

The Sindh Story



By K. R. Malkani

*Dedicated
To
The sacred memory
Of
Allah Bux Soomro
&
Bhagat Kanwar Ram*

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About the Author



K. R. Malkani (Kewalram Ratanmal Malkani) was Lieutenant Governor of Pondichery, India from 2002 till his death on October 27th 2003. He was the Vice-President of the Bharatiya Janata Party from 1991 to 1994. Mr Malkani was an author and a journalist. Born at Hyderabad (Sindh), then Pakistan on November 19, 1921, he had his education at Hyderabad, Pune, Karachi, Mumbai and Harvard. A professor and journalist, Malkani was associated with the Jana Sangh since its formation and was one of the founding members of the BJP in the year 1980. He was Vice-President of the Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi from 1983 to 1990. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1994 to 2000. He served as editor of many newspapers and was General Secretary of the Editors Guild of India from 1978 to 1979. He has written several articles and books including "The Midnight Knock" (1977), "The R. S. S. Story" (1980), and "The Sindh Story" (1984), his most popular book on history. His book *India First* (2002) is a compilation of some of his articles over the last several years. His last book, "Political Mysteries", explores several major Indian political assassinations including that of Mahatma Gandhi, Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, the "Kashmir Princess" , "Kanishka aircraft" bombing and the Purulia arms dropping case. The book is a

result of his nearly ten years of research. He died on 27 October, 2003. He was the youngest brother of N R Malkani. He is survived by two sons Arvind and Vikram and a daughter, Sindhu.

From Wikipedia 6-Jun-2010

Preface to Reprint

"The Sindh Story" was first published in 1984. Within months the book was sold out. Sheikh Ayaz, the leading poet and intellectual of Sindh, said "It is a book which should find a place in every Sindhi home." Soon after, Taj Joyo (Kandiaro Sindh), rendered the book in Sindhi and published it in Pakistan under the title 'Sindh Kahani'. More recently Mani Shankar Aiyar, well-known columnist, wrote: "It is a scholarly book, a fun book, a passionate book, a nostalgia book..." Meanwhile Gul Agha of the Department of Computer Science, University of Illinois, Urbana, USA, put the book on Internet. However, what convinced me more than anything else about the need to reprint the book was a letter from a young man, Aziz Kaleiri (Matari Sugar Mills, Matari, Hyderabad Sindh) who had read the book in Sindhi. This letter in Sindhi, received by me on Jan. 11, 1994, moved me to my depths. It said:

"Sir, I was born in 1966. I was not witness to the gross injustice done to you (Hindus) and to Sindh at the time of Partition. But when I read the accounts of those times and see the edifices left behind by you, I cannot help crying. When I ponder over your forced migration from Sindh, I feel that Sindh today lives only a fragmented, fractured existence. For long I have been wanting to correspond with a Sindhi in India so that I can re-integrate my splintered self. And recently I had the opportunity to read the Sindhi translation of your book 'The Sindh Story'. This book carried your address.

"I am bewildered. Many times I wake up in the morning with sobs. I have read the travelogues of Imdad Ali Serai and Mahatab Mahboob and their talks with Sindhi brethren in Hindustan. From these I have learnt of your great love for, and attachment to, the land of Sindh. I have recalled all that with tears. There is no sorrow, and no deprivation, as serious as the loss of one's own land of birth.

"I am sorry that Prof. Ram Punjwani, Master Chander and Mohan Kalpana left this world with the sorrow of Sindh in their hearts. I am reminded of what Sheikh Ayaz said on the passing of Narayan Shyam. 'Your sorrow was swept to the sea by the waters of Ganga while the Sindhu threw its arms about in vain.'

"Hope seems to be fading that : 'Things will change; it will rain again, and the days of separation will be over.'

"Sir, I belong to Kandiaro in Sahiti region which also has the holy town of Halani. Here, even now, the harvest season is marked by Vaisakhi Mela. But I feel- "The cotton trees don't have their old blossoms; the spinners are gone; the sight of empty shops only fills me with a deep sadness. "

"I am a broken splinter of your own life, Aziz Kaleiri."

My reply of January 13, 1994 to Aziz read:

"Your undated letter to hand. It had the sweet smell of Sindh in it. Thanks. Perhaps what happened, had to happen. As the Poet puts it

'The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, moves on.'

"For our Muslim brethren, the demand of Pakistan was like the proverbial 'Delhi ka ladoo' : you regret it if you eat it; and you regret it if you do not eat it. For us Sindhis, Hindustan was like maternal grandmother's house (Nani-a jo ghar).

"As I see it, Hindus, Muslims and others, whether in Hindustan, Pakistan or Bangladesh, are all one. We are three states but, from Khyber Pass to Kanya Kumari, we are One People.

"This whole area is like a Jhoola in which we play a great deal and, at times, quarrel a good deal. May God's grace help us stop our quarrelling and live in peace. For as Shah Saheb has said : 'Separation re-unites us even more warmly, than just being together'. And as Shah Saheb has also said: 'Don't give up hope; God is great in His mercy'.

"May Sindhu Darya flow full. May everybody be happy. 'May the Lord bring rains and abundance to Sindh.' (Saaein Sadaein Karein Mathay Sindh Sukar). "

I never heard from Aziz. Obviously because he never got my letter. Such is the Iron Curtain between India and Pakistan. I only hope that a letter from an Indian M.P. did not get dear Aziz into any trouble with the authorities. But books are the voice of the people. They can by-pass this curtain.

It is, therefore, a matter of great satisfaction that Sindhi Academy, Delhi, has decided to reprint the book. It was, not found necessary to revise the book because the historical part is history and 'The Sindhi Revival' after Partition has beautifully maintained its tempo. The only addition-apart from this Preface-is the Appendix, which is a report on Mr. G.M. Syed's memorable visit

to India in 1987. It will be read with the greatest interest. When that Grand Old Man of Sindhudesh passed away, tributes were paid to his heroic memory in the Rajya Sabha (April 26, 1995) not only by the undersigned (BJP) but also by Mohammed Salim (CPI-M) and Syed Sibte Razi and S.S. Ahluwalia (Congress).

My grateful thanks are due to Prof. D.L. Kaka, Dr. Motilal Jotwani, Prof. K.N. Vaswani and Hiro Thakur for their valuable suggestions for this reprint.

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July 4, 1997.

Preface

It was in Sindh towards the end of 1947. Partition had taken place and Hindus were leaving the province in large numbers. One day some of us RSS workers were walking down Tilak Incline in Hyderabad. Suddenly an elderly Muslim lady coming from the opposite direction stopped in front of us and asked in pain: "Brothers, will you, too, go away?"

One day I was standing in my balcony. A Muslim gentleman was happily carrying a big framed group photograph. Soon he could contain his joy no more. And so he stopped, held up the picture for me to see and said he had just bought it because of the respected Seth of his village sitting in that group. It was a great memento for him.

One day I was travelling in a city bus. The front seats were reserved for women. Suddenly a Muslim lady sitting in front noticed that an elderly Hindu neighbour was standing. She got up and insisted on the man taking her seat. In vain did the man protest that he was alright standing, and that, in any case, those seats were reserved for women. He had to sit down as the lady persisted with an anguished voice: "I know, you, too, will go away."

I'm not sure there were many areas in the India of 1947, where incidents like these could occur.

While Sindhis in India have made good here and abroad, Sindhis in Sindh have launched themselves on a course that can only lead to the eventual winding up of Pakistan.

Only last year I had a visitor from Sindh. When his friends learnt that he was visiting this side, they laughed and told him in the open bazar: "Don't come back alone. Bring the Indian Army along. And tell Mrs. Gandhi to send us dhotis by helicopter in advance, so that we can welcome the Indian troops in suitable style."

'The Sindh Story' is not a tale of kings and wars. It is an attempt at understanding an area, its people and their local culture, that have made all this possible.

I am grateful to Bharatiya Sindhu Sabha for planting the idea of this book in my mind --- and to my sister Gopi for encouraging the good thought. I am also grateful to many friends who supplied books and photographs and valuable information. In this connection I must thank Mohini Mansukhani, Ramakrishna Advani, Prof. K.N. Vaswani, Sewakram Karamchand, Uttamchand Issrani, Vishnu Shahani, Prof. D.L. Kaka, Gopal Gurbuxani, Gopal Mittal, Ram Keswani, Prem Daswani, Prof. M. P. Lakhani, Lakshmidharm Rupchandani, Narayan Wadhwani and Gobindram Chellani.

Thanks are also due to Nana Wagh for his sketches of Seth Naomal and Sir Bartle Frere --- and to K. B. Kumar for his excellent map of Sindh.

I am particularly grateful to Dr. Murlidhar Jetley who opened up his treasure-house of Sindh books to me with a cheer that encouraged me to delve deeper and deeper into them. But for his help this book would not be what it is. Dr. Haridev Sharma, Head of Research and Publications Division, Nehru Memorial Library, was extremely helpful in a variety of ways. Shri Devendra Swaroop of

Deendayal Research Institute was always ready with the necessary facts and figures.

Sitaram Goel, Jhamat Wadhwani, Gangu Kripalani and Arun Shukla read the whole manuscript and made many valuable suggestions.

Thanks are also due to Shri Janardanan of DRI Library for his research assistance --- and to Vijay Gupta, Rajesh Bansal and Ambika Dharmapalan, for their quick and competent typing.

Readers who have any suggestions or comments to make for a second edition, are welcome to do so on the following address.

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K.R. MALKANI

Raksha Bandhan, 1984.

Foreward

MY FRIEND Kewal Malkani is a journalist, a scholar and a perceptive student of Indian History. Being a product of Sindh, it is not surprising that he has devoted a good bit of industry and his historical insights for presentation of a panoramic view of the land of his birth. What surprises me, however, is his wish that I write a foreword to this most interesting book. I must confess that his command both flattered and frightened me. I do not know why Kewal's choice fell on me. Whatever my other pretension, and like many politicians I have quite a few, a deep study of history or a reasonable facility in historical presentation are by no means amongst them. I suspect it is a case of a pleasing misunderstanding. Even so I enjoy it. But it is more than neutralised by the thought that keeping up the pretence would require some amount of labour. The task seemed rather difficult, rendered more so by professional and political preoccupations. But then there happened one of those unexplained accidents. My doctors diagnosed a faulty heart and peremptorily put me to rest. With the heart wired to an E.C.G. monitoring machine, I read through the twenty chapters of the manuscript starting with 'Sindhu is Divine' and ending with 'The Sindhi Revival'. It is no exaggeration to say that I enjoyed every word and the reading certainly made my forced incarceration bearable. Deep gaps in my knowledge of what Sindh was, what it could have become and what it still might be in the future, have been agreeably filled. I share Kewal's pride in what might be generally described as 'Sindhia'. I greatly admire this outstanding product of his industry and research and heartily commend it to others. I hope the book will get into every Library, public and private. Everyone will enjoy it --- even those who are not in a hospital bed.

At the time of publication, however, the country is going through a monumental crisis. The levers of power have passed into the hands of men without morals and politicians without principles. Every part of the national anatomy is suffering from grave disorder. Scores of corrupt wheeler dealers, fixers, middle-men, con-men, their corrupt clients and principals have infested the landscape like hungry locusts devouring the thin crop that the poor of the country still manage to produce. The poor are too hungry even to be perplexed

by the blight that has over taken them and the rich are busy making hay while the sun shines. The intellectuals and men of honest judgment are woe fully silent, struck by a strange paralysis of the moral muscle and the vocal chords. The production of the book at this time on the other hand is so much more evidence of the author's inner equilibrium, sense of poise add objective scholarship. May be, in the true spirit of the Gita, he laboured for love leaving the result to inscrutable Providence. Naturally, I admire him all the more for it.

Mr. Malkani's book is a book of history. History is essentially a story but whereas a story can be written for entertainment which may often bear an inverse ratio to the content of truth in it, history cannot afford such a contradiction. Every book of history becomes a part of the mental furniture of the age it portrays. It must bear the stamp of authenticity and where accuracy is not possible, the fault must be disclosed. Moreover, however authentic a record of events it be, it is worse than useless if it cannot convey the thoughts, emotions and motives of the actors that made the events. This country has never been rich in its documentation of events. The dominant tradition has been one of oral communication. To write the story called history is not thus an easy task.

The Arab conquest of Sindh was a major event in the life of Sindh and Hind. What manner of men were those who subjugated Sindh in the beginning of the 8th Century of the Christian era? Mohammed Bin Kasim and his soldiers were authentic Arabs and not bad Muslims, certainly more humane and civilised than those who followed in their wake some centuries later. They were strongly monotheistic and fervently believed in the message of the Prophet who had passed away earlier on June 7, 632 A.D. Reference to this miracle of the Arabian desert is both relevant and revealing. With all his personal blemishes, somewhat exaggerated by his detractors, the Prophet of Islam must rank as one of the giants of history. He was deeply religious himself and his living habits must have made a deep impression on his followers. He lived in austerity even after he had achieved great prestige and even political power. His houses were invariably cottages of un-burnt brick and the furniture no

more than a mattress and a few pillows spread upon the floor, He stitched his own clothes and often mended his shoes, kindled the fire and swept the floor. He lived on dates and barley bread, and only rarely allowed himself the luxury of taking milk and honey. He was courteous and affable, dignified and indulgent. He tended the sick and joined funeral processions of the humblest. He spent little upon his family, less upon himself and much in charity. When he began, Arabia was a tribal desert. He left it a strong nation.

The morality that he imposed was in its context, one of ruthless courage and social pride. The local climate, however, produced sexual precocity and heat. His laws were designed to reduce temptations outside of marriage and increase opportunities within. That his own household consisted of ten wives and two concubines was a distinct improvement on the prevailing promiscuity of the age. And while he lived, the Muslims had not secluded their women. The two sexes exchanged visits, moved freely through the streets and prayed together in the mosques. When the Prophet's wife Aisha was asked why she never covered her face, she answered: "Since Allah, May He remain blessed and exalted, has put upon me the stamp of beauty it is my wish that the public should view that beauty and thereby recognise His Grace unto them." He was illiterate and was never known to write anything himself, but he composed the most famous and eloquent book in Arabic literature. He created in his followers a thirst for knowledge. He declared: "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge, walks in the path of god ... and the ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr."

The Prophet neither preached, nor envisaged the bloody conflict of rival religious creeds. He himself had not indulged in wars of aggression. Conscious Arab expansion and military conquests for baser motives was a later development. Partly, the causes were economic, as usual. A deficient irrigation system and a poor soil, produced, in the growing population, hunger for fertile land. Political causes too existed. Byzantium and Persia, exhausted by war and mutual devastation, afflicted by abnormal taxation and corrupt administration,

and adjoining kingdom weakened by oppression, produced irresistible temptations for conquest.

In 705 A.D., Walid-I became the King. His reign lasted for the next ten years. Al Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf (Hajjaj for short) was his Viceroy and Governor of Arabia. Sindh had even before attracted the attention of the Arabs during the reign of the second Khalifa. In the next 60 to 70 years, ten attempts at conquest had aborted. The aim of the final invasion, as the 'Chachnama' makes clear, was not the propagation of the faith but, it was a commercial-imperial enterprise. To improve the disastrous balance-sheet by show of huge profit, the conquered people must pay tribute and taxes and yield treasure, slaves and women. Mr. Malkani has a fascinating account of this encounter between the Sindhis and the Arabs. The ruling King Dahir was the son of Chach. The father was a scheming Brahmin who had managed to become the lover of the reigning Queen and after her husband's death, made himself the King. He ruled for 40 years and he repulsed the first Arab attack on the part of Debal [Fort] which, in all likelihood, was near Bhambhore, a little town 40 miles east of Karachi. Hajjaj in Dahir's time, appointed his 17-year old son-in-law, Mohammed Bin Kasim, General and gave detailed instructions for the assault on Sindh. Malkani is right that Sindh would not have fallen, but for the intrigues and betrayals of the Sindhis themselves. King Dahir could have easily repulsed the attack, but he acted with incredible foolishness.

In September 1979, on the Defence of Pakistan Day, a long article appeared in the "Pakistan Times" on Mohammed Bin Kasim, as a military strategist. The assessment was military, neutral and fair to the armies of both sides. Historical truth, however, is anathema to regimes; such as, the one existing in Pakistan. The Chairman of the National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, condemned the writer of the said article, in terms which are extremely revealing --- "Employment of appropriate phraseology is necessary when one is projecting the image of a hero. Expressions such as 'invader' and 'defenders', and 'the Indian army' fighting bravely but not being quick enough to 'fall upon the withdrawing enemy', loom large in the article. It is further

marred by some imbalanced statements such as follows: 'Had Raja Dahir defended the Indus heroically and stopped Kasim from crossing it, the history of this sub-continent might have been quite different.' One fails to understand whether the writer is applauding the victory of the hero or lamenting the defeat of his rival?" No wonder, the latest Steel Mill in Pakistan and the surrounding environments are named after Mohammed Bin Kasim. He is the hero of the regime.

I am not sure that Raja Dahir invokes respect or admiration in the minds of the Sindhis. In all probability, Malkani is wrong. It must be said, however, that a great Sindhi writer Mr. G. M. Syed in his Book "Sindhua Ji Sanjaah" (Identity of Sindh), has eloquently protested against the Pakistan Government attempting to project Mohammed Bin Kasim as a hero and saviour of Sindh. He deprecates that ports, roads, libraries and colleges should be named after him. He calls him an Arab tyrant who colonised Sindh, and condemned thousands to enforced slavery. Poignantly, he draws attention to the rape of Sindhi women and the massacre of the innocent, on which other Pakistani historians have maintained a criminal silence.

Rest of the Indians across the borders of Sindh were doubtless aware of the Arab conquest. It produced not a ripple on the quiet waters of their placid existence. Life went on as usual. There was neither a sense of territorial loss, nor an understanding of the nature of the new menace. The conquest of Sindh was dismissed as one more dacoity. Nearly 500 years elapsed before Mohammed Ghori and his marauding hordes descended on India in 1192 A.D. The whole Or northern India was made a tributary to the Ghor Dynasty. Muslim power in India had come to stay. Five centuries went by, but the country did not wake up or prepare to do or die. It is a shameful and tragic tale.

Afflicted by a debilitating pacificism, corroded by the idea of non-violence, Indians seemed to have left it to professional soldiers to fight the invaders. The rest of the people lifted not one finger to defend their homeland. Invaders who thirsted for the tremendous wealth of India and its delicate and beautiful women, never met the resistance that the nation could have generated. The only strong resistance that was offered came from the proud Rajputs, the descendants of the invading Huns of the earlier days. But, even this heroic resistance proved temporary and collapsed by reason of internecine rivalry --- a perennial disease of Hindu India, ancient and modern.

A couple of centuries later, when Muslim power in the north weakened, not because of Hindu resistance, but, because of inter-Muslim quarrels, some semblance of a Hindu revival took place in the Empire of Vijayanagar in the south of India. Even this last strong-hold of Hindu culture and independence was crushed in 1565 A.D. As usual, Muslims destroyed the magnificent city of Vijayanagar, one of the most remarkable Hindu cities that ever existed.

In the sordid history of Hindu India's collapse, Mr. Malkani manages to find some comfort in the exploits of the Sumras and Sama Chieftains of Sindh. Even Mr. Malkani's research has not been able to discover when and how they became Muslims, but, obviously, the Muslims of Sindh were different from the Muslims of rest of India, as indeed, they continue to be till today.

The Arabs who spread Islam in 7th and 8th Centuries, were literally following the Prophet's injunction, enjoining search for knowledge. From the Chinese, they picked up the use of paper and the first Paper Manufacturing Plant in Islam was opened at Baghdad. They picked up mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy and every branch of available knowledge, from wherever they went. Most mosques had libraries and some cities had public libraries of considerable content. When Baghdad was destroyed by Mongols, it had 36 public libraries, and private libraries were numberless. A Muslim physician

refused invitation of the Sultan of Bukhara to come and live at his Court, on the ground that he would need 400 camels to transport his library. The mosques produced scholars as numerous as the pillars in their buildings. They moved people's minds with their eloquence. The country was adorned by innumerable geographers, historians and theologians seeking knowledge and wisdom. The Courts of Princes resounded with poetry and philosophic debates. No rich man would deny support to literature and art. The old cultures of the conquered were eagerly absorbed by the quick-witted Arabs. That was the glory of Islam.

There came, however, some time in the history of Islam when. somebody seems to have decided that no book except the Koran, was worth reading. Independent thought was banished and the Gates of Ijtihad were closed for ever. Modern Muslim reformists have been trying in vain to re-open these gates but, no significant success seems to have been registered anywhere in the world of modern militant Islam. Even Mohammed Iqbal, before he ceased to be the Iqbal that he once was, in his challenging Book --- "Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" dealt with only reconstruction of thought; but, not in any significant manner, the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. He did suggest that Islam must be re-thought in modern times, but, made practically no contribution towards fruition of this idea. Sadly enough, he became the first to put forward. the idea of a separate Muslim State, which later on emerged as Pakistan. Till then, except for a brief period during the reign of Akbar, no serious effort had been made to synthesise Islam with the predominant faith of the country. Akbar was trying to do what Guru Nanak had started sometime earlier, These were the two great Apostles of Indian integration in the 16th century. It is a sad fact of the contemporary political scene that the faith of the Sikhs is under attack by Mrs. Gandhi and some of the dangerous communalists created by her, and Akbar the great is, and has been, under attack by the orthodox Ulemas of Islam. Mr. Malkani .is rightly proud of the fact that Akbar was born in Sindh, and it is not a matter without significance that almost every Sindhi Hindu is a follower of Guru Nanak. But, me sad truth is that the real Islam of the Prophet either died with him or soon thereafter. The faith that he created and propagated never reached India in its

pristine and pure form. The Muslim fundamentalists of today in India and abroad are plainly ignorant, if not ridiculous. They, say, they want to return to an Islamic order of things, as indeed, to an Islamic State. In the former, politics are derivative from the spirit of Islam; in the latter, politics and religion are parts of the single totality of Islam. Thus, the latter is more strictly and more truly Islamic. But, they have no conception of the basic problem: What Islam do they have in mind, to which they want to go back? Is it the Islam of the Prophet, or, is it the corrupted Islam of later times? These admirable gentlemen have not even thought of the answer. Most of them have only one thing in mind that the laws of the State must conform to Koranic injunctions, but, they refuse to draw some simple conclusions which inevitably follow. Original Islam did not sanction hereditary monarchy. The people had the right to elect and remove their Khalifa. By this standard, not a single Muslim State can claim to be a truly Islamic State. India is any day more "Islamic" than Pakistan or Saudi Arabia. The Ulema has, however, agreed to allow his limited learning to be prostituted. He would maintain every autocratic State. The specious argument used is that Islam recognises the sovereignty of Allah and not the sovereignty of the people. States ruled by Kings and Dictators are, therefore, truly Islamic. Other changes in the law which they want is the infliction of Islamic punishments. The Indian Parliament may be well-advised to give to Muslims accused of crimes, the option of punishment by amputation castration and whippings, instead of the normal punishment prescribed by the humane Indian law.

The fundamentalists have still another vital question to answer. What kind of education do they want? Must education seek knowledge and light wherever they can be found, or, is every source outside the Holy Book to be blacked out and out-lawed? I have described earlier how in the days of its glory, Islam opened itself to the learning of the entire world. Fundamentalism only provides an intellectual black-hole. Muslims, as indeed, all citizens of all States, must be taught from their infancy that in every religion, the essential co-exists with a lot that is disposable dross. Genuine secularism is never inconsistent with the essential teaching of any religion, though it may well collide with fortitious practices, silly superstitions and some dubious doctrinal deductions.

A State might call itself an Islamic Republic or a Hindu Rashtra. In either event, it can be genuinely secular if it metes out full economic and political justice to its minorities and allows them to deny or seek their God in the manner they think best. Secularism does not require abolition of religion, but, its full support, recognition and respect. Its domestic policies and the manifestos of its political parties (assuming they exist) must be based on sound economic and political needs, but, never, never, on the desire to capture votes of religious minorities. Foreign policy must be based on international law and morality and the pragmatic but enlightened long-range interests of the nation. Local Vote Banks are never a satisfactory foundation of relations with other States. It is a pity that we are friendly to the Harem-keeping Sheikhs of West Asia, but not the gallant Israelis fighting for survival; with the mad Gadafi of Libya but not with Hosni Mobarak of Egypt; with one-party dictatorships but, at loggerheads with secular democracies. Fake secularism alone explains this monstrous perversity. The last is, at best, a temporary expedient but, in the long run, it is always self-defeating and destructive of national integration. Religious obscurantism and friction divided this country. We blamed the foreigner for exploiting them, but, to our shame, they persist even today, in more subtle and virulent forms. The nation remains weak and debilitated. I wish the Sindhi poets. Shah Adul Latif the prince amongst poets of the entire world, Sachal Sarmast and Sami were to be introduced to the impressionable young at an appropriate age both in India and Pakistan, and a new era of religious synthesis ushered in. The subtle charm of any great verse is lost in translation, but, this priceless treasure of Sindh must at all cost, become a part of the intellectual heritage of the entire sub-continent. The first two were Muslims and the last a Hindu, but, none can discover in their prolific productions, a single word of religious hatred, narrow minded- ness and divisiveness. Each was deeply influenced by all the religious currents flowing around them, and each drank deep and integrated what he imbibed into a glorious cosmic and spiritual unity.

Iqbal wrote some moving Urdu poetry in this century when we were all slaves and unity of the nation was a categorical imperative. But he wrote, atleast later in life, in the vein of a narrow-minded and arrogant communalist inspite of his

liberal Western education, which the three Sindhi poets did not have. To illustrate Iqbal's Shikwa (Muslims complaint to God):

“A people You had blessed, lighten the burdens they bear,
Raise the poor down-trodden and make it Solomon's peer.
Make abundant that rare commodity, love, so that all may buy and sell,
Convert to Islam India's millions who still in temples dwell.
Long have we suffered; see how grief's blood flows down the drain.
From a heart pierced by the scalpel, hear his cry of pain.
The thought of converting Hindus to Islam never entered the mind of Shah and Sachal.”

Iqbal's Jawabi-Shikwa (God's Response to the Complaint):

“There is loud talk that Muslims have disappeared from the earth's face.
We ask you; did true Muslims exist anywhere in any place?
Your style of living is Christian, your culture that of the Hindu;
A Jew would be ashamed if he saw Muslims such as you. You are Saiyyads as well as
Mirzas, and you are Afghans --- You are all these but tell us are you also
Mussalmans?”

The imperative of religious synthesis intimately connected with Islam's attitude towards minorities in an Islamic State. If the Islamic State is, by definition, an ideological State and the ideology is wholly Muslim, it is manifest that minorities can never be treated equally and justly. What has happened to the Ahmediyas in Pakistan, Bahai's in Iran and to a lesser extent, the Copts in Egypt, is not a very heartening experience or experiment. If Muslim States treat their minorities in this manner. can they easily forget that a quarter of the world's 750 hundred million Muslims are minorities in non-Muslim countries? Sheer self-interest --- quid pro quo --- would indicate that unless the Islamic states are willing to mete out complete equality before the law and equal justice in every sense of the word to non-Muslims, they cannot expect similar treatment for Muslim minorities in non-Muslim States. This is not to suggest that the Muslim minority in India should be held as a hostage to

guarantee good conduct of Muslim governments the world over. But, ugly reactions to what happens to non-Muslim minorities elsewhere, are not easily avoidable, particularly when it is not strongly disapproved and condemned by the minorities in India.

The lesson of recent historical events might well induce some sober and responsible thinking amongst the fanatics. The Arab heart-land of Islam suffered a crushing military defeat in the 1967 War with Israel --- a humiliation that was felt personally not only in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the actual combatants, but, by all Muslim States, Arab as well as non-Arab. Then, in 1972, the largest Muslim State, Pakistan, broke up into two. The hatred, bitterness, mass-suffering and the War could not be prevented by the bond of Islam. The pulls of regionalism proved stronger Economic forces overwhelmed the religious. Lastly, a protracted and a senseless War has been going on between Khomeini's Iran and Sadam's Iraq. By now, the combatants have forgotten what they are fighting about, but, they are still killing one another, and the flower of youth in both the countries is being literally decimated to satisfy the ego of two mad men, both Muslims and fundamentalist Muslims, at that. The lesson is loud and clear. Islam itself can flourish only in peaceful co-existence and by rounding of its sharp angularities without compromise or loss of its essence. Let the Sindhis provide a model to work upon and improve.

Judge Holmes of the United States while on a local train, was once asked by the attendant to show his ticket. The Judge fumbled in his pockets and could not find it, while the attendant who recognised the Judge, said it was nothing to bother about. Holmes turned to him and said: ``No, young man, I must find the ticket, for I have forgotten where I am going." I too seem to have forgotten that this is only a Foreword. It must now end with an apology to the readers and gratitude to the author of this interesting work.

Bombay

Ram Jethmalani

30th August 1984

Member of Parliament



Sindhu is Divine

IN THE BEGINNING was the word. The first recorded word was the Veda. And the Veda is just ecstatic about the Sindhu, the cradle of Indian civilization.

“Sindhu in might surpasses all the streams that flow.... His roar is lifted up to heaven above the earth; he puts forth endless vigour with a flash of light Even as cows with milk rush to their calves, so other rivers roar into the Sindhu. As a warrior- king leads other warriors, so does Sindhu lead other rivers.... Rich in good steeds is Sindhu, rich in gold, nobly fashioned, rich in ample wealth.”

Sindhu is too alive and too divine to be “it”; and so Sindhu is “he”!

When the Vedic seer invokes heaven and earth, he also invokes the Sindhu. The Veda refers to the Ganga only twice; but it makes as many as thirty references to the Sindhu.

This is the Great Sindhu that gave Sindh --- and Hind! --- its name. It is the oldest name in Indian history --- and in Indian geography. When Shiva carried the immolated body of his divine consort Sati over all the land, her skull-top with its Hingula (Sindhur) fell at what has been Hinglaj ever since. It is near Karachi on the Sindh-Baluchistan border. To this holy spot --- sanctified by the visit of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana --- went the great Sindhi Sufi poet-saint Shah Abdul Latif in the company of yogis. As long as East and West Pakistan were one state, a major attraction to the Bangladesh Hindus visiting the west wing was, Hinglaj.

Sindh was part of Dasaratha's empire. When Kekayi goes into a sulk, Dasaratha tells her: "The sun does not set on my empire. Sindh, Sauvira, Saurashtra, Anga, Vanga, Magadha, Kashi, Koshal --- they are all mine. They produce an infinite variety of valuable articles. You can ask whatever you like."

Of course Kekayi wants nothing short of the throne for her son, Bharata. The rest is epic history. When Sita was kidnapped by Ravana, Rama sent the vanaras(monkeys) to look for her, among other places, in Sindh with its "remarkable swimming horses." Later, when all ended well, Rama gave Sindhu-Sauvira (the Sindh and Multan areas) to Bharata, who duly extended his rule farther north to Gandhara --- the home town of Gandhari of Mahabharata fame --- now Kandhar. His sons founded the cities of Peshawar (Pushkalavati) and Taxila (Takshasila).

Sindh emerges in a shady light in the Mahabharata. It is called "paap-purna pradesh" (a sinful province). And thereby hangs a tale. King Jayadratha of Sindh was married to Kaurava prince Duryodhan's sister, Dushhala. He was, therefore, all along on the side of the Kauravas --- and against the Pandavas. However, be it said to the credit of Jayadratha that he, like Dhritarashtra and Bhishma, opposed the disastrous game of dice between the Pandavas and the Kauravas.

However, Jayadratha's hostility towards the Pandavas had deeper roots. At the time of Draupadi's aswayamvara (free choice of husband in an assemblage of princes) he was one of the disappointed aspirants. Later, when the Pandavas were spending their time in exile, Jayadratha accosted her while she was alone. Draupadi innocently enquired of him about the people of Sindhu-Sauvira. However, when she found him full of mischief, she asked him to get lost. Thereupon he forcibly carried her away. When Arjuna and Bhima caught up with him and liberated Draupadi, Bhima cut off his hair in five places --- to make him look ridiculous. And he would have killed him, but for his eldest brother Yudhishthira telling him that it would make their cousin- sister Dushhala a widow --- and grieve uncle Dhritarashtra and aunt Gandhari.

In the titanic battle of Mahabharata, when Abhimanyu, Draupadi's son, got killed, Jayadratha "pushed" his body with his foot. Arjuna was furious. He vowed to kill "Sindhu-Pati" Jayadratha that very day, before the sun set. Jayadratha wanted to flee the field, but it was too late- He died an inglorious death.

In India, right up to the time of Shivaji, Pratap, and Guru Govind Singh, the traditional royal flag was some shade of bhagwa (ochre) or kesari. This was the case in the days of the Mahabharata also. The only difference was in the symbol on the flag. Interestingly enough, Jayadratha's symbol was a silvery boar --- the wild pig, that the Rajputs love to hunt to this day.

Jayadratha's other love was milk and condensed hot milk (the Sindhi khirni). When announcing his determination to kill Jayadratha. Arjuna said: "Jayadratha is a relation, but he is evil; he has been brought up on kshir and kshirni, but now I'll cut him to pieces with my arrows."

One can only hope that the Mahabharata referred to Sindh as "sinful" because of its king and not because of its people. (For the same reason, Karna refers to Shalya's Madraraj in similar terms.) In the "Bhishma Parva" of the Mahabharata, the Sindhu is referred to as the great protector which must be remembered day and night. Obviously the mighty river was a mighty defence line of the country. The "Anushasan Parva" of the Mahabharata prescribes Sindhu-bath for going to heaven after death.

Interestingly enough, the Bhagvad Gita is based on an earlier sermon involving Sindh! Once upon a time, the king of Sindh had defeated young prince Sanjay of Sauvira. Sanjay had lost heart and wanted to forget all about his kingdom. But his brave mother Vidula had shamed him into action. She had told him to remember his ancestry, remember his responsibilities to his people, uphold dharma, and live nobly or die nobly. At a time when the Pandavas were dispirited and did not want to fight, their mother Kunti reminded Krishna of the story of Vidula and asked him to repeat it to her sons --- to move them to action. The result was the immortal sermon of the Gita.

Dushhala also did a great good turn to Sindh. Since the movement of the centre of Indian civilization from the Sindhu to the Ganga, the former had obviously become a rough frontier tract subject to frequent invasions. Dushhala was pained to find the tribes of Jats and Medes in Sindh quarrelling endlessly. She therefore requested Duryodhana to send some Brahmins to tone up the socio-cultural life of Sindh. Duryodhana was good enough to send 30,000 Brahmins

to Sindh. It was these Brahmins who later formed the backbone of resistance to Alexander. But of that, later.

Kalidas says in the Raghuvamsha that on the advice of his maternal uncle Yudhajat, Rama conferred Sindh on Bharata. Rama's ancestor Raghu's triumphant horses had relaxed on the banks of the Sindhu.

Another great Sanskrit poet, Bhasa, had done a whole play, "Avimark" on the romance of prince Avimark with princess Kurangadi of Sindhu-Sauvira.

The Bhavishya Purana says that Shalivahana, the grandson of Maharaja Vikramaditya of Ujjain, established law and order in "Sindhusthan" and fixed his frontier on the Sindhu.

Anshnath, the eleventh Jain Tirthankar, was a Sindhi. He died in Bengal.

The Jaina Dakshinyachihna (eighth century) speaks of the Sindhis as "elegant, with a lovely, soft and slow gait. They are fond of songs, music and dance and feel affection for their country."

There is a legend that the great Buddha had graced Sindh with his visit. Finding the climate extreme, and the area dry and dusty, he had permitted the bhikshus to wear shoes here. He had also permitted the use of padded clothing, forbidden elsewhere. Here Sthavirtis, the prince of Rorik or Roruka (Aror or Alor near modern Rohri) became his disciple.

When the Buddha went round his native Kapilavatsu in a chariot, it was mentioned that the "four auspicious horses, of lotus colour, had come from Sindhudesh." To this day, historic Buddhist stupas are found in Sindh. No wonder when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had become President of Pakistan, even he adorned his office with a statue of the Buddha.

The Divyavadana (Tibetan version) reports: "The Buddha is in Rajgriha. At this time there were two great cities in Jampudvip (north India): Pataliputra and Roruka. When Roruka rises, Pataliputra declines; when Pataliputra rises, Roruka declines." Here was Roruka of Sindh competing with the capital of the Magadha empire. When Bimbisara was king of Magadha, he sent Rudrayan, king of Sindhu-Sauvira, a rare portrait of the Buddha. The two powerful ministers of Sindh at the time were Hiroo and Bheru, their names still common among the Sindhis!

Chandragupta Maurya first won Sindh and the Punjab. It was from this base that he displaced the Nandas, occupied Pataliputra and established the great Mauryan empire

Kashmir's ancient royal history Rajatarangini has many references to Sindh and the Sindhis- Kuya's son Sindhu rose to lead the elephant brigade of Kashmir- He was adviser to the good Queen Dida. A top honour in Kashmir was "Sindhu Gaja", Elephant of Sindh.

Obviously, Sindh was quite at the centre of things.

Sindhu Mata

THE VEDAS and the Puranas speak of Sindh in terms of gods and kings. But, how about the land, the people, and the culture of ancient Sindh?

The outside world knew ancient India only by ancient Sindh and the adjoining coastal areas. And it had the strangest notions about the people here.

Herodotus, the great Greek historian, wrote: "All the Indian tribes I have mentioned copulate in the open like cattle; their skins are all of the same colour, much like the Ethiopians. Their semen is not white like other people's, but black like their own skin. The same peculiarity is to be found in the Ethiopians. Their country is a long way from Persia towards the south and they were never subject to Darius."

Strabo, another Greek historian, wrote: "Indians had never been invaded and conquered by a foreign power." It is good to hear great ancient historians confirm that India had till then never been conquered by a foreign power. As for copulation in the open, Herodotus was obviously referring to prehistoric times when men were yet to build houses. Why, even in Elizabethan England, Shakespeare tells us, many Englishmen loved to romance in "fields of rye".

But the "black semen" story reminds us. When the Chinese in the past century heard the Englishmen say that the heart was on the left, they were sure their own hearts must be on the right --- since they were so very different from the British!

The Greeks were great artists; but scientific temper was alien to their ethos. On one occasion, several Greek philosophers had gathered to discuss how many teeth a woman had. Since men had thirty-two teeth, and women were "inferior", they all had decided that the latter had fewer --- twenty-eight --- teeth. Not one of them had suggested that they might open a woman's mouth and count the teeth in it.

However, good old Herodotus did not know that his own great Greek civilization was the fruit of a marriage between lower Sindh and eastern Mediterranean. And Homer, the great Greek poet, actually mentioned "Sintians" on the island of Lemnos, who "spoke a strange tongue" (Iliad 1: 594).

Writes Pococke, an authority on India's influence on Greece: "At the mouth of the Indus dwell a sea-faring people, active, ingenious and enterprising, as when, ages subsequent to this great movement, they themselves, with the warlike denizens of the Punjab, were driven from their native land, to seek the far distant climes of Greece. The commercial people dwelling along the coast that stretches from the mouth of the Indus to the Coree, are embarking on that emigration whose magnificent results to civilization and whose gigantic movements of art, fill the mind with mingled emotions of admiration and awe. These people coast along the shores of Mekran, traverse the mouth of the Persian Gulf and again adhering to the seaboard of Oman, Hadramant and Yemen sail up the Red Sea; and again ascending the mighty stream that fertilizes a land of wonders, found the kingdoms of Egypt, Nubia and Abyssinia. These are the same stock that, centuries subsequently to this colonization, spread the blessings of civilization over Hellas and her islands. The connection, therefore, which is so constantly represented by Greek historians as subsisting between Egypt and Athens, as well as Benotia and other parts of Greece, is perfectly natural and in fact is just what we should anticipate from a people, who so highly honoured and deeply venerated their parent state as to receive from its hands their sacred fire, and their ministers of religion....

