CHAPTER - I

INDIA AND THE GULF REGION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This is a famous statement, 'Political Science without History has no root'. Hence, to provide an insight into the contemporary relations between India and the Gulf countries historical antecedents have also to be taken into account. For academic convenience the present chapter as different from the ensuing ones, is divided into two parts- relations between India and Iran and relations between India and Arab world.

... RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND IRAN

The Indo- Iranians bore the common national name Arya and they appear to have been homogeneous in race. The ancient scripture, of the Hindus and Parsees throw some light on the origin and early history of Aryas. According to the tradition of Vendidad the ancestors of the Iranians lived in fifteen other countries turn by turn. One of these countries was Haptahindu, i.e., Saptasindhu, the cradle land of Indo- Aryan civilization. This is the clearest proof of the fact that the Aryan ancestors of the Iranians were once a part and parcel of the Aryans of Saptasindhu before they finally settled in Iran. Excessive heat created in this region by Angra Mainyu was, according to the testimony of the Vendidad, the reason why the ancestors of the Iranians left this country, but this could not have been the only reason, there are other reasons as well.

It is well known fact that whereas in the later Vedic and Sanskrit literature the words Deva and Asura mean god and demon respectively, in the Avesta the two words convey just the opposite senses. There are good grounds

1. The handbook of the Parsees.
2. Bhargava, P.L., The Origin and Early History of Indo-Iranian Peoples', one of the papers published in the book 'INDO-Iran' and presented at the Congress of Iranologists and Indologists (4-6 October 1971) in New Delhi on the Occasion of the 2550th Anniversary of the founding of Monarchy in Iran, New Delhi, p. 2
to believe that the use of these two words in the opposite senses by the Indians and the Iranians was the result of a schism which was perhaps one of the causes of the separation of the two branches of the Aryan race. It is however, clear that before schism took place the two words must have been used by the united Aryas in the same. This is exactly what we find in the bulk of the Rigveda which calls every one of its great gods both Deva and Asura. This can only mean that in the earlier part of the Rigveda age the ancestors of the Indians and the Iranians were still one people without any religious differences. Since the hymns of the Rigveda were composed in the region of Saptasindhu, the united Indo-Aryans must have been living in this region before the great split. Thus the evidence furnished by the history of these two words supports the conclusion that we have reached on the testimony of the Vendidad and supplies an added reason for the exodus of the Iranians from Saptasindhu. That the words Deva and Asura began to be used in opposite senses by the two sections of the Aryas as a result of schism is proved by the later Vedic and Puranic literature. There is mention both in the Brahmanas and Puranas of a long conflict between the Devas and the Asuras. The fact that the leaders of the conflict were Aryan kings shows that it was really a conflict between two sections of Aryas, one worshipping the divinity under the name of Deva and the other under the name of Asura. It is thus clear that the Aryan ancestors of the Indians and the Iranians have bequeathed to us a magnificent tradition of which we can justly be proud.

The earliest Indo-Iranian relations date from the chalcolithic age when the Indus Valley civilization displayed remarkable similarity with

1. Ibid. p. 3
the second pre-Diluvian culture of Elam. Indus Valley seals have been discovered in the ruins of Elam. The Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family had lived long in a common habitat either around the upper reaches of the Tigris where the Zob meets it and from where it lent its gods and numerals to the covenanters of Boghas-koI or in the vast 'doab' of the rivers Vahvi-Datiya and Manha, the Oxus and Jaxartes, which the Indo-Iranians called their dear land Eranvej. The memory of that common dwelling kept recurring to the Aryans long after they had settled down in the Sapt-Sindu in terms like Prithus and Parsus, the Parthians and Persians, in the Rigveda. A large number of common-cult-words was so persistently used in the Rigveda that Hillebrandt was forced to suggest that these parts of the Rigveda, in which Iranian names and terms occur were composed already in Iran.

