mazlum) oppressed.

معاف (Ma'af) Pardon

ولی (Wali) Saint

رسول (Rasul) Apostle, Messenger,

دين (Din) Religion.

مسجد (Masjid) , Mosque

نبی (Nabi), Prophet

دعاء (Dua), Prayer

حاجی (Haji), Pilgrim

قرآن (Quran), Holy Book Quran.

سنة (Sunnah) Practice of the Holy Prophet, circumcision.

صحابة (Sahabah), Companions of the Holy Prophet.

صبر (Sabr), Patience

نكاح (Nikah), Marriage

فتوى (Fatwa), Religious verdict,

رَبِّ (Rabb), Lord

امام (Imam), Leader

ايمان (Iman) Faith

خالق (Khaliq), Creator

كلمة (Kalimah), Holy words

خليفة (Khalifah), Caliph

مَنَّة (Mannah), Wish, etc.