“And thus it was that the native of Indus and of the rocky heights of Hela, when he became a settler in the Hellas, and thus it was with his polished descendant in Athens who, though called a Greek, was as thoroughly Sindian in his taste, religion and literature as any of his forefathers.

“Of the triple connection that links Egypt, Greece and the lands of the Indus, there will remain no longer the shadow of a doubt, as the reader accompanies me in the geographical development of the colonizations of Africa founded by the mercantile and thriving community of Corinthus. This is past controversy; for the Abusin, .. classical name for the Indus, is reproduced in Greece as the Coi-Indus (Corinthus), that is the people of the Cori Indus.”

These people are known to history as Phoenicians. The early historians always wondered where these great fathers of western civilization came from. But no more. Now it is established that the Vedic Panis (who, in India, became Vaniks, Vanias, and Bantias) became, in the West, Panikas, the Punic race or the Phoenicians. Although the modern Suez Canal, connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean, did not then exist, there was a canal connecting the eastern most estuary of the Nile to the Red Sea. The ancient people used this channel to go from the Red Sea via the Nile to the Mediterranean. Our Phoenicians went ahead and even set up the state of Phoenicia on what is the Syrian and Lebanese seaboard today.

Although the Panis had to leave Sindh to settle abroad --- allegedly because they had killed a king --- they took the sacred fire and holy men with them. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, “the Phoenicians claimed that their oldest cities had been founded by the gods themselves and that their race could boast an antiquity of 30,000 years.” Here are clear echoes of ancient

India with her yuga upon yuga of civilization. And here, too, are the ancient trading traditions of Sindh.

What was this great little Sindh like?

All early civilizations were born in river valleys; the mountain and the sea were too inhospitable for the early man. And obviously the Indus civilization is about as old as the Indus, which itself belongs to geology, not history.

The early man not only needed river water for sustenance, he needed protection from the elements as well. It is therefore believed that in the Sindh area the first habitations began in the Khirthar range in the west, not far from the river. The mountain caves in this range provided a good natural shelter close to the river. It is therefore no coincidence that Mohen-jo-daro, the crown of Indus civilization, is situated between the Indus and the Khirthar range. The ancient Laki Tirath is found in the same hilly area.

Geographically, historically, and culturally, Sindh has always been part of India. The vast rocky Baluchistan desert has effectively cut it off from Iran in the west. But the small Kutch and Rajasthan deserts have also historically partially isolated it from the east. And that left the Indus as the main artery connecting Sindh to Multan in the north. This gave Sindh a certain identity and personality of its own. And so ancient Sindh was semi-isolated. It included not only Baluchistan and Kutch but also Multan. Till 1947, when the Sindhis flooded Bombay, they were known to the Maharashtrians as "Multanis"!

The Indus then followed an easterly course and the eastern- most channel emptied itself in Kutch, which then was under the sea. No wonder Harappa

(vedic Hariyupiya) above Sindh and Lothal below Sindh (Gujerat) have the same civilization as Mohen-jo-daro. And the ruins of Mohen-jo-daro are a more eloquent testimony of the glory of ancient Sindh than all the other records put together.

Today when ,the Sindhi nationalists in Pakistan refer to their province as ``Sindhu Mata'', they are only re-stating an ancient fact. Sindh is not only mother for Sindhis, it is the mother of. ancient Greece and ancient Egypt, too.



The Immortal “Mound of the Dead”

FROM 1918 to 1922 Rakhal Das Banerji of the archaeological department of India was scouring the countryside of Sindh and Punjab in search of any remains of Alexander's passage through those part ;. But he could not find any --- although it is known that the Greek invader had buried some over-size arms in India, to make the future generations think that the Greek soldiers were some kind of over-size supermen. Rakhal did, however, find scores of big and small ancient mounds, all of which turned out to be Buddhist. The biggest of them, with a Buddhist stupa on top, is the one now known as Mohenjo- daro, near Larkana.

It is, however, not the mound (daro) of “Mohan”, Lord Krishna. In Sindhi it is known as “Mooanjo-daro”, the “mound of the dead”. Tradition held that there were lots of people buried inside the mound. A little excavation, however, revealed that there were hardly any bodies there. Instead, a whole great city came to light. Indeed it is not just one city but at least seven cities, built one over the other! From the stupa one can look east and clearly see the Sindhu as

a silvery ribbon in the distance. Every year the Sindhu brings masses of alluvial soil. Every hundred years the surrounding area rises by seven inches. The seven cities of Mooanjo-daro, with an aggregate height of seventy feet, therefore, represent some twelve thousand years of history.

The whole city is built of burnt bricks. And that not only shows that their civilization was highly developed, but also proves that there were huge forests, supplying quantities of firewood.

Well

And that in turn means Sindh then used to have heavy rainfall. Indeed the tigers, the rhinos, and the elephants on the ancient seals reflect a rich forest life.

In the ancient archaeological sites abroad, the emphasis is on gods and kings. There are big temples and lavish palaces. But this city was obviously a republic --- and a pretty egalitarian republic at that. While there are no palaces, all houses are Pucca (well built) --- and equipped with all the conveniences. The streets are broad and straight --- and the houses are well ventilated. Every house has a well of its own --- and a cistern, taking waste -water out into the central drainage system. The wonder of wonders, all the drains are covered. And since there was no lime in the area to use as cement, the bricks were so made and fitted into each other that no cementing as such was necessary!

The whole thing thrilled modern city planners. Said J.S. Townroe, a British housing expert, at the end of World War II: "Buried cities in the Indus Valley at least 5000 years old, when excavated, showed they were well planned and drained. Every large house had a bathroom. The old Vedic treatises afford striking proof of the knowledge and commonsense of the early people of India in regulating their building development and wisdom in their municipal

administration. When we think of the great urban civilization in the Indus Valley 5000 years ago, we gain humility in facing the issues of today. From India we can learn both patience and wisdom in dealing with the redevelopment of our bombed-out cities in Europe and North Africa and the Far East in the years to come."

Of the only two figures found, one is that of a dancing girl, and another the bust of a man in orange apparel painted with a floral design.

Here was a huge and prosperous port-city with international commerce; but it was so secure and peaceful that no arms were found. The thick wall, which was first believed to be the rampart of a fort, was later found to be a section of a public store-house. Said Sir Mortimer Wheeler, archaeologist: "It served both as a state bank and treasury."

Covered Drains

Aldous Huxley, the philosopher, was so impressed by the peaceful character of Mooan-jo-daro that he wrote: "The civilization of the Indus Valley was as rich and elaborate as those of Sumer and Egypt. But it was a civilization that knew nothing of war. No weapons have been found in its buried cities, nor any trace of fortification. This fact is of the highest significance. It proves that it is possible for men to enjoy the advantages of a complex urban civilization without having to pay for them by periodical mass-murders."

And it was unarmed, not because there was nothing to defend in the city. For it was a rich city with international commerce. Indeed Sir John Marshall, then director-general of the archeological department, noted: "The old ornaments are so well finished and so highly polished that they might have come out of a Bond Street jeweller rather than from a prehistoric house of 5000 years ago."

This city needed no arms because it was secure in its own law, order and justice. Here was a fine great city which had no use for arms but which made many toys for its beloved children. Some of these were still whistling and rattling when dug up!

Communal Bath

At first some westerners tried to prove that this Sindh city had been sacked by "Aryans". But evidence soon turned up to show that this city itself was as "Aryan" as any site in Bharat- varsh. Here are Shiva Pashupatinath and Kali, the worship of linga and peepal. And in front of the temple, topped by the stupa, is the huge tank for ceremonial bathing by pilgrims.

The invasion-destruction theory was further knocked down by anthropologists who found that the Mooanjo-daro people had the same long-headed skulls as the Sindhis of today. Obviously the invaders had been too few to change the native character of Sindh.

Next only to the Pyramids and the Great Wall of China, Mooanjo-daro is the greatest man-made wonder of the world. Indeed it is so much alive that "the mound of the dead" is quite a misnomer for it. Until we decipher its script and find out its original name, a more appropriate appellation for it would be "Amar Sindh Daro" (the "Mound of Immortal Sindh"). It is the most sacred spot in Sindh. Here is a place of pilgrimage for all mankind.



Alexander's Waterloo in Sindh

EVEN MORE than the Vedas and the Epics, Sindh figures very prominently in, of all places, the annals of Sikander that is Alexander.

British historians used to talk of Alexander as "the world conqueror" who "came and saw and conquered" every land he had visited. He is still advertised in Indian text-books as the victor in his war with India's Porus (Puru). However, the facts as recorded by Alexander's own Greek historians tell a very different tale. And Marshal Zhukov, the famous Russian commander in World War II, said at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, a few years back, that India had defeated Alexander.

Alexander fared badly enough with Porus in the Punjab. Indeed, Porus put him on the spot when he told him: "To what purpose should we make war upon one another. if the design of your coming to these parts be not to rob us of our water or our necessary food, which are the only things that wise men are indispensably obliged to fight for? As for other riches and possessions, as they

are accounted in the eyes of the world, if I am better provided of them than you, I am ready to let you share with me; but if fortune has been more liberal to you than to me, I have no objection to be obliged to you."

Alexander had no reply to the questions posed by Porus. Instead, with the obstinacy of a bully, he said: "I shall contend and do battle with you so far that, howsoever obliging you are, you shall not have the better of me." But Porus did have the better of Alexander. In the fighting that ensued, the Greeks were so terrified of Indian prowess that they refused to proceed farther, in spite of Alexander's angry urgings and piteous lamentations. Writes Plutarch, the great Greek historian: "This last combat with Porus took off the edge of the Macedonians' courage and stayed their further progress in India.... Alexander not only offered Porus to govern his own kingdom as satrap under himself but gave him also the additional territory of various independent tribes whom he had subdued." Porus emerged from his war with Alexander with his territory doubled and his gold stock augmented. So much for Alexander's "victory" over Porus. However, what was to befall him in Sindh, was even worse.

In his wars in Iran, Afghanistan, and north-west India, Alexander had made so many enemies that he did not dare return home by the same route he had come. He had, therefore, decided to travel via Sindh. But in Multan the Mallas gave him hell.

When Alexander's hordes invaded Sindh with the novel war-cry "Alalalalalai!" the Sindhis were obviously scared. The rulers of Musicanus, Sindemana, and Patala --- identified by Dr. H.T. Sorely I.C.S. author of *The Gazeteer of Sind* (1968), as Alor, Sehwan, and Hyderabad, respectively- fled. ("Patala" is believed to be a Greek corruption of "Patan" which means river bank or sea shore). But before long they collected their wits and gave Alexander a very bad time. Notes H.T. Lambrick, a former commissioner of Sindh, and author of *The Sindh before Muslim Conquest*: "There was a subtle power in Sindh which

created the will to resist the foreigner, the influence of the Brahmins." Dushhala's settling of 30,000 Brahmins in Sindh had not gone in vain!

Alexander confessed to his friends back home: "They attacked me everywhere. They wounded my shoulder, they hit my leg, they shot an arrow in my chest, and they struck me on my neck with a loud thud." At one stage word had spread in the Greek camp that Alexander was dead --- and he had to be propped up and exhibited as alive!

Alexander never excused the Brahmins for persuading the Sindhi king Sabbas to stand up and fight. To the horror of the local people, he had a whole lot of them slaughtered. However, he was so impressed with the quality and spirit of the Brahmins that he captured and kept with him ten of them. Plutarch's account of Alexander's questions and their replies makes interesting reading.

"The first being asked whether he thought the most numerous the dead or the living, answered, 'the living, because those who are dead, are not at all'. Of the second he desired to know whether the earth or the sea produced the largest beasts, who told him. 'The earth, for the sea is but part of it'. His question to the third was, 'which is the cunningest of animals?' 'That,' said he, 'which men have not yet found out.' He bade the fourth to tell him what argument he used with Sabbas to persuade him to revolt 'No other,' he said, 'than that he should either live nobly or die nobly.' Of the fifth he asked, what was the oldest, night or day. The philosopher replied, 'Day was oldest, by one day at least'. And perceiving Alexander not well satisfied with that account, he added that he ought not to wonder if he got strange answers for his strange questions. Then he went on and inquired of the next, what a man should do to be exceedingly beloved. 'He must be very powerful, without making himself too much feared.' The answer of the seventh to his question, how a man might become a god, was, 'By doing, that which was impossible for man to do.' The eighth told him, 'Life is stronger than death because it supports so many miseries.' And the last

philosopher, asked how long he thought it decent for a man to live, said 'till death appeared more desirable than life'."

The philosophers in turn posed him questions of their own. Dandamis (Dandamani?) asked Alexander why he undertook so long a journey to come into those parts. Kalanus (Kalyan) refused to talk to Alexander until the latter stripped himself naked and then heard him with humility and attention. Kalyan then conveyed to Alexander that his roaming far and wide was not good either for him or for his country. Reports Plutarch: "Kalanus threw a dry shrivelled hide on the ground and trod upon the edges of it, to show it would not straighten out that way. He then stood on it in the centre, to show how it straightened out immediately." The meaning of this similitude was that he ought to reside most in the middle of his empire, and not spend too much time on the borders of it.

However, life in Sindh for Alexander was something more than these encounters with Brahmin philosophers. And the worst was yet to come. When he saw the mighty Indus, he thought he had found the source of the Nile! The presence of crocodiles in the Indus only confirmed him in this belief, since they were also present in the Nile. With much relief and great fanfare, his army sailed down the Indus in hopes of reaching Egypt. But they soon found themselves at sea, literally. Here the monsoon and the tides --- both unknown to his native little land-locked Mediterranean country --- bewildered him to no end. He split his army into two --- one half led by Alexander, to go by lower Sindh and coastal Baluchistan to Iran, while the other half, led by Nearchus, to proceed by sea. Soon the two halves lost contact, each thinking the other lost and dead! On the land route, the paucity of water drove many of them mad. As and when they found a pond, they would jump into it and drink and drink and drink until they bloated up dead! Of the 40,000 Greeks who had started out by land from Sindh, only 15,000 reached Iran. Writes Robin Lane Poole, the modern biographer of Alexander: "All of them agreed that not even the sum total of all the army's sufferings in Asia deserved to be compared with the hardships in Makran. The highest officers were alive --- and so was Alexander -

-- but they had suffered a disgrace which was agonizingly irreversible. Alexander had known his first defeat".

Obviously Alexander's Indian trip was about as ``successful" as Napoleon's invasion of Russia. He, however, consoled himself with the thought that Queen Semiramis of Assyria, who had invaded Sindh, had been able to get back with only 20 men --- and Cyrus of Iran, with only seven."

However, Alexander's Indian adventure was not entirely unproductive. He had introduced the Indian elephant to the West. He was so much impressed by the broad-bottomed boats carrying grain up and down the Indus, that he had them introduced in Greece. The Greeks now introduced five times more spices in the West. Sissoo (Sheesham) wood of the Punjab was used to build pillars for the Susa Palace in imperial Iran. He would, no doubt, have carried the mango also, but for the fact that its over-eating had given the ``God-king" no end of loose motions. And so Alexander forbade mango-eating in his camp.

Evidently this sweet-sour experience with the mango was not confined to Alexander alone. When G.D. Birla took a basketful of the choicest Alphonso as a gift to Khrushchov, the latter declined them with thanks and said that that `strange fruit' did not suit the Russian stomach.

The Greeks had many interesting things to say about Sindh. Admiral Nearchus, who had led the Greek retreat by sea, noted that Sindhis were tall and slim and wore white leather shoes with thick soles, to appear taller. Vanity is neither recent nor imported!

Alexander had himself found Sindhis "healthy and temperate and partaking of community meals." Obviously the Langar did not start with the Sikhs. He had also noted that the Sindhis "hated war, and loved medicine", the science of health and long life.

There is one thing more the Greeks and the Sindhis have in common --- the Sindhi bhoonda or buja --- the peculiar Sindhi gesture of denunciation with an open, outstretched hand. When the Greek Cypriots wanted the British out of Cyprus, they had burnt the Union Jack with this "handy" denunciation. And when at the peak of the Pakistani people's demand for democracy Zia-ul-Haq toured Sindh in September 1983, he was greeted with the same gesture.

According to Prof. Demetrios Loukatos, this gesture has been in use in Greece since ancient times and it had even spread to the Romans and the Balkanians, particularly the Albanians. In Greek, it is known as moudja. With 'b' often changing into "m" in Greek, the moudja comes very close to the Sindhi Buja or bhoonda.

Here is a good theme for a doctoral thesis --- to find out whether it was a gift from Sindh to Alexander or the other way round. Or whether it was carried to Greece by our Panis that is Phoenicians thousands of years before.



Truth about Dahir Sen

THE PROPHET of Islam had known Sindh and Hind. One of his wives was named Hind, and he used to say of her: "May Allah bless this Hind and the country after which she is named!" When he learned that Yemen had been occupied by foreigners, his immediate question was whether it had been occupied by the Sindhis or the Abyssinians.

Many Indian Jats used to reside in Arabia. One of them had cured Ayesha, Mohammed's youngest wife, of an ailment induced through witchcraft practised by her maid-servant.

The Jats used to part their hair in the middle --- and Mohammed liked it so well that he adopted that hair style. The Sindhi Jats' thick-soled shoes became

famous in Arabia as `jutti'. Many of us still know it as Joota. In Sindhi it is still called jutti.

Arab traders had long reported that in Hindustan ``the rivers are pearls, the mountains are rubies, and the trees are perfume."

Indeed the Arabs and the Sindhis --- and other west coast Indians --- knew each other very well. According to Arab belief, Adam and Eve lived in India and India was heaven, Janatnishan. They marvelled at the peacocks and the elephants, the camphor and the sandalwood of India. The religion of the Arabs before Islam was very much like Hinduism, pantheistic. When the Arabs captured Sicily in 53 H, they got hold of the local gold idols, which they then sold to the king of Sindh.

When Islam exploded in the face of the world, and spread out in all directions, it was inevitable that it should hit India too. The tragedy is that India at this time was not in good shape. Northern India was in disarray after Harsha. And Sindh was ruled by a controversial dynasty.

Rai Sahasi, the king of Sindh, was the brother of the king of Chittor- He was childless. His wife Suhandi fell in love with the Brahmin minister, Chach. When Sahasi died, Suhandi had all the claimants to the throne liquidated. She then married Chach. The people were shocked.

But Chach proved a successful ruler. He annexed Multan and fixed the frontier of Sindh with Kashmir by planting the deodar of Sindh and the poplar of Kashmir and then letting their branches intertwine. He had similarly planted

palm trees to mark the frontier with Iran. That was certainly more beautiful than the cement pillars of modern boundaries.

Chach and Suhandi had two sons, Dahir and Daharsiah. Chach also had a daughter, Bai, by another wife. Dahir ruled upper Sindh at Alor and Daharsiah ruled lower Sind at Brahmanabad, near modern Nawabshah. When Bai came of age, the court astrologer predicted that she would never go out of the Alor fort and that her husband would become the ruler of Sindh and Hind. Thereupon the minister, Budhiman (the wise one) --- but who in this case proved quite buddhiheen (unwise) --- begged of Dahir to marry his half-sister and save himself and the kingdom. Dahir was as scandalised by the suggestion as anybody else. But on second thoughts he agreed to marry Bai symbolically. He did this by presenting her a ring, placing his sword in her lap and covering her head with his scarf. Because of Dahir ``marrying" his half-sister, though only symbolically, the word Dahiri came to mean in Sindhi, ``a silly fool".

But be it said in defence of Dahir that marriages between half- brothers and half-sisters and between cousins were not unknown in ancient royal history. The Pharaohs of Egypt and the old Shahinshahs of Iran invariably married their half-sisters or cousin-sisters --- on the ground that anything less than a royal princess would not be good enough for a real prince; and marriage into other royal families could lead to rivalries between brothers- in-law. And Bai was only a half-sister of Dahir.

However, Dahir's marriage with Bai scandalized the people and divided them. This was the situation in Sindh during the mortal Arab challenge. The remarkable thing is that Sindh resisted as well as it did.

When an Arab chief asked a Sindhi trader about Sindh, the latter told him: "There is too little water. The fruit is useless. The thieves steal with impunity. A small army will get annihilated. A large army will starve to death." The Arab saw in this reply a Sindhi patriotic effort to discourage Arab invasion. However, the Arabs who had already tasted blood --- and spread from Iran to Morocco --- were not easily dissuaded. On the basis of modern researches, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad in his *Humanity at Death's Door* and Maulana Nadvi in his *Indo-Arab Relations*, write that between 638 and 711 A.D., the Arabs launched as many as fifteen attacks against Sindh by land and by sea. And it was only the last by Mohammed Bin Qasim in 711 that succeeded.

Chachnama, the most authentic and almost contemporary account of Arab invasions of Sindh reports that as early as 638 A.D. Khalifa Umar sent Mughairah to launch a naval attack against Sindh, but it was repulsed on the Indian side. The Chachnama lists six more major attempts by land and/or by sea during the next 80 years, led by Hakam, Abdullah, Rashid, Munzir, Sinan, and Bazil, but they were all repulsed and the invading commanders killed.

Khalifa Usman was so upset by the Arab defeats in Sindh during his term that he forbade any more attempts on Sindh, on the ground that "its water is dirty, its soil stony, and its fruit poisonous."

It is interesting how a land of "musk and pearls" can suddenly become "dirty and stony", when there is no way to sack it. The Sindh grapes became sour! It reminds one of the contrasting Muslim view of the Hindus before and after partition. Before partition, the Hindus were "dhoti-wearing cowards, drinking daal and munching papad". But, after partition, when the Hindus showed that they could hit back real hard, they became "terrible fiends"!

However, the itch for war and the bug for booty had bitten the Arab soul. And so Khalifa Ali also sent an expedition. But they returned disheartened when Ali died. The next Khalifa, Muawiyah, had sent a big land army with provisions enough not to need to light any fire in the camp. But the Sindh army gave them hell and their commander Abdullah had raised the piteous cry before he fell dead: "Oh children of the Prophet's companions, do not turn your faces from the infidels so that your faith may remain free from any flaw and you may acquire the honour of freedom". However, the Arabs had decided to run away and live, if only in Makran --- rather than fight on and die, just to go to heaven.

The next major invasion was led by "Sinan, son of Salmah", who had been blessed on his birth by Mohammed himself. Sinan now even saw in a dream, Mohammed bless his adventure. But neither the blessings on birth nor the benediction from the other world, availed him when the Sindhis killed him at Budhiya.

Governor Ziyad then appointed Munzir, son of Harud, son of Bazhar, in A.D. 680 to go and get Sindh. However, as he got up in the court, his robe was caught in a piece of wood and torn, Abdullah, the governor of Iraq, took this as a bad omen and wailed: Munzir will never return from this journey and will die." And that was exactly what happened.

At this stage, Hajjaj, a notorious pervert and tyrant, was appointed governor of Iraq. And it was directly his charge to conquer Sindh. An Arab leader Alafi with 500 men had fled from his terror to Sindh and Dahir had given him asylum. Hajjaj also claimed that the Sindhi pirates had looted some Arab ships coming from Lanka. He made these two incidents a new excuse to go to war against Sindh. Khalifa Walid gave reluctant permission. Hajjaj sent Basil with a large army, but he was worsted by Jaisiah, the son of Dahir, and killed. Hajjaj now threatened "not to leave a single kafir alive up to the frontiers of China". And on the basis of his astrologers' predictions, he appointed Mohammed Bin

Qasim, his nephew and son-in-law, as the new invader of Sindh. So, astrologers were heeded not only by Dahirs but also by Hajjajs!

However, Khalifa Walid was in no mood for another bloody attempt on Sindh. He wrote to Hajjaj: "The people (of that country) are cunning and the country itself is very distant. It will cost us very large sums of money to provide a sufficient number of men and arms and instruments of war. This affair will be a source of great anxiety, and so we must put it off; for every time the army goes (on such an expedition) vast numbers of Muslims are killed. So think no more of such a design." But Hajjaj invoked the "honour of Islam" and vowed to "spend the wealth of the whole of Iraq" to "avenge the death of Basil".

On an "auspicious day" in A.D. 711 --- fixed by astrologers --- Mohammed Bin Qasim started for Sindh at the head of the Iraqi, Syrian, and other Arab soldiers of fortune. His horses and camels were given coats of mail to look like lions and elephants, respectively!

When the Arab army besieged Debal (meaning "Deval" or "Devalaya", 'place of god' temple) the battle raged for ten days even though it was not a major town of Sindh like Alor, Sehwan Nerunkot (Hyderabad), or Brahmanabad. The fortified temple fell when a frightened Brahmin crept out and told the Arabs to knock off the tall flagpole flying the huge red flag, to demoralise the defenders. At this stage, Jahin Budh, the incharge of Debal, surrendered. Carnage followed. And so did general collapse.

At a time when the Arabs were short of both food and fodder, Bhandarkan Samani, the man incharge of Nerunkot, surrendered that town. The Samanis or Shamans --- the Buddhist counterparts of Brahmins --- took the line that, as Buddhists, they were men of peace and not interested in who ruled the

country. They would not let Bachehra, the governor of Sehwan, to continue the defence of the town after one week. At a time when the Arabs did not know how to cross the Sindhu, one Mokah, the son of Besayeh, a princeling, made boats and provisions available in return for crown and estate. The astrologers now began to predict the "inevitable victory of the Arabs". But Dahir still continued to be over-confident. Contrary to the Arab Alafi's advice, he allowed the Arabs to cross the river to be able to fight, "lest it be imagined by them that we are in perplexity and have become very weak and powerless."

As the battle raged between the Sindhis and the Arabs, Ubaid, a lieutenant of Alafi, went over to the Arabs and told them of Dahir's plans. Even so, the Sindhi army fought so well that, says the Chachnama, on the eleventh and last day, "the army of Islam became irresolute and their lines were broken up in great confusion. It was generally believed that the Arabs were defeated, and put to flight."

Mohammed Bin Qasim was then "so perplexed that he called out for water". At this stage traitor Mokah with his men arrived on the scene and joined the Arab forces. Simultaneously a cry went up that the princesses in the Sindhi army had been cornered. This led to confusion. Dahir was heard by the Arabs shouting something like "nisi man, nisi man", (meaning "here I am, here I am") -so as to tell his men not to lose heart. But then a fiery arrow hit Dahir's howdah and set it on fire. Soon after, another arrow pierced his heart. And then all was over. It was on the evening of Thursday the 16 June A.D. 712. After fifteen attempts by nine Khalifas over a period of seventy-four years (638-712 A.D.) the Arabs had conquered Sindh. It was one of the saddest days in Indian history.

Dahir's wife Ladi was captured. In the Arab camp she tried to act as a shock-absorber between the invaders and the local people. Dahir's "wife" Bai

committed suttee to escape the hands of "these chandals (untouchables) and cow-eaters". Resistance continued.

But the Muslim problem had been created in India with the very first conversion to Islam in Debal. This man was promptly named Maulana Islami and sent, with a Syrian noble, to deliver a message to Dahir. The Chachnama reports that when the two entered Dahir's court, the Syrian bowed low to salute, but the new Muslim refused to bow or to salute. Dahir recognised him and asked him why he was not observing the court etiquette, and the latter said that with his change of religion his loyalty now was to "the king of Islam". Change of religion had resulted in change of nationality! The Pakistani mentality had born.

When Dahir's severed head was presented to Hajjaj, a courtier sang: "we have conquered Sindh after enormous trouble.... Betrayed is Dahir by Mohammed Bin Qasim's masterly strategy. Rejoice, the evil doers are disgraced. Their wealth has been brought away . . . They are now solitary and brittle as eggs and their women, fair and fragrant as musk-deer, are now asleep in our harems."

Why did it all happen?

The basic point, of course, is that no country can always be on top of the world . There are cycles in the fortunes of a people. And Sindh was not exactly in good shape at the time. The great Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsiang, who visited Sindh in A.D. 641, exactly seventy years before, did not find things too good. He wrote:

“There are several hundred Sangh aramas, (resting places) occupied by about 10,000 priests.... There are about thirty Deva temples, in which sectaries of various kinds congregate. The king is of the Sudra (Sho-tu-lo) caste. He is by nature honest and sincere, and he reverences the law of Buddha.... By the side of the river Sindhu along the flat marshy lowlands there are several hundreds of thousands of families settled. They are of an unfeeling and hasty temper, and are given to blood- shed only. They give themselves exclusively to tending cattle.... Men and women, both cut their hair short.”

Although the ruler at the time was Chach, a Brahmin, Hiuen Tsiang describes him as a Sudra (Sho-tu-lo) either because he had come to the throne in an irregular manner, or because he was ruling a rough border area, off the Indian mainstream. Some scholars interpret Sho-tu-lo not as Sudra but as “Kshudrak” an ancient republic in central Sindh. Still others think that Sho-tu-lo does not mean Sudra at all, that it stands for ‘Shrotriya’ Brahmins. The king was a Brahmin but there were too many Buddhists, making for social dissonance. The social tensions showed in hasty temper and bloodshed. Many of the Buddhists were traders who preferred peace to resistance.

Apart from this general decline, there were specific reasons.

One reason no doubt was the controversies surrounding the royal family. Another was the failure of Dahir to prevent --- and punish --- cowardice and treason in the local camp. Yet another was the dubious position of many Buddhists, who conveniently camouflaged their cowardice as desire for peace, even though Dahir had placed them in important positions. But a much bigger reason was the explosive nature of Islam which had combined one Allah and one Prophet with the single-minded devotion to murder and loot and rape. It is no wonder that the Arabs who had overrun Iran in A.D. 641 in spite of Sindhi help --- and entered even far-away Spain in A.D. 711, should roll up Sindh in A.D. 712.

The north Indian kingdom of Kanauj could have helped --- as the Franks did help Spain --- but after the death of Harsha in A.D. 647, it was too weak to help itself, much less others. Sindh fought and fell alone.

The official history of Sindh published in ten volumes in Pakistan makes interesting reading on the subject. According to Dr. Mumtaz Hussain Pathan, the reasons adduced by the Arabs for the invasion were all false. He thinks that the story of the loot of Arab ships by the Sindhi pirates is "a fabrication". He adds: "That the Arab prisoners were recovered from Debal after the Arab conquest is another fabrication, not supported by historical evidence and contrary to the facts recorded in contemporary sources. He thinks the real reasons were two --- loot, and the necessity of keeping the in-fighting Arabs occupied elsewhere. "In order to meet the financial deficiency, al-Hajjaj; ventured on new designs of lucrative nature, to fill in the coffers of the State. The main purpose of these attacks may also have been actuated by political reasons, with the sole intention of diverting the energies of the Arabs to new enterprises, rather than fighting . among themselves." Dr. Pathan has no doubt that it was a case of aggression, pure and simple. "The conquest of Sindh was included in the pre-planned programme of Hajjaj, for which some flimsy grounds were needed." Indeed Hajjaj had asked his men to advance to the frontiers of China!

Dr. Khan also thinks that "the Alafis who had taken shelter in Sindh as fugitives, too, seem to have acted as secret agents for the Arab viceroy. Although they posed to be the enemies of Hajjaj, yet they communicated news of strategic importance to the Arabs and instigated them to make an attack on Sindh."

Dr. Khan also blames the Buddhist Shamanis who betrayed the trust placed in them by Dahir. He says that while some classes suffered inequality under Dahir's rule, their lot grew much worse under the Arab rule. Earlier, the common people were forbidden to wear silks or ride horses. Now the Arabs additionally ordered them not to cover their heads, and to walk barefoot in Arab presence. Also, the Buddhists were ordered to entertain any Arab --- soldier, trader or adventurer --- for at least three days. In many cases the Arab guests succeeded in eloping with the wives and daughters of their hosts." The Arabs let hell loose on Sindh. Even those who embraced Islam to save their skin found themselves called mawalis (clients) and charged jeziya (head tax) like any Hindus. And so most of them promptly returned to their ancestral faith. The Deval Smriti was enunciated to facilitate the shuddhikaran (re-conversion) of the forced converts, on performance of certain purificatory rites. No wonder even for the Sindhi Muslims today, Dahir Sen is hero, and Mohammed Bin Qasim, a villain.

Within two years of the Arab invasion, the Arab influence was confined to Debal and the surrounding coastline. Dahir's son Jaisiah had become a Muslim to survive --- only to become Hindu again to survive with honour. The Arabs thereupon sent a huge army twentyfive years later under the leadership of Salim. In the titanic battle that raged on the Sindh-Rajasthan border, Jaisiah, assisted by his mother Ladi, and the redoubtable Bappa Rawal of Chittor (A.D. 739-753), and blessed by Hirat Swami, worsted the Arabs. A treaty of peace was signed only when Salim surrendered all equipment, gave his daughter Maiya in marriage to Bappa Rawal, and vowed that the Arabs would never again attack India. It is significant that in the succeeding centuries the Arabs never again attacked India.

However, more than heroes, the period of Arab conquest of Sindh had its heroines --- Surya Devi and Parimal Devi, the daughters of Dahir. Mohammed Bin Qasim had sent them to Khalifa Walid in Baghdad for his harem. The Khalifa, reports the Chachnama, was "charmed with their perfect beauty" and their "blood-sucking blandishments". However, the two princesses said to the

Khalifa that Qasim had already violated their chastity. The Khalifa flew into a rage. He ordered that Mohammed Bin Qasim be killed and his body brought to him in a bullock's hide. When the orders were duly executed, the princesses revealed that they had cooked up the violation story only to avenge "the ruination of the king of Sindh and Hind and desolation of the kingdom of our fathers and grandfathers". The enraged Khalifa ordered them tortured to death and had their torn bodies thrown into the river Tigris. The defeat of Sindh had been partly avenged.

In Sindh the very first thing the Arabs did was to convert the Debal temple into a prison. Soon, however, all Sindh became an Arab prison. The loot of Sindh enriched the Arab lands. Twenty thousand Sindhis were sold in slavery, mostly as cooks and cashiers. Here they specially popularized the Sindhi rice porridge bhatt (Sanskrit Bhakt, Hindi bhaat, rice). Others captivated the Arab hearts with their sweet singing, to the accompaniment of the ektara and the cymbals. Many other Sindhis became trusted accountants in Arab business houses. A Sindhi accountant became a guarantee of business success. Several Sindhi vaidas (native physicians) became famous in West Asia. One of them, Manik, cured Khalifa Harun al-Rashid, when the local and Greek physicians had given up hope. On another occasion Manik revived the Khalifa's dear cousin Ibrahim, after he had been declared dead by the physicians. Many Hindu arts and sciences began to flow from Sindh into the Arab lands. Hindu astronomy, medicine, and mathematics reached Europe through the Arab hands. To this day, the numerals 1,2,3,... are known in Arabic as Hindsa. The Panchatantra stories of wisdom were translated into Arabic as Kalilah wa Dimnah.

Even the Arabic script came from India --- centuries before the Arab invasion of Sindh. According to experts, sixteen of the twenty-two basic Arabic characters are directly traceable to the Brahmi lipi of Ashoka's days. They look very different only because they came to be written from right to left in the style of "Kharoshthi" (in the manner of "asses' lips"). Dr. Pathan notes: "Even the Arabic script, which is supposed to have been -borrowed from the Nabataeans, was greatly influenced by the Hindu Nagari script."

Under the Hindu influence, the great Syrian poet Abdul Alaal-Maorri became a Hindu and went vegetarian. Al-Hallaj visited Sindh, cried ``anal-Haqq" (Aham Brahm Asmi --- I am the Truth) and was crucified. There even was an Arab-Sindhi romance. Luai was a descendant of Mohammed. He and his wife Hind had a son, Asim. The family settled down in Samarra in Sindh. Here Hind repaired the local Hindu temple. Asim fell in love with Sita, the daughter of the temple priest. But Luai would not consent to Asim becoming Hindu --- and the priest would not agree to Sita becoming Muslim. At last Hind took the two to Saniyya (now Sann, the native village of the prominent Sindh leader G.M.Syed). There they were married while keeping their respective religions. When Sita died, Asim immolated himself on her funeral pyre!

But otherwise the relations between the Sindhis and the Arabs were none too good. In Sindh, the Arabs lived in isolated colonies, particularly in Mansurah, the twin-city of Brahmanabad, while the people went their own way under the local chiefs. The Sindhis viewed the iniquities of Baghdad with horror. To this day, in the Sindhi language, ``Baghdad" means the ``limit of tyranny". Mahmud Ghazni's invasion of Sindh put an end to the rump of the Arab governors of Sindh, and thereby helped the local Rajput dynasty of the Soomras to come up. Today there is no trace of the 300-year-long Arab adventurc in India. The twin-cities of Brahmanabad and Mansurah, now known only as Brahmanabad, were so completely destroyed that according to Richardson, archaeologist, ``even twenty barrels of gunpowder under each house would not destroy it so completely."

As for Arab influence on Sindhi character, Dr. Pathan is quite sarcastic. He writes in the year of grace, 1978: ``A Sindhi is an embodiment of Arab mentality. Arrogant in leisure time, he is equally timid and cannot withstand force. Like an Arab, he takes pleasure in having as many wives as he can and maintains sexual relations with a number of women called surets (concubines). Like the Ghazwah practice of the Arabs, women are stolen

away.... Woman, therefore, is the root cause of crime and bloodshed in Sindh". He adds: "In psychological traits, a Sindhi is a brother of an Arab, being vindictive and full of deceit at all times. Like a true Arab, he is a cunning hypocrite and matchless intriguer." Dr. Pathan even goes so far as to say that "Quraishi" --- the family name of Mohammed --- in Arabic means "a sea monster", "a profiteer".

Professor Humayun Kabir had said that while the Government of India supported the Arabs against the Israelis, the people of India favoured the Israelis against the Arabs. The reason, he said, was the Arab invasion of Sindh twelve hundred years ago. He was quite right. The race memory has neither forgotten nor forgiven the Arab invasion. Even the Sindhi Muslims share this Indian resentment of the Arab aggression of long ago. Today they honour "Dahir Sen of Sindhudesh" --- and look upon Mohammed Bin Qasim as an invader.

G.M. Syed, the "Grand Old Man" of Sindh, and the moving spirit behind the "Independent Sindh" movement, is ecstatic about the bravery and statesmanship of Dahir. According to him, Dahir had even offered asylum to Hussain, the grandson of Mohammed --- married to a Sindhi girl --- who was being persecuted at home. He was on his way to Sindh when he was intercepted at Karbala in Iraq --- and killed most cruelly. The Sindhis weep for Imam Hussain --- and they weep for Raja Dahir Sen.



“Jhoolay Lal”

WHEN Mahmud Ghazni was returning from his sack of Somnath early in A.D. 1017 he had decided to take the Sindh route. Here, however, the Jats gave him so much hell that later the same year he had led a special expedition to punish the Sindhis. The ‘religious’ reason for the expedition was that Mahmud was a Sunni, attached to the Khalifa in Baghdad, and the Muslims in Sindh were inclined towards the Karmatian Shia rulers of Egypt, who had even carried away the black stone of Kaaba. The Karmatians in India were half-Hindu; they looked upon Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed and fourth Khalifa, as the tenth avatar of Vishnu!

Obviously, Mahmud's effort was not particularly successful. The contemporary writers do not even mention it. The later flattering historians, however, claim that Mahmud defeated the Sindhis in a titanic river fight in which his 1400 boats allegedly worsted the Sindhis' 4000 boats. These historians also claim that Mahmud's horoscope was identical with that of Prophet Mohammed. Which, in turn, could be quite an embarrassment for the latter!

However, historians dispute the victory claim. They point out that Mahmud's was a land army and never an amphibious force. They also point out that Mahmud had never before used boats --- and that so many boats were never found even in all the Sindh- Punjab rivers put together.

Mahmud's fans claim that the underwater spikes attached to his boats had pierced and overturned the Sindhi boats. Historians ask: how could Mahmud's spiked boats overturn the Sindhi boats, without themselves overturning in the process!

But Mahmud did seem to have succeeded in carrying away many Sindhis as slaves. Today, they are known as "Sintis" among the sixty lakh Gypsies now in Europe.