In course of time the bonds snapped and the lands drifted away from each until they were brought together again by the achaemenids. Arjan records that Indians between the rivers Indus and Gophen, the Sindhu and Kabil were in ancient times subject to the Assyrians, the Medes, and finally to the Persians under Cyrus to whom they paid tribute he imposed on them. After the Assyrians had been to sword and their capital at Nineveh set on fire by the Medes and Babylon of Belshezzar had met its holocaust following the writing on the wall, the achaemenians laid claims to the land of the Indus and conquered it. Gandhara, Punjab and Sind now became the newly acquired satrapies of the empire of Darius I , as evidenced by his epigraphs of Persepolis and Nakhsh-i-Rustam, yielding 360 hundredic talents of gold dust amounting to

a million pound starting, about half the entire revenue of his extensive
dominions. The empire extended from southern Russia to the cataracts
of the Nile and from the Danube to the Indus, and within these bounds
Greeks, Persians, Sakas, Iranians, Indians all were forced to meet
as citizens. Indian mercenaries roamed the coasts of the Caspian
and skirmished with the wild Scythians and the Khudrakas of the Ravi
were deployed beyond the Hindu Kush. Indians fought under Xerxes and Darius
III at the battles of Thermopylae and Guagamels and shared the Persian
defeat. They battled under the command of the Persian Phraezathres, son
of Artabates, and took part in the Boeotian campaign under the Iranian
commander Mardoni. Indian caravans roamed round the Caspian, across
the Samarra on to the towns of Aleppo, Sidon and Tyre, to Corinth and
along the Danube, and merchants from Syria s rambled up hill and down
dale to reach Ujjain where they unbuckled and sold their wares.

Going by the preceding discussions it can be inferred that there
are perhaps no two countries in the world which have had such close and
long contacts as Iran and India. These contacts date from even before
the dawn of history, stemming from such common denominators as racial
origin, traditions, philosophy, language and literature. Among different
parts of the country Gujrat has got special relationship with Iran.

True, Gujrat's name itself has associations with the Gujar tribe
of Iran that inhabited the region of Gujistan (after which it was so
called), situated near the Caucasus Mountains in the west of the Caspian
Sea. In Gujarati, the name used for these people is Gurjaras. They, along
with other class, poured in from Iran into India between the 5th and
6th centuries A.D. and spread into different directions and ultimately

5. Ibid, p.57-58.
6. Imperial Gazetteer, Vol.,I, p.201 (1909)
made their home in different places inclusive of the region of what is known as present Gujrat. The majority of the population of Gujrat is constituted of the Hindus. The ancestors of the Hindus and the Iranians had originally belonged to the great Indo-European family that lived together for many centuries under the same skies, in the vast pasture lands of Central Asia. Thereafter the Indo-Iranians lived for a long time as one race, speaking the same language and following the same religion. There was a great split among them, which led to the subsequent formation of the two well-known religious groups, the Iranians who stayed on in Iran and the Hindus who penetrated to the south and spread all over India of which Gujarat forms a part. Their language was bifurcated into Avesta and Sanskrit respectively.

So far as the political history of Gujrat is concerned, the Satraps of Saurashtra and Gutch like these of other places assumed independent authority after the conquest of Alexander and acknowledged the suzerainty of the Iranian empire—first of the Parthians and later of the Sassanians. The sway of these Satraps is attested to by the discovery in Saurashtra of Parthian coins dating from the beginning of the Christian era bearing the impression of the firepan which was the stamp of the Iranian Kings. In the history of Gujrat, the period of three centuries beginning from A.D. 78 is shown as the 'Kshatrapa (Satrap) period. That rule in Gujrat extended upto A.D. 400. The first Kshatrapa king of Gujrat and Saurashtra was the Iranian Nahapana.

7. Name of the original land of Iran
The arrow and thunderbolt on his coins connect him with the Parthians.

The next noteworthy prominent Kshatrapa was Chashtana who was succeeded by Jayadaman and he by the well-known Rudradaman I who was the greatest of Kshatrapas and ruled about A.D. 150 over a vast dominion.

In the (A.D. 625) the empire of the Sassanians was brought to an end by the Arabian invasion of Persia. The last Zarathushtrian king Yazdugird III became a homeless fugitive and was hunted from place to place, till he was murdered for love of filthy lucre by a low-bread miller. One of his daughters named Moh-barni is said to have fled to India with a few companions. According to a tradition, she married a Hindu prince and became the ancestress of the Sisodias of Udaipur, the bravest and the most famous among the Rajput families some of which have their homes in Gujrat as well. The Arab persecution of the Zarathushtrians and the consequent threat to the security of life, to the self-respect and independence of non-Muslims went on increasing and became unendurable. They left their homes and a large group migrated to Gujrat where they established the Parsi community which assumed a lofty position among the people of Gujrat.

There is no authentic detailed account of this migration in recorded history. But there is a small but well-known Persian poem of 864 verses entitled Qissa-i-Sanjan (Episode of Sanjan) written in A.D. 1599, by a Persian priest of 'Navsari (one of the main centres of this community in Gujrat today) named Behman Kaqabud Harmuzdyar Sanjana.

11. Ibid., p. XXIV
The relevant pieces of information given in the poem are as follows:

When the Arabs conquered Iran, some pious souls escaped from the turmoil and established themselves for a hundred years in the hilly region of Khurān. As the Arab menace too imminent, they left that place and settled for fifteen years at the part of Harmuz (or Ormuz). But when there, too, they found the conditions still disquieting, at the advice of a sagacious Dastur, well-versed in astrology, a large band of the Iranians with women and children boarded ships, sailed away from Harmuz and landed at the port of Diu on the coast of Saurashtra. There they stayed for nineteen years, and again sailed away in search of a more suitable place. During their voyage they were caught in a terrible storm and so they offered prayers to God vowing to build on Atish Bahram (the fire of Bahram, i.e., the cathedral fire temple) if their lives were spared. Their prayers were heared and they happened to land safely at a port named Sanjan. According to a tradition Jadi Rana the then king of the palace was reluctant to admit them into his kingdom as nothing about their antecedents was known. With a view to evade their entrance as politely as possible, he sent them a cup of milk full to the brim, gently insinuating thereby that there was no accommodation for refugees in his kingdom just as there was no room in the cup of milk. Their sagacious leader quietly sprinkled a handful of sugar into it, thereby suggesting that just as the sugar sweetened the milk, they would harmonize their interests with those of their fellow people. The king was pleased to hear the reply and generously vouchsafed them the protection they needed on these conditions: the adoption of the regional language of Gujar, the consent to adopt also for their w
the dress worn by women of Gujarat, the reunification of arms for a life of peaceful industry and performance of the nuptial ceremony in evenings. In reply they promised to remain friends of India. Some five years later the Parsees decided to build a temple for their sacred fire (Atish Lehren) and the Rana gave them all the facilities for construction thereof. This sacred fire came to be described by the Parsees of Gujarat under the eponymous designation of Iranshah (the King of Iran) as being the symbol of their ancient religion and empire. After a long stay at Sanjan, extending over some generations, many of the Parsees are said to have migrated to the towns of Navsari, Surat, Broach, Cambay and other centres of Gujarat.

Ever since their settlement they never ignored their Iranian co-religionists from whom from time to time they have been seeking guidance and enlightenment and thereby keeping up their contact with Iran, and the people of Gujarat have been sharing the joys and merriments of the observance of their festivals of Navroze and others. The Parsees excepting in the matter of religion lead almost the same kind of life as their Hindu brethren today. They are for all practical purposes the inhabitants of Gujarat, speaking and writing the same language and their contribution to Gujarati literature is considerable in bulk and distinguished in quality.

After the establishment of Muslim regime in Gujarat, the cultural contact between Iran and Gujarat kept on developing under the fostering care of several noted Sultans, the last of whom was Bahadurshah (A.D. 152-1537), one of the ablest rulers of the time. After his death, during the rule of the weak Sultans that followed, there was confusion throughout the

the kingdom. Taking advantage of that, Akbar, the Mughal emperor, conquered it and annexed to his empire in A.D. 1572. There Sultans in general and the Mughal emperors and their subedars in particular were renowned for their magnificent patronage of men of letters.

These descriptions lead us to conclude that we have been having close relations with Iran for a long time and Gujarat has been the key part of India so far as genesis of this relationship is concerned. This close contact is time-tested and deep rooted unchallenged by any upheavals, crises and revolutions in international politics.

3 RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND ARAB WORLD:

For India the 7th century A.D. was a period of political disruption and decline. The glorious years of the Mauryas and the Guptas had ceased to be, but the literary and scientific achievements of the Indians during these periods were known, though vaguely, to the Arabs also, for they are referred to in the Arabic literature that followed in the Middle East subsequently. The period of marsha coincided with that of prophet Mohammad in Hijaz. While the Indians faced general political decline the Arabs were going through new political experience for the first time in their history. The political success of the Arabs of Hijaz and Sajid brought them close to the boundaries of India and finally, the conquest of Sind by Mohammad b. Qasim in A.D. 711-12 extended the Arab rule to the very soil of India. Thus having been amputated from the body-politic of India, Sind became a part of the vast Islamic Empire extending from Jirvan in North Africa to Central Asia and from the caucasus regions to the shores of the Arabian sea.