Students of history, however, do note three points: Mahmud, who had invaded India seventeen times between A.D. 1000 and 1026, did not repeat the exercise after his Sindh adventure, though he had ruled for another five years. Secondly, the Karmatians survive today as Ismaili Khojas --- who, till 1937, were governed by the Hindu civil law --- having produced in modern Sindh, important leaders such as Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Aga Khan. Thirdly,

Mahmud's attack had ended the Arab presence in Sindh and it was followed by the local Rajput clan of Soomras emerging as sovereign rulers of Sindh.

The first big Soomra name early in the eleventh century was that of Dalurai. In folklore, Dalurai was a bad man who required every new bride to spend the first night with him. God, it is believed, visited His wrath on him and destroyed "Dalurai ji Nagari". Nobody knows for sure what was this Dalurai's capital. But the local people point to every major pile of ruins in Sindh as "Dalurai ji Nagari"!

It is possible that Dalurai did indulge in "First-Night-with-the- King", an old anthropological custom surviving in some mediaeval societies. (Till modern times the bridegrooms of certain castes in Kerala looked upon the bride's bleeding caused by the tearing of the hymen as "violence", and engaged professionals to do the "dirty bloody job" for them!) Very probably the public opprobrium represents a later, higher morality. For while a couple of early sources --- known to be hostile to the Soomras, and close to their rivals, the Sahtas of Sahiti, Central Sindh --- denounce Dalurai for this practice, many other sources praise him as a great and just king.

Interestingly enough, the Alor and the Brahmanabad ruins, hundreds of miles apart, are both supposed to be "Dalurai ji Nagari". But it is now known that Brahmanabad was destroyed in an earthquake in 962, about fifty years before Dalurai; and Alor was ruined only by the shift of the river course, almost three hundred years later!

History is something more than a chronicle of events; it is also an expression of hopes and fears of the people. The story of "Dalurai ji Nagari" is people's

way of rejecting a lower morality and fostering a higher morality in men's minds.

The Soomras ruled Sindh for almost three hundred years --- until A.D. 1315. But, who were they? Some Muslim writers are inclined to think that there was at least some Arab blood in them. But scholars have no doubt that, like the Jareja Rajputs, they were Parmars. According to the Tarikh-e-Tahiri, the Soomras were Hindus. According to H.T. Sorley, the Soomras did become Muslim, but nobody knows when. They were like the Jareja Rajputs, he says, "of whom the Rao himself once averred that out of 2,000 Jarejas, there were not three who knew what their religion was". Obviously, the Soomras were Hindus with some Muslim influence, who later became nominal Muslims while retaining their Hindu culture.

At this distance in time it is no use going into the rise and fall of dozens of Soomra kings --- from Rajpal and Bhoongar and Dodo to Hamir and Nangar and Chanesar. There even was a Nehro Dodo, who saluted the commanders of Alauddin Khalji's invading force with his left hand, by way of Sindh's defiance of the Khaljis. But more revealing than the chronicles of kings are the epics of men which throw a flood of light on the life and culture of a society. As Arnold Toynbee puts it in his Study of History: "History, like the drama and the novel, grew out of mythology, a primitive form of apprehension and expression in which --- as in fairy tales listened to by children or in dreams dreamt by sophisticated adults --- the line between fact and fiction is left undrawn. It has, for example, been said of the Iliad that anyone who starts reading it as history will find that it is full of fiction but, equally, anyone who starts reading it as fiction will find that it is full of history." The same is true of the tales of Sindh which combine history with story to produce literature that reflects life intensely and reflects it whole.

The oldest extent tale of Sindh is the Rai Diyach, with its locale in lower Sindh and Saurashtra. The Samma Rajputs of Sindh had migrated to Saurashtra ("Sorath" in Sindhi) after the Arab invasion. In the first decade of the eleventh century, Rai Dewas (or Diyach), belonging to the Chuda tribe of the Sammas, was ruling in Girnar, Junagadh. His sister gave birth to a male child who, the astrologers said, would slay his maternal uncle. The mother asked her maid to dispose of the unlucky child, but the latter was so charmed by the baby's looks that she put him in a box and let it float down the river. The box was picked up by a charan (minstrel) in the territory of King Anirai and the child was named Bijal. Bijal grew up to be a great singer. At this stage, Sorath, the daughter of potter Ratna, in Girnar, was engaged to Anirai. When the marriage procession was on way, Rai Diyach intercepted it, carried away Sorath, and married her.

Anirai was furious over this humiliation. He announced a big platter of precious stones for whoever would avenge his insult and bring Rai Diyach's head. Bijal's wife, who was sure her husband could achieve anything with his bewitching voice, accepted the jewellery on promise of doing the needful. She persuaded Bijal to go and sing in front of the palace of Rai Diyach --- and when the king would ask him for "any favour", to ask for his head. That was exactly how it worked out. The king chivalrously agreed to offer his head and said: "If I had a hundred thousand heads, I'd cut them one by one for every song of yours." Shah Abdul Latif [Shrine], the Mahakavi of Sindh, has made the story immortal in his "Sur Sorath". It makes four great points: justice must be done; fate is inevitable; women have a fatal weakness for finery; and Music has more power over men than anything else.

Another incident of the same period is the story of Lila- Chanesar. Chanesar was the Soomra ruler of Devalkot near Thatta. He was happily married to Lila. Kounroo, the daughter of Rai Khengar, the Solanki ruler of Lakhpat, fell in love with Chanesar, but she could not seduce him. Thereupon Kounroo hit upon an idea. She dressed up as a maid servant and joined Lila's service. After some time she offered Lila a rare necklace, if only she would let her spend one night with Chanesar. In a fit of weakness for a rare piece of jewellery --- and hoping

that Chanesar in his cups would not be able to distinguish Kounroo from Lila -- Lila agreed. But Chanesar found it out, rejected Lila for good, and married Kounroo. The story highlights women's weakness for gold --- and for gadgets of all kinds. It also emphasizes that the Lord --- whether he be temporal or spiritual --- can not be trifled with.

Shah in his Sur Lila-Chanesar tells Lila: "What you thought was a necklace, became a stone round your neck." Lila says: "Oh God, one should never be too smart; the smart ones come to grief." Shah ends with this advice to Lila: "Oh Lila, weep no more; get up and sweep your yard, and go and sacrifice your own self, your father and your grandfather at the altar of your Lord."

However, the Sindhi epic of the period par excellence is the Umar Marui. Marui is a village belle, engaged to her kinsman, Khetsen. When the Soomra ruler Umar of Umarkot or Amarkot comes to know of her beauty, he abducts her, confines her in his fort, and invites her to marry him. Marui declines. She refuses to take any rich foods or wear any finery. She would not even oil or comb her hair. She is afraid her kinsfolk have given her up, thinking she may not like to give up the palace for the sand-dunes of the Thar desert. However, she manages to send word to her people. She then tells Umar she would like to go out for a stroll. That makes Umar think she is relaxing and relenting in her rejection of him. She then goes out and is rescued and taken home among joyous scenes.

Marui reminds us of Sita in her confinement in Lanka. Interestingly enough, both Ravana and Umar, old villains, were gentlemen enough; they did not force their will on their captive beauties.

Marui is very emphatic that she is a poor girl, in love with her desert land; that she is already engaged and will not marry any other man --- for love or money or both. Her love of her poor land and poor people almost makes us wish to go and live in a blooming desert. Her pining for her desert-home has elicited some of the most patriotic poetry in Sindhi literature.

Says Shah's Marui: "I wish I had not been born; or if I were born, I wish I had died there and then, rather than face this ignominy.... Oh Umar, don't make a laughing stock of me by making this poor girl wear those silks of yours. We are poor but we don't change our life-partners for gold. O Umar, when I die, send my body to my land [watan], where it will then come back to life...."

The Umar Marui is one long paean of patriotism. Even more, it is a plea for swadharma --- for y our own life values and life style. The Umar Marui is an abiding source of inspiration for the Sindhi nationalists today.

However, the long and memorable Soomra rule is enshrined most in the historic contest of Dodo and Chanesar. When Bhungar Rao died towards the end of the thirteenth century, the court elders had decided to crown Dodo, his younger and brighter son by his regular wife, and not Chanesar, his elder son, by an iron- smith girl. Neither half-brother was keen on the pugg (pugree, turban or crown); and Dodo even said that he would be a titular sovereign and Chanesar would be the real ruler. But even so, the formal crowning of the younger brother infuriated Chanesar's mother and wife --- even as Kekayi and Manthura had been enraged by Rama's succession --- who provoked him to seek the aid of Alauddin Khalji in Delhi. What followed was a titanic struggle between Sindh and the Khaljis in 1296--1300. A huge army descended on Sindh via Gujerat. The army was so huge, say the Sindhi bards, that "they drank the Sabarmati dry".

The Khaljis now not only wanted to replace Dodo by Chanesar; they also wanted Bhagi, Bhungar Rao's daughter by a third (regular) wife, for Alauddin. However, the Soomras would not agree to either demand. Rejecting the idea of a matrimonial alliance, they said: ``Tu Turk asee Soomra, ahri jor na jugai'' (``You are a Turk and we are Soomras; such a union will not be right''). In the fight that ensued, both sides suffered heavily. Dodo's son Bhungar Jr. and even Chanesar's son Nangar ``Nehro'', fought heroically for Dodo --- and fell. Sabar Abro, a Samma chief on the Soomra side, killed Alauddin's son Syed Ghazi Salar. When Dodo was speared and raised high, he told Chanesar standing by: ``Even now I am above you!''

Meanwhile the Khalji attack on his own land and people had induced second thoughts in Chanesar. He now began to hate Alauddin for his excesses against Sindh. He is believed to have died fighting Alauddin.

The most important aspect of this episode is that in Sindh it became a people's war. Even peasants, shepherds, cowherds, bards, faqirs, fishermen, potters and weavers joined the fray. They all said: The sword is our plough."

The Soomra ladies secretly left for the safety of Samma protection in Kutch, and Alauddin found the palace deserted. He left Sindh disgusted and disappointed.

To this day songs are sung in praise of the heroism of the Soomras and the beauty and purity of their womenfolk. Dodo's martyrdom is still observed with an annual fair in the month of Chaitra. Three-hundred-year-old ballads, still sung in Sindh, go on like this:

“Sindh is the life-breath of the Soomras.... Their Vagahkot is God's own fort; may it not suffer the slightest indignity. Oh Dodo, glory unto your mother who gave you birth. The warriors of Sindh are fighting the enemy. Oh God, give them victory....Let there always be peace and prosperity in this auspicious land....”

The Soomras gave us, even in the twentieth century, Allah Bux Soomro, the prime minister of Sindh, who resisted partition till his dying day. And dearest to the hearts of the Sindhi people are two holy figures of the Soomra times --- Jhoolay Lal and Lal Shahbaz (Red King-falcon).

Lal Shahbaz Qalandar's Shrine

Lal Shahbaz “Qalandar” [Shrine] was born Pir Usman Shah in Marwand, now Afghanistan, in 1143. He came and settled down in Sehwan, famous for its ancient Shiva temple. He is the first well-known Muslim to have preached love and tolerance in Sindh. He, therefore, became an instant hit with the Muslims and the Hindus alike. He was called Shahbaz because he was believed to have turned himself into a falcon to pick up his friend Sheikh Farid Shukur Ganj from the gallows of the fanatics. He was called “Lal” (red) for the red robe which he wore all his life. Lal Shahbaz is the first important Sufi saint in Sindh. The Hindus regarded him as the incarnation of Bhartihari, the saintly brother of King Vikramaditya, who is believed to have worshipped Shiva at the spot where Lal Shahbaz's shrine stands today.

The other holy figure is that of Jhoolay Lal, also known as Udero Lal, Amar Lal or Lal Sain. In the tenth century when Arabs were declining and the Soomras were coming up, Mirkh Shah, the fanatical ruler of Thatta, ordered the Hindus to embrace Islam. The bewildered people collected en masse on the banks of the Sindhu and prayed to Varuna Devata for a saviour. Legend has it that a handsome young man emerged from the river on a charger, showed many

miracles and saved the people from cultural genocide. He is shown in Nasarpur --- where he is believed to have been born to Rattan Rao Luhana and his wife Devaki---as a baby in a silver swing(jhoola or peengho) --- just like Lord Krishna in his childhood. Elsewhere he is shown with a flowing white beard, like Guru Nanak, but seated on the river- fruit, fish. But he was obviously a great youth leader who saved the Sindhi Hindus a thousand years ago. To this day temples are built in his honour and panjaras (five-line verses) are sung to his greater glory. And in recent years Roona Laila has made Jhoolay Lal --- and Mast Qalandar --- household names in Hindustan and Pakistan alike, with her lilting ``O Lal, Meri Pat Rakhiyo Sada Jhoolay Lalan...." Rendered in English, it reads:

OH LORD of Sindh, Jhoolay Lal, and Sire of Sehwan, the red- robed Cod-intoxicated Qalandar, glory unto you! May I always have your benign protection.

YOUR SHRINE is always lighted with four lamps; and here I come to light a fifth lamp in ycur honour.

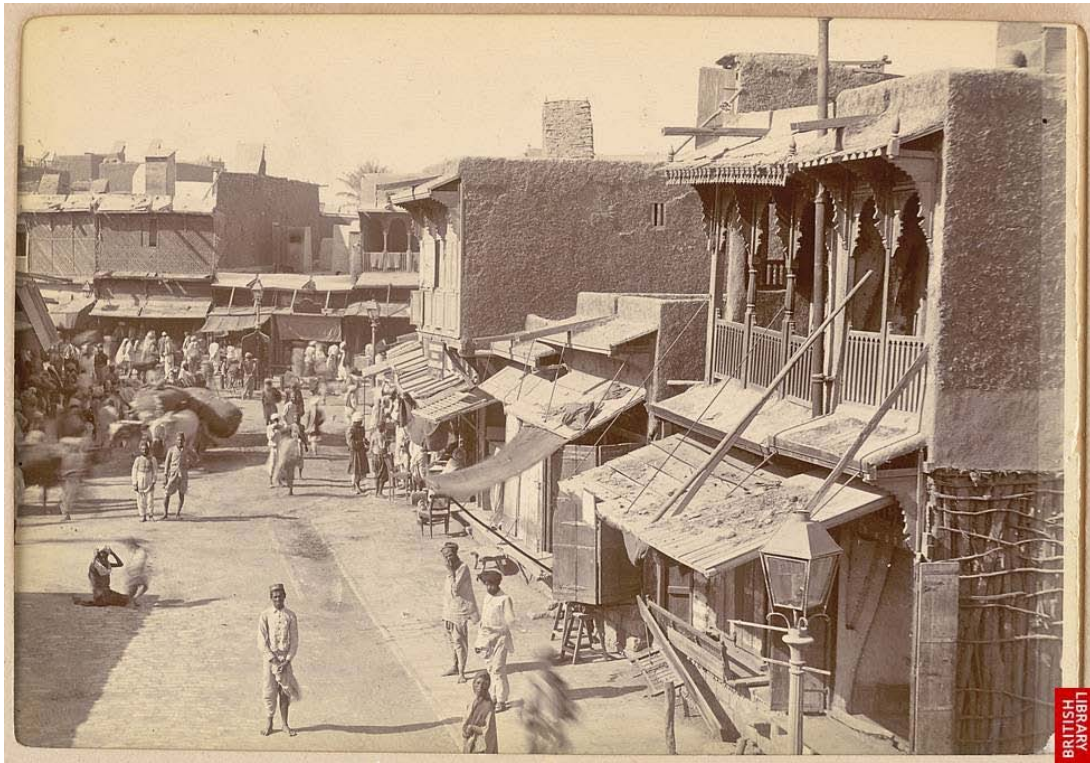
LET YOUR heroic name ring out in Hind and Sindh; let the gong ring loud for your glory.

OH LORD, may you prevail every time, everywhere. In the name of Ali, I pray to you to help my boat cross (the river of life) in safety.



Karachi: Queen of the East

ONCE THE DUST of Miani and Dabo had settled down, Prime Minister Peel and Leader of the Opposition Lord John Russell joined hands to accord Napier a unanimous Vote of Thanks in the British Parliament. Napier was also pleased to get a cash prize of 70,000 pound sterling. He now settled down for five years to implement Ellenborough's wish that "in Scinde we must do all for futurity, we have to create an Egypt". Said Napier: "if any civilized man were asked, if you were a ruler of Scinde, what would you do, his answer would be, I would abolish the tolls on the river, make Karachi a free port, make Sukkur a mart on the Indus. I would make a truckway along its banks. I would get steam-boats." And that is precisely what he started out to do, beginning with the abolition of the river tolls.



He promptly called the Baluchi jagirdars, returned them their swords, and confirmed their jagirs. As a special favour, some of them were allowed to salute the picture of Queen Victoria, which was otherwise kept covered with a curtain from the gaze of commoners and retainers. He told them: "Obey me! Do what you like --- rob, murder, anything I have not forbidden --- all things unless I have said 'No'." And this is what they did --- obeying the British and, for the rest, being quite a law unto themselves.



The common Sindhi also promptly fell in line. For him the "Laat Saheb" (the Lord) and the "Lendy Saheba" (the Lady) soon became the ultimate in authority. When summoned to the presence, they would leave their shoes outside. The first question that an Englishman would generally ask of his visitor, was: "Are you a badmash (bad character)?" And the visitor would sheepishly admit both, his rascality and his obedience, by saying: "We are sarkari badmashes." The "Wadera" --- the biggish zamindar --- the Bania, the Pir, and the "Saheb", white or brown, between them constituted the quadrangle of authority in Sindh.

Napier had promised mock-heroically to call engineers from all the three Presidencies to let the Indus waters flow into the Hindu area of Kutch via the Eastern Nara. But he soon realized that the fate of Kutch had been decided by an earthquake followed by the westward flow of the Indus --- and not by the

Kalhoras' ``Allah Bund''. He, therefore, promptly set up a Canals Department to improve old canals and to dig new ones.

In another bid to impress the Hindus, the main gate of Jama Masjid in Ghazni was brought to India as ``the looted gate of Somnath''. However, the Hindu experts soon pronounced it as not genuine.

Napier had written off all the pre-1843 dues of the peasantry. He set up Sindh Police, which became a model for all other provinces.

Napier was particularly good in the administration of justice. His instructions were: ``Take what the people call justice, not what the laws call justice." He once heard the case of the Manchhar lake fishermen for three days and then decided that they shall give only three per cent of the catch as tax. He once recalled: ``Kardars and policemen, I smash by dozens. Against all evidence, I decide in favour of the poor."

The only two discontented sections in the new set-up were the former Talpur rulers and their Hindu Amil (Kayasth) employees. The Talpurs had lost their power and the Amils, their top administrative jobs to the British. However, the Talpurs soon reconciled themselves to their jagirs and their pensions. And with the expansion of the administration and the economy, the Amils soon more than came into their own. (After Partition, Sir Patrick Cadell, a former Commissioner of Sindh, wrote to Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi, the Pakistan, Minister of Information and Broadcasting that he considered the Amils of Sindh the best of administrators, who shone in all fields. No wonder, of the fourteen Sindhis --- all Hindus --- who entered the ICS, twelve were Amils.)

All this impressed --- and was meant to impress --- the Punjab, which was now going to piece under ``Sikha-shahi" --- and getting ripe to fall into the British lap.

However, Napier was much more than the first British ruler of Sindh. He was an empire-builder with a great vision. ``What the Kohinoor is among diamonds, India is among nations Were I emperor of India for twelve years, she should be traversed by railroads and have her rivers bridged; her seat of government at Delhi or Meerut or Simla or Allahabad. No Indian Prince should exist. The Nizam should be no more heard of. Nepaul should be ours and an ague fit should become the courtly imperial (Turkish) sickness at Constantinople, while the emperor of Russia and he of China should never get their pulses below 100 !

``Would that I were King of India, I should make Muscowa and Peking shake. Were I King of England, I would, from the Palace of Delhi, thrust forth a clenched fist in the teeth of Russia and France. England's fleet should be all in the West and the Indian Army all in the East."

However, with all his qualities, Napier was more a warrior than an administrator or a builder. After he left in 1850, Sindh was attached to the Bombay Presidency, with Sir Bartle Frere as its first Commissioner. Frere was shocked to find ``not a mile of bridged or metalled road, not a masonry bridge of any kind not five miles of any cleared road, not a single Dak Bungalow, Serai, Dharamsala or district Kutchery, not a courthouse, lock- up, police station or office of any kind, no district boundaries not even a list of villages, no survey, no settlement".

Though only 35 at the time, Frere turned out to be the best administrator of Sindh during the British century. In nine brief years, 1850--1859, he quite changed the face of Sindh. In 1853 he gave Sindh its first English school. In 1858 he saw the Sindd Railway Co. start work on the Karachi-Hyderabad railway track. He got Lt. Fife, an engineer, to submit a plan that eventually found consummation in the great Sukkur Barrage, turning Sindh into a surplus province. The Barrage hurt the old inundation canals. But the general prosperity even reduced the crime rate in the province.

Frere organized a trade fair in Karachi that attracted not only all India but also Central Asia. Frere also persuaded the Viceroy to get ships coming from England to halt at Karachi, before they reached Bombay --- something the British East India Company had refused. With this, Karachi, described by Napier as "the Queen of the East", blossomed into a really great metropolis of the world. Today one of the Sindhi grouches against refugees in Sindh is that they do not even know how to pronounce the name of the great city. They call it "Kaaraachi" or "Kirainchi" --- anything but good old "Karachi".

General Jacob disciplined and developed the northern-most Sindh so well that the area was named after him as the Jacobabad district. Likewise, Parker did so well in south-east Sindh that the district of Thar was renamed Thar Parker.

Frere also decided on a script for Sindhi --- and then recognized it as the language of administration at the lower levels. Why, he even gave Sindh the honour of the first postage stamp in all India, the "Scinde District Dawk", 1852.

When the 1857 Great Revolt erupted, Sher Mohammed Khan of Mirpur Khas did give the British a good fight --- and he was blown from cannon-mouth at

Rambagh in Karachi. Next Darya Khan Jakhrani, whom Napier had tried to win over with a jagir, was expelled to Aden for his role in the Great Revolt. But, for the rest, Sindh was so peaceful that Frere had sent all the British troops to help in the north.

Frere later rose to be governor of Bombay and, later still, member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In that capacity he contributed to the formulation of high policy. Lord Lawrence's Punjab School wished to consolidate India into a homogeneous unitary state. Their slogan was: "Back to the Indus". Sir Frere's Sindh School of thought appreciated the diversity of India. They favoured a loosely knit system that could be advantageously extended to Central Asia, at any rate until India obtained a sound strategic frontier. While the Punjab School was for caution, the Sindh School favoured a Forward Policy. In 1876, Frere ordered the occupation of Quetta and posted Agents in Herat and Kandhar in Afghanistan.

Not all Commissioners were as good as Frere. One of them, G.A. Thomas, was so stiff-necked that the Sind Observer dubbed him as "God Almighty" Thomas. However, the British rule was institutional and not personal. And there was no doubt about its general direction. In the hundred-odd years the British ruled Sindh, they gave it roads and railways, canals and bridges, schools and hospitals, ideas and ideals that changed the face of the province from medieval to modern.

Napier had said: "Karachi, you will yet be the glory of the East! Would that I could come alive again to see you. Karachi, in your grandeur!" Napier would indeed have been delighted to see the glory of Karachi in just another fifty years. The first college in Sindh was set up in Karachi, though most of the students came from Hyderabad because, as Rishi Dayaram put it: "Karachi is more important than Sindh."

Sadhbela Island Temple

Rabindranath Tagore described Hyderabad as "the most fashionable city in India". Shikarpur became the banker of Central Asia --- and when revolution overtook Russia, it became the banker of southern India. The sight of the Sindhu at Sukkur --- with the island of Zindah Pir above, the island of Bakhar supporting the Lansdowne Bridge, in the middle, the Sadhbela island-temple, and the Sukkur Barrage with its seven canals below --- is one of the great sights of natural and man-made beauty in the world. Pax Britannica, with all its faults, helped the businessmen of Hyderabad and Shikarpur to bring 2.5 crore rupees annually to Sindh --- at a time when the province's annual budget was only five crores. In the words of Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi, "But for Naoomal's treachery, the Sindhi Muslims would still be riding horses and camels, and the Sindhi Hindus, donkeys and mules."

However, perhaps the greatest gifts of the British were modern education and equality for all, whether Hindu or Muslim. Under the Muslim rule, the Hindus had been forbidden to ride horses, to hold land, or to join the army. In 1843, the Hindus, who were 25 per cent of the population, did not hold even one acre of land; in 1947 they held 40 per cent of the land. Even the son of a milk-vender in Shikarpur, one Mathuradas, could become "Mathrani, ICS". When the first Sindhi --- H. K. Kripalani --- was selected for ICS, his primary school-teachers turned out to pull his carriage out of sheer joy.

However, it was not the British system by itself that produced these results. It was the excellent local response that made real what otherwise was only potential.

Among the Muslims, the Agha Khan and Mohammed Ali Jinnah, born in Sindh, made themselves famous in politics. Mirza Kalich Beg became a pillar of education, administration and literature. Hassan Ali Effendi started the madrassa in Karachi that produced what little the Sindhi Muslim middle class there was. G. M. Bhurgri became the first Sindhi barrister.

The Hindus of course produced a whole galaxy of great men, in the tradition of Gidumal, Awatrai and Naoomal. Those were the days when it took four months to sail from Karachi to Bombay. (This was hardly to be wondered at in the pre-steamship days; why, even Clive, on two of his three trips to India, had his ship drift away all the way to South America!) The first four matric students --- Chuharmal Punjabi, Navalrai Advani, Dayaram Jethmal and Kauromal Khilnani --- found it so trying that only the first one passed the examination. However, the British were understanding. They encouraged even the non-matriculates with employment. And what a name they made! Dayaram Jethmal became a leading lawyer. He helped finance D.J. Sind College --- which bears his name --- with many Hindus contributing a month's salary for the college. Navalrai founded the great school that today bears his and his brother Hiranand's name --- N.H. Academy. Kauromal (1844 --- 1916) discovered Sami's Shlokas that made the latter the third great poet of Sindh --- along with Shah and Sachal. Kauromal also presided over teachers' training and put new life in Sahiti in central Sindh.

Rishi Dayaram

Chuharmal became the first Sindhi graduate, and Tarachand, the first Sindhi doctor. Sadhu Hiranand edited the first Sindhi magazines, Sind Times and Sind Sudhar. And Kanwal Singh brought out the first Sindhi daily paper, Sindhvasi (1914). However, the greatest Sindhi of the British period --- if we leave out politics --- was Rishi Dayaram. Dayaram, son of Gidumal Shahani (not to be confused with Gidumal of Kalhora-Talpur days, who gave his name to Gidvanis) was verily the Yuga Purush of Sindh. He represented the brightest and the best of Sindh during the British period.

Dayaram (1857--1927) rose to be a great district and sessions judge. But his real work lay outside the court. In addition to helping set up D.J. Sind College, he got his brother Metharam to donate one thousand guineas to construct the huge Metharam Hostel in Karachi. His Trust donated one lakh rupees to set up D.G. National College, Hyderabad.

Dayaram helped set up the Nari Shala, where widows could spend their time reading Guru Granth Sahib and doing social work. He campaigned against the "Seven Sins against our Girls". These were: piercing their arms and face with needles for tattoo marks; not letting them go to school or play games; burdening them with long rows of ivory bangles; childhood marriage; mothers-in-law's harassment; child-motherhood; death in delivery -- followed by quick re-marriage of the man. He waged a war on dowry system (Deti-Leti), got the panchayat to fix 500 rupees as the maximum. He himself set an example when, at his daughter Rukmani's wedding feast he served only papad and sherbet (The Radha Swamis of Agra persuaded the Sindhi women to replace armfuls of ivory bangles by just one or more gold bangles.) Dayaram took three months' leave to serve the plague victims. He saved 800 orphans from the clutches of missionaries. during the same period.

D J Sind College

His father, Gidumal, spent seven years in Hardwar, studying Sanskrit. He came back and taught it to Brahmin boys in Sindh. When the boys argued that, as Brahmins, they should be seated at a higher plane than himself, a mere Amil (Kayasth), he smiled and gave them higher seats. He even gave them stipends. Son Dayaram put up a nice building for this Sanskrit Pathshala in Hyderabad.

Dayaram got 1120 rupees a month, of which he spent only 150 rupees, giving the rest in charity. He would not so much as spend a few annas on a mirror; he tied his turban before his window glass-pane. He even set up an insurance company and a provident fund and studied and encouraged homeopathy.

As a judge, Dayaram was superb. When a businessman, Seth Mewaldas of Shikarpur, committed rape, he sentenced him to seven years in jail, even though the Seth was a very popular man. Another famous case he decided was that of Huzuri. This "religious" leader was accused of murder. His defence was that he murdered his victim on Allah's orders (Alhaam). Dayaram sentenced him for life, the accused's "Alhaam" notwithstanding.

However, the most important case he decided was that of Jama Masjid of Ahmedabad. The trustees of the mosque were selling bits of land belonging to the mosque and pocketing the money. The Imam went to court. The case had gone on for 12 years. When, however, Dayaram was appointed district judge, he heard the case continuously for twelve days, studied all the Persian documents and ordered all alienated lands restored to the mosque. He had his order written, not on paper, but on cloth, for long life. Said the Imam years later: "The way Dayaram conducted the case, I felt as if the Prophet himself was sitting in the judge's chair." When Lord Curzon met Dayaram he greeted him thus: "Learned Judge, we know your abilities."

Dayaram's Life of Bahramji, Malabari, the well-known Parsi social reformer and philanthropist, carried a Foreword by no less a person than Florence Nightingale.

A deeply religious man, Dayaram spent his evenings with Bhai Kalachand and Bhai Moolchand Giani, two saintly personages. Another friend of his was Bawa

Gurpat Saheb of the Gur Mandir in Hyderabad. Dayaram could read the Gita in Sanskrit the Koran in Arabic, and the Bible in Hebrew.

At this time --- 1878 --- a great controversy rocked Sindh. Tharoo, a Hindu young man with wife and children fell in love with a Muslim girl and embraced Islam to marry her. When ``Sheikh Tharoo" lost his Muslim wife, he wished to return to his family and became a Hindu.

A Shuddhi ceremony was accordingly performed. But Showkiram Advani (father of Navalrai and Hiranand), who had succeeded Awatrai as Mukhi, refused. In vain did Awatrai, Gidumal, Bawa Gurpat Saheb argue with him. As a result the Hyderabad panchayat split. The two sides even gave themselves separate shmashans (burning ghats). The whole thing dismayed all thinking Hindus. Showkiram had four sons. Three of them died childless. The fourth, Hiranand, had three daughters, two of whom died in childhood, and the third, Lachhmi, died childless. People attributed the withering away of Showkiram's family to the displeasure of Bawa Gurpat Saheb over the ``Sheikh Tharoo" case.

Nor did Dayaram confine his public work to Sindh. He got 100 acres of land in Dharampur near Simla and set up a T.B. sanatorium there. Lord Hardinge praised the effort. He established Seva Sadan at Bandra in Bombay. He also set up Shanti Ashram Library in Amritsar in 1925 and handed it over to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, which, in its wisdom, renamed it as Guru Ramdas Library.

Dayaram toured the country and exchanged notes with Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Devendranath Tagore, Col. Olcott of the Theosophical Society, and Mahatma Hansraj and Dyal Singh Majithia in Lahore. He regularly sent

financial aid to Tagore's Santiniketan and to Jagdis Chandra Bose for his research. He set up Metharam Dharmada Trust for all his properties, in the name of his elder brother. Towards the end he observed a year of maun, (absolute) silence. During this period Gandhiji went to see him, but he begged to be excused --- and to be helped to maintain his maun vrat. He wrote to his son Kewalram Shahani on 11 October, 1927 that his diary was an experiment with truth. Three years later, when Gandhiji wrote his autobiography at the instance of Jairamdas he also titled it My Experiments with Truth. Dayaram now came to be known as a Rishi.

It was men such as these who made a small province like Sindh great --- and prepared the ground for the cultural revival and the freedom movement in Sindh.



From Brahmo Samaj to RSS

WHEN the British took over Sindh in 1843, it was little more than sandy expanses on both sides of the river, interspersed with patches of green. Karachi was a small trading town and even Hyderabad, the capital, had housing that was little more than miserable hovels. There were no great monuments. And even the Mirs' "palaces" had nothing palatial about them. Life was poor and short, even if it was not nasty and brutish.

The Sindh of 1947 was a very different affair. It was something that old-timers --- Hindus, Muslims and English alike --- remember with nostalgia. It was "beautiful as a bride", says Pir Husamuddin Rashdi. This was not the doing of only great individuals. It was the cumulative result of the winds of change that blew in from all directions.

Unfortunately the Sindhi Muslims did not get --- or did not take --- any favourable wind. The Muslim-majority separate province of Sindh became a division of the Bombay Presidency, -with its Hindu majority. Bombay officialdom treated Sindh as the Shikargah (hunting ground) during their winter visits.

The Wahabi movement with its extreme emphasis on Islamic fundamentalism did not have many takers in eclectic Sindh, which delighted in its Pirs and graves and amulets. Wahabi leader Syed Ahmed Bareilvi did come to Sindh; and he did help reorganise the Hurs as a fraternity madly devoted to their Pir in the cause of ``Deen''. But the Mirs of Sindh saw that the British were using the Syed to harass the Sikhs in their rear, in what is the North-West Frontier Province today. However, the Wahabi wars with the Sikhs did keep Ranjit Singh too pre-occupied to go and capture Shikarpur in Sindh, which had been ceded by Afghanistan to the Sikhs.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, British rule was very popular in India and Lord Ripon, the Viceroy, was particularly popular. In Banaras his carriage was pulled by the Kashi Pandits. All over the country thousands of welcome addresses were being signed by leading citizens to be presented to him. The Sindh Sabha also called a meeting in Karachi in 1881 to send him a memorandum signed by the leaders, appreciating his services. In this meeting Khan Bahadur Hassan Ali Effendi opposed the move and said a simple letter should do. Dayaram flared up and said that it would be a shame (lainat) if Sindh failed to honour Ripon like the rest of the country. An enraged Effendi walked out as he muttered ``lainat! lainat!" in resentment. The Sindh Sabha duly sent a delegation --- including Dayaram, Hiranand, Futeh Ali, etc. --- which joined other delegations in honouring Ripon at a public reception in Bombay. But Effendi did not join it; instead, he set up Sindh Madrassa for Muslim students the very next year in 1885. Although the Madrassa was born in resentment against servility to the British, it grew up as an ordinary school with no particular impact on the political or literary life of the province. Much of the time it had English headmasters. The Muslim zamindars refused to help

Muslim education; they feared that if their underlings, children went to school, they would cease to be their obedient servants!

Interestingly enough, even Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) did not have much of an impact on Sindh. The only AMU graduate who became a Sindh MLA was Mohammed Amin Khoso, who joined the Congress.

The Khilafat movement did affect Sindh much. Sheikh Abdul Majid Lilaram, Sheikh Abdul Rahim (Kripalani) and Obaidullah Sindhi (born Sikh) even got involved in the Silk Kerchief Case, inviting the Afghan King to "liberate" India. But the whole thing only earned them long terms in jail or exile. Thousands of Sindhi Muslims staged a hijrat to Afghanistan; but they too came to grief. The talk of Khalifa and Turkey did initiate them into West Asian affairs. But the Arab-Turkish animosity bewildered them. The emergence of Kamal Pasha as the saviour of Turkey thrilled them. But his war on mullahs, Arabic language and Fez cap left them cold. The anti-climax was complete when the leaders in Iran, Arabia and Turkey ridiculed the Khilafat movement and expressed themselves in favour of the freedom movement in India.

While the Muslims elsewhere in India gloried in Urdu and Iqbal, the better type of Sindhi Muslims ridiculed and rejected "Urdu" as "Phurdu". They marvelled at how Iqbal had praised Amanullah, King of Afghanistan, as also Nadir Khan, the British stooge who succeeded him. They viewed the whole thing as the limit of opportunism.

At one time conversions had provided an emotional boost to the Sindhi Muslims. But with the coming of the Hindu renaissance and the growth of the Freedom Movement, that too had stopped.

For years the Sindhi Muslims concentrated on the separation of Sindh from Bombay, to the neglect of everything else. It had been barely two years when World War II broke out, bringing in its wake political storms such as "Quit India" of the Congress and "Direct Action" of the Muslim League. The Sindhis just did not get time enough to settle down and think out their future. The Muslim peasants declared themselves "Lengi" and duly voted for the Muslim League. But their heart was not in it. Basically, they remained glued to their Pir --- and attached to their Wadera. They protected the Bania as the hen that laid the golden credit eggs for them --- and they respected the Amil Diwan for his accomplishments. The Sindhi Muslim was sound at heart, but the winds of change had left him almost unchanged. However, these winds had changed the Hindu beyond recognition.

When the British took over Sindh, Hindus were in a pretty parlous state. They held important offices as Dewans, and they made money as Seths. But even the highest Dewan and the richest Seth could be ruined by the lust of a Mir or the fatwa of a Pir. Hinduism had survived very much as Sanatan Dharma. The peregrinations of the Yogis and the pilgrimages of the laity had kept the ancient torch burning, even if not very bright. The stories of Raja Gopichand and Guru Gorakhnath gripped the people. Even Shah Abdul Latif had sung of "Vindura ja vana" (the trees of Vrindavan) and seen great virtues in "Ganjo Takar" the Bald Hillock (Ganjay mein guna ghana), which housed an ancient Kali temple. Mutts and marhis, amulets and bhabhooti, even myths and miracles, held the popular mind firm. Rohri alone was supposed to have produced "sawa lakh sant" (one and a quarter lakh of saints). And then there were any number of local saints such as Bhai Kalachand, Bhai Dalpat, Bhai Vasant, Bhai Moolchand, Paroo Shah, Lila Shah and the great Swami Bankhandi Sahib who set up Sadhbela Mandir in Sukkur in 1823. Others such as Kaka Bhagavandas (1842--1922), father of Acharya J.B. Kripalani, were beholden to Shri Nath Dwara of Udaipur. (On one occasion when a young Kripalani Cousin Jivat commented on the hard texture of the Shri Nath Dwara Ladoo Prasad, Kaka chased him with a lathi for daring to comment on the sacred Prasad.) But, with all this, the fact is that when the British took over, Hindus could neither keep an idol nor ring a bell in what passed for their "temples". The

rise of Sikh power in the Punjab did come as a moral boost to the Sindhi Hindus, who had promptly put up a few gurdwaras. But that was all.

The coming of the British opened vast new vistas. The merger with Bombay linked Sindh to Hindu India officially and intimately. Gujarati traders and Marathi and Parsi administrators came to Sindh in large numbers. The biggest school in Karachi, N.J. Government High School, was named after Narayan Jagannath, a Maharashtrian educationist. And the best school in Karachi was Sharda Mandir, a private Gujarati enterprise.

However, the old challenges to the Hindus of Sindh remained; and new ones came up. Islam had always been a challenge; and now Christianity also emerged as a challenge. My mother recalled that at the turn of the century, missionaries started visiting Amil homes to teach English to the little girls. The visiting missionaries were very nice. But the elders decided that their real objective was to convert them to Christianity. And so the girls started to hide under their string cots, to avoid their dubious benefactors.

A leading Sindhi, Parmanand Mewaram, editor of Jyot and author of English-Sindhi and Sindhi-English dictionaries, actually changed his faith.

Even more serious, however, was the challenge of modernity. Contact with Bombay, Calcutta and London had shown what a stagnant pool was Sindh. Those were the days when Sindhi women lived in purdah; you could see 12-year-old mothers. Young men roamed about the streets without any education. Holi-time was taken up with drinking; Janmashtami- time, with gambling; and filthy abuses filled the air the whole year round.