15. S. Maqbool Ahmad, 'INDO-ARAB RELATIONS, Chapter II, New Delhi 1976, p. 68.
1. Arabian Rule Over Sind And Gurjara-Pratiharas:

The relations of the Arab rulers of Sind with the neighbouring Indian princes, the Gurjara-Pratiharas (ruled from A.D. 800 - 1037) were anything but peaceful. Multan in the north and al Mansura in the south had roughly formed the eastern boundaries of the Arab rule in Sind and the Punjab. It appears from the scattered references in Arabic writings that political tension continued to exist between the Arab rulers of Sind and the Indian rulers. The reason for this was that Multan at this time was an important pilgrim centre, for it had the great temple of the sun-god Aditya which the Hindus from all over India came to worship. Thus it was a great source of revenue for the Arab rulers. It also acted as a deterrent against the invasion of the Gurjara-Pratiharas, for whenever they planned to conquer Multan or carry away the idol, the Muslims threatened the invaders with destruction of the idol. Al-Mansura was comparatively secure from such saids perhaps due to the intervening barrier of the Thar desert.

There the 'khutba' was read in the name of the 'Abbasid Caliph Of Baghdad.

2. Contacts Between The Arabs And The Rashtrakutas:

The position of the Arabs living in Southern India was different from that of the Arabs of Sind. In the south the Arab merchants and travellers were cordially welcomed by the rulers, specially by the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan, whom the Arabs refer to as Balhara. The Arab writers of this period are full of praise for these rulers, for they protected their lives and property and gave them full facilities for trade and freedom of worship. Whether the Rashtrakutas' cordial and friendly

16. IBID, p. 69.
relations and attitude towards the Arabs visiting their kingdom was due to the fact that the Arabs came to their country as peaceful merchants, or whether there was any other reason, is not clear from the Arabs' accounts. It may be that since the Rastrakutas were not on peaceful terms with the Arabs of Sind, the Rastrakutas displayed a specially favourable attitude the Arabs so as to gain the sympathies of the Arab rulers of Sind. However the conditions were more favourable in the south than in the north for the Arabs. This was one of the reasons why the Arab travellers and historians were able to write in greater detail about southern India than about north. It was not until the beginning of the 11th century that we find detailed and comprehensive accounts of India beginning with those of Al.--miruni. During this period several envoys and embassies were sent to India for the purpose of establishing cultural contacts. In this respect the illustrious viziers of the Abbasid caliphs, al- Bramika, played a very important role. One such embassy was sent by the Caliph Harun- al- Rashid as a result of which several Indian scientists and physicians visited Baghdad. Yahya- bin- Shalid- Barmaki, the distinguished vizier of Caliph al- Mansur, had sent an envoy to the East to collect material on political and religious conditions, on medicinal plants and other aspects of life of the Eastern peoples. The date of his visit has been fixed at A.D. 800. It is not certain if these embassies had any political objectives. Diplomatic relations did however exist between the Arab rulers of Sind and the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad or the Fatimid Caliphs of Egypt in so far as the question of the Arab rulers' allegiance to one caliphate or the other was concerned.

17. Ibid p. 69-70
3. **Contacts Between Muslim Rulers Of India And The Caliphs**

One of the most important religio-political aspects of the relations between the Arab and non-Arab Muslim rulers of India on one hand and the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad or the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt on the other was that generally the Indian Muslim rulers considered it politically expedient to get legal sanctions for their rule, from the Arab caliphs in the form of 'manshurs' and 'sanads'. The caliph of Baghdad, right up to the 13th century A.D., were accepted as the law representatives and vicegerents of Prophet Muhammad by the orthodox Muslims of the East, and as such they exercised considerable influence, religious and political; Muslims looked up to them and respected their opinions. It was for this reason and in order to establish the legality of their rule that the Arab rulers of Sind and the Sultans of Delhi endeavoured to get 'sanads' and 'manshurs' from the caliphs. Such legal sanction made their rule acceptable to the Muslims and established them as an integral force in the political set up of the Islamic world of the time. However, the status of the 'Khilafat' itself had not become stabilized. The establishment of the Fatimid rule in North Africa and Egypt in the 10th century A.D. had complicated matters. The Islamic world was divided into two big camps; the Sunnis and the Shiis, originating from a rift that was caused in the early history of Islam over the religio-political question of the Khilafat. Thus the Ismaili or the Shia rulers in general owed allegiance to the caliphs of Baghdad. In a way, therefore the factional politics of the Arab world continued to be reflected in the rivalries and jealousies of the Arab rulers in Sind and of the Sultans of Delhi.

18. Ibid p. 71
Contacts Between the Arabs of Sind and the Caliphs

The rulers of al-Mansura read the Khutba for the 'Abbasid. The amir of Multan, Wirayshite and a descendant of Sama-b. Luay b. Shali, did not obey the ruler of al-Mansura but read the Khutba in the name of the Abbasid caliphs Mutazz b. Ahmad (or Mughir b. Ahmad), the ruler of Turan, read the Khutba for the Caliph of Baghdad and so did Mutahhar b. Kija the ruler of Mashkay. These rulers of Sind belonged mainly to the 10th century A.D. but by the end of this century the political influence of the Ismailis had increased considerably and for more than a century Multan and Mansura continued owing allegiance to the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt.

After the collapse of the Samanids and with the expansion of the State of Ghur under his energetic rule, Mahmud felt strong enough to assume the title of 'Sultan'. The thought it worth his while to get his title as an independent ruler confirmed by the caliph of Baghdad. He had received the title of Yamin al-Daula and Amin al-Filla but was anxious to get additional titles from the Caliph. But the latter declined to give him one. The Ghurids were equally eager to secure confirmation of their sovereignty from the Caliph, Baghdad. Sayas al-Din received his investiture from Caliph al-Rustadi (1170–80) and al-Nasir (1180–1225). Similarly, Yalooz got his Letters of Patent from the Caliph.

Iltutmish described himself as the lieutenant of the Caliph on his title:

21. Ibid, p. 18
and possibly in the 'Khutba' also. In this he simply followed the Islamic Law, political convention and the heritage from the Chusnawids and Shorls. He had also received a role of honour from the Caliph al-Mahdi, but it is not clear whether the role was sent to him on his own request or whether the Caliph conferred it upon him for political reasons. Tripathi remarks that whatever may be the case the fact fastened the fiction of Khilafat on the Sultanate of Delhi, and involved legally the recognition of the final sovereignty of the Khalifa, an authority remote the geographical limits of India, but inside that vague yet none the less real brotherhood of Islam.

Ilutmish maintained diplomatic relations with Baghdad and frequently exchanged envoys. Maulana Razi-al-Din Hasan Saghah came to Delhi during the reign of Ilutmish as the envoy of the Caliph al-Hasan al-Mustansir billah (A.D. 1179-1225) and his successors. Ikhtiyar al-Mulk Rashid al-Din Abu Bakr Habsh was sent to Baghdad on a mission by the court of Delhi, probably to secure a manshur from the Caliph. Once the Caliph sent Jalal 'Urus with an old copy of Safinat al-Khalifa' which contained some epigraphic inscription from al-Hamun. The Sultan was so pleased with this present that he wanted to give half of his kingdom to Qadi Jala'. However, Balban inscribed the coins and read the Khutba in the name of the deceased Khalifa. It was a sort of challenge to the Mughal Khagan; for it amounted to: "The Khalifa is dead, long live the Khalifa." As the fourteenth century Arab historian Ibn Tadj Allah al-Umari tells us, Muhammad b. Ughlaq

22. IBID, p. 26
24. R.P. Tripathi, OP. CIT, pp. 36-37
had deputed one of his secretaries named Bayghadun to go to Sultan Abu Said, one of the Ilkhan of Persia (A.D. 1316-1335), as messenger and had given him one million tankas to be distributed in the shrines Kufa, Basra and Iraq. But Bayghadan had different ideas and he did not intend to return to the court of Muhammad. On his arrival in Iraq he found that Abu S. had died. He went to Baghdad, then to Damascus and finally settled down in Baghdad.

5. GOLDEN AGE OF TRADE BETWEEN INDIA AND ARAB WORLD:

The golden age of Indo-Arab trade has been the period between the rise of Mua Islam in the 7th century A.D. up to about the 10th century A.D. Hijaz has been a centre of Islam, a historic place wherein the great religion originated. The Arabs of Hijaz were mainly inland traders. Mecca which lay midway between Syria and Yemen was the centre of their commercial activities. However, these Arabs did carry on some sea trade as well. They were agents of trade between Egypt, Abyssinia and Hijaz and their main port was Jiddah.