Sikhism, which had been the solace of Sindhi Hindus in the last days of the Muslim rule, did not meet these new challenges. It continued to be very popular. Thousands kept night-long vigil for Guru Nanak birthday --- something they did not do even for Janmashtami. They would go vegetarian on Gur-Parbh (Parva) days, when the Sikhs themselves take meat to ``celebrate" the occasion. However, Sikhism was not the answer to the new challenges. But an answer had to be found, if society was to survive and grow.

Nobody faced up to these challenges as boldly as Navalrai (1843-93), the son of Showkiram Nandiram Advani, Mukhi of Hyderabad. By sheer dint of ability, integrity and devotion, he rose from a clerk to be deputy collector, the highest office an Indian could hold in those days, Navalrai founded the Sikh Sabha, consisting of leading Hindus, who all had faith in Guru Nanak. At the age of 26, he paid an unannounced visit to Calcutta and met Keshub Chandra Sen. What he saw in Calcutta, heard from Keshub, and experienced in the Bharat Ashram, a community centre of the Brahmo families, answered all his questions about the reconstruction of Sindh. Navalrai returned home, the prophet of a New Sindh. The result, in the words of Rishi Dayaram, was ``the miracle of modern Sindh".

Navalrai and his friends now renamed the Sikh Sabha as the Sindh Sabha. He plunged himself heart and soul into the task of educating boys and girls. He was so thrilled with the life and teachings of the Brahmos that he built a first-class Brahmo Mandir with his own money in Hyderabad. He sent his younger brother Hiranand (1863-93) to Calcutta, where he lived much of the time with Keshub Chandra, as a member of his family.

In Calcutta, Hiranand was doubly blessed by the holy company of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who once said of him and of Vivekananda: ``Narendra belongs to a very high level. Hiranand too. How childlike his nature is! What a sweet disposition he has! I want to see him too." On another

occasion he said: "If married people develop love of God, they will not be attached to the world. Hiranand is married. What if he is? He will not be much attached to the world."

Hiranand had completed his education in Calcutta in 1883 and gone back to Sindh. But in April 1886, when Sri Ramakrishna fell seriously ill --- he died on 15 August, 1886 --- Hiranand specially visited Calcutta to see the Master. Ramakrishna was delighted to see him. He called in Narendra and said: "I want to hear you two talk." At the end of their spiritual discussion Narendra sang for Hiranand the song: "Blest indeed is the wearer of the loin-cloth."

One day during that last visit, Hiranand was massaging the Master's feet and the latter said: "Suppose you don't go to Sindh. Suppose you give up the job. Why don't you live here?" Hiranand explained: "But there is nobody else to do my work." Hiranand invited Ramakrishna to visit Sindh. Ramakrishna was pleased but he said that he was too ill --- and Sindh too far --- for that. However, Ramakrishna reminded Hiranand to send him some Sindhi pajamas for easy wear, since his dhoti tended to slip away.

The two brothers, Navalrai and Hiranand, put new life into Sindh. They started the Union Academy in Hyderabad, which later became famous after its founders' names as N.H. Academy. They started the first girls' school and got two Ghose sisters from Lucknow to teach there. Hiranand took his two daughters to Bankipore in Bihar for education under Shrimati Aghor Kamini Prakash Roy, mother of Dr. B.C. Roy, who rose to be Chief Minister of West Bengal. Special attention was paid to the teaching of Sanskrit. One of their Sanskrit students was Roopchand Bilaram who rose to be the only Indian Judicial Commissioner of Sindh.

They started a Leper Home in Karachi and an orphanage in Shikarpur.

Their campaign against child marriage even got them in a scrape. One Hundomal, a student of N. H. Academy, told his uncle, who was an official, that he would respectfully refuse to marry at that age even if his father asked him. On the basis of this, a complaint was filed with the Director of Public Instruction of Bombay that Hiranand was fostering disrespect for parents! And the DPI duly asked Hiranand for his explanation. Hiranand had to rush to Bombay. And only a word from the Sindh officials saved him from censure!

Their campaign against drinking, gambling, and abusive language also made its mark on the Sindhi society. Unfortunately the two brothers died very young --- within months of each other, in 1893. But they had infused new hope in society --- and provided it with models to multiply. When Keshub Chandra Sen was requested to visit Sindh, he said that Sindh, which had a Navalrai, did not need anybody else. Colonel Trevor, the Collector of Hyderabad, wished that Navalrai had been the Collector, and himself his clerk! And Mirza Kalich Beg, a Muslim savant of Sindh, said of Sadhu Hiranand: "He was more an angel than a human being."

Even after the demise of the Sadhu Brothers, Brahmo Pribhdas put up the Nav Vidyalaya High School and Brahmo Kundanmal put up what came to be known as the great Kundanmal Girls High School, both in Hyderabad. But the Brahmo Samaj movement was not an unqualified success in Sindh even in the days of Navalrai and Hiranand. When the Government wanted to transfer its own high school in Hyderabad to the Academy management, the people objected --- on the ground that the Brahmos were half-Christian. This impression was unfortunately reinforced when Bhawani Charan Bannerji, a Sanskrit teacher at the Academy, became a Christian in 1892.

Earlier, Sadhu Navalrai's multi-religious musical procession on the inauguration of the Brahmo Mandir in 1875, singing, among other things, "Allah-o-Akbar" and "Ya Allah il Allah", had elicited the sneer that it all sounded like Moharrum.

Divisions in the Brahmo Samaj --- Prarthana Samaj, Sadharan Samaj, etc. --- also took away the Brahmo steam. But more than these, it was its failure to combat conversions to Islam and project the power and glory of Hindu Dharma, that made the Brahmo Samaj a back-number well before Independence came.

These dual inadequacies of the Brahmo Samaj were found remedied in the Arya Samaj. When, therefore, Moorajmal, Deomal, Tharoomal and several other Amils became Muslim, and many more seemed to be on the verge of conversion, Sindhi Hindu leaders, under the guidance of Dayaram, sent urgent requests to Swami Shraddhanand in Lahore in 1893 for help.

The Punjab Arya Samaj promptly sent Pandit Lekhram Arya Musafir and Pandit Poornanand to Sindh. The two preachers did not stop at defending Hinduism; they started to ask any number, and all kind, of inconvenient questions about Islam and Christianity. The maulvis were unused to the new situation, complete with "Shastrarth" inter-religious debates. In sheer rage they got Lekhram murdered. Many other murders followed. But the message of the Arya Samaj had caught on too well to be drowned in blood. A regular tug-of-conversion-war ensued. Many Hindus, earlier converted to Islam--including the entire community of Sanjogis --- were brought back to the ancestral faith. In the process, many Muslim girls also converted and married Hindus.

In this new atmosphere the old abuse of homosexuality was also challenged and resisted. In Jacobabad, Abul Hassan, a revered local Pir, went mad after Suggu, a handsome young Hindu, who used to act female parts in local dramas. The Pir fell off a window crying "Suggu! Suggu!", while seeing a Suggu rehearsal. The death of the Pir in these circumstances so enraged some local Muslims that they engaged an assassin who shot down ten Hindus with a 12-bore gun one May evening in 1929. Nothing like that had happened in Sindh before. Even Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya arrived on the scene to see things for himself. For days the market was closed. Sukhiya, a Parsi intelligence officer, was specially deputed to inquire. (Whenever a serious Hindu-Muslim situation arose in Sindh, an Englishman or a Parsi was sent in, to handle the issue impartially.) Sukhia did unearth the conspiracy of big landlords and maulvis. But they were not touched. In their place some fake accused were prosecuted and then duly acquitted. The actual killer was never nabbed.

In Upper Sindh, many Muslims visited Harijan women, advanced loans to their families, and later converted them. The local Arya Samajists hit upon an idea: they presented pigs to those Harijan families. The sight of pigs kept the Muslims away; and the income from pigs made Harijans independent of money-lenders.

To the extent that a tit called for a tat, the Arya Samaj played a useful role in Sindh. The Arya Samajists did not put up any colleges, or many schools; but they did organize many gymnasias and Kanya Sanskrit Pathshalas. They gave the Hindus a new pride. Somehow, the Arya Samaj did not attract the classes in Sindh --- as it did in the Punjab. Its leading lights were Tarachand Gajra and Swami Krishnanand. It was not chic to be in the conversion business; but Arya Samaj did influence Sindhi Hindu masses. It was a good service well performed.

Meanwhile another movement arrived on the scene to take care of the Sindhi elite in the wake of the eclipse of the Brahmo Samaj. This was the Theosophical Society. It revived the basic Hindu thought in international idiom. This was doubly welcome to the educated Sindhi, who valued his Hinduism and who did not underrate internationalism. Stalwarts such as Jethmal Parasram and Jamshed Mehta became the pillars of Theosophy in Sindh. The Theosophical Lodges became non-denominational centres of intellectual and cultural activity. The Theosophical Society of Karachi was found to be the most active branch in the whole world. Dayaram Gidumal's son Kewalram became an active theosophist. He helped set up D.G. National College in Hyderabad, and Sarnagati, a research library in Karachi.

The universal appeal of Theosophy attracted not only Parsi leaders such as Jamshed and Kotwal but also Muslim intellectuals such as G.M. Syed, Hyderbux Jatoti and A K. Brohi. who have all been major characters on the Pakistani scene.

The theosophists also joined hands with the Hindus to checkmate Christianity. Dewan Dayaram delivered fifteen scholarly lectures on the inadequacy of Christianity. And Dr. Annie Besant appealed to the Sindhis not to change faith. The convert Parmanand's mother asked her an obviously inspired question: "You advise the Hindus not to be Christian; how is it that you have renounced Christianity and become a Hindu?" Pat came Besant's reply: "I have done so because in my previous birth I was a Brahmin."

After that nobody heard of any conversions .

A very significant movement of spiritual revival was led by Sadhu T.L. Vaswani (1879--1966). A great scholar, he taught at D.J. Sind College in Karachi and

Vidyasagar College in Calcutta. Later he was Principal of Dyal Singh College in Lahore, Victoria College in Cooch-Behar, and Mahendra College in Patiala. But more than a scholar, he was a saint. He represented India at the World Congress of Religions in Berlin in 1910. On his return journey he threw all the flattering press cuttings in the sea; he regarded them all a vanity.

His mother could not bear the thought of his renouncing the world; the farthest she could go was, not to force him to marry. However, the day she died in 1918, he gave up his silk suits, draped himself in white khadi, and resigned his princely job in Patiala. He now began to live on ten rupees a month, and lecture on religion to distinguished audiences. For years the world knew only three Indian names --- Gandhi, Tagore and Vaswani.

Vaswani set up Shakti Ashram in Rajpur near Dehra Dun, Shakti School for boys and Mira School for girls, both in Hyderabad. His poetical compositions compiled in the Nuri Granth make inspiring reading.

As Partition approached, he visited the durgah of Shah Abdul Latif. "No spot in Sindh", he said, "can be more sacred than this Bhit (sand-dune) in the desert."

After Partition, some Muslims also came to respect him as Dada Darvish. But some others could not stand a Hindu religious centre in Pakistan. When Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah died, Sadhu Vaswani offered prayers, at the end of which, as usual, "Kanaah Prasad" was distributed. But the fanatics said that he had "celebrated" the death of the Quaid-e-Azam. The sympathetic Muslim Collector of Hyderabad said that his life was too precious to be left to a fanatic's whim. On 10 November 1948 he left Sindh. Soon after, he established Mira School and College in Pune, where he was heartily welcomed by Maharshi Karve himself.

Sadhu Vaswani specially appealed to women, whom he initiated into simplicity and spirituality. Today his work is being ably carried on by his nephew, Dada Jashan Vaswani.

An unusual movement in Sindh that hit the headlines in India --- and even in Japan --- in the late nineteen-thirties was Om Mandali, now well known as the "Brahma Kumaris" organization. It was a socio-religious organization started by Dada Lekhraj Kripalani (1876--1969), who had been a jeweller in Calcutta.

The Om Mandali attracted mostly women --- and that too only those belonging to the Bhaibund business community of Hyderabad. The unmarried among them refused to marry; and the married ones gave it in writing to their husbands that the latter were free to re-marry. Meanwhile many stories --- ranging from mesmerism to merriment --- spread about the Om Mandali. Public organisations such as the Congress and the Arya Samaj denounced the Om Mandali as disturber of family peace. And Dada Lekhraj in turn denounced the Congress as "Kansa". Under pressure of Hindu public opinion, the Sindh government reluctantly banned the Om Mandali, which went to court and had the ban order quashed.

Time has proved the Om Mandali as a genuine socio-religious movement. Obviously the Bhaibund ladies were particularly drawn to it because of their greater religiousity. Another factor in the situation was the fact that their menfolk spent six months in Hyderabad and the following three years abroad, anywhere from Hong Kong round the world to Honolulu. The Om Mandali filled a vacuum in their lives.

Sindh now was a regular garden with many singing birds. The Brahmos sang their melodies in their sylvan Mandirs. The theosophists discoursed on the "Masters in Tibet". The Arya Samajists rekindled the Yagna fires after centuries of blood and ashes. Sadhu Vaswani led the Mira movement, initiating once fashionable girls into Khadi, vegetarianism and Bhakti-bhava. Sant Kanwar Ram danced as he sang "O nallay Alakh Jay bero taar munhijo" ("Oh Lord, keep my boat afloat") Vishnu Digambar enchanted the people with "Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram" during his yearly visits. Nimano Faqir spread Sachal's message of love and benediction: "Rakhien munhja Dholana aiba no pholana; nangra nimaniya ja, jeeven teeven palna" ("Oh my Lord, you are my protector, you will uphold me, whatever my faults"). And Ram Punjwani enchanted his audiences on the "Matka" from college halls to Sufi Durgahs.

However, the movement that took Sindh literally by storm was the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. It was introduced in Sindh by Rajpal Puri (1917-77) of Sialkot, who came to be lovingly called "Shriji". Before RSS, the words "Sangh", "Sangathan", and "Sanskriti" were almost unknown in Sindh. Some at first even spelt "Sangh" as "Sung". But by 1942, RSS had spread to every nook and corner of the province.

Dr. Hedgewar, founder of RSS, had laid down a target of three per cent of adult male population to be recruited to RSS in the urban centres --- the target for rural areas being one per cent. And Sindh had the unique distinction of achieving this target.

Shri Guruji's annual (1943--1947) visits to Sindh were major events in the public life of the province. Every time he visited both, Hyderabad and Karachi. He also visited Sukkur, Shikarpur and Mirpur Khas once each. During these visits he met leaders in different fields --- including Sadhu Vaswani and Ranganathananda, religious leaders; Dr. Choithram, Prof. Ghanshyam and Prof. Malkani, Congress leaders; Lalji Mehrotra, Shivrattan Mohatta, Bhai Pratap,

public-spirited businessmen; Nihchaldas Vazirani, Dr. Hemandas Wadhvani and Mukhi Gobindram, ministers; and of course leading lawyers and educationists.

During his first visit, when the train was crossing the Indus at Kotri Bridge, Shri Guruji pointed out to his private secretary, Dr. Aba Thatte, in Marathi: "Aba, Paha Sindhu"! (Aba, see the Sindhu!) Here were simple words, but they were suffused with a divine emotion, as for a long-lost mother.

Shri Gurmukh Singh was a Sikh Swayamsevak of Jacobabad. He used to wear a very big turban. In a question-answer session in Shikarpur, 1945, Gurmukh Singh said: "Guruji, you are carrying a very heavy burden on your head." Pat came Shri Guruji's happy response: "You are carrying an even heavier burden on your head." Gurmukh Singh and all others burst in- to laughter.

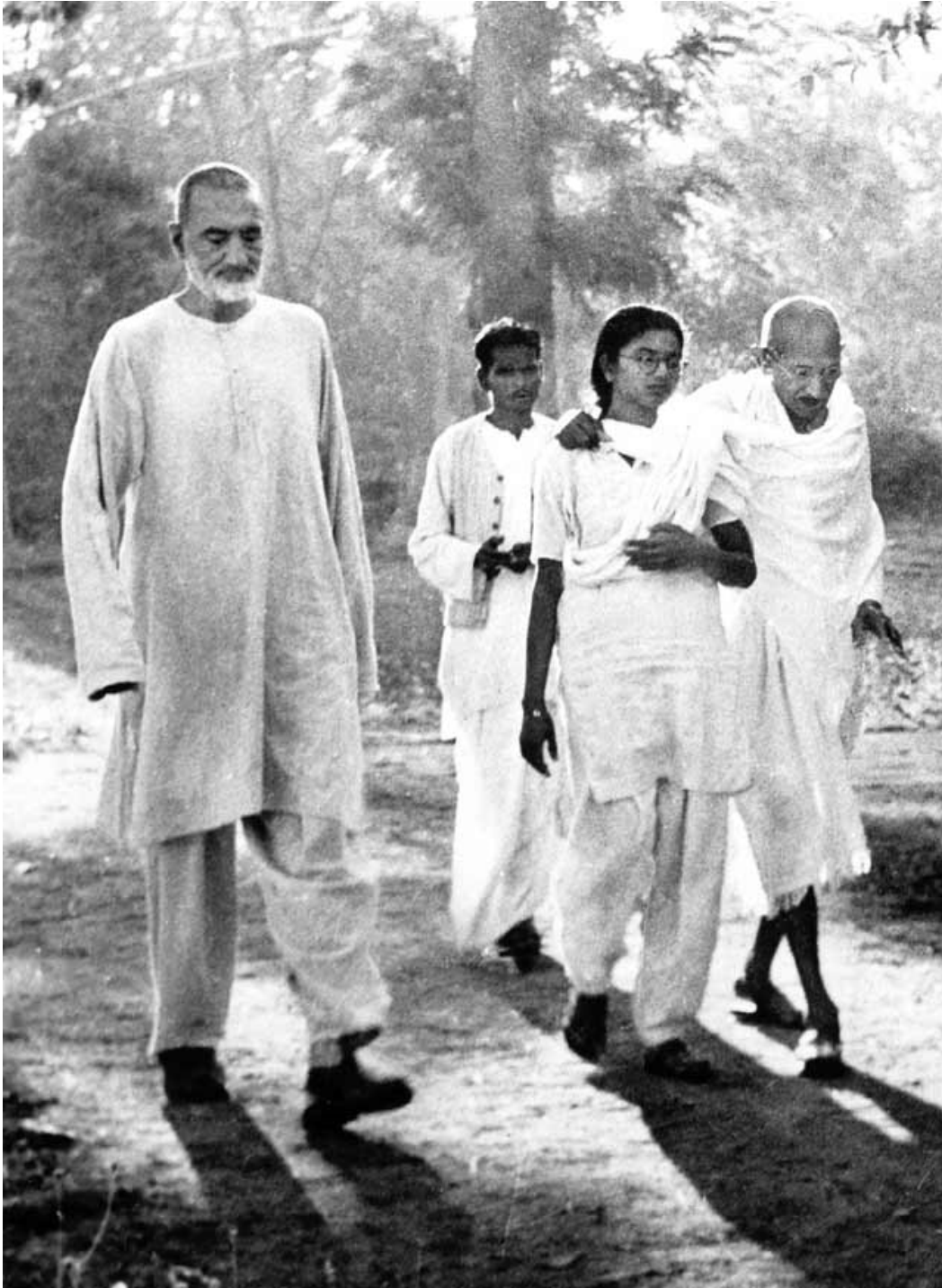
Shri Guruji's last visit to Karachi took place just nine days before Partition, that is on August 5. In a meeting with leading citizens, Shri K. Punniyah, editor, 'Sind Observer,' said: "Where is the harm if we gladly accept Partition? What is the harm, if a diseased limb is cut off? The man still lives!" Quick came the retort: "Where is the harm, if the nose is cut off? The man still lives!"

On one occasion when we went to see Shri Guruji off at the Hyderabad railway station we found a Sindh Muslim minister in the same compartment. The two were introduced to each other. Said the minister: "Sher, sher ko hi milna chahta hai" ("The lion likes to keep the company of only lions"). Thereupon Guruji laughed and said: "I am not a lion!"

RSS overcame all the earlier distinctions between the Amils and the Bhaibunds, the Hyderabadis and the non-Hyderabadis, the urbanites, the suburbanites and the ruralites, the Sanatanis and the Samajists --- whether of the Arya or the Brahmo variety. Boys of both Congress and Mahasabha families, could be seen playing together and saluting the same Bhagwa Dhwaja. RSS further Hinduized the Sindhi Hindus. Formerly 90 per cent of students used to opt for Persian; after RSS came in, 95 per cent began to opt for Sanskrit. Many even took up Hindi in place of Sindhi since, they said, they already knew Sindhi well enough. RSS politicized and radicalized the Sindhi Hindu youth. J.T. Wadhwani, president of Bharatiya Sindhu Sabha, and Hashu Advani, founder of Vivekananda Education Society of Bombay, were inducted into public life by RSS. Manhar Mehta, president of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, is a product of Sindh RSS. And a gem like Lal K. Advani is the gift of Sindh RSS to Indian public life. It was not for nothing that Janardan Thakur wrote of him in 1977 in his *All the Janata Men*.

“The man who has really helped gain a greater respectability for the Jana Sangh constituent of the Janata Party without ever projecting himself, is Lal Krishna Advani, by far the cleanest and straightest leader in Indian politics today. Clean, sophisticated, business-like, mild-looking, but firm when needed, the Minister for Information & Broadcasting is almost a freak in today's political world. Though never in the forefront, he stands bright as a candle of hope in an otherwise dark prospect.”

It was all these movements from the Brahmo Samaj down to RSS that transformed Sindh from a slimy backwater into a small but significant province. And it was these movements that provided the steam for the freedom movement.



Freedom Movement

“NADIR SHAH looted the country only once. But the British loot us every day. Every year wealth to the tune of 4.5 million dollar is being drained out, sucking

our very blood. Britain should immediately quit India." --- That's what the Sindh Times wrote on May 20, 1884, a year before the Indian National Congress was born and full 58 years before Gandhiji thought of the "Quit India" movement!

The partition of Bengal --- "Vanga Bhanga" --- triggering the Swadeshi movement, gave a great fillip to the freedom movement in Sindh, as elsewhere in the country. When Khudiram Bose was hanged in 1908, his portrait found its way into all patriotic homes. In the same year, Virumal Begraj (1874--1955) set up a swadeshi store in Sukkur, and Lokram Sharma in Hyderabad. They then held the first All-Sindh Political Conference in Sukkur.

When in 1907 Principal Jackson of D.J. Sind College of Karachi said, "You Indians are liars", leading students such as Jivat, Jawahar and Narain left the college and migrated to Baroda and Pune. Later the three of them became famous as Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Swami Govindanand and Prof. N.R. Malkani.

When in 1908 Bal Gangadhar Tilak was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, many young men began to sleep on the floor --- something unusual in a province where even beggars slept on cots.

In Shikarpur, the Pritam Dharma Sabha, set up in 1888, not only did much social reform, but also inspired the setting up of swadeshi sugar, soap, and cloth mills. The literature produced by the Sabha was considered so revolutionary that, in 1909, Seth Chetumal, Virumal Begraj and Govind Sharma were all sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment. Judge Boyde said in his order: "These young men are members of a religious organisation. Their influence on the people, therefore, will be great. Their writings and activities

are so seditious that they deserve death. But in view of their tender age I am handing out a lesser punishment."

In 1910, Acharya Kripalani, Kaka Kalelkar, Swami Govind-anand, Dr. Choithram and others set up the Brahmacharya Ashram in Hyderabad --- next to Dr. Tarachand's Hospital in East Kutch. This was not only an institution to produce patriotic young men --- through song, drama and gymnastics --- but also a forum for other patriotic activities, including shelter for revolutionaries-in-hiding. Dr. Choithram, Swami Alaram, Pandit Deendayal Vachaspati and Swami Satyadev went on a cow protection tour of Sindh singing ``Bael Saheb ko karo Salaam" (``Salute Sir Bullock!") and collected 3,000 rupees for the Brahmacharya Ashram.

Baba Gurditt Singh was carrying a prize of 40,000 rupees on his head. He had hired the Japanese ship Komagatamaru for group migration to Canada but had been refused permission to land there and had then sailed back to Calcutta where they refused to disembark. This led to firing, resulting in many deaths. Gurditt Singh himself was safely sheltered in Sindh for three years. For the same Komagatamaru incident, Govindanand was sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment.

One mid-night in 1913, a lame Muslim, complaining of severe stomach-ache, arrived in a bullock cart from Kotri, at the residence of Lokram Sharma in Hyderabad. Once in, it became clear that he was Rashbehari Bose, the famous revolutionary in disguise, who had thrown a bomb at Lord Hardinge in Chandni Chowk, Delhi in 1912. Rashbehari, Lokram Sharma, (1890--1933), and his brother Vishnu Sharma had been in the same house in Delhi on that bomb-throw day. Dr. Choithram arranged money for Rashbehari and sent him to Amritsar on way to Japan via Afghanistan.

Earlier, Shikarpur had sent a sum of 10,000 rupees to Gandhiji for his movement in South Africa. Hyderabad gave a tumultuous reception to Pandit Malaviya and presented him a welcome address in Sanskrit.

When Dr. Annie Besant became Congress President, she appointed G.M. Bhurgri (1878--1924), a leading nationalist Muslim of Sindh as general secretary of the party.

When Kripalani resigned from G B.B. College of Muzaffarpur in Bihar, he left a sum of 2,000 rupees with Prof. N.R. Malkani for assistance to revolutionaries.

Sindh now published the daily Hindu in 1919, to foster and mobilize patriotic public opinion.

Sindh repeatedly sent monetary help to Madame Cama, then labouring for Indian Independence in Paris.

At a time when Gandhiji was still addressing War ``Recruitment Melas'', Dr. Tuljaram Khilnani of Nawabshah publicly campaigned against War Loan Bonds. Sindh was then part of Bombay Presidency and Sindh Congress, part of Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. When Gandhiji sought election to AICC from Bombay PCC, the delegate from Sindh opposed his election in view of his support to the British war effort.

When Tilak visited Sindh in 1920, young men pulled his carriage; women for the first time came out of their seclusion and offered arati to him. Tilak was

overwhelmed. He wrote in his paper Kesari: "If every province had men like Dr. Choithram, we could break the chains of bondage in no time."

When Tilak died on 1 August 1920, Jairamdas and other Sindhi leaders had their heads shaved. They were afraid that the Freedom Movement would grind to a halt. They were only too delighted to see "Karmaveer" Gandhi --- as the Mahatma was then known --- carry the movement forward to new heights.

When Gandhiji gave the call to oppose the Rowlatt Act, Jethmal Parasram, an ardent theosophist, invited people to a course of suffering and sacrifice --- Kalalkay haat kusan jo kope wahay --- that earned him two years rigorous imprisonment. When the Amritsar session of the Congress was held, Sindh sent a Jallianwala Special train with delegates. When the Prince of Wales visited Karachi on 17 March 1922, not a single man from the public went to receive him; and one could not get either a cigarette or a cup of tea anywhere in the city. Karachi also made history when Bharati Krishna Tirth, the revolutionary Shankaracharya of Puri, was put up for trial along with Maulana Mohammed Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Kitchlew, in the historic Karachi Conspiracy Case in Khalikdina Hall --- from 26 September, 1921, to 4 November, 1922. Gandhiji described it as "one of the most important of all modern trials".

The administration was so flustered that it started to subsidize pro-government mullahs. And when it could not get actual mullahs, it did not hesitate to invent some. Ranjhe Khan Jamadar was asked to produce some Mullahs for the award of "Peace Medals". Being at a loss as to what to do, he submitted fictitious names of Pir Thagrial (Pir Rag-Tag) and Pir Thekrathoo (Pir Bogus). For these "services" he was duly presented to Collector Bolus --- and promoted as subedar!

The administration also turned a blind eye to dacoities --- to harass the Hindus, who were pro-Congress. When the people -protested, they were told to ``Go to Gandhi" --- and ask him to catch the dacoits.

The 1930-32 ``Satyagraha" movement was a huge success in Sindh. In town after town, people would go round, collecting foreign cloth, heaping it on donkey-backs, and then making huge bonfire of it --- RS viewers impromptu tossed their felt hats etc. into the raging fire. A penniless Muslim peasant in Jacobabad had only his saunti (thick short wooden stick) to give. It was put to auction, and it fetched 250 rupees.

Also, for the first time, Sindhi women came out of the four walls of their homes to join processions and picketing in a big way. Before long, Karachi and Hyderabad became two of the biggest storm-centres in the Bombay Presidency. Sindh then had a population of less than forty lakhs, 30 per cent of them Hindu, who alone were participating in the movement. Even so, 724 persons went to jail in 1930.

In its misconceived zeal, the Congress in Sindh even decided to boycott the census operations of 1931. One could only hope that not many people followed their census boycott programme.

In the Karachi firing that killed Dattatreya Mane and Meghraj Rewachand, even a leader like Jairamdas was shot in the thigh. The whole country was shocked. Gandhiji wired on 20 April, 1930: ``Consider Jairamdas most fortunate. Bullet wound thigh better than prison. Wound heart better still." He later wrote: ``It would exhilarate me to hear that a co-worker like Jairamdas was shot dead. I have not known anyone more pure-hearted than Jairamdas. It is with the blood of such Indians that the temple of Swaraj will be built."

At the time of the weekly inspection by the jail superintendent even a man like Jairamdas was expected to appear in only a loose langoti and say "Sarkar, Salaam!" When he refused, he was shackled and put in a solitary cell.

The shooting of Jairamdas echoed in the British Parliament, where a member asked how a leading light of the Amils, the community which was prominent in loyal government service, had also entered the Freedom Movement. The Secretary of State for India cut a sorry figure, saying that he himself was surprised. His surprise could have only increased when H.B. Shivdasani, ICS, resigned from the "Heaven-born service" in sympathy with the national movement.

Lesser leaders outside the jail were harassed to no end. The government would see to it that they got no tonga, not even a bullock-cart, to visit the villages. Sarkari goondas would be sent to disturb their meetings or even beat them up. Gandhiji took note of "the realities of repression in Sindh". He said: "I render my congratulations to them for their courage and patience under very trying circumstances. If they continue to suffer patiently and bravely, the end will be brought nearer to this unbridled and unscrupulous repression."

The AICC report on satyagraha in Sindh noted in 1932: "The province seems to be doing fairly well. Classification of prisoners in Sindh is a scandal. Even Jairamdas, AICC General Secretary, has been placed in C class --- as also 37 out of 40 women satyagrahis. Many young satyagrahis have been made to break stones. Twelve of them have been flogged with a dozen stripes each."

The 1930 movement ended in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which was followed by the Karachi session of the Congress in March 1931. It was organized in a grand

manner --- on a budget of only 90,000 rupees --- and in the course of just three weeks. Mahadev Desai grew ecstatic over "the canopy of heaven under which the Congress is meeting for the first time in its history". Gandhiji was "thankful that the Reception Committee has rent it (shamiana-top) as under and put us into direct communion with God". Built on the Takri (hillock), which now sports Jinnah's mausoleum, it was mainly organized by Jamshed Mehta, the Mayor of Karachi, and Chairman of the Reception Committee.

However, the historic Congress session was clouded by two tragedies. The British hanged Sardar Bhagat Singh and his colleagues Sukhdev and Rajguru on the eve of the session --- despite Gandhiji's best efforts to save their lives --- just to make their imperial existence felt. And when Muslims in Kanpur refused to close their shops in honour of Bhagat Singh, violence ensued. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, PCC President of the United Provinces, and editor of the Pratap, who went to quell the rioting, lost his life in the heroic effort. Gandhiji was greeted with black flags and black cloth flowers and "Go Back" slogans at every station on his way to Karachi. He actually detrained at Drigh Road, to avoid an angry crowd in Karachi proper. Gandhiji said that he would keep the black flags as an "heirloom" --- unless the demonstrators realized their mistake and asked for their return. But he begged of them not to disturb the Congress session and "not to mar the wonderful work by the workers of Sindh". After that the Karachi session of the Congress passed off peacefully. A highlight of this session was the first-time participation of the Frontier Red Shirts led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar.

The Karachi session was presided over by the redoubtable Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It was here that the Congress decided to participate in the Second Round Table Conference. The session also adopted a 20-point resolution on Fundamental Rights, promising universal adult franchise, free primary education, a living wage for all in free India.

This session also had an interesting interlude when Maulana Zafar Ali, editor of the Zamindar of Lahore, insisted that the Congress adjourn for namaz. Gandhiji refused --- conceding only that the Congress could conduct less important business during namaz time. An infuriated Maulana walked straight out to the station, where he caught the first train to Lahore.

Before and after the 1930-32 movement, the Congress was popular enough to pit a Mochi(cobbler) againsta Mukhi --- and get him elected. In the 1937 elections, the Congress had 7 MLAs in a house of 60, enough to become a balancing factor.

The 1942 movement went better in Sindh than in the Punjab and in many other provinces. It took two young valuable lives --- Hemu Kalani, caught removing rails, and Nirmal Jivtani, poet, who was flogged, and who died soon after. Prime Minister Allah Bux Soomro was so close to the Congress that he used to carry Khadi on his shoulder and hawk it from door to door. During the "Quit India" movement he offered to requisition a bungalow on Clifton --- Karachi's beautiful beach --- if enough women offered satyagraha. It was this proximity to the Congress that earned him his dismissal, followed, shortly after, by his mysterious murder. Sindh never recovered from that tragedy; and it paved the way for partition --- even though the Congress bagged 22 seats in the 1946 elections.

Such in brief was the course of the freedom movement in Sindh. Its leaders, qualitatively, were among the best in the country. Kripalani (1888--1982), the best known of them, first saw Gandhiji in Santiniketan, and was hooked to him for life. He put life in Charkha Sangha and worked longest as General Secretary of the Congress. Here was a remarkable case of front- rank leadership for sixty historic years.

Jairamdas Daulatram Alimchandani (1891 --- 1978), scholar- turned-fiery-patriot, was the most Gandhian of the Congressmen of Sindh. For some time he worked as editor of The Hindustan Times and later as General Secretary of the Congress. After Independence, Jairamdas became Governor of Bihar, Union Food Minister, Governor of Assam and editor of Complete Works of Gandhi.

Dr. Choithram (1889--1957) was a life-long public worker, who started to serve the country before the Congress was even heard of. Starting with partition of Bengal, he continued to serve the country after the partition of India. On the eve of Partition, he even organized a training camp in Chittor Fort for 40 young men --- with the help of the Maharana of Udaipur --- to help defend people in Sindh. It was he who got a reluctant Jawaharlal Nehru to agree to compensate the refugees for their property losses. Way back in 1'i24, Gandhiji wrote about him in the Young India: "Dr. Choithram has sacrificed everything and turned into a faqir, all for the cause of his country."

Acharya A.T. Gidvani (1890--1935) resigned his cushy job as principal of Ramjas College of Delhi, to work with Gandhiji on one-fifth his old emoluments. When the Congress decided to induct top leaders in public offices and Pandit Nehru became chairman of Allahabad municipality and Sardar Patel chairman of Ahmedabad municipality and Subhas Chandra Bose, Chief Officer of Calcutta Corporation, Gidvani became Chief Education Officer of Karachi Corporation. His premature death in 1935 cut off a brilliant career.

Professor Ghanshyam Shivdasani, life-long public worker, and leader of the Sindh Assembly Congress Party, 1937-47, was an embodiment of Mathew Arnold's definition of culture as "sweetness and light".

Harchandrai Vishindas Bharwani (1862--1928) was chairman of the reception committee of the Karachi session of the Congress in 1913. Here, for the first time, he voiced the demand for separation of Sindh from Bombay --- and its constitution into a separate province. He was president of Karachi Corporation during 1911-- 1920. In 1920 he was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly. Speaking about the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, he said: "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." Though on his death-bed, he left Karachi for Delhi to vote against the Simon Commission. He died in Delhi before he could cast his vote. His pall-bearers here were Motilal Nehru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpatrai and Vithalbhai Patel.

Jamshed, though not a member of the Congress, was elected on Congress ticket from Dadu in 1937. He was the maker of modern Karachi. He was the arbiter in all disputes, which were many in public life.

N.R. Malkani (1860--1974) was professor in G.B.B. College of Muzaffarpur when Gandhiji stayed with him for a few days on way to Champaran in 1917. During an evening walk Gandhiji asked him: "What next, Professor?" That was the turning point in Malkani's life. He resigned his job, joined Gujarat Vidyapeeth, later helped build up the Harijan Colony in Delhi, and later still took up constructive work in Sindh. He helped influence Allah Bux in favour of the Congress --- and even introduced the Congress, complete with its charkha, to the formidable Pir Pagaro of the Hurs.

Among the women leaders, Ganga Behn, wife of Acharya Gidvani, Kiki Behn, sister of Kripalani, Ambi Khilnani, daughter-in- law of Kauromal, and Kumari Jethi Sipahimalani played a significant role in the public life of Sindh.

During the freedom movement, national leaders were lionized all over the country. Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were particularly popular in Sindh. However, Pandit Nehru never felt particularly drawn to Sindh, even though the Sindhis adored him. As he wrote to Padmaja Naidu on 16 July 1936: "I don't know Sindh. I don't feel attracted to it." In another letter, 26 July, 1936, to Padmaja, from Nawabshah in Sindh he wrote: "The Sindhi people have their good qualities and I rather like them. But they are a curious mixture of the muslim feudal classes and the Hindu bania class, neither very admirable, as classes go. Still they have push and energy and that is something to be thankful for. They seem to be singularly devoid of any artistic sense. And the colour they sport in their striped pajamas are a trial."

In Kandiaro in 1936, the panchayat refused to present its purse to Pandit Nehru when he failed to ride through the town on horse-back, because of fatigue. Later in the evening Nehru obliged with an "Achha Bhai"(all right, friends), when the Panchayat duly come out with its welcome address and purse.

In the case of Subhas Bose, the affection was mutual. Sindh voted unanimously for his re-election --- against Pattabhi Sitaramayya as Congress President in 1938 Once when Subhas Bose was leaving Hyderabad by train, someone humorously suggested that he should marry a Sindhi girl; he could then denote the handsome dowry to the national cause. Subhas Bose said he was willing to marry if Dr. Choithram led the way. Inquiries revealed that most of those present were unmarried. Thereupon Subhas Bose said: "Let us form a party of the bachelors of India, with Choithram as president and myself as secretary. We'll call it 'Jai Hind Party'. Our object will be to sacrifice married bliss for the joy of serving the country." Obviously he had "Jai Hind" in his mind long before he founded the I.N.A.

When Subhas Bose set up INA in the Far East, his best and biggest supporters were the Sindhi businessmen there. Both Subhas Bose and Gandhiji referred to Sindhis as "World Citizens" since they are to be found everywhere.

Gandhiji of course had the sweetest of relations with Sindh and the Sindhis. He told in his prayer meeting on 27 May 1947: "Why should the Hindus of Sindh be afraid? Why should they panic? Instead of being frightened, why do they not take the name of Rama? The people of Sindh want me to go to them. I have not been to Sindh for many years but I have maintained such close relations with the people of Sindh that at one time I used to call myself a Sindhi." The relations of Gandhiji with Sindh constitute a saga by themselves.



“I am a Sindh” – Gandhi

“EVERYTHING IN INDIA attracts me. But when I first visited Sindh in 1916, it attracted me in a special way and a bond was established between the Sindhis and me that has proved capable of bearing severe strains. I have been able to deliver to the Sindhis bitter truths without being misunderstood” -- wrote Gandhiji way back in 1929.

Actually Gandhiji delivered to Sindh more sweet truths than bitter truths. And, in any case, all these truths indeed established a very warm relationship between Gandhiji and the Sindhis. He visited Sindh seven times --- in 1916, 1917, 1920, 1921, 1929, 1931, and 1934. It was “a Sindhi friend” who had helped Gandhi shift from an expensive hotel to economical lodgings when he arrived in London for his law studies. In 1893, C.L. Lachiram, a Sindhi merchant, helped him organize the Natal Indian Congress. In 1899, Barrister Gandhi successfully fought for seven Sindhi traders who were being denied

entry into South Africa. He supported the case of K. Hundamal, a silk merchant of Durban, in his articles in the Indian Opinion.