In the inland trade, they bought Indian goods in Yemen and sold them in Mecca and other towns. In Mecca at this time a fair was annually held in which the commodities bought in Sana and other towns in Syria were sold to the Beduins who gathered there to buy their requirements and also to worship their deities kept in the Kaba. The Quraysh who were the custodians of the Kaba were also leading merchants of the town. Mecca being the nerve centre of the commercial and cultural activities of Hijaz at this time, it is now wonder that the message of Islam arose and spread from this town.

Among the goods that were imported from India at this period and sold in the markets of Hijaz was the Indian sword called by the Arabs 'al-Muhammad.' The Beduins being warring tribes, instruments of war were most popular among them. Swords were imported both from Yemen and India. Those manufactured in Yemen were made out of the iron imported from India; others were manufactured in India. The swords of India had the reputation of being very supple and sharp. Pre-Islamic Arabian poetry has many references to these and other goods that came from India and were popular among the Beduins. An important factor contributing to the development of Indo-Arab trade was the rise and spread of the Arab political power which within a few years of the rise of Islam engulfed vast territories stretching between the Canary Islands, off the west coast of Africa, in the west and the borders of China in the east, and between the Caucasus in the north and the shores of the Arabian Sea in the south. The inclusion of Sind within the Arab Emirate further accelerated the overland trade with India. However, the greatest impetus to the Indo-Arab sea trade was given when Baghdad was founded by the 'Abbasid Caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur on the site of an ancient Sasanian village of the same name. The foundation of Baghdad was an epoch-making event in the history of Indo-Arab trade relations, for now, for the first time the capital of the Arab Empire was directly linked by water with the Arabian sea through the water systems of the Tigris and the Euphrates which joined and flowed into the Persian Gulf.

28. S. Maqbool Ahmad, 1394.
During the first century after the rise of Islam (622-722 A.D.),
the main trade of India was with Iraq, but there was considerable decline
as compared to the previous position, and India's trade with other Arab
countries also declined. As pointed out by Salih Ahmad El-Ali, this
was a direct result of the Arab conquests. The import of finished goods
from India had decreased as the Arabs, who had now become masters of the
Middle East, increasingly needed armaments and weapons of war and cheap
essential commodities rather than costly finished goods. Moreover,
Arab merchants became engaged in the purchase and sale of stocks of
booty acquired by the conquering armies, which business they found to
be more profitable. Sea trade declined as it involved greater risks
like wreckage, harm from pirate activities etc. However, gold played
an important part in what trade there was between India and the Arab
countries. It was used as the only means of exchange by the Indian
merchants. After the foundation of Baghdad in A.D. 762 direct trade
relations between India and the Arab countries seemed to have improved
and lasted until roughly the 16th century A.D. The import export
commodities from India to the Arab world were Teak wood, raw-iron,
swords, silver and other metals, pearls, the horn of the rhinoceros, ivory
diamond, gold, aromatics, spices, scents, pepper, cardamom, cinnamon,
camphor, sandal wood, alseas-wood and perfumes, mangoes, jack-fruit,
lemons, comfits, Jamans, sugar candy, elephants, civet cats, peacocks,
muslin, cotton cloth, indigo and various types of dyes. Among the
goods imported by India were frankincense, ivory tusks, horses, gold,

30. Ibid, pp.215-17
pearls, dates and other finished goods. It is difficult to say anything about the general effects of this trade on the economy of imports and exports and the periodic trade figures and balances have not yet been worked out. But on the basis of the accounts of the Arab writers of this period, it may be summarised that the total balance of trade must have been favourable to India.

By the tenth century A.D. Baghdad had lost its former glory and importance as the cultural and economic centre of Islam. Fustat (Cai(Cairo) had come into prominence. As a result of the continuous wars of the crusades a large portion of Syrian and Egyptian trade was diverted to Western countries. Then the devastation caused by the Mongol invasions of Western Asia the rise of the petty dynasties in the latter 'Abbasid period had caused much disruption in trade and shaken the balance of economy of the Arab world. The Abbasid caliphs came to an end in A.D. 1258 when Hulagu sacked Baghdad. All these factors led to the decline of Arab trade with India. But by far the greatest setback was caused by the appearance of the Portuguese in the Arabian Sea. Soon after this event both Arab and Persian sea-trade with India collapsed, and Arab naval strength deteriorated.

31. S. M. Q. Ahmad, ... p. 85
32. Ibid. p. 86
India's cultural relations with Arabia date back to prehistoric times. In India the Harappans, Dravidians and Aryans wove the webs of many cultures. In the Arab lands Babylon, Assyria, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, Sumer and Elam were the centres of ancient civilizations. The people of the Indus Valley had intimate relations with the people of Sumer and trade relations with Egypt and Crete as the excavations reveal. From the most ancient times India's communications with West Asia have been both along the land and sea routes. The ocean between these two great nations, touching on the one side the holy land of the Arabs and on the other the foothills of the Aryavasta, forms a long and broad highway over which have travelled from prehistoric times Indian ships with sails and hundreds of oars. Objects found in Sumeria and Egypt indicate the traffic between these countries as far back as 3000 B.C. According to the author of the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* (composed about the middle or first half of the first century B.C.) these voyages used to be made in small vessels kept close to the shore and following its windings. The best season for ships to sail for India from Egypt was July. Strabo, the Greek geographer and historian (born about 63 B.C.), found that about 120 ships sailed from Myos-Hormos (Mussel Harbour) to India, although in the time of Ptolemies scarcely anyone would venture on this voyage. Direct voyages in those days were rare. Indian and Arabian traders used to meet half way to exchange their products. The Indians sailed from the western Indian sea ports along the coast, entered the Persian Gulf and rested at Bahrain, where recent diggings by a Danish Mission have uncovered seals and other objects which show that the island's culture
group ran the trade between the Indus civilization and the Sumerian.

According to Strabo, large quantities of Indian merchandise were
conveyed over the Oxus to the Caspian Sea and transferred from there by
the Greeks and through the adjoining countries to Buxina. Hippalus was
first pilot to observe the bearings of the ports, the configuration of the sea and the direct course across the ocean. It is worthwhile to recall in this connection the story of that adventurous Indian who cut from India in search of a direct route to Egypt. -...ast all drifted for months till his companions had perished one by one due to hunger and starvation and he was found half-dead near his destination. This ship wrecked Indian gave the impetus to the famous explorer
Eudoxus of Cyzicus to make a voyage to India which went along a further closer relationships between India and the countries of West
Asia. Trade relations got an impetus in the subsequent centuries.

'Pamukka' (Persia). The Arabian steeds in King Harsha's camp were as
popular as the sword made of Indian steel- 'Saif-i-Hind' proverbial in Arabic literature. Daba (situated in the south eastern corner of Arabia) was one of the major ports of pre-Islamic Arabia.

An annual fair there attracted traders from Hind, China and Greece.

These early contacts led to the establishment of an Indian colony in Alexandria in the 2nd century B.C. The Indians built two temples containing the images of their gods. The great riches of Arabia Felix (Aden) were largely due to the visit of Indian traders who came here in large numbers from Potara (Shatila), founded by Alexander in the river Sindhi.