When Vishnu Sharma wrote a book on Gandhiji's satyagraha in South Africa and sent him a copy of the same, the latter acknowledged it with thanks. During his visit to Sindh in 1916, Gandhiji was presented with a welcome address artistically framed in Sindhi style. Gandhiji liked it so well that he kept it for years and showed it to visitors as an excellent example of Indian art. And it was Jairamdas who, in 1930, persuaded him to put everything else on one side and finish the autobiography, *My Experiments With Truth*.

However, the most important Sindhi leader in Gandhiji's life and work was Acharya Jivatram Bhagavandas Kripalani. Their first encounter in Santiniketan in 1915 was none too successful. Wrote Kripalani decades later: "Everything about him appeared queer and even quixotic.... I had never seen a middle-class educated man making a heavy meal of nuts, specially of such oily nuts as badams and pistas." Added the Acharya: "He was trying to know me and measure me. I too on my side was doing the same."

A few months later Gandhiji set up an ashram in Ahmedabad and sent Kripalani a copy of its rules. Kripalani found the rules "very strange" --- including the rule that husband and wife should live as brother and sister. He threw them away as "impractical".

And then one late evening in 1917, Kripalani got a telegram in Muzaffarpur from Gandhiji saying that he was arriving that night. He was on his way to Champaran to lead the indigo- growers' movement against their exploitation. Kripalani did not know what to do. As a bachelor-professor, superintending the G.B.B. College hostel, he did not have a house of his own. He, therefore,

decided to put him up with his friend and fellow- professor, N.R.Malkani. But how was Gandhi, the "great man" of the South African struggle, to be received? The hostel students decided on a welcome with arati. But where to get a coconut for a proper arati, at night? While the students hesitated, Kripalani climbed a coconut tree in the hostel compound and plucked more than one coconuts. Gandhiji was properly received -and brought to the college campus in a horse-carriage lent on the spot by a local zamindar-friend of Kripalani --- and pulled by the students, against Gandhiji's wishes.

Noted Gandhiji in his autobiography: "Acharya Kripalani, when I first met him in 1915, was already a seasoned warrior. He was then earning Rs. 400 per month but was a Brahmachari, taking only Rs. 40 for himself and sending the balance to Dr. Choithram who was conducting a Brahmacharya Ashram at Hyderabad (Sindh)." Years later, Gandhiji wrote of that Muzaffarpur meet that "since Kripalani had no rooms of his own, Prof. Malkani virtually became my host. It was an extraordinary thing in those days for Government Professors to harbour a man like me." He added that Kripalani, "though a Sindhi, was more Bihari than a born-Bihari. He was my gate-keeper- in-chief. For the time being he made it the end and aim of his life to save me from darshan-seekers. He warded off people, calling to his aid now his unfailing humour, now his non-violent threats. At nightfall, he would take up his occupation of a teacher and regale his companions with his historical studies and observations and quicken any timid visitors into bravery."

Even after this friendly encounter, the Gandhi-Kripalani relationship took some time to settle down to a happy, steady course. For example, Kripalani did not see how Independence could be won non-violently For Gandhiji, the course of Indian history had been non-violent; Kripalani thought otherwise. After some time Kripalani stopped putting questions to Gandhiji; he began to answer them himself. He now saw that India, in fact, was less violent than other countries; here, traditionally, only the professional warriors took part in fighting; in this country, children did not climb trees to destroy birds' nests;

more people were vegetarian by conviction in India than anywhere else in the world. Kripalani the revolutionary had been converted to the cult of Ahimsa!

Even when the Himsa-Ahimsa issue was sorted out, Kripalani did not accept Gandhiji as "Mahatma". He said: "There were better and greater Brahmacharis than Gandhi. I never had any spiritual discussions with him. I also did not consider him a Mahatma. He used to call me Professor and I used to call him Mr. Gandhi. After year. I called him either Bapu or Gandhiji. I rarely used the word Mahatma. As a matter of fact he resented people calling him Mahatma. ` Also Kripalani did not fancy Gandhiji's multi-religious public prayers; he thought prayer was a private affair between man and his Maker.

Kripalani supported Gandhiji's ` Khilafat" movement to the extent that the British had promised to retain the Khalifa. But he did not agree with Gandhiji that if the Muslim anger was not channelized into the non-cooperation movement, it would have led to much violence. Kripalani viewed it only as an "expediency" to get Muslim support for the freedom movement. Kripalani was sorry that Gandhiji's meeting with Jinnah in 1944 sent up the Muslim League stock. He felt that Muslims in India were more orthodox than Muslims anywhere else in the world because the Hindus were also very orthodox. And he once told me that Muslim cruelty and fanaticism could be traced to their neglect of the fine arts of music, dancing, painting and sculpture as "un-Islamic".

After a few years, as Acharya of Gujerat Vidyapeeth, Kripalani went full-time into politics and became General Secretary of the Congress for more than a decade. He was of the definite opinion that there would have been no partition if we had followed Gandhiji. Gandhiji wanted to lead another struggle to wrest freedom for united India. But many leaders were too old and tired to wait that long for office. Gandhiji then "suggested that the British Government would be more anxious to back the Congress than the Muslim League. Therefore we had

better try in that direction to checkmate Jinnah." But here again other leaders did not agree to join hands with the British and put Jinnah in his place.

Pandit Nehru even thought that the partition process would take "at least ten years" --- since the separation of Burma from India had taken that much time! Kripalani's plea for a "voluntary exchange of population" was also brushed aside.

When violence erupted in the Punjab in March 1947, the Congress asked for "administrative division" of the province. Kripalani saw in this clear seeds of partition --- and he rang up Gandhiji in Bihar to oppose the move. But, regrets Kripalani: "He was unfortunately surrounded by non-violent sadhus who did not understand politics at all. The phone was picked up by one such sadhu who insisted on my speaking to him only. What could I talk to that dunce?"

The fate of Indian unity was sealed.

Gandhiji's relations with Kripalani were not confined to public affairs. Right from the start, Gandhiji extended his interest to the whole Kripalani family. He wrote to Kripalani's father, Kaka Bhagavandas, assuring him that his grandson Girdhari was doing well in the ashram. He was always worried about the health of Kiki Behn, Acharya's only sister.

Kripalani was approaching fifty when he decided to marry Sucheta. "We had no intention but to live as companions. That is all we have been doing." But living together without formal wedlock would have only caused loose tongues to wag. However, Gandhiji would not bless the marriage. He was afraid he would lose a tried and trusted colleague like Kripalani. It was only when

Sucheta assured him that, in their marriage, he would be gaining a new hand (Sucheta's) that he gave his blessings.

Nor did he hesitate to make fun of his dear friend, the Acharya. "Kripalani was morose formerly because I thought he was not married. But even when he is married and has a very good partner in life, his mood haunts him," he wrote early in 1942.

When Gandhiji suggested Kripalani for Congress President in 1946, Syed Mahmud and Yunus --- who were staying with Nehru --- opposed. Nehru himself opposed on the ground that Kripalani had a temper. Gandhiji countered: "But how about your temper?"

That clinched the issue. Kripalani presided over the Meerut session of the Congress. It was the period of transfer of power and Gandhiji said that Kripalani was "going not only to ear a crown of thorns but also lie on a bed of thorns. It is a much more difficult place than even the Cabinet members are filling."

But within months Kripalani resigned because the Congress ministers, Nehru and Patel, would not consult the Congress President even on major issues.

Gandhiji told Sucheta on that occasion that Kripalani was going to play a bigger role in national affairs. He was right. From 1947 to 1977, Kripalani became the conscience of the country.

Gandhiji's relations with Acharya Gidvani were equally dear, except that the latter died too soon, in 1935. Gidvani resigned as principal of Ramjas College in Delhi, to head the Gujarat Vidyapeeth. Gandhiji said of him that he was "not only a scholar but, on the touch-stone of character, gold."

The Sikhs were agitating in 1923 against the deposition of the patriotic prince of Nabha. Nehru, Acharya Gidvani and K. Santhanam went to observe the scene and were arrested, sentenced, and then sent out. When the atrocities continued, Motilal wired Gidvani to go and see on the Nabha border what was happening. On one occasion not only was a satyagrahi shot dead, his child, who was being breast-fed, was also shot dead. Gidvani thereupon rushed to the scene of firing just inside the Nabha state border. He was immediately pounced upon and kept in jail for almost a year. Writes Nehru in his Autobiography: "I felt inclined to go to Nabha myself and allow the (British) Administrator to treat me as he had treated Gidvani. Loyalty to a colleague seemed to demand it. But many friends thought otherwise and dissuaded me. I took shelter behind the advice of friends and made of it a pretext to cover my own weakness."

Gandhiji noted: "He did not even wilfully cross the Nabha border. His humanity pushed him in." And when Gandhiji heard from Shrimati Gidvani after an interview that Gidvani was locked, his clothes were dirty, he looked much reduced as he had fasted for seven days," he wrote: "The whole of the civil resister rose in me and I felt like giving battle. But I realized my powerlessness and hung my head in shame. With an India cut up into warring parties and torn with Hindu-Muslim squabbles, civil resistance seems to be an impossibility. One's only comfort is that Acharya Gidvani is a brave man and well able to undergo all the suffering he may be subjected to. May God give him the strength to go through the fire!"

When Gidvani died prematurely, Gandhiji wrote: "Such servants of humanity never die. They live through their service." He collected a Gidvani Memorial Fund and built Harijan Hostel in his honour at Kheda in Gujarat.

Nor did he forget the Gidvani family. He greeted Ganga Behn as "the brave wife of a brave husband" and gave her a letter of introduction that helped her set up an insurance business and bring up her young children.

Years earlier, Gidvani had told Gandhiji not to worry about petty personal things. But Gandhiji had told him: "The personal things you call petty are of as much interest to me as Bardoli, for I have to know all about co-workers." And he had added- "Tell Ganga Behn not to forget her Gujarati!"

Gandhiji had known Prof. Malkani since his stay with him in Muzaffarpur. Malkani was teaching at Gujarat Vidyapeeth when, in 1927, under pressure from his wife and persuasion from N.V. Thadhani --- then Principal, D.G. National College, Hyderabad Sindh --- he left Ahmedabad without consulting Gandhiji.

Gandhiji was shocked into penning some of the more moving letters of his life. He wrote to Malkani on 26 June: "I do not mind what happens to the Mahavidyalaya, but I do mind what happens to a man. May God help you and me."

Gandhiji wrote to Kripalani, then principal of the Vidyapeeth on 10 July: "It (the news) nearly broke me to pieces. For I regarded Malkani to be one of my unbreakables."

And in a long letter to Principal Thadhani on 19 July he wrote: "Malkani standing at the helm of his sinking ship in Gujarat, himself starving, his wife and mother-in-law looking daggers at him, and his friends howling at him in indignation for his madness, would have been an ideal professor for your boys and a noble lesson for India."

He went on: "My life has been a witness of many such institutions (like the Vidyapeeth) arising and falling, with some of which I have myself been intimately concerned. For me, their worth has consisted in their having thrown up heroes and thus finished their task." He concluded: "I may inform you that I have not yet got over the shock. Bardoli never disturbed me; but Malkani does."

Gandhiji admired Sindh for giving so many excellent professors to the country. Referring to the Sindhi professors at the Gujarat Vidyapeeth as "the treaty made between Gujarat and Sindh", he asked the Gujarat students to go as flood relief workers to Sindh and repay "the debt to Sindh".

However, perhaps his sweetest relations were with Jairamdas. At the Amritsar session of the Congress, 1919, acute differences had arisen on the reforms resolution between Gandhiji on the one hand and Tilak, C.R. Das and Mohammed Ali on the other. Recalled Gandhiji years later: "Jairamdas, that cool-headed Sindhi, came to the rescue. He passed me a slip containing a suggestion and pleading for a compromise. I hardly knew him. Something in his eyes and face captivated me. I read the suggestion. It was good. I passed it on to Deshbandhu. 'Yes, if my party will accept it' was his response. Lokmanya said, 'I don't want to see it. If Das has approved, it is good enough for me.' Malaviyaji (who was presiding anxiously) overheard it, snatched the paper

from my hands and, amid deafening cheers, announced that a compromise had been arrived at."

When Gandhiji was launching the "Salt Satyagraha" in 1930, he wrote to Jairamdas, who was then member of the Bombay Legislative Council: "I have taken charge of the Committee for Boycott of Foreign Cloth. I must have a whole-time secretary, if that thing is to work. And I can think of nobody so suitable like you." Jairamdas immediately resigned his seat, took up the new charge, and made a tremendous success of the boycott of foreign cloth.

When some Muslims alleged that Jairamdas was communal, Gandhiji told them: "I swear by Jairamdas. Truer men I have not had the honour of meeting. He is not anti-Muslim. I decline to think of him --- or of Dr. Choithram --- as anything but pro-moter of Hindu-Muslim unity."

In 1941, when Dr. Choithram, President Sindh PCC, consulted Gandhiji on a particular issue, the latter told him: "Do as Jairamdas advises. My faith in his wisdom is a constant factor."

Nor did Gandhiji confine his interest to leaders. He never forgot that he had disappointed the people of Padidan in 1919 by falling asleep at the time. He made it a point to visit that place when he visited Sindh ten years later! And he wrote any number of letters to and about Anand Hingorani and his wife Vidya, concerning their health, work, welfare. When Vidya died and Anand started worshipping her, Gandhiji wrote to him: "Vidya was good but cannot take the place of God. I am an iconoclast. If you can forget her easily, do so. Then Vidya will rise and also you."

Gandhiji's humour infected even the Congress dames. He jokingly asked Ganga Behn Gidvani, who was doing insurance business, in 1936, to "insure" his life. She joked back: "No, I will not insure an old man like you." After a meal with Malkani, he asked Shrimati Malkani for dakshina. And she returned: "I have given Malkani to you. What more dakshina do you want?"

All this interest in individuals was not only intensely human; it was calculated to promote the causes dearest to him. And these apart from Swaraj, were Khadi and Hindi. He was delighted when Acharya Gidvani draped Guru Granth Sahib, not in the customary silk or satin, but in Khadi. This, he said, was a great example to those who draped even the Puri idols in foreign cloth.

However, Gandhiji noted in 1924 that the Sindhis did not take Khadi seriously. He found Sindh yarn "a sorry affair", with "little trace of practised spinning". Even years later he noted that "with a few honourable exceptions, they are not interested in Khadi. Want of faith is the father of an innumerable brood of doubts." He found that Kotri had only 20 Congress members, whose number would be reduced to two, if Khadi-wearing was insisted on. What surprised him most about Sindh's neglect of Khadi was that it had an abundance of cotton --- and lot of poverty. As proof of Sindh's poverty, he quoted the large number of pies he got in his collection. "Apart from Orissa, I have never found so many pies in my collection as in Sindh. In one place I found even cowries among the collection. (The old rupee had 64 paise; one paise was equal to three pies; and five cowries made one pie). This could not be attributed to miserliness. Stinginess I have never experienced in Sindh. A people who gave over Rs. 70,000 in 12 days (for the Rs. 5-lakh Lala Lajpatrai Memorial Fund) could not be considered unwilling."

Gandhiji was particularly upset when Jamshed Mehta, the mayor of Karachi and a great Congress sympathiser, moved a resolution in 1928, to rescind the earlier 1924 resolution of Karachi Corporation, prescribing Khadi uniforms for

Corporation peons and scavengers. Jamshed's argument was that during the preceding three years, the Corporation had spent one lakh rupees on Khadi, 85 per cent of which was a waste. Khadi, he said, soiled sooner and wore out faster --- and the poor chaps were entitled to only two dresses a year. Said Jamshed: "I tell you it is really a cruelty. The stuff we are now giving our peons is enough to bring tears in one's eyes."

Gandhiji wrote: "Jamshed Mehta is rightly accepted as the - truest man of Karachi. Almost every good public movement there claims him as its own.... His honesty and independence areas unquestioned as his patriotism." But Jamshed's judgement on Khadi "is very like that of a delicate lady, judging the appetite of her weather-beaten guests by her own."

Of course poor Jamshed had already withdrawn that resolution on the objection of the Congress corporators. But a few years later, Gandhiji himself adopted the argument of Jamshed --- on the subject of Harijan housing in Karachi. Replying to the Address of Welcome, he told the Karachi Corporation in 1934: "The city fathers should see to it that not a single Harijan was housed in quarters in which they themselves would not consent to live." Later he told a public meeting in Karachi: "It does not redound to Karachi's credit that a single Harijan within its limits should be compelled to live in a house which the tallest .of its citizens would not gladly occupy."

Jamshed had not been seeking anything different --- for their clothing!

During this same visit in 1934, Gandhiji met the Karachi press. When K. Punniiah, the editor of the Sind Observer asked him about -the separation of Sindh from Bombay, Gandhiji excused himself and said: "Now you are taking me out of my depths."

When asked about his impressions of Sindh, he said: "My impressions of Sindh have been very happy. I should have been happier if I could get more money." Thereupon the pressmen happily collected 30 rupees on the spot. Gandhiji said: "I do not want to rob you of what little you get. At least give me your pencils." And so Gandhiji took both 30 rupees and the pencils, amidst general laughter.

Again and again Gandhiji was asking the leaders and their wives and their children --- and whoever else would listen --- to learn and use Hindi. He even wrote to Sucheta in 1945 to ask Kripalani to "write to me in Hindi or Urdu or Sindhi. Why does he write in English? Is it because he is a 'professor'?"

And he was quite-horrified by the Sindhi custom of "Deti-Leti" (Dowry) particularly among the Amils. He told the D.J. Sind College students in 1934: "Here they try to imitate the sahibs and the Parsis. When I saw the girls during my first visit to Sindh, I wondered how there were so many Parsi girls around. Later on I came to know that they belonged to the Amil class. I was familiar with the name "Bhai-band" (the business community). But I was rather scared by the name "Amil". I wondered what kind of people they would be. When I saw the Amils I found them exactly like the Sahibs."

Gandhiji added: "The Amils of Sindh are probably the most advanced community in that province. But in spite of all their advance, there are some serious abuses of which they seem to have monopoly. Of these the custom of Deti-Leti is not the least serious.... The parents should so educate their daughters that they would refuse to marry a young man who wanted a price for marrying and would rather remain spinsters than be party to the degrading custom."

When Malkani informed him that he had spent only 2000 rupees on the wedding of his daughter Mithi, Gandhiji wrote back on 4 October, 1928:

“If it was not tragic, I should have a hearty laugh over your considering the expenses of Rs. 2,000 a little thing. Ramdas' marriage cost me probably one rupee, that is one or two coconuts and two taklis for the bride and the bridegroom, two copies of the Gita and two copies of the Bhajanavali. Rs. 2,000 in Gujerat will be considered a fairly large sum even outside the Ashram limits. I do not think that even Jamnalalji spent Rs. 20,000 over Kamala's wedding two years ago. But I know that if I measured Sindh by Gujerat footrule, it would be a hopelessly false measurement. I suppose for you it is progress from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 2,000. You will perhaps have to renounce your mother-in-law and to have a divorce from your wife. Considered from that point of view, Rs. 2,000 is perhaps not a bad; bargain.”

It was left to Hassanad Jadugar (magician) to set an example in dowry-less marriage. He gave his daughters only five Ch's: charkha (spinning wheel), chaadi (milk-churner), chakki (grinding-stone), chulha (native stove) and chaunri (metal bucket).

When Muslim League minister Khuhro was charged with the murder of Allah Bux, the former nationalist Premier, he tried to engage Jinnah to defend him. But Jinnah refused. (Incidentally, it was a Sindhi, Vasant T. Kripalani, who persuaded Jinnah to take up his last case in life --- and that too only in a city magistrate's court in Agra! --- vide. The Indian Express, 27 March 1983.) Khuhro then approached Bhulabhai Desai, who agreed. Dr. Choithram protested to Gandhiji about it. Gandhiji thereupon wrote to Bhulabhai: “I do not hesitate to request you that if after examining the papers of Khuhro's case you feel that he is -innocent, you should fight for him, but if you feel that he is

guilty, you should advise him to plead guilty or ask him to relieve you." Bhulabhai went out of the case but Khuhro was saved from the gallows by a Hindu lawyer, Dialmal. Immediately after, Mr. Wells, Sessions Judge, who had tried the case, retired prematurely in mysterious circumstances, and left for UK.

Way back in the Nineteen-Twenties, Gandhiji reported: "I have just received from Dr. Choithram the alleged facts of an attempted forcible conversion of a Hindu in Sindh. The man is said to have been done to death by his Muslim companions because he will not accept Islam. The facts are ghastly if they are true." Gandhiji referred the matter to Sir Abdullah Haroon, a Muslim leader of Sindh, who alleged suicide, promised to inquire, and then sat silent over the matter.

When violence gripped Sindh from 1939 onwards, Gandhiji raised his voice against it. He warned that "what happens in India, whether good or bad, in one part, must ultimately affect the whole of India."

His "real remedy" for the Hur menance was that the Congress MLAs should resign their seats and the Allah Bux ministry should resign and all of them should "form a Peace Brigade and fearlessly settle down among the Hurs". The Sindhis did not think it quite practicable, one MLA, Seth Sital Das, having already been shot dead. One press correspondent even wrote to Gandhiji: "Instead of asking the Sindh MLAs to resign and go to the Hurs, why should you not send a 'company' of your trained satyagrahis and try the luck of your doctrine?... Or is it your case that your satyagrahis will meet the danger only when it reaches the Ashram?"

When the Hindus complained of continued systematic violence against them in 1939, he told them to "learn the art of defending themselves". And "if they do not feel safe, and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in." He returned to the subject in January 1940 and wrote: "I have suggested hijrat. I repeat the suggestion. It is not unpractical. People do not know its value. High and mighty have been known to have resorted to it before now. The Second Book of the Old Testament is known as Exodus. It is an account of the planned flight of the Israelites. In exile they prepared for a military career. There is, therefore, nothing wrong, dishonourable or cowardly in self-imposed exile. India is a vast country. Though poor, it is well able to admit of inter-migration, specially of those who are capable, hard-working and honest."

And when in 1947 the Sindhi Hindus did begin to leave, Gandhiji wrote: "If even a single Sindhi leaves Sindh, it will be a matter of shame to Mr. Jinnah as Governor-General." He added: "The Sindh Hindus are first-class businessmen. Why are they running away to Bombay, Madras and other places? It will not be they who will be the losers, but Sindh. For they will make money for themselves, wherever they go. One finds Sindhis in South America. There is hardly any place in the world where Sindhis are not found. In South Africa they were making big money and gave of it liberally to the poor."

Although the Sindhi leaders had the sweetest of relations with Gandhiji, be it said to their credit that they did not hesitate to speak up when they thought him wrong. Jethmal Parasram described the Khilafat as "aafat" (catastrophe). And when Gandhiji asked Choithram in 1930 what Jethmal thought of the proposed "Salt Satyagraha", he told him: "Jethmal says that in 1920 you wanted freedom with balls of yarn; now you want it out of ladoos of salt." Choithram reported that Gandhiji visibly slumped at the remark.

Gopinath had shot an Englishman, Mr. De. The AICC draft resolution condemned Gopinath's action. An amendment praised Gopinath's heroism. When Gandhiji opposed the amendment, Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das walked out. Gandhiji won the point, but in view of the walk-out, he said the amendment might be taken as passed. Thereupon, Choithram stood up on a "point of order" and asked: "How can a rejected amendment be taken as passed?" Gandhiji was shaken. With tears in his eyes, he said: "Choithram, who is like a child to me, is now raising points of order with me. Today I stand alone." The point of order was drowned in the tears of Gandhiji, Choithram and Mohammed Ali, who now placed his cap at Gandhiji's feet.

When there was an attempt on the life of Lord Irwin, Gandhiji wanted the AICC to condemn it. Swami Govindanand opposed. In the vote that followed, Gandhiji won by only 38 votes in a house of about 700. Gandhiji graciously conceded: "the moral victory was with Swami Govindanand."

In the AICC meeting in October 1934, Gandhiji moved an amendment to the Congress constitution, renaming the United Provinces as "Hind", and the Central Provinces as "Mahakoshal". Dr. Choithram opposed the amendment and said that UP could not be called "Hind", which was the name of the whole country.

Shri C. Rajagopalachari supported Choithram.

Gandhiji said that he had agreed to the change only because people complained that they had no Indian name for UP. Now that there was an objection he was withdrawing his amendment. However, the members pointed out that they had no objection to CP being renamed Mahakoshal. Gandhiji accepted the new amendment and said amidst general laughter: "You seem to

grudge poor Jawaharlal, who is inside the Naini Jail. It was he who had suggested that UP should be called Hind."

During his last days, Gandhiji had P.B. Chandwani, former deputy general manager of North-Western Railway, staying with him in the Birla House. On 20 January 1948, a bomb exploded during prayer-time, and tore away a section of the compound wall of Birla House. At the end of the prayer meeting, Gandhiji said he thought it was only some military firing practice in the distance. Thereupon, Chandwani said: "Bapu, that is neither truth nor non-violence." Perhaps only a Sindhi ashram-mate could be that blunt.

When Partition came in spite of Gandhiji, he persuaded the Government of India to do everything for the refugees. He spoke to the Maharao of Kutch and got Kandla land for the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation. He told a Sindhi delegation, led by Dr. Choithram, on 30 January, 1948: "If there can be war for Kashmir, there can also be war for the rights of Sindhi Hindus in Pakistan."

Professor Malkani met him only an hour before Gandhiji was shot. Malkani had been just appointed Additional Deputy High Commissioner to organise the migration from Sindh. Gandhiji gave him a resounding blessing-pat on the back with the words: "Take out everybody. See that you are the last to come out. And tell Khuhro I want to visit Sindh to re-establish peace. Let him consult Jinnah and inform me telegraphically." When Malkani told him how the Hindus in Sindh had to wear "Jinnah Cap" and carry about an Urdu paper or Dawn to pass off as Muslims, for security reasons, he said he would mention it in his prayer meeting that evening. Alas, he died before he could visit Sindh --- or expose the excesses there!



Thrown to the Wolves

INDIA BECAME FREE; but it was a fissured freedom. In the churning of Indian humanity we had got not only the nectar of freedom but also the poison of partition. Was Pakistan inevitable? It was --- and it was not.

The over-all all-India causes of partition are well enough known. At the root of it all was history. The Hindus had an acute sense of grievance over the Muslim mayhem in India. But the Muslims on the other hand were dismayed that Islam, which had prevailed everywhere else, had been checkmated in India. In the celebrated words of poet Hali:

Woh deene Hejazi ka bebak beda
Nishan jiska aqsai alam mein pahuncha
Kiye passipar jisne saton samandar
Woh dooba dahane mein Ganga kay aakar.

(The fearless flotilla of Islam, whose flag fluttered over all the world, the ship that crossed the seven seas, came here and sank in the Ganga.)

In the eighteenth century, Hindu society stood up triumphant from Attock to Cuttack and Delhi to Deccan --- having contained the poison of the preceding centuries like a 'Nilakantha'. Islam stood tamed --- and Indianized. And then came 1761 and the defeat of the sovereign power of the Mahrattas in the Third Battle of Panipat, which opened the way to British rule in India. It also revived the Wahabis and the Waliullahs, who took Islam back to fundamentalism and greater fanaticism in hopes of an Islamic revival.

On top of all this came Gandhiji's Khilafat movement for the restoration of the Khalifa, the deposed Sultan of Turkey, as the spiritual leader of the Muslims of the world. It communalised politics and turned religious leaders into political leaders. Overnight, the mullahs became Netas (leaders). Jethmal Parasram of Sindh was only too right when he said: "Khilafat aahay aafat" ("Khilafat movement is a disaster"). By whipping up the fanaticism and extra-territoriality of Muslim Indians, the Khilafat agitation greatly widened the gulf between Hindus and Muslims.

Gandhiji did not help matters when he appealed to the religious sentiments of the Hindus also. His talk of satya (truth) and ahimsa, brahmacharya and Ramarajya struck a responsive note in the Hindu heart, but it left the Muslim cold. Many Congress meetings in Sindh ended with distribution of 'Kanh Prasad' from the neighbourhood gurdwara. After the Khilafat movement had petered out, the Congress discovered that it had only one active Muslim worker, Maulvi Mohammed Sadiq of Karachi. Later Comrade Taj Mohammed joined the Congress in Shikarpur. The Congress had only one Muslim MLA Khoso of Jacobabad, an AMU graduate. But the Jacobabad District Congress Committee office had a separate water pot (surahi) for him! No wonder they all felt that "the Congress is a Hindu movement."

Tilak was, if anything, a profounder Hindu than Gandhiji. But he had kept the struggle political, secular --- and moved the Hindus and the Muslims alike. Gandhiji heightened the struggle -- but he also divided it.

And then there was a third factor the British presence. It worked both ways.

During the Muslim rule the Hindu was kept down. When the Muslim hand was replaced by a neutral hand, things changed dramatically. The Hindu came into his own. By and large, Brahmins and Vaishyas had not converted to Islam. Their traditions of learning and trading blossomed forth into higher education and big business. Large sections of the Hindu society forged ahead, leaving the Muslims far behind.

As a perceptive observer in Sindh noted: "The offices are full of Hindus and the jails are full of Muslims." The Muslim mind, rooted in mediaevalism, and still basking in the sunset of the Mughal empire, could not comprehend the

dynamics of modernity. It reacted to the new situation by staging a riot or throwing a spanner in the freedom movement.

On the other hand, when the Hindu asked for Independence, the British booked Muslim support with many favours and then used the Muslim dissent as a veto to stall Indian independence. The Hindu now saw the Muslim as a stooge and a traitor.

This was the all-India context in which partition took place. But it also had a local Sindhi context, which only made matters worse.

The biggest single factor in Hindu-Muslim tension in Sindh was the conversions which continued even under the British rule. These incidents rocked the province and poisoned relations between the communities. The most sensational in this genre was what came to be known --- and published -- - as "The Great Sheikh Case". In 1891, Moorajmal Advani, a cousin of Showkiram Advani, the mukhi of Hyderabad Hindus, became Muslim. His three sons also became Muslim. One of them, Mewaram, invited his wife Mithi Bai with her four children --- Khushali, Nihali, Parmanand, and Hemi --- to join her. She refused. Mewaram moved the sessions judge of Hyderabad, an Englishman, under the Guardians and Wards Act, to secure the custody of the two elder children. The Hindus took it as a challenge. Showkiram's sons Navalrai and Tarachand, collected a sum of 25,000 rupees to fight the case. The Muslims reportedly collected 40,000 rupees. The Hindu case was argued by Jairamdas's father, Daulatram. The Muslims engaged Effendi, the founder of the Karachi madrasa. The fat was in the fire.

Khushali, who was only eight at the time, told the court that, for her, father had died the moment he changed his faith. She said that if the court must hand her

over to her father, it must first do her the favour of hanging her. The court ruled that it would be a crime to hand over the two girls to Mewaram. Mewaram moved the higher court but meanwhile the two girls had been married off and the court dismissed the appeal. Mewaram then brought forty camel-loads of armed Muslims to physically seize the two younger children, but the latter escaped through a back-door. Mithi Bai and her children then moved to the security of Amritsar, since the Muslims were scared of the Sikhs. Her son P.M. Advani made name as Principal of the Blind School in Karachi.

Soon after, Deomal, elder brother of Acharya Kripalani, became Sheikh Abdul Rahman. Since he did not dare become Muslim while his eldest brother, Thakurdas, was alive, he took him for a swim to the Phuleli canal with Muslim friends and had him drowned. Some time later when the widowed sister-in-law wanted to visit her mother, he escorted her out and took her to a Muslim locality. She was never heard of again. Soon after, Deomal himself became Muslim. Later he kidnapped his 12-year young brother Nanak from the school, got him converted, sent him to the Frontier. Nanak died fighting for the Turks against the Italians in 1911.

The problem with these new Muslims was that they did not like to inter-marry with the old Muslims; they therefore tried to convert more Hindus to enlarge their endogamous circle.

In 1908, Jethanand Lilaram of Thatta became Sheikh Abdul Majid. Since he was twenty plus at the time, he won the case. But advocacy of his case by Bhurgri made the latter a leader.

Maulana Taj Mohammed of Amraot near Larkana, a top Khilafat leader, converted seven thousand Hindus in the countryside. To this day Amraot preserves the list of those converts.

In 1927, Karima of Larkana with her four kids eloped with a Hindu and became Hindu. She won the case. The Muslims looted shops. The Hindus held 80 Muslims responsible --- including Khuhro, who later rose to be Premier of Sindh. All of them were acquitted. But the bitterness grew.

Bawa Harnamdas of Sadhbela, Sukkur, described the Situation aptly to Mr. Jinnah when the latter called on him at that island temple in 1930 and made an offering of Rs. 100. Mr. Jinnah asked him why there was communal tension in Sindh. And the Bawa said in Sindhi: ``Shaikh putt shaitan jo; na Hindu, na Musalman" (the new convert Sheikh is the son of satan; he is neither Hindu nor Muslim).

Tension further grew with polemics. One Nathuram wrote Islam jo itihās (History of Islam) in reply to the mulla attacks on Hindudharma. He was sentenced to eighteen months jail and 1,000 rupees fine. He appealed to the Chief Court of Sindh. Some Muslims feared he might be acquitted. And so, one Abdul Qayum stabbed him to death in open court. When Judge O'Sullivan asked Qayum why he had done it, the later said that punishment for insulting Islam must be death, not just jail. Qayum was hanged. The Government refused to hand over his body to the Muslims who, nevertheless, dug it up and took it out in procession. Those were the times --- 1934 --- when the British did not tolerate any trifling with authority. And so the outraged Commissioner of Sindh, Gibson, ordered machine- gun fire, killing sixty-four Muslims, further souring Hindu- Muslim relations.

Another complicating factor was the status of Sindh. It was part of Bombay Presidency. In those days there were only a few huge provinces. But being a distinct geographical and linguistic unit, Sindh felt neglected as a remote area. In 1913, Harchandrai Vishindas, as chairman of the Reception Committee to the Karachi session of the Congress, first raised the issue of separation of Sindh.' But when the issue was raised at the Aligarh session of the Muslim League in 1925, it was transformed from a Sindhi demand into a Muslim demand. When, however, it was suggested that the Muslim-majority Sindh may be separated from the distant Hindu-majority Bombay, and then attached to the adjoining Muslim-majority Punjab, even the Sindhi Muslims refused; they had no intention of living under the shadow of a "big brother".

The majority of the Muslims --- led by Sheikh Abdul Majid --- favoured separation. But important leaders such as Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto (father of Z.A. Bhutto) and Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah opposed it. And so, for long, did the Sindh Muslim Association, representing the Muslim elite. They were not sure of the solvency of the province; the area had a deficit of two crore rupees. And they liked being part of a big and prosperous Bombay Presidency.

Hindus were, if anything, even more divided --- with Jethmal always favouring separation, Jairamdas always opposing it, and others changing sides with time and circumstance. A separate Sindh would mean full provincial set-up and a consequential job increase, most of which would inevitably go to the Hindus because of their education. An autonomous Sindh would come into its own --- economically, culturally, and otherwise. But they were also afraid of the Muslim majority --- and what that might mean for their security.

Interestingly enough, the rest of Bombay was also in two minds on the subject: they liked it bigger --- from Jacobabad to Hubli-Dharwar; but they thoroughly disliked the block of Sindhi Muslim MLAs who always danced to the British official tune. The Nehru report of 1928 favoured separation.

After much argument, thirty leaders from both sides signed the Sindh Hindu-Muslim pact in 1928. It laid down:

1. Sindh shall be separated.
2. Hindus will have 10 per cent weightage.
3. There will be joint electorates in Sindh.
4. There will be justice and equality for all.

It is sad to say that the Sindh Hindu Conference in Sukkur failed to ratify the Agreement. Bawa Harnamdas of Sadhbela Mandir of Sukkur was too apprehensive of Muslim aggressiveness to agree to a separate Sindh. (Had the Conference met in Karachi or Hyderabad, it would very probably have confirmed the Pact.) The Hindus now said they would accept separate Sindh only if joint electorates were introduced all over the country --- which was very high-minded, but hardly realistic.

This going back of the Hindus on their word was a disaster. In the Simon Commission there was a tie on this issue, but the chairman cast his vote for separation in 1930. At the Ottawa Imperial Trade Conference in 1932, Sir Abdullah Haroon of Sindh went along with the British business interests --- and the latter promised to separate Sindh. And so Sindh was born as a separate province on 1 April, 1936 as an act of favour to the Muslims by the British.

Even so, things were quiet enough. And everybody looked to the new dispensation with hope, not unmixed with fear. Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, in his message to the "Azad Sindh" issue of Al-Wahid (16 June, 1936), a leading organ of Muslim opinion, said: "The communal situation in Sindh, Punjab and Bengal threatens to assume ugly forms. I want Sindh to have the glory of solving the Hindu-Muslim problem for the rest of India to follow." But the ensuing assembly elections dashed those hopes. The elections returned 24 of Bhutto's Ittehad Party, 6 of Ghulam Hussain's Muslim Political Party, 5 of Majid's Azad Party --- all Muslims, 9 Congressmen, 3 Europeans, 1 Labour representative (Naraindas), 1 women's representative (Jethi Sipahimalani) 11 independent Hindus.

But Sir S. N. Bhutto himself was defeated by Sheikh Abdul Majid of the Azad Party, who campaigned with the Koran on his head as proof that he was a better Muslim! The governor did not invite Khuhro, the new leader of the Ittehad Party, to form the government; he invited the old British favourite, Sir Ghulam Hussain (1878--1948), though he had the support of only five members. Once in the saddle, Sir Ghulam Hussain was able to put together the majority, like any Bhajan Lal of present-day Haryana. He won over independent Hindu MLAs by making one of them Speaker. However, early in 1938, the government fell. Meanwhile Khuhro had joined the Muslim League and the new Ittehad Party leader, Allah Bux Soomro, 38, became Premier.

Allah Bux (1900--43) was the finest Premier Sindh ever had. Though a zamindar and government contractor, he habitually wore Khadi. Immediately on entering office, he lifted the externment orders on Obaidullah Sindhi (1872--1944), a Sialkot Sikh who had become a Muslim, a leading revolutionary who had been vegetating in West Asia. (The Muslim League gave a reception in honour of Obaidullah. But when they started to chant: "Muslim ho, to Muslim League mein aao" --- If you are a Muslim, then join the Muslim League --- he walked out in protest; he was thinking in terms of a "Sindh Narbada Party".) He withdrew the magisterial powers from the Waderas. He followed the Congress line and fixed 500 rupees as minister's salary. Nominations to local

bodies were ended. The unassuming Allah Bux sat by the side of the driver, never used the official flag on the car bonnet, never accepted any receptions or parties. In the train he would use the upper berth -and let others use the more convenient lower berth. On one occasion when flood-waters threatened Shikarpur, he breached the canal to flood his own lands --- and saved the city. But above all he was non-communal and nationalist.

That was reason enough for the communal Muslims to try to topple him. A huge League conference was held in Karachi in October 1938. Here the League stalwarts roared against the Hindus, the Congress, and Allah Bux. The conference set-up was comic-opera, complete with Arab sands, date trees and horsemen in the Arab head-dress, Iqaal. They even adopted a resolution which talked of self-determination for the ``two nations'' of Hindus and Muslims. Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi felt that Mohammed Ali Jinnah was indifferent to this resolution. ``He just allowed us to use it as a hint, a threat, a political stunt." The real object was to topple Allah Bux somehow, anyhow. They got 29 Muslim MLAs to join the League. With the help of 3 European MLAs, they could have formed a government of their own. When, however, a no-confidence motion was moved, only 7 of them voted for it. And the League leader Hidayatullah himself quit the party and joined the Allah Bux ministry.

Indeed the League was so rootless in Sindh that when they announced a public meeting for Jinnah in Jacobabad, nobody turned up. Rashdi had to request his local friend Hakim Kaimuddin to ask his Hindu friends to produce an audience. The Hindus, as good friends, obliged. They even pocketed their ``Gandhi caps `` to avoid embarrassment to Jinnah; but they refused to shout ``Jinnah Saheb Zindabad'' with any gusto.

However, the League persisted in its mischief. The respected Pir of Lawari, near Badin in the Hyderabad district, had organised a local Haj for those who could not afford to visit Arabia. It had gone on since 1934. The pilgrims

gathered on Ziwal-Haj, read namaz while turning to the durgah, went to a local well renamed ``Zam Zam'', addressed the Pir as ``Khuda'' and greeted each other as ``Haji''. It gave these poor people great spiritual satisfaction. But the fanatics denounced it as un-Islamic, agitated violently, and forced Allah Bux to ban it in 1938.

Success here only whetted the League appetite. Meanwhile, under Hindu pressure, the government regularized a small unauthorized Hanuman temple on Artillery Maidan near the Sindh Secretariat and banned the Om Mandali which has since become the Brahma Kumaris organization. All this encouraged the Leaguers' belief that the government could be brow-beaten. They now mounted a big agitation to topple Allah Bux.

Manzilgah was a couple of dilapidated structures on the bank of the Sindhu in Sukkur near the Sadhbela Island Mandir of the Hindus. It had long been used as a government godown. The Muslims now claimed it to be a mosque. The Hindus opposed the claim as fake; they also feared that a mosque near Sadhbela would be used to provoke controversy and tension.

Allah Bux was on the horns of a dilemma. Ghulam Hussain before him had held Manzilgah to be government property and had refused to hand it over to the Muslims. Allah Bux sent Muslim officers to inspect the Manzilgah. They came back and reported that the original Persian inscriptions described it as an inn and that the ``mehrab'' was a later addition. But the Leaguers were determined to create trouble. From 3 October to 19 November, 1939, under the leadership of G.M. Syed, Khuhro and Sir Haroon, they forcibly occupied Manzilgah. On 1 November, 1939, Bhagat Kanwar Ram, the well-known singer-saint of Sindh, was gunned down at Ruk railway station --- and nobody was arrested. Sukkur district observed complete hartal for fifteen days. When Pamnani, MLA, said that the Pir of Bharchundi had got Kanwar Ram killed (earlier the Pir's son had

been beaten for kidnapping Hindu girls) he, too, was gunned down. The Sindh Hindus were stunned.

But worse was to follow. Word went round that killing one Hindu was equal to doing seven Haj pilgrimages. Sixty-four Hindus were killed and property worth several million was looted or burnt in the Sukkur countryside. In this violent atmosphere, G.M. Syed said on the floor of the Assembly that the Hindus shall be driven out of Sindh like the Jews from Germany --- a statement he has very much regretted since. But the damage was done.

It was a tragic situation, in which the Congress should have understood Allah Bux's dilemma. Here was a man who had presided over the All-India Azad Conference in Delhi in 1940 and said: "The Muslims as a separate nation in India on the basis of their religion, is un-Islamic." And the Congress should have understood why he had vacillated on the Manzilgah issue. As Gandhiji rightly pointed out in the Harijan (2 December, 1939), the basic problem was that self-administration was new to Sindh. "Sindh is nominally autonomous and to that extent less able to protect life and property than the preceding government. For it has never had previous training in the Police or the Military arts." But Congress joined hands with Muslim League to topple the Allah Bux ministry! (And when Khoso, the only Congress Muslim MLA, objected, he was expelled from the Party!) It was a great gift made by the Congressmen of Sindh to the Muslim League, two days before that party met in Lahore and adopted the Partition resolution on 25 March, 1940! The Muslim leaders have since freely admitted that the Manzilgah issue was a bogus ("hathradoo") agitation, staged just to topple Allah Bux.

Responsible Hindus were shocked by the short-sightedness of Sindh Congressmen. Professor N.R. Malkani wrote to Sardar Patel to do something about it. And the Sardar wrote back: "I have received your distressing letter of the 1st March 1940. Our friends of the Congress Assembly Party in Sindh have

acted in a manner which has brought discredit to the organization and to themselves . . . The Hindu Panchayat of Sukkur has, it seems, succeeded in coercing them to a line of action which they would not have taken if they had the choice or the requisite courage to stand by the principles of the Congress . . . They talk of wider interest of the country in relation to their action, while they forget that they are not serving the local, much less the wider interest."

The League ministry fell the following year and Aljah Bux came back to power. But the damage had been done. The Muslim League branches in Sindh went up from 30 to 400. During this one League year the British officers covered themselves with infamy, in serving the communal cause.

Justice Weston was appointed to inquire into the Manzilgah riots. When the Muslim Anjuman blamed the Muslim League for the violence, the judge turned on them! When the parties and the judge went to examine the Manzilgah site, Rashdi, the League "counsel", picked up Weston's shoes and kept them in the shade. Weston was thrilled. When they came out, Rashdi again took the shoes and placed them before Weston. The judge in his excess of joy forgot even elementary discretion. He now left his car and sat in Rashdi's car, as the party drove to Rohri. Rashdi writes in his memoirs that Weston even asked him that day in the car as to when the Muslims were going to claim Sadhbela. No wonder Weston in his report blamed the Hindus for the riots. This same partisan judge was now appointed to decide about the Manzilgah. And he decided that it was a mosque! The Manzilgah issue died down --- but not before it had delivered a body-blow to Hindu-Muslim amity in Sindh.

Allah Bux came back to power. But the British were now bent on seeing him out. When the "Quit India" movement started, he renounced his old title of Khan Bahadur and the new one of OBE (Order of the British Empire). He also resigned from the National Defence Council. The Governor now declared that he had no confidence in him --- the Assembly's confidence notwithstanding ---

and dismissed him! A few months later he was murdered in broad daylight, while going in a tonga in his home-town of Shikarpur. The League minister Khuhro was arraigned --- but he escaped with the benefit of doubt.

Meanwhile British partiality for the League continued. The 1946 Assembly elections returned 28 Leaguers, 22 Congressmen, 7 anti-League Muslims, and 3 Europeans were nominated. The 22 Congressmen and the 7 anti-League Muslims had formed an alliance. They were one more than the League. But the Governor, Sir Francis Mudie, installed a League ministry and asked the 3 nominated Europeans to support it!

Even then, with a Leaguer elected Speaker, the League was reduced to 29 in a house of 60. But the Governor would not call the Assembly session. On top of that, when Mir Bunde Ali Khan Talpur quit the League, the Governor sent his secretary to him, asking him to rejoin the League on promise of a ministership. When the Assembly had to be called to elect Sindh's representatives to the Constituent Assembly, the Governor adjourned the House on the very day that it was scheduled to take up the no-confidence motion. His excuse was that the Assembly, called to elect members to the Consemby, could not conduct any other business. Interestingly enough, at the same time, the British Governor of the Punjab allowed the Punjab Assembly to take up the motion of no-confidence against the non-League Khizr government, though it, too, had been called for electing representatives to the Consemby.

Later, when the Sindh Assembly session became constitutionally due, the Governor did not summon it --- because the League was by then down to 25; instead, he dissolved the Assembly, called for fresh elections and kept the Leaguers as "care-taker government". In the ensuing elections, massive rigging by the Muslim zamindars and officers, at the instance of the British higher-ups, gave the League 35 seats, as against only 2 to Nationalist Muslims. Before the election petitions could be taken up, the rigged Assembly had voted

for Pakistan!, Governor Mudie was duly rewarded for his services by being elevated from the governorship of Sindh to that of the Punjab. Pir A.M. Rashdi has aptly described Mudie as "Katikoo" (master crook). The fate of Sindh was sealed by "Quide-e-Azam Mudie" even more than by the other Quaid, Mr. Jinnah.

The Congress could have at least partly saved Sindh, but it acted like Chamberlain who had abandoned Czechoslovakia to Hitler in 1938 with the statement that it was "a far-away country about which we know little."

The Thar Parker district had a Hindu majority and the Congress should have claimed it. Indeed it had traditionally been more a part of Marwar than of Sindh. On the eve of Partition, the Sindh government promptly merged Sanghar district with Thar Parker district --- to cancel out its Hindu majority. But even then the case of Thar Parker district was on par with that of Sylhet in Assam, where the Muslim League had demanded --- and got --- part of the district, through a plebiscite.

In 1928, when there was talk of separation of Sindh from Bombay, Jodhpur State had laid claim to the Amarkot (Umarkot) area of Thar Parker district. Jodhpur's case was that Amarkot had traditionally been part of its Marwar area. The Britishers had taken the area from Jodhpur temporarily for defence purposes. However, the Sindh Congress had opposed the move.

Another area India could have got was the native Khairpur state, as big as any district. For years the Mir of Khairpur had been kept confined to a house in Pune. In the Nineteen Forties the Khairpur Dewan was Aijaz Ali of U.P. The Number Two man was Mangharam Wadhvani, Treasury Officer. Aijaz Ali had ousted Mangharam. When the transfer of power was approaching, Mangharam

met the Mir in Pune and promised to have him restored to his throne --- on condition that he removed Aijaz Ali and acceded to India. The Mir agreed. Mangharam met Mountbatten and Sardar Patel. The Mir was duly restored to his state; Aijaz Ali was sent away. The Mir was now prepared to accede to India. But Pandit Nehru declined the offer --- even as he had returned the accession papers of the Kalat state in Baluchistan.

Had New Delhi played its cards in Khairpur and Thar Parker, the frontier of India would have touched the mighty Indus. Indeed India could have asked for a plebiscite in the whole of Sindh, for the majority of Sindhis had voted against the League in the 1946 general elections. In these elections, the Muslim League got only 46.3 per cent vote in a province with a 71 per cent Muslim population. For every four votes polled by the League, three were polled by the nationalist Muslims led by G.M. Syed and Maula Bux!

In a house of sixty, ten MLAs were returned unopposed. Only one of them was a Muslim. Had polling taken place in these ten constituencies also, the League percentage of the popular vote would have come down to less than forty!

So there was a clear anti-League majority of the popular vote in Sindh. In failing to avail of all these favourable factors, the Congress did little justice to Sindh and even less to India. The Congress threw not only NWFP to the wolves --- as complained by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan; it threw Sindh also to the wolves.



Jiye Sindh

THE FATE OF SINDH was sealed in 1947. But it has been unsealing from the very first day. Sindhi Muslims were asking for partition because other Muslims were also doing so --- and because the Hindus were saying no. It seemed to be such great fun. But they had never thought of the consequences of this funny business.

It is true, the Sindhi Muslims were way behind the Hindus in education, employment, and trade. But they were coming up all the time. Moreover, they were 70 per cent of the population and a big majority in the Assembly --- and what cuts deep in politics was bound, eventually, to cut deep all-round The future of the Sindhi Muslims, therefore, was assured.

Meanwhile, in 1945 the two most respected leaders of Sindh had already resigned from the Muslim League in disgust over Jinnah's preference for the pro-British reactionaries in Muslim society. One was Sheikh Abdul Majid, who had joined the League in 1915, and edited the chief organ of Muslim opinion in Sindh, the daily Al-Wahid, and inducted stalwarts such as Khaliquzzaman of UP and Abdur Rab Nishtar of NWFP into the League. The other was G M. Syed who, as president of the provincial League, had transformed it from a sleepy little feudal outfit into a mass organization

When, therefore, Partition came, the Sindhi Muslims were not sure it was the right thing. Mohammed Ibrahim Joyo was sure it was the wrong thing. He wrote the book Save Sind --- from Pakistan. But it was too late. And when refugees from Bihar poured in, and the Sindhi Hindus began to leave, they were sure it was the wrong thing- The atmosphere in Sindh turned funereal. It was as though the rakshasa (demon) was on the prowl and he might devour anybody and anything any time. People spoke very little and in hushed tones. The Muslims were heard saying that Qiamat (end of the world) seemed to be fast approaching.

Within days Jinnah's portrait was off the Sindhi walls. When refugee Muslims wanted to kill Hindus, Sindhi Muslims refused to cooperate. Premier Khuhro himself went out, revolver in hand, to quell the riots. Indeed, the first dispute between the Sindh Government and the Pakistan Government arose when, after the sack of Karachi on 6 January, 1948, the former arrested refugee rioters and recovered looted property from them, and the Centre sided with

the rioters. The refugees were heard saying: "The Sindhi Muslims seem to be born from the urine of the Hindus."

In January, 1948, Government of India appointed Malkani as Additional Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan to organise the migration of Hindus from Sindh. But Khuhro, the Premier of Sindh, refused to let him tour the province; for, he said, he did not want the Hindus to leave. And he meant it. He was so keen on the Hindus staying on that he saw to it that even the "normal" run of dacoities did not take place. This was more than the refugee Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, could stand. Soon after, Khuhro was dismissed.

Such is the genesis of the "Jiye Sindh" ("Long Live Sindh") movement, which caused the MRD (Movement for Restoration of Democracy) to assume the form of a mass struggle in August-September 1983, when five hundred persons were killed and railway property alone worth about 150 crores of rupees destroyed. A complete rationale of this movement is to be found in G.M. Syed's books *The Past, Present and Future of Sindh*, *Sindhu Desh --- What and Why*, and *Consciousness of Sindh*, all in Sindhi. These books make revealing reading. Syed, born in 1904 and still happily with us, says that Pakistan is a folly and a crime, that refugees have ruined the country, that West Punjab has reduced Sindh to a colony and that Pakistan must die so that Sindh can live and breathe freely again. He elaborates as follows:

First the so-called Islamic State of Pakistan". It is altogether un-Islamic. There has never been an Islamic State --- and there never can be one. It is ridiculous to say that the Koran is the last word in wisdom or knowledge. And in any case there is nothing in the Koran on which you can base a modern polity --- or build a modern economy.

Muslims have been divided into various schools from the first day. There are 350 different sects of Islam. There is no provision for a Khalifa in the Koran; but a Khalifa was fabricated nevertheless --- on the model of the Pope. Religion and politics were also mixed up in Islam --- again on the model of the mediaeval Church. Christians, however, had the good sense to separate the Church from the State centuries ago. Muslims continue to mix up the two --- and muddy both.

Islamic principles are fine; but ``Arab Chhaap Islam" (``Made in Arabia Islam") has always been intolerant, aggressive and imperialist. The Arabs invaded Sindh in the name of Islam, sacked it in the name of Islam, sold 20,000 Sindhi men, women and children in slavery, again in the name of Islam. We have no use for that kind of Islam. Even tyrannical rulers such as Timur and Aurangzeb had been hailed as ``great Islamic leaders".

Also much of what passes for Islam is pre-Mohammedan Arab tribal customs. Qaaba, says Syed, is believed to be an old Shiva linga. Hajis still throw stones to kill old Arab goddesses Manaat and Laat. They run between two hills, Marru and Safaa, because that is what Ibrahim's slave-girl Hajran did in search of water when she was about to deliver a baby. These are primitive Arab customs which have nothing to do with Islam. The water of the Indus is not less holy than that of the Arab well of Zam Zam.

The people here want to be buried in Arabia for a favourable position before Allah on the Day of judgement. They do not know that some time after burial, the Arabs take out their bodies and throw them into a cave. What kind of schools and colleges can be established by people who have been burning libraries? Can the people, who have been warring on music and dancing, ever do justice to radio and television?

Pakistan is a denial of Indian geography and history. It goes against the grain of Ashoka and Akbar. In any case, if the Arabs who speak the same language and swear by the same Allah can have separate states, why cannot the Sindhis, the Punjabis, the Baluchis and the Pakhtoons have separate, sovereign states of their own? To keep them together against their wishes is to give them a common funeral.

Pakistan is a sinful state, founded on the ashes of all sound principles. It is a thieves' kitchen. It is led by kafan-chors (people who would steal even coffins). Even as a "bhangi" (scavenger) does not become "great" by being called mahtar, this randi-khana [house of (political) prostitution] does not become "holy" by just being named "Pakistan". The Sindhis do not want to have anything to do with such a state.

Next the "refugees". They have come to Pakistan not because they could not live in India. Crores of Muslims are living in India in peace and with honour. In UP, the Muslims were 13 per cent of the population but they had 45 per cent of the jobs. And yet they have come away in large numbers. They are adventurers, who want even more here than they had in India. The Hindus left vast properties in Sindh; all these have gone to the refugees. Even the Hindu properties sold to Sindhi Muslims were declared "evacuee property" and handed over to refugees. Many of these refugees had filed false claims; but all these were certified by their fellow-refugees manning the evacuee property and rehabilitation departments.

It was these refugees who had murdered and looted the Hyderabad Hindus on 26 December, 1947 and the Karachi Hindus on 6 January, 1948. When Premier Khuhro proceeded against the rioters, the refugee supremo, Liaqat Ali Khan, turned against him.

The Sindhi leaders in their goodness had invited Jinnah to set up the capital of Pakistan in Karachi. But Liaqat Ali detached Karachi from Sindh and asked the Government of Sindh itself to shift to Hyderabad. When the Sindhis asked for at least compensation for the loss of Karachi, they were told that it was a "conquered territory", for which there could be no compensation. When Khuhro protested, they just dismissed him. In his place they brought in a spineless man, Pir Illahi Bux. This puppet promptly made Urdu compulsory in Sindh.

When Syed Ali Akbar Shah, Sindh Muslim League President, led a Sindhi deputation to Liaqat Ali to urge protection for Sindhi culture, the latter remarked: "What is Sindhi culture, except driving donkeys and camels?" This same Liaqat Ali invited all the Indian Muslims to Pakistan when he said it was good enough for all the ten crore Muslims.

India drafted its constitution in three years; Pakistan under Liaqat did not do so even in six years. In view of his pro- refugee and anti-local policies, some Punjabi politicians and officials united to bump him off. Soon after partition, the Punjab, NWFP, and Baluchistan banned further entry of refugees. But refugees have been allowed to flood into Sindh all through. This is an intolerable situation.

Even in the British days an officer posted in Sindh had to learn Sindhi within six months. But now this rule has been waived. The Governor, the Chief Secretary, the Inspector-General of Police and most other senior officers in Sindh are non-Sindhis, who refuse to learn Sindhi. If the refugees settled in Sindh persist in refusing to learn Sindhi, they will deserve to be disfranchised.

In pre-partition Sindh, Hindus had come to acquire 30 lakh acres of land over a period of 100 years, and the Muslims resented that; but the refugees have grabbed 60 lakh acres in a fraction of that time.

Hundreds of crores of rupees have been gifted away or loaned to the refugees to set up industry, carry on trade, build houses. None of this is available to the Sindhis. The Sindhis have less than 3 per cent jobs in the government of Pakistan. (The joke in Pakistan is that it was established by the Sunnis, so that the Shias --- of UP etc. may rule it, for the benefit of the Ahmediyas of Qadian, who have since been proclaimed as non- Muslims.)

The refugee leaders have been obliterating old Sindhi names and substituting new ones for them. (In Karachi, the ancient Ram Bagh has been renamed Aram Bagh --- and Achal Singh Park, as Iqbal Park.) On the other hand, foreign names have not been replaced in Sindh. For example, we still have Jacobabad, named after Gen. Jacob who had conquered Sindh with Napier. However, in the Punjab, Montgomery has been named Sahiwal, and Lyallpur, Faisalabad to restore the Punjabis' self-respect.

This is an impossible state of affairs. The refugees must rediscover their roots in Krishna and Kabir, and behave themselves --- if they want to live in Sindh.

As for the Punjabis in Pakistan, the less said the better. A popular saying in Sindh is that one Punjabi is equal to two men and two Punjabis are much too many. They treat all Pakistan as their colony. Pakistan has become Punjabistan. They control the politics and the civil and military services. They are taking over more and more land, industry and trade in Pakistan. The British seem to have partitioned India to give the Punjabi Muslims all this territory for their exploitation, in appreciation of their services in the two

World Wars. To make this exploitation easier, in 1954 they forced the merger of all the four provinces into "One Unit". Since the premiers of these provinces would not agree, they were all dismissed.

As the hapless Sindhi officers were being transported en masse to Lahore, the scene reminded everybody of the Jews being taken in captivity to Babylon after the fall of Jerusalem.

At the time of the formation of One Unit, Sindh had a credit of 33 crore rupees -- and Punjab a debit of 100 crore rupees. All these finances were merged --- and Sindh was thus robbed of its surpluses.

More than ten years after Partition, the constitution of Pakistan was at last ready. All that remained was the Governor General's signature. But at this stage, this Punjabi gentleman, Ghulam Mohammed, dissolved the Constituent Assembly and installed a Bengali puppet, Mohammed Ali Bogra --- then doing duty as ambassador in Washington --- as Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The dissolution of the Consenbly was challenged in the Sindh High Court, which pronounced it unconstitutional. But the Federal Court, controlled by the Punjabis, upheld the dissolution.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a Sindhi, but he was also a puppet of Punjab. He came up by flattering Iskander Mirza and Ayub Khan. He organized lavish shikar parties for them on his vast estate. He compared Ayub to Lincoln and Lenin and said that if Shah Abdul Latif, the great Sindhi poet, were alive, he would have surely garlanded him. When Bhutto came to power, he became a terror. He branded some of his critics with red-hot irons. He took out others in

procession, with their faces painted black. He got a district and sessions judge arrested without warrant. When the Sindh Assembly declared Sindhi as the sole official language of Sindh, Bhutto had the province declared bi-lingual, giving Urdu official status in Sindh. He played into the hands of the Punjabi civil and military officers. He did nothing to right the many wrongs perpetrated on Sindh by the Punjabis and the refugees.

Although Bhutto posed as a democrat, fighting military dictatorship after 1977, he had all along been hand in glove with the top brass. As Secretary-General of Convention League. Bhutto proposed that the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police should be district party president and secretary, respectively. He was the right-hand man of Ayub until the Tashkent declaration between India and Pakistan, when Bhutto had decided to desert him, to escape the unpopularity that attended that declaration in Pakistan. Bhutto proposed to Air Marshal Asghar Khan that the two should rule together: "The programme is to rule. The people are stupid and I know how to make a fool of them. I will have the danda (lathi) in my hand and no one will be able to remove me for twenty years." He made the same proposal to Gen. Yahya Khan: "East Pakistan is no problem. We will have to kill some 20,000 people there and all will be well."

In 1977, Bhutto actually made himself Chief Martial Law Administrator. Later he appointed himself Colonel-in-Chief of the Pakistan Armoured Corps. Not even his judicial murder had erased these memories from the public mind. One reason why Zia-ul-Haq was able to get away with the postponement of elections was the feeling, shared by other parties, that the unscrupulous Bhutto must not be allowed to return to power.

The principles of distribution of Indus basin river waters between Sindh and Punjab were laid down in the various statutes and agreements since 1901. It was laid down that Sindh shall have 25 per cent of the waters of the Ravi, the

Sutlej, and the Beas, and 75 per cent of the waters of the Sindhu. These formulae were based on the fact that Sindh has less than 10 inches annual rainfall as against Punjab's more than 20 inches and it has less forest cover --- 2 per cent --- than even Arabia. When, however, One Unit was forged, this agreement was violated. The waters of the Ravi, the Sutlej, and the Beas were sold for 1,000 crore rupees from India and some other countries. And this money was not used to implement the dozen irrigation schemes earlier prepared by the Government of Sindh; it was used, instead, to dam the waters at Tarbela, Mangla, Chashma and Rawal in the Punjab, for the benefit of Punjabis.

Sui gas of Baluchistan is sold cheaper to the Punjab than to Sindh.

Punjab has an area of 55,000 square miles --- and Sindhi 54,000 square miles. In 1947, Punjab had a population density of 300 as against 80 in Sindh, 150 in NWFP, and 18 in Baluchistan. But in 1979, while the Punjab density had increased by only 33 per cent to 400, in Sindh it had more than trebled to 260 per square miles. This extraordinary increase represented the influx of the Punjabis and the refugees in Sindh.

The Sindh lands irrigated by the two post-Partition barrages at Guddu in the north and Kotri in the south --- have been allotted mostly to refugees and retired military men, most of them again Punjabis. The whole thing amounts to an internal invasion of Sindh. And when Sindh resents it all, Punjab only threatens it the more.

General Tikka Khan, as governor of East Pakistan, had said: "Pakistan is interested only in Bangla land; as for the population, it could bring people to settle there." Later he told the army men in Malir near Karachi: "We failed in

East Bengal because it was too far away; there were too many people there, and it was helped by India. If 'Sindhu Desh' raises its head, we can easily crush it because it is near at hand, not very populous, and not likely to be helped by any foreign power. We will then offer the Sindhi Pirs and Zamindars, who are fattening now, as a sacrifice (qurbani) in celebration of our victory, Jashne-e-fateh."

The Punjabis have become very aggressive. Their Iqbal only further pumped their ego when he wrote:

Khudi ko kar buland itna
ki har taqdir se pahle
Khuda banday se poochhe,
Batn teri raza kya hai

(Let your personality be so strong that before God apportions fortune, He asks you, what you would like to have.)

The Sindhi psychology is very very different. Shah Abdul Latif says:

Wag Dhani je vas,
Aun ka paana vahini?

(My string is in the hands of my Lord, I am not here on my own steam.)

Punjabi and Sindhi Khudas are as different as Punjabis and Sindhis themselves. "If the Punjabis end up in Heaven, we Sindhis would like to stay in Hell."

It was not always like this. Punjab and Sindh never invaded each other in history. This was because the mind of the Punjab was then moulded by saint-poets such as Guru Nanak, Warris Shah, Bullay Shah. It has now forgotten its real culture and destiny. In the process it has suffered badly. Because of Partition, two Indo-Pak wars had been fought on the soil of Punjab, hurting the Punjabis badly. The Punjabis also feel amputated by separation from other Punjabis, now in India; hence their keen desire to woo back the Sikhs. The Punjabi Muslims will have to recover their heritage of Nanak-Warris- Bulay Shah, to be at peace with themselves and with others.

As for the state of Pakistan, Sindh rejects it wholly. Sindh has always been there, Pakistan is a passing show. Sindh is a fact, Pakistan is a fiction. Sindhis are a nation, but Muslims are not a nation. Sindhi language is 2,000 years old, Urdu is only 250 years old. Sindhi has 52 letters, Urdu has only 26. The enslavement of Sindh by the Punjab in the name of "Pakistan" and "Islam" is a fraud. It is the most serious crisis in the history of Sindh in the past 2,000 years.

The Sindhis have long been fooled in the name of Islam. Many of them tried to trace their ancestry to Persian, Turkish and Arab families. Some of them could be heard singing their desire to sweep the streets of Mecca and to die in Medina. "Under the impact of foreign Muslim rule, even a foreign sparrow

came to be regarded a nightingale in Sindh." Now they realize that all this is folly. "Only a fool dances to other people's tunes."

They had thought that the "Islamic state of Pakistan" would be good for them. But it had been a disaster. "We are reminded of the animal which went to get some horns, and returned with its ears chopped off."

"Sindh rejects the Arabian edition of Islam, it rejects the Punjabi version of Pakistan, and it rejects made-in-India Urdu. Iqbal and Jinnah have been worse disasters for Indian Muslims than Chenghiz and Halaku. Sindh rejects them both." When Pakistan celebrated Jinnah centenary, lakhs of posters appeared in Sindh denouncing the Quaid-e-Azam as Qadu Hajam (Silly Barber), Qatil-e-Azam (Great Murderer), Kafir-e-Azam (the Great Heathen), and Ghadar-i-Sindh (Traitor to Sindh).

Many Muslims look upon Iqbal as the prophet and poet of Pakistan, who enunciated the theory of partition in his presidential address at the Allahabad session of the Muslim League in 1930. But Sindhi nationalists look upon him as a Punjabi chauvinist and British stooge. They point out that when the Muslims were agitated over the British attack on Turkey during World War I, Iqbal had sung: "I offer my head in the war, please accept this humble gift from a loyal subject." In 1923, when others were returning their titles over the British excesses, Iqbal agreed to be knighted. The Muslim League split into two in 1928 over its attitude to the Simon Commission. The nationalist section led by Jinnah and Saifuddin Kitchlew met in Calcutta and denounced the commission; the pro-British section, led by Mohammed Shafi and Iqbal, met in Lahore and welcomed the all-white Simon Commission.

Iqbal was a great admirer of Amanullah, the progressive king of Afghanistan. But when the British dethroned Amanullah and enthroned puppet Nadir Khan, Iqbal was all praise for Nadir too!

The Sheriff of Mecca was a nationalist. The British replaced him by a pliable Saud as the keeper of Islam's holies. This gentleman in his Wahabi fundamentalism, demolished many ancient tombs, including those of Mohammed's family members. Muslims all over the world were shocked. But Iqbal hailed Saud as ``the best ruler in Asia".

When Bhopal sanctioned Iqbal a monthly allowance of 500 rupees, the Nawab became ``the star of Islam". Nehru had refused to meet Mussolini; Iqbal not only met him but announced that Islam tallied with fascism. Iqbal himself admitted that he had come out in support of Pakistan because ``Lord Lothian, Under Secretary of State for India, assured me that India would be partitioned." For all these reasons, the Sindhis reject Iqbal. When, therefore, Pakistan observed Iqbal Centenary, Sindh countered it by celebrating the anniversary of its poet-saint Latif in every nook and corner of the province.

The Sindhis point out that Sindh is bigger than Belgium Denmark and Switzerland, all put together.

Sindh takes pride in its heritage from mooanjo-daro to Dahir to Dodo Soomro to Allah Bux --- something tabooed by the establishment in Pakistan. Sindh wonders why it cannot glorify its pre-Islamic heritage, when Firdausi, the national poet of Iran, had glorified ancient Iranian heroes and ridiculed the Arabs as barbarians.

Pakistan celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of the pre-Islamic Cyrus of Iran for a whole week; why does it not celebrate Maharaja Dahir Sen, the pre-Islamic hero of Sindh?

Dance and music are natural to a normal man. The one and only statuette unearthed at Mooanjo-daro is that of a dancing girl. Syed thinks that even Kathakali and Manipuri dances originated in Sindh. It is stupid, he says, to reject dancing as In-Islamic.

For centuries, Muslim spiritual seekers in Sindh went with Yogis and Avadhoots on pilgrimage to Porbandar and Hinglaj. They were interested in truth and self-realization, and not in hatred and violence. It is stupid to cancel Diwali, Dussehra, Janmashtami, Nanak Jayanti and Christmas as holidays in Pakistan.

Since Pakistan will never allow Sindh --- and NWFP and Baluchistan --- to live its own life and come into its own, Pakistan has got to go. ``A Sufi Sindh and an Islamic Pakistan cannot coexist, even as you can't put two swords in one scabbard. If Pakistan continues, Sindh will die. If, therefore, Sindh is to live, Pakistan must die."

This is not an easy task. There are many cowards and collaborators in Sindh. Some of them have married Urdu- wallas --- and they even speak Urdu at home. But all is not lost; the unconquerable will never to submit or yield, remains. The Sindhi youth are awake. They know that if they do not act now, Sindhis will be liquidated like the Red Indians in America --- or reduced to the position of Harijans in Hindu society. As the Persian adage goes, ``Tang ayad ba jang ayad" (driven into a corner, anybody will fight back). And so will Sindh. A volcano is raging underneath the apparent quiet of Sindh.

The odds are heavy. But Sindh has survived invasions of Iranians and Greeks, Arabs and Pathans, Mughals and British. It shall overcome. It says to Pakistan:

Aado takar tar,
matan rooh ratyoon thien.

(Oh you obstructing rock, get lost, or you will be smashed to smithereens.)

It hopes to God for the fall of the establishment:

Munhiji, aasa eeha,
Kadhain keraibday Kot khay.

(I am looking forward to the collapse of that fortress.) It is sure that help will come to Sindh if it helps itself:

Panehi eendo Hote,
Aun pin agabhari thiyan.

(My Lord will come; but let me, too, go forward --- to meet Him half-way.)

And so Sindh is looking to Porbandar, the ancient spiritual beacon for Sindh --- for ``Ghaibi maddad" (divine or mysterious help).

The appeal of love, peace, and Vedanta from the East is irresistible. Did not Shah Latif himself say:

Purab mariyas,

Kanh dar diyan danhiri.

(I have been captivated by the East. To whom shall I confide this?)

The Sindhi rejection of Pakistan, as enunciated above by G.M. Syed, is total.



Allah Alone Knows

SINDH'S REJECTION OF PAKISTAN is total. But the Pakistani establishment, backed by the United States of America has no intention of disappearing from the scene. Here is an irresistible force facing an immovable object. What can be the upshot of such an explosive situation? Allah alone knows, but man may speculate --- in the light of history . . . and common sense.

Right now people in Pakistan --- and particularly in Sindh --- want elections. They want elections because, as former Indians, they have known elections since 1921. They are not like the Arabs or the Iranians who have never known a proper election. After Partition, they have not had seven elections like in India. But they had elections in 1954 and in 1971 --- and again in 1977. After the 1954 elections, Fazlul Haq of East Bengal came to West Bengal and said in Calcutta that ``those who divided the country are traitors" (``Deshar vibhajan jara korechhe, tara deshdrohi"). He was then dismissed for his labours. But the 1971 elections more than vindicated Haq when Mujibur Rehman converted East Pakistan from a colony of Pakistan into the sovereign state of Bangladesh. No wonder the Pakistani establishment does not want elections.

Today military officers are working as Governors, departmental heads, collectors, judges; they do not want to give up what they have, even if it does not belong to them. However, there is another, bigger, reason behind the demand for elections; and the Army is scared stiff of that. Today the conviction in all the provinces in Pakistan is that they must have more powers. The party which asks for the greatest autonomy will get the biggest electoral support. Their core demand is that Pakistan must become a confederation, with the provinces transferring only Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communications and Currency to the Centre. The money for the Army must also come from the provinces --- with their approval. It is the old 6-point formula of Mujibur Rehman again at work. The Army wants no part of such a scheme. It has scared Washington with the assessment that any elections in Pakistan will return "leftist" parties. And for the USA, Left --- any Left --- is communism. The fact, however, is that the Pakistan provinces will not go leftist; they will go nationalist. However, the USA is not used to such nice distinctions in the realm of its Third-World diplomacy. Whatever, apparently, goes counter to American interests, is bad, subversive, "communist". It is not very different from South Africa, where anybody who objects to "apartheid", is dubbed "communist".

Even otherwise, the USA prefers to deal with dictators --- preferably of the military variety --- than with democrats who have a mind of their own and a constituency to tend.

Pakistan has been an unashamed American client state ever since the New York Times welcomed Liaqat Ali's arrival in the USA with a front-page, greeting in Urdu: "Khoosh Aamded!" Ayub Khan's brother Sardar Bahadur himself said that the military coup of 1958 was CIA inspired. As long as Ayub was the strong man of Pakistan, he visited USA every year and met CIA boss Allen Dulles every time. Allen himself certified Pakistan under military dictatorship as "a bulwark of freedom in Asia". The then US ambassador not only donned the "Jinnah cap", his daughter even married strongman Iskander

Mirza's son. Indeed in the words of Air Marshal Asghar Khan, "Iskander Mirza's pro-Americanism often embarrassed the Americans." Ayub opposed Egypt's Nasser to please the USA --- and Zia opposes Iran's Khomeini, again to please the USA. None of this would be possible in a democratic Pakistan.

The USA, therefore, does not want elections any more than does Zia. Indeed the USA would dump Zia, if he gets to be too unpopular, and install another general in his place, who can then hop fully eke out some more years for the Pentagon's comfort. A new broom is expected to sweep better --- for a while.

But not quite. The new dictator will not last even a fraction of that of the old one. And meanwhile the people's demand for democracy will grow too strong to resist. And at that stage the American democratic conscience will no doubt come into play. Elections will be held --- even though Zia says that Allah told him in a dream in 1978 that "elections are un-Islamic." Interestingly enough, Jinnah had pronounced that "whatever the Muslims do, is Islamic." And Muslims in Pakistan do want elections! And these elections may prove as crucial as the 1971 polls.

A pertinent question here is why the demand for elections is much stronger in Sindh than in the other three provinces. The fact is that all the provinces want elections, but some want it more urgently --- for local reasons. The Punjab is ruling all Pakistan today through the Army; so it is not all that keen on elections, which will give it more freedom, but which will also reduce its power.

People in Sindh, Baluchistan, and the NWFP, on the other hand, want much more than elections. They want autonomy --- as a prelude to independence. But as separate nationalities, they have a different psychic clock ticking away

inside them. Baluchistan's fight for freedom in the Nineteen Seventies caused Pakistan to post one lakh troops in that province at a daily expense of one crore of rupees --- mostly paid for by the Shah of Iran for five long years. At the end of it, 5,300 Baluchi guerrillas and 3,300 Pakistani troops lay dead. Today the highest office a Baluchi can hold in the police force is that of sub-inspector. In the words of Sardar Mengal, the deposed Baluchi premier: "There is no Kalati in the Kalat Scouts and no Makrani in the Makran Militia." In this situation, the Baluchis do not want just elections; they want a revolution that will bring them freedom. They will strike in their own way and in their own good time.

And so will the NWFP. Here the lakhs of Afghan refugees are already saying, "We have come home to Pakhtoonistan." And one of these years they may have a separate sovereign state of Pakhtoons. It is not for nothing that Wali Khan has said that the Pathans can fabricate any arms "except atom bomb". But they are obviously biding their time. And they know that the hotting up of the cold war, particularly on their Afghan border, is not the time to precipitate matters.

Indeed the two super-powers are quite unpopular --- both in India and in Pakistan. Instinctively, people all over the Hindustan peninsula feel that the powers are only using them --- and exploiting their differences --- to advance their own interests in the area. A reunited India would be a Great Power, dealing with the USA and the USSR on terms of equality.

Just now Soviet Russia is sitting in Afghanistan, right across the border. Any mass movement in the NWFP or Baluchistan would only get Zia more American arms --- if not also a few thousand American "military advisers", a la Salvador. People in Pakistan would like to get rid of American military presence, and not invite Russian military presence also. The latter course can only precipitate a Russo-American confrontation on Pakistani soil. Pakistanis

do not want that. And, mercifully, Russia does not want it either. Its hands are more than full with Afghanistan. It knows that Pakistan is not its cup of tea. Crossing the Khyber will mean war --- maybe even World War III. And so the NWFP and Baluchistan are deliberately hastening slowly. They know that time is on their side.

This, however, is not the compulsion for Sindh. It finds itself at a safe enough distance from the Russians in Kabul Unlike Baluchistan, it has not been overrun and overwhelmed by the Punjabis It has been enundated by the Punjabis and by the refugees from India. It, therefore, does have some maneuverability. Indeed the settlement of a large number of families of education, culture and wealth from India has contributed to the ferment in Sindh. Even otherwise, Sindh is politically more .conscious than NWFP and Baluchistan. On top of this, Sindh finds that it has a long border with a sympathetic India. All these factors have combined to make the anti-Zia MRD stronger in Sindh than in any other province. And then there is the ``Jiye Sindh ` sentiment to draw upon.

A legitimate question would be: If the Indian States can live together, why are the Pakistan provinces not able to live together? After all, they are a pretty homogeneous state, in the same river valley.

There are three good reasons why they cannot. India is a large country with several States, none of which dominates the Union. Even Uttar Pradesh, the biggest State, has less than one-sixth of the seats in the Lok Sabha. By contrast, the Punjab in Pakistan is bigger than all the other provinces put together.

American backing for the Pakistani army, which is basically Punjabi, puts even more premium on the Punjab. And that makes it even more unacceptable to

Sindh and other provinces. The third factor is psychological: the Hindus tend to be tolerant even of the non-Hindus; the Muslims tend to be intolerant even of each other.

Such are the wages of monotheistic Islam --- and such, the bonus of polytheistic Hinduism. As Arnold Toynbee put it in his Dialogues with Daisaku Ikeda of Soka Gakkai of Japan: "The Indian and East Asian attitude is pantheism. The Judaic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) have concentrated the element of divinity into a unique, omnipotent, creator god outside the universe, and this restriction of divinity has deprived nature --- including human nature --- of its divinity. By contrast, in India and Eastern Asia, before the impact of the modern West, the whole universe and everything in it, including non-human nature and man himself, was divine and, therefore, possessed, in human eyes, a sanctity and a dignity that have restrained man's impulse to indulge in greed by doing violence to non-human nature...I believe that mankind needs to revert to pantheism. The present adherents of the Judaic monotheistic religions are, all of them, ex-pantheists. This historical fact suggests that there might be some hope of their reverting to the pantheistic attitude, now that they have become aware of the badness of the consequences of the monotheistic lack of respect for nature."

Nor is that all. Pakistan was a very reluctant, a very much forced, state. Even in the 1946 assembly elections, the majority of the Sindhis did not vote for the pro-partition candidates, though the province had 70 per cent Muslim population. Baluchistan's top leader, Khan Samad Khan, was against partition. The Khan of Kalat actually applied for accession to India. It was the British-controlled tribal jirgas that opted for Pakistan. The NWFP had elected a Congress Government even in 1946. It went to Pakistan only by default --- because West Punjab's plumping for partition had removed the NWFP's land-link with the new India, and the British would not give it the choice of Independence. In disgust, the NWFP Congress boycotted the referendum. Good old Ghaffar Khan justly complained that they had been "thrown to the wolves".

It will thus be seen that the democratic pro-Indian urges in Sindh, NWFP, and Baluchistan are nothing new; they were there even in 1947. The Muslim League was not half as popular in the Muslim-majority provinces as it was in the Muslim-minority provinces. Indeed, even Pakistani Punjab has now acquired strong new intimations of its Punjabi identity. These days Punjabi films succeed in Pakistan, while Urdu films flop.

Today Punjab backs the role of Urdu in Pakistan because of the traditional position of Urdu as official language in the province; also because Urdu seals the Punjabi-Refugee alliance against the other three provinces of Pakistan --- and makes it out as a pan-Indo-Muslim language. In a changed situation, even Pakistan Punjab may forget about Urdu. It was not for nothing that Josh Malihabadi said that Urdu might have some future in India but it had none whatsoever in Pakistan.

A few years before Partition, the Muslim students of Punjab University in Lahore had resolved that even as strong animals prey on weak animals, Muslims had the natural right to live off Hindus. But a few years back, the students of the same Punjab University, resolved that the National Day of Punjab is Vaisakhi! Evidently they did not know that Vaisakhi is the Hindu New Year Day. Such is the natural Hindu-ness of even the Punjabi-Muslims. All of them are Muslim-Indians --- to be exact, Muslim-Hindus --- and not Indian Muslims. They are Indians who happen to be Muslim --- not Muslims who happen to be Indian.

One day the then Governor-General of Pakistan, Ghulam Mohammed, was having a boating excursion on the Manchar (corruption of Mansarovar) lake in Sindh. Music was going on in the next boat. At one stage the singer sang:

Chhad jhagda masjid mandir da;

Ghantor tariqa Qalandar da

(Give up this fight over temple and mosque --- and take Saint Qalandar's way of love.)

Ghulam Mohammed, a Punjabi, burst into tears. And the boat with the singing party had to be moved away, to calm down the Governor-General.

No, the Punjabi Muslims are also Punjabis first and Muslims only for an argument with the Hindus or for a cushy job with the Saudis.

Some Sindhis in their desperation say, if they have to choose between Islam and Sindhiat they would rather choose Sindhiat. (This is a new word for "Sindhi culture" coined after independence-partition --- the earlier word being the Persianized "Sindhi Tahzeeb".) However, such a problem does not exist. The native nationalism of people in Pakistan has asserted itself; Islam is only a thin superimposition on their nationalism. They would all like to come into their own --- and not be a nuisance to one another. Even Punjab would recognize that since the Vedic times Sindh and Punjab have been separate states --- then known as Sindhu and Sauvira, respectively. The one had its centre at Mooanjo-daro, the other at Harappa. The ancient realities are asserting themselves. Verily, the more we change the more we remain the same. The Sindhis remain Sindhis and the Punjabis remain Punjabis and not even Islam can make them all "Pakistanis".

In this situation a confederal arrangement, with a certain friendly freedom for all the four provinces, should be the right solution for the Pakistani problem.

But how would the USA view the matter? It looks upon Pakistan as one of its two policemen in West Asia --- the other one being Israel. Israel keeps the Arab states in line from the out side; Pakistan, being Muslim, is in a position to keep them in line from the inside. This internal police role of Pakistan, in the service of the USA, could be allowed to continue for some time while Pakistan is reorganized internally. After all, if the UK can recruit troops in Kathmandu, the USA may recruit troops in Lahore --- if that is what the two sides want! Hopefully, as oil exhausts itself, the USA will have a diminishing strategic interest in the Pakistani area.

An assurance that the American strategic interests in Pakistan will not be adversely affected, underwritten by India, the paramount power in South Asia, could reconcile the USA to a more realistic reorganization of the Pakistani areas.

There is another problem. A confederation tends to become a federation --- and a federation tends to become more unitary than federal; otherwise it tends to break up into so many constituent units. Since the Pakistanis have tried the unitary experiment and rejected it, they could now drift apart into complete independence. If that is their free will, so be it. However, the Indus river system will always bind them together in economic cooperation. Punjab can be guaranteed free access to Karachi harbour. Indeed while politically a part of Sindh, the Karachi port area could be administered jointly by the four provinces. That should satisfy all the provinces.

Nor need the refugees fear for their future in Sindh. A few years ago they had said that India should care for them also, since they too were "persons of Indian origin". However, there is no defence like amity. Otherwise the refugee islands in the cities of Sindh could always be overwhelmed by the sea of rural Sindhi humanity. But refugees in Sindh need have no such fear. Nobody will any more call them Makar (locusts) in Sindh, once they make their peace with the Sindhis. G. M. Syed Or Sindh has said that all those who identify themselves with the people and culture of Sindh, will be accepted as Sindhis. After all, this is not the first time that outsiders have settled down in an area; they always adjust to the new land and the new situation, to be at peace with themselves and with the world. The "New Sindhis" are also beginning to respond to the "Old Sindhis", Maulana Noorani, general secretary of Jamat-i-Islami, and a ranking refugee leader, has come out openly in support of the Sindhi demands.

There are important people in Sindh who say India should liberate them from Pakistan --- and then keep them in India or outside. Any such act of mid-wifery on the part of India would be a legitimate act of liberation on the part of one democratic people for a fraternal people aspiring for democracy. Sheikh Ayaz, the most out-standing modern poet of Sindh, has been saying: "Jai Sindh! Jai Hind!" It is for the Government of India to decide whether it should help deliver the democratic baby in Pakistan. But, even if it does not, the people there can take care of the situation.

Pakistan took away Karachi from Sindh in 1948: and in 1954 Sindh was forcibly merged into "One Unit". But the Sindhis succeeded in undoing the "One Unit" and getting back Karachi in 1971. They have the will to acquire all the autonomy they want; and they will no doubt have their way. They have even given themselves the "axe" (parashu) as the symbol of the "Jiye Sindh" movement, to leave nobody in any doubt that they mean business.

True, the Sindhis do not fight pitched battles; they did not fight any even when Sindh was free. They used to engage the Baluchis to fight for them --- whether the enemy was Nadir Shah or Napier. But even the single tribe of Hurs gave the British enough hell in 1943, to necessitate Martial Law in half of Sindh for a whole year. Of late all Sindh has been up in arms--even though these arms consist mostly of lathis and axes. Rasul Bux Palejo, the Sindh farmers' leader, has been in detention since 1979. Even the Sindh Graduates' Association has been banned. No government can keep down a people, once they are roused. So even if Government of India does not act, the people of Pakistan shall prevail against their rootless government. It will only mean some delay --- and some more suffering. That is all.

Nor need anybody be surprised by the four provinces of Pakistan coming into their own under a benign Indian umbrella. Bharat Mata takes care even of her truant children. After all, even Jinnah had not visualized a permanent Indo-Pak hostility. He had said that against any foreign threat, India and Pakistan would stand together. Khaliquzzaman, a pillar of the Partition movement, said after 1971 that the Partition scheme had failed, and that a new arrangement needed to be worked out. And even Bhutto of ``one-thousand-year-war" fame had thought aloud that he might not become prime minister in a reunited India, but that he could certainly hope to be its foreign minister. Of course. And even if it is too late for Bhutto, j it may be timely enough for a Jatoi, a Daultana, a Wali Khan or a Mengal.



Sindhi Society and Culture

SINDHI SOCIETY is an integral part of the great Indian society. And Sindhi culture is an integral part of the great Indian culture. And yet, because of local factors, it has a flavour of its own. The people are eclectic: not very profound, but very practical. As a wit put it: "The Sindhi rule of the thumb is to do whatever is convenient and profitable." Their varied experience over the ages has given them a certain flexibility that makes for survival, even if not for glory. Added to the profundities of their ancestral faith, they have faced waves of foreigners and they themselves have travelled far and wide for trade. This has made them easy citizens of the world. All fanaticism becomes foreign to their nature. As H.T. Lambrick, ICS, has observed: "There is something in the air of Sindh which blurs the frontiers of ordinarily opposed creeds."

When Islam came to India, it had staged the usual scene of murder, loot and rape. However, before long, the mischief had been contained. The new Muslims adorned their graves with the old lingas and yonis and offered them incense and flowers. "The day of wedlock," they said, "is more important than

a thousand years of roza and namaz." They dispensed with the Arab practice of female circumcision. They even moderated the harsh Muslim law. For example, they decided that saying "Talaq, Talaq" twice together would be counted as one and not two. Even the Arabs visiting Sindh --- which is about all the Hind that they knew --- were so Sindhized that, on return home, they were told: "O returner from Hind, renew thy faith." The Sammas and the Soomras, who were native chiefs, ruled for 500 years. Even when converted, they remained more Sindhi than Muslim. No wonder Capt. Hamilton, who visited Sindh in the eighteenth century, recorded that until a century earlier, the Hindu population had been ten times the Muslim population. Today Sindhi intellectuals like G.M. Syed reject the "Arab Chhaap Islam"; they would obviously like to have the "Sindhi-Chhaap Islam" that very much prevailed until the late Mughal times.

Ironically enough, this pro-Hindu situation changed during the Mughal period. Akbar initiated the policy of religious toleration. He gave more and more top jobs to the Hindus. This antagonized many Muslims, who now lost their monopoly of top jobs. Those who thus got left out, joined hands with the fanatical mullahs. It was this unholy alliance that helped Aurangzeb prevail over Dara. And so even while Akbar's policy brought the Hindus into their own, the Muslim reaction to that policy strengthened the forces of fanaticism and launched a wave of mass conversions. It was obviously this tidal wave that overwhelmed Sindh and converted it into a Muslim-majority province full thousand years after the Arab invasion. Al-Ghazali, the fanatic, who had attacked the liberal al-Farabi and Ibn Sina in the eleventh century, and who had abjured reason and divorced religion from science, now prevailed in the Muslim courts with a vengeance.

The exponent of this new policy in Sindh was Mohammed Hashim Thattwi. His fatwa was duly issued as a firman of the Kalhora ruler Ghulam Shah. It read: "Let all functionaries of the state note that they have to make all efforts to implement the religious directives issued from time to time by Janab Makhdoom Mohammed Hashim. They should forbid the (Shia practice of)

mourning and Tazias during Moharram. Women should be stopped from visiting gardens and graveyards. People should be prevented from mourning for the dead. Animals should not be painted. Hindus should be forbidden from wearing 'choti' or 'dhoti', or sitting in their shops with bare knees. Muslims should be told not to keep moustache --- and not to grow their beard long. The beard should not exceed the size of a fist. Hindus should not be allowed to play Holi or sing with sarod, shehnai, drum or bugle. Hindus should also be stopped from bowing to the idols or to the river. Government staff must enforce the above orders strictly. Violation of any of these orders must be visited with deterrent punishment so that nobody dares indulge in these practices. In addition, people should be told to observe roza, namaz and other religious practices. Let there be no failure in the implementation of the above rules. Shaban 2, 1072 H."

The liberal religious policy of Abar, followed by fanaticism like this, led to the Hindus getting more jobs; but it also led to more and more Hindus at lower levels getting converted under official pressure. And thus one could see the two opposing developments at the same time. Gidumal and many other Amils became ministers in the court of Sindh. They were allowed to dress like Muslim aristocracy, charged no taxes, and addressed as "Dewan". But Hindus could neither keep an idol nor ring a bell, in what passed for their "mandirs". From Thursday evening till Saturday morning, they kept indoors --- for fear of some Muslim saying they had heard them say "Allah" or "Mohammed" on the holy day of Friday and that, therefore, they were now deemed Muslims. The Hindus would not touch any Arabic book --- for fear it might turn out to be the Koran, whose touch would make them Muslim in the eyes of fanatics. British visitors such as Richard Burton noted that the Hindus would never use the word rasso or rassi, for rope --- for fear somebody might say that they had uttered the word "rasul" (prophet); they would always call it "nori". A Sindhi prince gave his watch to an Englishman for repair in Bombay, with instruction that it should not be touched by any idol-worshipper. This Englishman was presented with a sword with the Persian inscription: "I am light of weight, but I am heavy on the enemy. Warriors have used me to slaughter one lakh Hindus." Even a veteran statesman like Gidumal, who had served the state

with distinction, like a Cardinal Wolsey, was murdered in the open court when his daughter Draupadi ended her life rather than agree to marry a Muslim prince.

British observers, therefore, wondered why the Hindus stayed on in a place like that. Dr. James Burton wrote: "It is really difficult to conceive how many Hindus should have continued to reside in the country; and the fact can only be accounted for by that attachment which man shares with the vegetable, to 'the soil in which he is reared.'"

That was one side of the picture. Another side was what E. B. Eastwick noted: "When we arrived in Shikarpur and Hyderabad we found Hindu merchants as wealthy, almost as numerous, as in the most prosperous towns under our own government." He added: "As we entered Karachi, we met pilgrims returning from Hinglaj...It is the farthest western limit to which Indian polytheism extends."

Hamilton reported in 1699 the celebration of Holi in Sindh from morning till evening. "In this mad feast people of all ages and sexes dance through the streets to pipes, drums and cymbals."

Eastwick even saw a remarkable sight of Diwali, on 5 November 1839, four years before the British conquest of Sindh. He noted: "The Diwali happening to fall on this day, the whole river was bright with lamps. The scene was really enchanting. The mosques and ruined tombs, illumined by myriads of lights, and the broad current sweeping by them in all sombre majesty --- the palm-groves and the island fortress of Bakhar in mid-stream, made up a wondrous picture. Ever and anon some votary would offer up his prayers to Lakshmi and launch a tiny craft bearing a cluster of lamps into the water."

Here were Sindhi Muslims celebrating Diwali along with the Hindus. Obviously the Sindhis had evolved a Sindhi version of Islam. A certain good humoured co-existence prevailed. When Mir Sarfaraz Khan made fun of Gidumal's short stature, the latter retorted in Persian: "Manhood is tested in war; the thumb, though small, is more important than the fingers."

Once the poet-saint Shah Abdul Latif teased his Hindu friend Madan with the question: "How will you Kafirs fare on the day of judgement?" ("Hashar vela hissab mein, kafir kanda keina?") Madan did not reply at the time. Later, when they reached a ferry point, the boat had just started off. Madan took out extra money and showed it to the boatman, who stopped to pick them up. Madan now turned to Shah and answered his earlier query thus: "Those who have an open hand will cross over ahead of all others." ("Hath jineen jo heean, se pahrein pattan paar pya.")

Most of the Sindhi Hindus had always been there. When Mohammed Bin Qasim sacked Aror, the capital of Sindh, many of them migrated north to the Punjab. They are still known as Aroras. For the rest, the Hindus shifted to Multan, Jaisalmir, and Kutch for safety --- and many of them came back when conditions improved. A good number of them returned during Mughal-Kalhora period. And so we have Miss Vimla Sindhi, a Punjabi lady, who assists Mrs. Indira Gandhi. And we had a Sindhi ICS man called K. L. Punjabi. The Advanis came from Multan, the Malkanis, Thadhanis and Ramchandanis from Jaisalmir; the Kripalanis from far-away Prayag, and the Bhagchandanis all the way from Ayodhya. They are all known -after their great ancestor, a dozen generations earlier. The only exception are the Shahanis, who are so called after Shah Baharo, a chieftain of Larkana. He was so popular that his relations, friends and even employees called themselves "Shahani". The Bhag-naris were late arrivals in Shikarpur from Baluchistan. Contrary to popular impression, the Amils and the Bhaibunds come from the same group of families. Those who

took to service became known as Amils (for 'amal', to execute) and those who took to business became Bhai-bandhus (Bhaibunds).

A sociological study by Bherumal Mehrchand shows that the Mukhis, the NAGRANIS, the SAGRANIS, the JETHMALANIS, the LAKHANIS, the LULLAS, the MATTAS, and the CHABRIAS are cousins. So, too, are the ADVANIS, the SITLANIS, the SADHWANIS and the SHAMDASANIS. The CHANDIRAMANIS, the BHAMBHANIS, the KARNANIS and the KRIPALANIS are all "Chugh". The THADHANIS, the RAISINGHANIS, and the GEHANIS are all "Khangar". The CHAINANIS, the HINGORANIS, and the JHANGIANIS are "Pahuja". The KESWANIS, the AMBWANIS, the MULCHANDANIS, and the BHAGWANANIS are "Kukreja". The AJWANIS, the BHAVNANIS, the GIDWANIS, and the JAGTIANIS are kin. And so are the MIRCHANDANIS, the MAHTANIS, the MOORJANIS, the SADARANGANIS and the MAKHIJAS. The BALWANIS, the MALKANIS, the RAMCHANDANIS, and the RAMRAKHIANIS are all "Darari".

The Sindhi Muslim society is more varied than the Hindu society. The ancient mass is Koli and Santhal. And so we still have some Munda words in Sindh. For the same reason many Sindhis still have the vigesimal system of counting by twenties. When a Sindhi boy plays gilli-danda, he does not count "hik-ba- tay", Sindhi for "one-two-three"; he counts by the South Indian numerals --- "vikat, laine, moon, naar"!

Then came the Jats and the Medes. Later still, the Arabs, the Turks, and the Afghans. Today the Syeds are the religious leaders. The Sheikhs are upper-caste converts. The Sammats represent the Samma and Soomra Rajputs. There are more Baluchis in Sindh than in all Baluchistan --- just as there are more Gurkhas in India than in Nepal. And then there are the commoners --- Maru and Sanghar, Panhwar, Malah, Mangta, Sodha, Dhati, Gandra, Rebra, Kaachi, Kohyara, Muhana, Oda, Makrani, Shidi (Abyssinian). We even have the "Lunds" in Matli --- a very funny tribe --- who are believed to be third-century Hun settlers. All of them are conscious of their caste. When Richard Burton

asked an "Ashraf" who were the other high castes, he was told: "We are one; Syeds are another; half of Fateh Ali's family: the rest are all riff-raff"!

A significant factor in Hindu survival in Sindh during the Muslim period, in reasonably good shape, was the rise of Sikhism in the Punjab. Sanatan Dharma having gone moribund under prolonged Muslim rule, Sikhism came as a fresh breeze in the stale Sindhi atmosphere. The fact that the two provinces were neighbours, their people, kin and their languages allied, made Sikhism tick very well in Sindh. It is believed that Guru Nanak Dev had visited Shikarpur in his wide-ranging travels. One Kanayalal of Sindh joined Guru Govind Singh, who made it his duty to serve water to the wounded on the battle-field. Kanayalal gave water not only to the Hindu wounded but also to the Muslim wounded. Some Sikhs thought it wrong to revive enemy soldiers. They took Kanayalal to the Guru, who appreciated his action and asked him to go and preach Sikh Dharma in Sindh. He came to be known as "Khat Waro Bao" (Khaat wala Bawa) because he gave his sermon while sitting on a cot.

When Bhai Dayal Singh grew old in the service of the Guru's army, he was given a sword, a kirpan, a chakra, and a spear to go and infuse some courage in the Sindhis.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent one Manik Singh with a copy of Guru Granth Sahib on elephant-back to be installed in Hyderabad. The Mirs gave land for the purpose and the well-known Akal Bhoonga was built there. When the Gurdwara used drums and bugles, the Muslims were scandalised. They objected to music before a mosque, which stood next door. At first the Mirs asked the Akal Bhoonga to shift from there. But realizing that it might displease the mighty Lahore Durbar, they let it remain --- and, instead, converted the old mosque into one "for women only". Of course no woman ever went to offer namaz there. It remained locked.

Guru Nanak's two sons Baba Lakhmichand and Baba Srichand, gave rise to the Jagiasu and Udasi schools of preachers. They also established many temples. Chief of them was Bawa Gurpat Saheb, the twelfth-generation descendant of Guru Nanak. He played a notable role in Sindhi society. No wonder the Sindhis are very familiar with Sikh scriptures. Today even important Sindhi Muslim leaders such as G.M. Syed feel that the teachings of Guru Nanak would be good for all Sindhis and Punjabis.

British rule ended the preferential treatment of Muslims under Muslim rule, and held the scales of justice even between the Hindus and the Muslims. Given equal opportunities, the Hindus forged far ahead of the Muslims, because of their traditional interest in education and business. Soon they dominated the services, the professions, trade and industry. The Muslim was confined to land and crafts. So much so that when partition took place and refugees arrived in Sindh, they wondered how Pakistan could be established in Sindh. They said: "There are more Muslims in Lucknow and Patna than in Hyderabad and Karachi in Sindh."

The Sindhis had always traded with foreign lands. Their slogan was: "Service is lowly; agriculture is noble; but trade alone is profitable." Thousands of years ago they had traded with, and even settled down in, eastern Mediterranean, as Phoenicians. Shah Latif has a whole lovely "Sur Samundi" on the annual trading expeditions to Lanka, Java and China. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 gave a tremendous impetus to this trade. Beginning with Sindhi arts and crafts --- hence the name "Sindh- worki" for them --- they soon ranged all the way from textiles to curios to diamonds.

When the British took over, the Hindus did not hold any land. The British gave land to the retiring officers, most of them Hindu. The wealthy began to buy

lands at market price. The improvident Muslim landlords began to mortgage lands to the Hindu money-lenders, who gradually acquired the same on default. In one century of British rule, the Hindus had come to, acquire about 40 per cent of the land. Another 20 per cent was believed to have been mortgaged to them. Some Muslim League leaders --- particularly Sir Abdullah Haroon --- made this into a big issue. Here was a gentleman who started life as a cycle-repair assistant on four annas a day, and ended up as a crore-pati, who grudging 30 per cent of the population .(Hindus) owning 40 per cent of the land! He could never see the initial iniquity of the Hindus (30 per cent of the population) holding zero land under the Muslim rule. However, many other Muslim leaders noted that the peasants were happier with the Hindu zamindars than with the Muslim zamindars. They also noted that many Muslim zamindars did not want education to spread --- for fear the next generation of educated tenants might ask for more rights.

The real reasons for this shift of land-ownership were two: the Hindus who had been starved of land for centuries, felt the natural human urge for land --- and now they went in for it. Secondly, the impecunious Muslim habits stood in sharp contrast with Hindu prudence. A Muslim tended to spend beyond his means; a Hindu tended to save and invest. A popular saying was that when a Hindu had money, he would buy or build more and more houses (Jaye Mathan Jaye); when a Muslim had money, he would marry more and more wives (Joye Mathan Joye).

And Muslim backwardness in the field of business is traditional. Both the Mughlas and the British recognized the Hindu superiority in trade. As the "Mirza Namah" of Aziz Ahmed advised the Muslim aristocracy in the sixteenth century: "If he needs to borrow money, he should borrow it from a Hindu Mahajan, whom he should prefer to a Muslim Mughal merchant, even though the latter lends money free of interest. He should totally avoid purchasing from the shop of a Mughal, as it means paying four times the cost of the thing purchased and suffering great loss, and in the end it means listening to fourfold harangues of these merchants in the market-place. On the

other hand, a Hindu is content even if he reduces the interest, considers the little he gets as plenty and is thankful for it."

Robert Clive had the same experience. He wrote: "These fat expensive Moormen (Muslims) spend Government's revenue in luxury and assuagements. Indeed in my opinion none but Gentoos (Gentiles, that is Hindus) ought to be renters of counters who always spend less than their income and can, when called upon, make good any deficiency in the revenues."

Some leaders did try to mend the Muslim matters. G.M. Syed told them not to overspend on wedding ceremonies. He advised them to reduce the size of salwar and patko (turban) from 20 yards to 3-4 yards. He even begged of them not to bathe just once a year. As president of the Sindh Provincial Muslim League he conducted a regular campaign for the Muslims to take to trade. But all this takes a long time. As Maulana Abul Kalam Azad put it, "It takes a whole generation even to learn how to wear a shoe properly."

Pir Husamuddin Rashdi ridiculed the extremes of puritanism and profligacy in Muslim society. On the one hand they observed such strict purdah that even a pregnant woman was not allowed into the zenana --- for fear she might be carrying a male child, who might cast a glance on the secluded beauties. On the other hand, one could see any number of them twirl their moustache with one hand and feel their private parts with the other hand, on seeing a winsome lady.

The major responsibility for the backwardness of Muslim society lay with the mullahs. Too many of them were as ignorant as they were fanatical. Knowing nothing about religion, they often divided over non-issues. One would pronounce the hooka un-Islamic, another would declare snuff Islamic. They

would argue endlessly whether red or black would be Islamic for dyeing a greying beard. Others would discuss whether hands should be folded or separated at namaz time --- and if folded, should they be held above the navel or, below it. Professor Hotchand Gurbuxani had edited an excellent edition of Shah's works. To this day it is recognized as a classic. But Maulana Nizamani rejected it --- on the ground that no Hindu (polytheist) could possibly enter the spirit of a monotheistic Muslim poet!

It was this stupidity and ignorance of many mullahs that roused Shah and Sachal, the two greatest poets of Sindh, to denounce them in no uncertain terms. Said Shah: "Don't call the mullahs: they are stooges. They would barter pearls for a pot of flesh. . . With open eyes they would dive in a sea of sand." (Sujani Allah, tubbi dinaoon dhoor mein.)

Sachal had only one solution for the unreasonable mullahs. "Beat the mullah on his head" ("Kutt mian ji thorh"). G.M. Syed now has suggested a legal ban on mullahs issuing fatwas, doing communal propaganda, or taking part in politics.

The progress of the Hindus during the British rule was dramatic. To begin with, the upper castes of Brahmins, Baniyas and Kayasthas had remained Hindu, only landlords, peasants, artisans, soldiers had become Muslim. So the earlier caste differentiation was now compounded by creedal differentiation. With modernization, the caste-community difference was reinforced by class differentiation. The fact that the "higher" caste-class Hindu was also urban, only further heightened the difference --- and widened the gulf. This irked many Muslims. Leaving aside the mullahs, who were congenitally anti-Hindu, even Khuhro once said: "Today Muslim women are washing dishes in Hindu homes. I look for the day when Hindu women will be washing dishes in Muslim homes." But G.M. Syed, after his experience in the Muslim League --- which made him sadder but wiser said: "Why blame the Hindus for Muslim

backwardness? Every morning when the Hindu child takes his bath and goes to school, the unwashed Muslim child is seen playing marbles in the dirty by-lane." Syed once even suggested that all government jobs should be given only to the Amils; he found them so good.

While Premier Allah Bux was positively nationalist, even Premier Sir Ghulam Hussian Hidayatullah was non-communal. He was the son of Duhlanomal of Shikarpur, who had married Hur Bibi, a Pathan girl. The two wanted to live in peace, but the shortsighted Hindu society would not let them. They, therefore, shifted to the holy place of Hardwar. After some time, however, the pull of the home-town brought them back to Shikarpur, But once again the Hindu society would not let them live in peace. Duhlanomal, therefore, became Muslim --- to escape the Hindu taunts.

Although Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto made himself infamous as Dewan of Junagadh in 1947, when that state acceded to Pakistan, he had never been communal in Sindh. Indeed the communalists thought him so much pro-Hindu that they used to say he must have been fathered by a Hindu. While this statement seems malicious, Sir Bhutto's wife, who bore him "Zulfi", was certainly Hindu. She was Lakhan Bai before she became Khurshid. Poet Sheikh Ayaz's mother was Dadan Bai, a Hindu lady of Shikarpur.

Hindus and Muslims, Shias and Sunnis, lived in peace. Outside of the Sukkur district, communal violence was almost unknown. The Sindhi Muslims heard the fighting slogan "Nara-i- Taqdir", 'Allah-o-Akbar' only after the Khilafat movement. The slogan at the Battle of Miani in 1843 was not "Allah-o-Akbar" but the Baluchi "Marsaan, Marsaan, Sindh na dhesaan" ("We will die but we will not surrender Sindh"). Fighting was considered bad. There was a saying: "Give a threat, make some noise. If even then the other fellow does not run away, then better you run away!" The typical Sindhi response to tyranny will not be violence but Bhoondo or Bujo, accompanied by the choicest epithets.

Contrary to orthodox Sunni directives, the Shias and the Sunnis in Sindh jointly mourned the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussain and took out Tazias, inspired by the Rath of Puri Jagannath. These Tazias were huge affairs which were not immersed or buried, but moth-balled- and renovated every year. The Hindus offered coconuts and "patashas" at the Tazias. Moharram was something of a spectacle to which the Hindus and Muslims looked forward, as we do now to Republic Day tableau.

Typical of this harmoniously philosophical attitude of life was one Ram Dularay at Keamari, the harbour of Karachi. He was so good at setting bones that even Col. Johnson, the civil surgeon of Karachi, took his son to him, when the boy fractured three bones. Ram Dularay charged no fees and attended to the rich and the poor alike in strict order. When Johnson's son recovered in two months, the surprised doctor offered him a 150 rupees job in the hospital. But Ram Dularay preferred to stay on as a harbour chowkidar on 30 rupees a month.

One day Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi took Rai Bahadur Hotchand of Nawabshah to Ram Dularay for his bone-setting. When Rai Bahadur's turn came, Ram Dularay set his fractured bones, recognized Rashdi, then a rabid Muslim Leaguer. Ram Dularay turned to him and said: "My son, you will be happy if you remember that life is like a piece of paper in a stream. It can only melt away. If not today, then tomorrow." Obviously Rashdi felt touched by it and so he has mentioned it in his memoirs.

Thanks to the storm that shook all India, Sindh had become part of Pakistan. Most of the Hindus left the province. But it is a matter of satisfaction that by and large there were no hard feelings. Many Sindhi refugees brought "Sindhu-jal" and/ or some earth, as sacred mementos. Pir Husamuddin Rashdi, noted

Sindhi journalist, wrote recently: "In fact it was the Hindus who had built Sindh. They adorned it. They brought to it wealth from the four corners of the earth. They built great houses. Today we cannot even maintain them." He added: "The real masters of Sindh were the Hindus. They had the education, the jobs, the trade, the land." He thinks that the Hindus made the mistake of not acting as helpful elder brother to the Muslims. He could be right; maybe the Hindus should have done more for the Muslims. However, the schools, the colleges the hospitals, and other institutions set up by the Hindus were open to the Muslims. On the other hand, the rich Muslim zamindars never did anything for anybody, Hindu or Muslim.

G.M. Syed has three complaints against the Sindhi Hindus: they always thought in all-India terms; they inserted many Sanskrit words in Sindhi; and they called the Sindhi Muslims derisively as "Jhat" (corrupt form of Jat).

Syed is at once right --- and wrong. All Sindhis thought in all- India terms, whether the terms were Hindu or Muslim. It is true some second-line Hindu writers did insert some Sanskrit words in Sindhi. But adding two per cent more Sanskrit to a language that was already seventy per cent Sanskrit, was hardly a sin; on the other hand many frant-rank Muslim writers loaded Sindhi with more Persian and Arabic words than our sweet language could bear. As for using the word "Jhat" for all Sindhi Muslims --- including Sir Ghulam Hussain! --- it was certainly unfortunate. But it was the casual habit of centuries, which did not mean offense. Funnily enough, it was the Baluchis --- themselves very illiterate --- who first dubbed all Sindhi Muslims, as "Jhat", meaning illiterate. And even a Hindu child, poor at studies, would be told: "Are you a Jhat?"

It will thus be seen that inspite of the wide educational and economic gulf between the Hindu and the Muslim segments of Sindhi society, there was no bitterness in their relations. The Muslims had transformed old gods into new

Pirs. Many Hindus visited Muslim durgahs which, in turn, had adopted Hindu-style morning and evening drum-beats. The common Muslims were known as Kando (thorn) Kauro (bitter one) Mitho (sweet one), Bacho (saved), Waryo (returned), Soomar (monday), Ambo (mango) --- and not by those Arab names. The Muslims continued with the same good old talismans as are to be found in Mooanjo-daro.

Births were celebrated. Like the Hindu "mundan" (shaving of head) they had "Akiko". At about age eight, when the Hindu normally had his "Janeo," (sacred thread ceremony), the Muslim boy was circumcised and given a saffron-coloured lungi to wear. Wedding songs were similar --- and in chaste Sindhi. The Hindu bridegroom proved his manhood by breaking a coconut; the Muslim bridegroom did so by breaking an earthen pot. Like the Hindu couple, the Muslim couple also touched foreheads. In both communities the couple exchanged fistfuls of sesame seeds back and forth seven times, for amity and an abundant brood. The Muslims believed that marriages solemnised before dawn --- "bhej-bhini" --- as per ancient custom, were more successful. The ceremonial wedding articles were known to both the Hindus and the Muslims as "Deva". They had the same post-wedding feast of the two families in "Satavaro". As Tarikh-e-Tahiri moaned long ago: "Each month has several Ids for them." Even the first Monday and the first Friday of each month were turned into festivals, complete with fairs and feasts.

Normally the Sindhi Muslims did not eat beef; nor the Sindhi Hindus, pork. When the Rashdi brothers of Sukkur were short of money which was very often --- they got their meals from the langar (community kitchen) of Sadhbela, the leading Hindu temple in Sindh. The menu, they write, consisted of "Daal, Poori, Halwa, Khichri, Achar, Papad, Basar (onion) and Kanah Prasad."

Important as these external unities were, even more important was the unity of their philosophy. The Hindu and the dominant Muslim views of life were the

same. The Hindu saw God in everything, everywhere. And so did the great Sufi poet-saints of Sindh. They were all "Wujudis" who saw no difference between the Creator and His creation and not "Shahudis", who distinguished between God and his creation --- and between 'god and god' and 'man and man'.

In the words of Annemarie Schimmel: "In Sindh, the borders between Hinduism and Islam were not hermetically closed. A classical example of this close connection is 'Sur Ramkali' in Shah Abdul Latif's 'Risalo', a poem in which this mystic praises the wandering yogis in terms taken from Quran and Hadith. Sachal Sarmast and his followers have not hesitated to sing the essential Unity of Being that manifests itself now in Abu Hanifa, now in Hanuman, now in the Vedas, now in the Quran."

The Islamic "la ilah ilallah", (which literally means there is no God but Allah) was re-interpreted by poet Shah Abdul Karim thus: "One who takes the seller, the buyer and the wares to be one and the same, will know its meaning." "This world," said Shah Latif, "is a mansion with a million doors and windows; whichever way you look, you will see God."

No wonder the Hindu-Muslim relations were not half as bad in Sindh as in many other provinces. To this day, the Sindhi Hindus remember Sindh with misty eyes -and the Sindhi Muslims remember the Sindhi Hindus in India with fond affection. Says Pir Husamuddin of Sukkur with anguish: "That Sukkur is gone. Those Sakhroos are gone too. Our compatriots are gone. Their place has been taken by strangers." Says Sheikh Ayaz of Sindh:

Poesy is a river

On whose banks today

I have seen
Saraswati and Mahakali;
The two together
Were drinking moonlight;
They have come together
After long ages,
No doubt today will be born
A great Maha Kavi.

The great poet has no doubt been born. It is the youth of Sindh. And its poetry
is ``Jye Sindh!'' ``Jai Sindhu Desh!''



Shah, Sachal and Swami

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE are the life and spirit of a society. The Sindhi language and literature reflect the rich variety and quality of Sindhi life and thought. Sindhi has 125 names for as many varieties of fish. From Hyderabad to the sea, a distance of less than one hundred miles, the Sindhu river has half a dozen names --- Sahu, Sita, Mograh, Popat, Bano, and Hajamiro --- to reflect its many moods. The camel has a score of names, to indicate its age, colour, gait and character.

There are seven styles of the Sindhi language --- Siro (north), Vicholo (middle), Laar (south), Thareli (Thar), Laasi (Lasbela), Kutchki (Kutch), and Dhatki (Sindhi-Rajasthani).

The fact that Sindhi is mostly written in the Arabic script, gives some people the impression that it is a Persio-Arabic tongue. It is nothing of the kind. Over seventy per cent of the Sindhi words are Sanskrit. A peculiarly Sindhi-sounding word like 'manhu' (man) is derived from the Sanskrit 'manush'. English scholars of the mid-nineteenth century were all praise for the Sindhi language and literature.

Professor E. Trumpp in his monumental 'Sindhi Alphabet and Grammar' (1812) writes: "The Sindhi is a pure Sanskritical language, more free from foreign elements than any of the North Indian vernaculars."

Grierson confirms this and says: "The immediate predecessor of Sindhi was an Apabhramsha Prakrit named Vrachada."

John Beames writes: "It is a rough language, having thorny paths of its own, but there hangs about it, to my mind, somewhat of the charm of wild flowers.... There is a flavour of wheaten flour and a reek of cottage smoke about Panjabi and Sindhi, which is infinitely more natural and captivating than anything which the hide-bound Pandit-ridden languages of the eastern part of India can show."

Richard Burton wrote way back in 1851: "As regards the literature in the Sindhi tongue it may be easily asserted that no vernacular dialect at the time of

our taking that country possessed more, and few so much, original composition."

And Capt. George Stack writes: "I was hitherto proud of the English language as more beautiful and very copious language in the world, but it is really vain of me; when I learnt Sindhi, I found reduplicated casual verbs and other points that give Sindhi beauties distinct from most Indian tongues."

Writes Dr. Annemarie Schimmel, Harvard professor of Islamics, and versatile linguist: "Since every word in Sindhi ends in a vowel, the sound is very musical."

Today Sindhi is written in Sindh in the Arabic script. In India, Devnagri is also used. The Government of India recognizes both scripts. What was the original script of Sindhi? Even 300 years after the Arab conquest, at the time of Mahmud Ghazni, Al-Biruni, historian, found three scripts current --- Ardhanagari, Saindhu and Malwari, all variations of Devnagri.

When the British arrived, they found the Pandits writing Sindhi in Devnagri. Traders --- including Khojas and Memons --- were using a variety of "Modi" or "Vanika" scripts, without any vowels. Hindu women were using Gurmukhi and government employees, some kind of Arabic script.

British scholars found the language Sanskritic and said that the Devnagri script would be right for it. In 1849 they produced an English-Sindhi dictionary in Devnagri. A year later they translated the Bible in Sindhi, again in the Devnagri script. Government servants, many of whom were Hindus, unwisely favoured the Arabic script, since they did not know Devnagri, and

had to learn it anew. (For the same reason, after partition, the Sindhi language teachers in Bombay insisted on teaching the language in the Arabic script, causing the government to permit both scripts for Sindhi.) A big debate started, with Capt. Burton favouring the Arabic script and Capt. Stack favouring Devnagri. Sir Frere, the Commissioner of Sindh, referred the matter to the Court of Directors of the British East India Company, which favoured Arabic on the ground that Muslim names could not be written in Devnagri. Since the Arabic script could not express many Sindhi sounds, a scheme of dots was worked out for the purpose. As a result, the Sindhi script today not only has all its own sounds, but also all the four Z's of Arabic. Though called "Arabic", no Arab will be able to read it. Gandhiji felt that Sindhi had been given the "Arabic script" to divide Muslims and Hindus.

There was a Sindhi version of the Mahabharata in the third century B C. The Kushan King Vasudev VII had ordered the listing of all Sindhi poetical works in A.D. 346. But today none of that remains. The Arabs tried to impose Arabic on Sindh but failed. The wise among them saw the virtue of local languages, with their greater appeal to the people. And so Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273) wrote in his 'Masnavi':

Sindhian ra istalah Sindh madah;

Hindian ra istalah Hind madah.

(The Sindhis are welcome to use the Sindhi idiom; the Hindis are welcome to use the Hindi idiom.)

Sindhi as we know it today is about 800 years old. But the earliest Sindhi writings, are only 600 years old. These are the seven riddles (mamui) spoken by seven faqirs on being decapitated by the rulers. Two of the more important

riddles warned of the dangers from the Kandhar side and prayed for the Sindhu shifting its flow eastwards.

At about the same time came the religious writings of Ismaili Khojas (Khwajas), known as ``Ginan" (Gnan). They availed of the local language to reach the masses for religious conversion. However, their diction and idiom were almost entirely Hindu. Asking the people to get up early and pray, one Ginan says: ``Jago Jago Bhayara, raina wihai" (Wake up dear brothers, the night is over) --- or else ``the hooris will not hold hands with you."

Other Sindhi poets, it is known, used to sing Sindhi Kaafi in the durbars of Sheikh Farid and Nizamuddin Aulia. And of course there had been any number of ballads sung from generation to generation --- and improvised in the process.

The first major Sindhi poet was Qazi Kadan (d.1551), the scholar statesman of Bakhar. Most of his Dohas have been recovered from Bhagat Haridas's mutt, in village Ranela in the Bhiwani district of Haryana, after Independence. They are transcribed in the Devnagri script. He says: ``Let others study grammar, I only want to contemplate the Lord." He had no use for ``Qanz, Qaduri, Kafiyan" (Prophet's traditions, Hanifi law, and traditional grammatical poem); he found the Lord, he said, elsewhere. He says: ``Jogi jagayos, sutto huyus ninda mein" (The yogi woke me up when I was fast asleep).

Qazi Kadan influenced the great Hindu saint Dadu Dayal of Haryana, who himself has written some Sindhi poetry.

The next great poet-saint was Shah Abdul Karim (1536--1623). His guru was Sultan Ibrahim of Bihar, who was so disgusted with killing men in war that he renounced the world and arrived in Sindh. When his master presented him a pair of shoes, Abdul Karim had them re-made into a cap -so that he could wear it on his head, and not on his feet. Abdul Karim was a simple farmer; but he was a man of God. Once when his elder brother saw him dance in ecstasy, he slapped him and dragged him to his mother. The mother rebuked her elder son and told him that his brother was a spiritual man. Once a friend asked him how he could remember God while farming, and Abdul Karim explained: "When a woman carries a pitcher on her head, is she not able to walk and talk?" He said, "The Lord is nearer to you than your heart.... Separation and union are one and the same." Abdul Karim has left us only 93 verses. He was so Sindhi, he has used only 8 Persian and 30 Arabic root words. However, the greatest gift of Abdul Karim was his great-grandson, Shah Abdul Latif 'Bhitai'.

Shah Abdul Latif

Shah Abdul Latif [Shrine] (1689--1752) was not only the greatest poet of Sindh, he was probably the greatest Sindhi in history. As a poet he belongs to world class. His poetry is more valuable than all the other Sindhi literature put together. And he was not only a great poet; he was a great saint, a great nationalist, a great humanist. And at a pinch, he could be a humorist, too.

A Frenchman, who saw "Hamlet", said that the play was fine but the author had used too many quotations. He did not know that the "quotations" had been coined by the author Or "Hamlet" himself. So, too, with Shah. Many wise sayings, which are current coin in Sindhi, had been authored by Shah. Here was a Syed who spent three years visiting holy spots from Hinglaj to Dwarka. Except when he wore black during Moharrum, he draped himself in bhagwa. Atal and Chanchal, two singers from Delhi, played music in his durbar, despite orthodox displeasure.

Much of his poetry expresses the aspirant's seeking for God in terms of well-known ballads. In Islamic tradition the seeker and the sought are both males. But Shah followed the Indian tradition, in which the seeker is a woman. Most of Shah's heroines come from a "lower" strata than the heroes --- but they shine brighter. His "Sur Husseini" glorifies the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussain. "Not only men, but birds and animals and the angels in the skies, too, wept for them."

In "Sur Samundi," Shah immortalises the trading traditions of Sindh. "The monsoon is over. It is Diwali time and traders are preparing to set sail for distant lands. Their wives are bringing offerings to the waves with tearful eyes. Here they clasp the mast; there they say that without their lords, they will feel cold even in their quilts." But then he gives it a quick spiritual turn: "You must worship the Deep (God) if you wish to gain rubies and pearls.... They who worship the sea, they shall be fulfilled."

"Sur Ramkali" is devoted to the yogis. "They carry nothing with themselves, certainly not their own self (ego).... They have sewed up their hearts to Rama. . . For them joy is the same as sorrow; they offer arati with their tears of blood.... If you want to be a yogi, follow the guru, forget all desires and proceed to Hinglaj. The yogis respond to an ancient call that was given even before Islam; they have given up everything, to be one with Gorakhnath."

As a yogi himself, Shah looks upon the world with an equal eye. "Sorrows are the ornament of joys; I have no use for joys unmixed with sorrows.... Don't follow the beaten path; other people float downstream, you should swim upstream."

Shah has no use for formal Hindus and Muslims. He tells the Muslim hypocrites: "Faith does not consist in saying the 'Kalma'; with evil in your heart, you are a devil and not a Musalman." Likewise he tells hypocritical Hindus: "Don't call yourself a Hindu: you don't deserve your janeo. The tilak behooves only those who are true to God." He says: "Roza and Namaz are all right; but it is some other discipline that helps you see the Lord." On one occasion he had stopped the forcible conversion of a bania (trader) who was crying piteously.

With rain so sparse in Sindh, Shah invokes it again and again in 'Sur Sarang'. "The clouds should learn weeping from the lovers, whose eyes never dry." When it rains, it is bliss itself. "The pedigree horse is there in the yard, and out, there, is the buffalo; the house is shimmering in the plain; the bed smells good with my lord by my side; oh rain, go on pouring May I and my lord live long and equal."

In another verse, Shah prays for rain in Istanbul and Maghreb, China and Samarkand, Kabul and Kandhar, Delhi and Deccan, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, and Girnar, but above all in Sindh. "Saeen Sadaeen Karein Mathay Sindh Sukar" (Oh Lord, may you always confer plenty on Sindh). Here is the national poet of Sindh wishing the whole world well. He is only too right when he says that his poetry is not ordinary verses; they are 'ayats', inspired verses. Here is a rishi of recent times.

Sachal Sarmast

Another immortal poet of Sindh was Abdul Wahab (1739- 1829) well known as Sachal 'Sarmast' [Shrine] --- the True Intoxicated One. He was born in Darazan, near Khairpur, and spent all his life there. Here was a great Persian-Arabic scholar, who wrote much in Persian and then became an intoxicated Sufi thinker-poet. He became vegetarian, living mostly on pulses and curds. He

had no use for creeds and rituals. And he thirsted for Hindu-Muslim unity. At the beat of a drum and the pull of a string, he would stand up, his hair on end, and dance --- like Sri Ramakrishna. Poet Bedil, who saw him, later wrote, "There was a unique spectacle of love in Darazan. Sachal was like Mansur; he was an incarnation of love (Ishq Jo Avtar Ho)."

Sachal had no use for empty rituals. "The Kalma has not at all made me a Musalman; nor did Mohammed send any faith from Araby. I am the Truth --- though I am but a man for men." In another place he says: "If I read the Kalma, I will become a kafir. I will not set foot on the path of Mohammed." Elsewhere he says: "Why this Kaaba and Qibla? All these are excuses." He says: "One should seek knowledge even in China." Of mullahs and qazis he says: "I don't care for them. What do they know of divine love?" Seeing God in everything and everybody, he says: "If you look upon yourself as God, you are God; if you see yourself as a beggar, you are a beggar."

Although the British conquest of Sindh was decades away, Sachal could see the havoc they would play. He wanted the Hindus and the Muslims to unite to prevent such a catastrophe. "Time has come to overcome these divisions. Be quick to eschew all fruitless, graceless controversies. Let Hindus and Muslims commingle in love. Let it not be too late to save the situation." He adds: "If action is not taken in time, these foreigners will leave behind heaps of corpses." What a prophetic view of 1947, more than one hundred years before!

Sachal is in love with Jogis who have had "a true bath in Gan- ga-Jamuna. I would die a hundred times for this tribe of Jogis." He adds: "I am neither a mulla nor a Brahmin; nor even a page of the Koran. Not-for me the scripture or the Gita. I am neither east nor west, neither earth nor sky. I am a Jogi."

Some of Sachal's poetry is highly Sanskritized. He says: "Guru and Govind are the same." He talks of making your mind into a "mandir" and installing the "Devi" in your heart. He says "Sachu is a pujari of Porbandar." He writes: "O Sadhu, the Lord is one beyond all doubt. He enjoys the scene anywhere and is king at all points. Sometimes he will read the Hindu scriptures, sometimes the Koran. He can be Jesus as well as Mohammed --- and even Hanuman. He can create a bewilderment for His own self, for His own Lila." That was Sachal --- Sachu, the True one. To this day he is sung in congregations wherever there is a sizable Sindhi population, Hindu or Muslim.

The third great Sindhi poet was Chainrai "Sami" (1743--1850). Sami (Swami) was a cloth merchant of Shikarpur who spent much time in Amritsar. He wrote out his verses on bits of paper and put them in a "matka". Long after his death, these bits and pieces were edited and published. His entire poetry is religious. He had rendered the Vedic thought in simple Sindhi(" Vedan jaa vichar, se Sindhi mein sunayam"). Shah was an ocean of love and pining; Sachal was an ocean of wonderment; Sami was an ocean of pure bliss. Since then there have been many poets --- Bedil, Bekas, Dalpat, Kishenchand "Bewas". During the British period Sindhi prose attained great heights under Mirza Kalich Beg, Hakim Fateh Mohammed Khan Sewhani, Bherumal Mehrchand, Lalchand Amardinomal, Jethmal Parasram, N.R. Malkani and Dr. Gurbuxani.

The post-Partition period has thrown up two great poets. Says Narayan Shyam: "The Ganga and the Jamuna are all amrit, but the Sindhu is my mother's milk." And Sheikh Ayaz sings: "I belong to the religion of all men, all women and all children. I am everyone. I am as old as the hills of Aror. I am the 'madan-mast' plant which grew up wherever there fell the drops of blood shed by Ladi, wife of Dahir, fighting the ruthless Arabs. I am the cave of Goddess Kali's thousand idols which I wrought in stone and which I have been worshipping all my life."

Sindhi is alive. Sindhis are alive --- in India and in Pakistan. Sindh is alive too!



The Sindhi Revival

IN OCTOBER 1983, a Sindhi conference was held in New Delhi. It had the unusual distinction of being addressed by both, the President and the Prime Minister. Both of them indulged in fulsome praise of Sindhis for their "intelligence, enterprise and adaptability". Mrs. Gandhi recollected that way back in the Nineteen Thirties she had noticed a Sindhi shop even in an obscure village on the island of Sicily. Others had found a Sindhi enterprise even on Falkland Islands near the South Pole.

Zia-ul-Huq, the military ruler of Pakistan, denounced the conference as an attempt to aid and abet the revolt in Sindh. The fact is that the conference had been announced a whole year earlier, when nobody had imagined the 1983 upsurge in Sindh. Zia. even went on to say that the Sindhis in India were not "Sindhi". One of these days he might even decree that the Sindhis in Sindh are not Sindhi either --- having opted to become "Pakistani"!

However, the response of the leaders in India and Pakistan alike, to the Sindhi people, underlines one fact --- that the ten million Sindhis, of whom only one quarter are in India, are a significant factor in India, in Pakistan, and in Indo-Pak relations. The emigre Sindhis are a lively little Sindh --- Sindhuri --- in the lap of Bharat Mata.

Immediately after the Partition, Sindhis concentrated in Jodhpur and Ajmer, hoping that an unnatural thing such as Pakistan could not go on for long, and expecting to get back home quick from the proximity of Rajasthan. Bombay was considered too big, too expensive and too far away.

However, as the possibility of early annulment of Partition receded, they began to look for alternatives. One of these was Kandla Port, where the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation had been given land to build the city of Gandhidham. However, Rome was not built in a day; nor could even Gandhidham be built in a day, or a year, or even several years. And the impoverished refugees were in a hurry; they could not afford to wait for years. They, therefore, began to gravitate more and more towards Bombay. Here the barracks of Kalyan Camp, built to house the Italian prisoners of war during World War II, and now renamed Ulhasnagar, came very handy. The refugees could live here economically --- and make money in nearby Bombay.

Even as they tried to lift themselves up by their very bootstraps, many hearts failed. But before long, their will to live and make good prevailed. The challenge was great --- but their response was even greater. In Sindh we had heard of only a few companies such as Kaycee's Blue Star, Motwaney's Chicago Radio, and J.B. Mangharam's Biscuits. But in Gajra Gears, Krishna Steel, Advani Oerlikon, Weston TV, Westerworks, Esquire and India Book House, the Sindhi entrepreneurs have broken new ground and attained new heights. Before Partition, we could count the number of Sindhi Crorepatis on the fingers of one hand. Today, Ulhasnagar alone has more than forty Crorepatis. Their only

problem is that they cannot negotiate matrimonial alliances with Warden Road or Colaba --- or even Vile Parle!

Although Bombay is the "capital" of the Sindhis in India, they have spread themselves far and wide. There is hardly a town in India that does not have a cluster of Sindhi families. Some of them have captured subzi mandis (vegetable markets) and retail cloth trade; others have gone into transport business and civil contracts; still others are working brick-kilns; some of them have even penetrated the tribal areas in Central India and taught tribal women to wear blouses. Even in an off-beat place like Fyzabad (Ayodhya) they are so numerous and prosperous that their annual Jhoolay Lal procession is an event --- like a mini- Republic Day Parade --- to which the whole city looks forward with joyous expectation. Even as the Huguenots, the French Protestant refugees in England, gave an impetus to the British economy two hundred years ago, the Sindhi entrepreneurs have been an important catalytic agent of economic development in many areas of India.

Sindhi Business Houses have always been prominent abroad. Today they are more prominent than ever before. In 1947 the "Big Five" were Wassiamal Assoomull, Pohoomal Bros., Kishinchand Chellaram, J.T. Chanrai and K.A.J. Chotirmal. In the new "Big Five", Dhalamals and Bhojsons have replaced Wassiamal and Pohoomal. However, the richest Sindhi family today is the Hinduja brothers, evaluated at more than 1,000 crore rupees. The Janata Government needed them as much as the Congress Government, in their big foreign business deals. Moorjani of Hong Kong dominates the world Jeans market with a \$1 billion turn-over. The biggest builders in Miami, Florida, USA's poshest state, are Melwani and Shyam Sani. And Ram Kripalani with his booming business and famous charities, is the Uncrowned King of Trinidad in the West Indies. A popular Negro song, "Ram the Magician" broadcast by Trinidad radio, tells the local Prime Minister, George Chamber, among other things:

Everything Mr. Ram puts his hand to

Turns from a shack to a mansion.

So, George Chamber, you should see

Mr. Ram Kripalani.

If you can't run the country,

Call in Kripalani.

Today the Sindhi charities are keeping pace with the Sindhi riches. The good old Wattumull Foundation was always there. The Chanrais of Lagos have donated 30 lakh rupees to the Vivekananda Education Society of Bombay alone. The In-Laks Foundation (named after Indru and Lakshmi Shivdasani) has donated one crore of rupees for Sadhu Vaswani Hospital and Research Centre in Pune. It also gives 200 foreign scholarships every year. Kishinchand Shahani is a distinguished philanthropist who patronizes all good causes. From "Sharnarthis", the Sindhis have grown into "Pursharthis" and "Parmarthis".

What could be the reason for the dramatic success of Sindhis --- and Punjabis -- after the shattering shock of Partition? It is the same reason that enabled Japan and Germany to revive themselves after the trauma of defeat in World War II. This is, the mind of a people. Milton described it long back as "the unconquerable will, never to submit or yield". The Sindhi considers it his Fundamental Right to Succeed. Given this frame of mind, men can make gold even out of dust.

Nor have they confined themselves to making money and instituting charities. They have established some of the finest institutions in Bombay and

elsewhere. The Wattumull Institute of Computer Technology and Engineering has equipment worth two crore of rupees. Thanks to Hotchand Gopaldas and Khushi Kundnani, the Sindhis have not only set up a dozen colleges in Bombay, their Jai Hind College and K.C. College are two of the best colleges in India's premier city. Jaslok Hospital (named after Jasoti --- Sindhization of Yashoda --- and Lokumal) is the most famous in the country.

The Vivekananda Education Society of Bombay and the Mira Education Society of Pune are two of the more significant Sindhi services in the realm of education.

Ownership flat system is a Sindhi innovation in Bombay. Raheja Bros. alone have put up a thousand buildings on this basis. And Jethi Sipahimalani's Navjiwan Housing Colonies in Mahim, Chembur and Bombay Central are a marvel of cooperative enterprise in the field of housing. Atur Sangtani of Pune is not only big in construction, he runs The Poona Herald.

However, the greatest builder of them all was Bhai Partap who built the twin cities of Adipur (residential) and Gandhidham (commercial) for Kandla Port. Ram Nagrani, I.P.S., has been put in charge of the newly constituted National Security Guards --- to handle situations like the one in Punjab.

Individual Sindhis have also made a name in various walks of life. Dr. Menda presided over the Indian Medical Association and Prof. G.R. Malkani, over the Indian Philosophical Congress. Ram Jethmalani led the Indian Bar Council for years.

Sewakram Karamchand as general secretary of Servants of People Society became one of the "Sapta Rishi" (Seven Rishis) who, with Bhimsen Sachar, was detained in 1975 during the Emergency. Jiwanlal Jairamdas has devoted his life to Harijan Sewak Sangh. Dada Sewak Bhojraj keeps the torch of Balkanji- Bari alive along with his Bapu Village for the tribals.

Today G.G. Mirchandani heads the UNI (United News of India), a leading national news agency. Business India is run by Ashok Advani. Prof. K. N. Vaswani leads the Vivekananda" Rock Memorial Committee in Kanyakumari. Hari Atmaram is a trustee of Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Justice Nain presided over the MRTPC (Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission); Justice Chainani over the Bombay High Court; and Justice Thadhani over the Assam High Court. T.M. Advani became Vice-Chancellor of Bombay and Kashmir universities. K.L. Punjabi became Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, and Sadhwani, of Gujarat. Ms. Dr. K.A. Advani is Principal of the 125-year-old Government Law College of Bombay, the biggest and best in Asia.

T.V. Mansukhani heads HMT (Hindustan Machine Tools), M.J. Pherwani heads Ashok Leyland; Samat(-ani) is No. 2 in Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited; R.G. Keswani is president, All India Electrical Manufacturers' Association. G.S. Ramchand led Indian cricket. T.N. Idnani was the member for Power in the Central Water and Power Commission.

M. K. Kripalani was ambassador in Canada, Khilnani in Kenya and Vishnu Ahuja in Russia.

There are not only Maj.-Gen. Hira and Vice-Admiral Tahliani, Admiral Nanda -- the victor of the sea war in 1971, when Bangladesh was formed --- loves to speak Sindhi with the Sindhis. When asked how he managed to blockade Karachi, he said: "I know every inch of Karachi harbour."

Before Partition very few Sindhis --- Bhudo Advani, Hari Shivdasani --- had made a name in the movies. Today G.P. Sippy is a leader of the film industry, closely followed by N.C. Sippy and several others.

Leading film directors include Govind Nihalani ("Aakrosh"), Raj Sippy, Ramesh Sippy, Kumar Shahani. Leading Sindhi cine artists include Sudhir, Mach Mohan, Raj Kiran (Mahtani) Asrani, Sheila Ramani, Babita, Sadhana.

In the religious field, Dada Jashan Vaswani, Sant Lila Shah, Holy Guru Nanak Mission. Dada Chellaram's "Nij Thanw", Brahmakumaris, and several other organisations are so many beacons of spiritual light. The week-long celebrations at Majnuka-Tilla in Delhi, are a new high in Sindhi religious consciousness

In the field of literature, Kalyan Advani, M. 11. Malkani Lekhraj Aziz, Tirath Basant, Ram Punjwani Haru Sadarangani, Popati Hiranandani, Gobind Malhi, Narayan Shyam and several others have been duly honoured by the Sahitya Akademi.

In Sindh, Pokardas served Sindhi literature with his innumerable publications. After Partition, H.G. Mirchandani of India Book House has, through Amar Chitra Katha, introduced a whole new generation to the glories of Indian history and culture.

Krishna Kripalani has presided over Sahitya Akademi and he now guides the National Book Trust.

Bulo Rani, Shanti Hiranand, C.H. Atma, Master Chander, Kamla Keswani, Bhagwanti Nawani, Deepika Kripalani, Chainani Sisters and Hoondraj 'Dukhayal' have put new life in Sindhi music.

In politics, while Acharya Kripalani was a colossus, Jairamdas served with distinction as member of Parliament, cabinet minister and governor. L.K. Advani shone not only as minister for Information and Broadcasting, he is in the front rank of Indian politics. Hashu Advani occupies a similar position in Maharashtra. Sucheta Kirpalani, Dr. Choithram, Prof. N.R. Malkani, Ram Jethmalani, Krishna Kripalani have made their name in Parliament. And Bhanu Kumar Shastri stormed Sukhadia's citadel in Udaipur to enter the Lok Sabha with a bang in 1977.

Oscar Wilde has said that all of us have five senses, but that unless we have the sixth sense to make money, we cannot make good use of the other five senses. The Sindhis have acted very well on this adage.

They are not very prominent in the services. This could be due to discrimination --- or due to the feeling that there is no money even in the highest services. However, they have partly made up for this by the universality of literacy. A Sindhi who cannot read and write will be hard to find. Also most of them are not just dubhashis, bilingual; they are regular chatur-bhashis,, quadri-lingual. They know their Sindhi and their Hindi; they know the local language --- whether it is Gujarati or Marathi, Tamil or Telugu -- - and they generally know English. This has helped them in business --- and in

social integration. It has made for psychological rehabilitation, after the uprooting of 1947. There have been many distinguished marriage alliances with non-Sindhis.

Pre-Partition Sindh had witnessed Acharya's marriage to Sucheta Majumdar, Krishna Kripalani's to Nandita, Tagore's grand-daughter, and Gopi Mukhi's to Gauba of Lahore. Later Sundari Bhavnani (Triveni Kala Sangam) married Krishnalal Shridharani. Kamla Malkani married Lokpati --- and- became Kamlapati Tripathi's ``Banut. Vishnu Ahuja married Nuruddin's daughter Amina. Bhai Pratap's daughter Nirmala married Balu Patwardhan, brother of Achhyut Patwardhan, Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma, married Usha Kukreja of Larkana. Shirin Advani married Jehangir, son of M.C. Chagla. And in the film world Sadhana Shivdasani married Nayyar, Babita Shivdasani married Randhir Kapoor and Poonam Chandiramani married Shatrughan Sinha.

Some Sikh intellectuals --- for example, Khushwant Singh --- have a feeling that Sindhis have become less Sikh after Partition. They have -and they have not. The Sindhi response to Akali tantrums in the Punjab is certainly negative. But even then, in Bombay, Pune and elsewhere, Sindhis are very prominent in celebrating Guru Nanak Jayanti. They have set up several Sindhi gurdwaras, including ``Nij Thanw" on Pusa Road in New Delhi. But it is also true that Sikhism no longer occupies a near-monopolistic position in Sindhi religious perception. For one thing, even before Partition, while reading Gurbani and visiting gurdwaras, the Sindhis always read other Hindu scriptures and bowed to all gods and pilgrimaged to all shrines. They were ``Shishyas" (disciples) that is ``Sikhs" of the guru; with few exceptions, they were not Khalsas or Sardarjis.

In addition, after Partition, the Sindhis have felt the need for identity. They have, therefore, revived the old Sindhi patron- saint of Jhoolay Lal. Today the

portraits of Guru Nanak and Jhoolay Lal are found side by side in Sindhi temples and homes.

Also, the Sindhis like to adapt to the local scene. They like to be always "sugar-in-milk" with the locals. In the north, they apply "Sindhur" in the 'Maang' (hair-divide). In Bombay, the Sindhi women have learnt to wear Mangalsutra from the Maharashtrians, something unknown to them in Sindh. Likewise they have taken to Ganesh festival with gusto. The Sindhi child in Maharashtra will sing "Dhan Guru Nanak Jag Tariyo" (Glory unto Guru Nanak who saved the world); but he will also chant: "Ganpati Bapa Moriya, Purcha Varshi Laukariya" (Oh lord Ganesha, come ,soon next year). It is at once natural and desirable; it is typical Hindu.

Even more important than Sindhi economic revival as an element in the emergence of the Sindhi factor in India and in Pakistan, is the growth of Sindhi consciousness. India is a land of infinite identities. Even after centuries, the Sindhis will still be known as "Sindhis" --- though many of them may not be able to speak Sindhi. In this situation the Sindhi feels for his roots --- and likes to nourish them.

The tendency towards the unity of all Sindhis is nourished by the thought that Hindus and Muslims in Sindh didn't have hard feelings towards each other. It was a pretty peaceful and good-natured co-existence. Even the Arya Samaj elders would say first thing in the morning --- "Hindu Mussalman Jo Khair" (May all be well with the Hindus and the Muslims).

This growing realization of the unity of all Sindhis --- as an integral part of all Indians --- is being felt both in India and in Pakistan. The Sindhi Muslims remember the Hindus with nostalgia. Sindhi Hindus in India reciprocate the

feeling. This does not mean that Sindhi Hindus are planning to get back to Sindh in the foreseeable future. Once bitten twice shy. But it does visualise a normalisation of India's relations with Sindh. It could be G.M. Syed's plan of confederation. The Bharatiya Sindhu Sabha conference in Bombay in 1981 asked for commemoration stamps not only for Hemu Kalani and Bhagat Kanwar Ram, but also for Shah Abdul Latif and Shahid Allah Bux. They suggested reopening of the Khokhrapar railway track, linking Sindh to Rajasthan. Many suggested visiting Sindh as tourists and as pilgrims --- to Sadhbela and Hinglaj, Debal and Mooan-jo-daro. (When A.B. Vajpayee was minister for External Affairs, he had put Pakistan on notice to allow pilgrims to Sindh, or face reconsideration of Nehru-Liaqat Pact.) Others suggested bringing "Sindhujal" and Sindhu soil as sacred mementos. In this new situation many even shouted the hope: "Next Year in Sindh!"

The story of Sindh is that interesting. And in the next few years it promises to be even more interesting --- and important!

Appendix: Report on G M Syed's Delhi Visit

Thanks to Shri Jhamatmal Wadhwani's call from Bombay on Saturday morning, July 4, 1987, about a dozen of us, including some ladies, were able to greet G.M. Syed, the Grand Old Man of Sindh, at Palam. He was accompanied by his son Imdad, PA and his Secretary, Allar Soomar Thebo. We even managed a quick bouquet. Syed looked pleased to be received by Sindhis. There was nobody from the government side to receive him.

We drove him to Kanishka Hotel and introduced ourselves to him. Here he was received as a state guest and a car was put at his disposal. He wanted to see Badshah Khan as soon as possible. We rang, up Yunus' residence and were told to come straight away, Syed was helped into his special shoes, and then another call came, suggesting, the meeting at 6 PM, "when AIR and TV men will also be there." When I went to see him in the evening, I was told by Allar that Badshah Khan had suffered a stroke and that the Prime Minister had rushed him to All India Medical Institute. Syed had already gone to AIIMS and now Allar and I also went there. Later that evening I took them to a nice Sindhi cultural show at Kamani Hall. He was welcomed and garlanded and he made appropriate remarks.

The following day I contacted several editors; most of them took special interviews and published them. I also arranged kuldeep's and BBC interviews for him. Sindh received more coverage in the Indian Press in July 1987 than ever before or after. AIR approached Syed Sahib for an interview to be beamed to Sindh. I was asked to do the interviewing. I drafted 15 questions for him and he prepared the answers, which he later read out in the studio. I suggested to the AIR Director that he should also be interviewed in Hindi and English for the Indian public. The Director asked me to repeat the first five questions in English-to be broadcast by our External Services. That AIR should broadcast his views on freedom of Sindh and confederation of Sindh with India, was a pleasant surprise for me.

On his second day in Delhi, Nari Thadhani held a reception for him at his Mayfair residence. It was a top class catering, of about sixty, attended, among others, by Ram Nao-rani, Anand Hingorani, Sevakram, Asrani (Joint Secy, Ministry of External Affairs). Shanti Hiranand gave beautiful Sindhi music. Everybody introduced himself/herself at some length. Syed spoke briefly and answered questions. It was a very y pleasant evening.

Lal Advani came and saw Syed, who was delighted. Two days later, on July 10, Lal brought Dandawate, Upendra, Unnikrishnan and Dipen Goswami, leading MPs, to see him. They suggested another meeting- with more MPs.

The following day Balkavi Vairagi, Congress MP, came to see him. They suggested a larger MPs' audience for him. Later Balkavi told me that Moopanar had suggested MPs seeing him in small groups. He said he would speak to Jakhar, for a bigger meet of MPs. However, the Presidential poll was on and I left for Nagpur, and so this bigger MPs' meet did not materialize. Syed was sorry that there was no photographer around when Advani came; he was also sorry, not to be able to pay a return visit to Lal because of the latter's preoccupation.

I took Prof. Rajendra Singh of RSS, to see him. Syed chatted with him and presented him a copy of his 'Religion, a Reality'.

The Freedom Fighters Organization held a special reception for him at Vithalbhai Patel House on July 10. It was a nice big function. Here I saw Nirmala Deshpande (who used to be Vinoba's intermediary with Indira). She was keen to meet Syed. The following day I arranged a special interview for her. Bahuguna came and saw him-with a photographer!

Syed was honoured by Sindhu Samaj at Sindhu Bhavan, Rajendranagar, on July 8. There was music by Kan Motihar, speech by Syed, questions and answers, more music. Some people started dancing. Many offered "Ghor". It was a delightful function, attended by about one hundred. He was presented a silk dupatta.

I asked some Seths of Subzi Mandi to see him on July 7. It was a small but warm group. Some of them asked him if a certain 'Marhi' in Rohri had been burnt. He said people had gone mad; one of them went and burnt the Koran in the local masjid in his ancestral Sann. When asked what he was doing, the man said he was lighting one more Lamp! Syed added that when refugees attacked some Hindu shops and houses in reaction to Meerut, Sindhi youths came out and shooed the rioters away. Since then, those properties had been repaired. The meet ended with a prayerful "palao paayo".

The PM met Syed. I asked him how the meeting went. He said he had spoken for one hour but Rajiv did not utter one word. It is not clear whether Rajiv does not know anything about the Sindh problem or he didn't want to commit himself to anything. He said Rajiv was late from his meeting with Opposition leaders. He was very tired. Syed suggested meeting him some other time, but Rajiv said he'd be alright after he had washed his eyes. And so the meeting, continued.

The Bar Association of the Supreme Court invited him. About one hundred lawyers attended. They presented him a nice sandal-wood garland, which I persuaded Syed to take home.

When I returned from Nagpur and called on him on 16th morning, I found Narendra Kumar of Vikas publications with him. He had come to invite him to do a book on Sindh - following 2 Vikas books by Wali Khan, then in the press. Syed suggested that his latest book in Sindhi, "Pakistan Should Now Break Up" should be translated in English and published. Narendra said it was only a pamphlet. I suggested that somebody should read all his books (52 written; only 35 of these published - some of them proscribed) and then collate, edit and produce an old- new book. Syed said I should do this. His secretary said they'll consult Kirat Babani and let me know. There that matter rested.

The following day he was leaving. I invited him to dinner. We were about fifteen. Nana Deshmukh also attended. Here we presented him a shawl. The following day we saw him off. We were three-Acharya Bhagvande, Chaturvedi, MP, convener of AICC's Foreign Cell, asked by the PM to see him off, and myself.

On July 16, he asked for Mira and Kabir songs in Arabic script. I was not able to get them. I hope he got them in Bombay. He also wanted Nimano Faqir's compilation of Sachal (Baroda). I could not arrange that either.

I asked him if he would like to have Ramayana and Mahabharat, and he said he already had them.

One day I must have said 'Hari Om' etc. He asked me what 'Hari' meant. I told him it was a name of 'Krishna', since 'haran' meant 'to steal', and child Krishna had stolen butter. He asked for other names of Krishna and I told him some. On another occasion he asked Nanaji how many names Krishna had and he was told he had one thousand names.

More than once I heard him say he believed in life after death. I asked him how he reconciled that with the concept of 'Qiamat' and he said there were many cycles of life and death before Qiamat.

He had brought 3 tapes of Sindhi patriotic songs. Nari got several copies of these made, which Syed gave to AIR, Shanti Hiranand, myself and some others.

Anand Hingorani said to him in good humour : "I have come to protest. You had moved the resolution in favour of Partition in the Sindh Assembly. You are responsible for our leaving Sind." Syed said: "I plead guilty. But even a murderer gets only 20 years; I have already suffered 22 years."

I met him morning and evening and put him many questions.

In the beginning, Syed used to say he was against democracy. He said this because, democratically, Punjabis out-numbered all others in Pakistan. I told him his opposition to "democracy" will be misunderstood. I suggested to him that he should say that Freedom (of Sindh) must come first; only then there can be true democracy. He did not oppose 'democracy', as such, after that.

Here are some of the other questions I put him - and his answers:

Q. Why did you leave the Congress and join the Muslim League?

A. We expected the Congress to help us enact laws to protect the peasantry. When Congress did not help us, we felt frustrated and joined the League. (The expectation was unrealistic because most of the MLAs, both Hindu and Muslim, were Zamindars.)

Q. Why did you leave the League?

A. Even when I was in the League, I had maintained relations with Congress leaders. When Congress adopted the Quit India resolution, Jinnah called a meeting of the League Working Committee. Here Jinnah moved a resolution, saying that the 'Quit India resolution was directed against Muslims, and not against the British. I spoke against this resolution, and so did some others but Jinnah said he had given word to the British, never to come to terms with the Congress. Therefore, this resolution must be adopted. While other critics fell silent, I insisted on my vote of dissent being recorded. It is still there. I began to feel more and more that Jinnah was serving British interests and not Muslim interests. I, therefore, left the League in 1945.

Q. Was Khuhro responsible for the murder of Allah Bux? In Gandhiji's 'Complete Works', there are references to Khuhro being defended by Bhulabhai Desai.

A. Is that so? Can you give me those references? (The same were given to Syed). Actually Allah Bux and Bhagat Kanwar Ram and Pamnani were all murdered by Janu Jalbani, a fanatical follower of the Pir of Bhirchundi. The Pir had converted some Hindu boys. At the instance of some people, these converts were taken out in procession in Sukkur. The Hindus of Sukkur resented this, and beat up the son of Bhirchundi. The Pir's followers took this as an insult to the Pir and these murders followed.

Q. Why are you more opposed to Bhutto than to Zia?

A. When a Bhutto is in power, people get a false sense of power and democracy. Actually it is Punjabis who move the strings of Bhutto or his daughter. When, on the other hand, a Zia is in power, people see it as a Punjabi, and an Army-man, in power. I consider veiled Punjabi rule more dangerous than an open one, because it hides facts and deceives the people. I am interested in change of system-from a centralized Pakistan to a confederal one-and not just a change of rulers-from Zia to Benazir.

Q. Why, you think, Zia let you come?

A. I do not know. When I was ailing last year, Badshah. Khan had come to see me in Sann. When, therefore, he fell ill, I wanted to come and see him. I wrote to the Government of Pakistan. They took 20 days to reply to my application. I had not expected an okay, and I was pleasantly surprised. One reason could be that they expect me to speak out here-and they plan to punish me for that when I return to Sindh. Fact, however, is that I speak more in Sindh than I do here. Another reason could be that they have nothing against me. What I say, I say publicly, and I have been saying it for years. I am a man of non-violence. Sindhi youths are impatient. They think I am weak. But I know that if there is a physical confrontation, we will be crushed. Gen. Tikka Khan is saying that they want Sindh, and not Sindhis. Nasrullah is another Punjabi fanatic. Ex-Air Marshal Asghar speaks the same language.

Q. Zia called on you when you broke your leg.

A. Yes, he did-in Karachi. And he said he will call on me in my native Sann also. But he has not. And you know why? Half a dozen Punjabi women demonstrated outside his residence,-urging him not to see an "enemy of Pakistan like O.M. Syed." Such is the power of public opinion. That is why I want Sindhis in Delhi etc. to demonstrate against Pakistan embassy, when they harass us. That will create world opinion against Pakistan-and encourage Sindhi nationalists in their struggle.

Syed Saheb also recollected an interesting experience with Gandhi. It was sometime in 1945. Gandhiji was staying in Bhangi Colony. Syed, Maula Bux and Bhurgri Jr. went to see him early in the morning. Gandhiji had already had his prayer etc. Maula Bux said they wanted to speak to him all alone. Gandhiji said, "There will be nobody else here, except God. "

After the talk, Bhurgri went to see Jinnah, who had been a dear friend of his father-who had been Congress General Secretary, when Dr. Annie. Besant was Congress President-and whom he addressed as 'Uncle'. He found the outer gate locked. From inside, he was greeted by a barking dog. When he told the durban that Jinnah was his 'Chacha', he was told that Chacha or no Chacha, he could not see him, as he had no appointment. Syed said, Bhurgri came back and said: "'Kafir' Gandhi had taken his bath and said his 'namaz' (prayer), but 'Momen' Uncle Jinnah was still asleep, with only his dog to greet you."

Syed was a Sufi; but he was also very much of a Theosophist. Many of his friends were members of Theosophical Lodge, Karachi. They included Jethmal Parsram, Jamshed, Tahilramani, PM Advani (of Karachi's School for the Blind). One of his frequent callers in Delhi was Ann (full name, Anandamai Advani) daughter of PM Advani, working with Tourism Department. He told her jocularly that her father and he were both fond of Ruki, who eventually married PM. When asked why he failed, he said it was too bad, he was already married. Syed had particularly fond memories of Jethi Sipahimalani. He had

prepared a book on her life and collected her letters to him. It is yet to be published. He told me a few anecdotes of Jethi

1. "One day Jethi, Jethrnal, Abdul Majid and I were sitting together. In the argument that followed, I was cornered. Jethi turned to me and said 'you are surrounded by three Jethas', (Jeshtha, big one). Sheikh Abdul Majid's original name was Jethanand!

2. "On another occasion I happened to shed tears over something. And Jethi said: "Syeds are a weepy lot". I said "How?" And quick came the retort: "Don't you beat your breasts every year, crying Ya Ali! Ya Hussain!"

3. "On a third occasion, many of us were sitting with Khuhro, then CM. We were all taking tea, but Jethi did not touch anything. When Khuhro asked her why, she said she could not forget that he had been accused of murdering Allah Bux. Khuhro told her that even Allah Bux's son and brother met him and dined with him. Jethi told her, min could be hard-hearted; they could be 'Dodo Chanesars' (who had betrayed Sindh to Allauddin Khilji); but not she! "He said Jethi had written to him, not to leave Sindh out of disgust, and come over to India. "Sentimentality", she wrote, "won't do. We have no 'izzat' here." Syed said that when Partition was announced, Kripalani had come to Sindh. "We were all sitting in Bhai Pratap's house. Abdul Majid wondered what had gone wrong. And Kripalani said we had unleashed forces that we could not control."

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