There is also considerable evidence of the presence of Hindu philosophers in Western Asia during the time of Socrates who discussed metaphysical problems with them. Asoka, encouraged this exchange of visits and emissaries to Syria, Egypt, Macedon, Cynicea and Epire, Al-Rumuni (1000 A.D.) corroborates Asoka's claim that in former times Iraq, Mosul and the country up to the frontiers of Syria were under Buddhist influence and that Indian culture had definitely extended to these West Asian countries. The extreme empiricism of Buddhists made a deep impression on Arab scholars, theologians, philosophers and Jurists; we frequently come across references to the Indian school of thought in their discussion of epistemology and the theory of knowledge. Manichaeism which flourished in the third century A.D. contains unmistakable traces of Buddhist influence. Dean Milburn points: 'It is certain that the genuine Indian mysticism first established a permanent western settlement in the deserts of Egypt.' Mani and Mazdak, the two most prominent propagators, were scattered all over Western Asia. Their teachings were based upon a combination of zoroastrianism, Buddhist and Christian Ideas. The fact is that Central Asia including Turkestan and Khorasan, owed allegiance to Buddhism before the rise of Islam, as the evidence of the Chinese traveller Itven Tsang amply proves. Asoka further authorised his emissaries or 'dutas', as they were called to undertake philomonic works on his behalf in the kingdoms of the Hellenic rulers of West Asia. Thus walls at every half 'kas' and rest houses were constructed, medicinal herbs and roots, wherever they did not exist, were imported and planted. These acts, the Emperor thought, would obtain release for him from the debt he owed to his creatures.
the advent of Islam, relations between India and the Arab countries
were further strengthened. Prophet Muhammad is reported to have told his
companions that he "gets cool breezes from the side of Hind." Indian
tribes, like the Jats, were settled in some parts of Arabia during this
time. Rukhari in his work 'Kitabul Adabul Majfud' states that when
Ayasha, the favourite wife of the Prophet, fell ill she was treated by
an Indian physician who belonged to the Jat tribe. Two prominent
Indians Sarmanak (said to have been the Raja of Kanau) and Ratan visited
Arabia during the Prophet's time. Ratan is believed to have collected
the sayings of the Prophet, still extant as Ar-Rataniyat. Ibn 'Ali
Hatim relates that the valley of Hind, where Adam descended from heaven
and the valley of Mecca, which had the tradition of Abraham, were the
best valleys of the world (Subhat-ul-Namjan). The fourth Caliph,
is reported to have said, "the land where books were first written and
from where wisdom and knowledge sprang is India." According to Ghulam
'Ali Azad Bilgrami, words like 'taoba', 'sundas', and 'ablai', which
occur in the Quran are of Sanskrit origin. Names of many Indian
articles, for instance, 'Qurum Phul' (karan phul), 'Kafur' (Camphor),
'Ambuj' (am), Harjil (Hariyal), etc., passed into the Arabic language.
Arabic words too found their way into the Indian languages. Indian
words - 'Sukkan' (rudder), 'Maluni' (Captain of ship) from Arabic Maluni,
'Kambal', 'Qutal', 'Qurban', 'Bandar', 'Dost', 'Kaghaz' etc. which are
commonly used are all derived from the Arabic language. This mutual
intercourse led the Arabs to take interest in Indian literature, some
of India's best known works, such as 'Panchatantra', the book of novels
taught through animal and bird stories was translated from its Pahlavi version into Arabic and thereafter introduced to the Western world. 'Hitopadesha', or good advice, selection and adaptation of tales from 'Panchtantra' found their way to Europe through Baghdad, Byzantine and Cairo. According to some scholars, the basis of the famous 'One Thousand and One Nights' was a Persian work containing several of Indian origin. The reign of Harun al-Rashid (754-776 A.D.) opened a new chapter in the cultural relations of these two regions. It was his zeal for learning attracted many Hindu scholars to the Abbaside court. The deputation of Indian representatives to the court of the Caliph in 771 A.D. was memorable. One of the members of the delegation, a noted scholar, presented a copy of the Siddhanta which was translated into Arabic by Ibrahim Al. Farzani.

Indian physicians and medical systems enjoyed a wide reputation even in pre Islamic Arabia. The famous pre Islamic Persian, V. Conde- Chapur invited Indian physicians to meet their counterparts; a curious blending of science took place there. The Mamlouk physician 'Abdul- al- Adwaiya' (substitute of medicine), which was written by a Persian, Masarjawaih, give an idea about the blending of these two medical systems. In the 8th century, we find Arabs and Persians translating into their respective languages the thousand year old compendia of Sushruta (on surgery) and 'Charaka- Samastra' (on medicine). These works were fully made use of and quoted in extensive form. Raazes down to Ibnal- Baiter, the pharmacologist who lived in the 12th century. The Caliph Al- Fath felt so fascinated by the Indian works on medicine and philosophy that he had a scholar Al- Abbas specially put to duty to read out to him daily some passages from these works. Under his reign the famous 'Barmecides or Barmarks came into prominence. Originally they were Arab.
and were in charge of the famous temple of Jaya- Vihara in Baikh. Near their patronage Baghdad became the centre of Hindu learning. Writing about the services they rendered to the advancement of science and culture, an an- Hadim said: "Yahya - ibn- Khalid, the Wazir, sent a mission to India to collect information regarding medicinal herbs and to report on their religious beliefs and practices". The Arabic historian relates that Caliph Harun suffered from a severe headache and it was Nanaka, an Indian physician, who was called to treat him. In another case, Saleh-ibn. Wall was called to treat a member of the royal family who appeared to have died and was about to be buried. He was however restored to life. Apart from Nanaka, there were two other successful Indian medical practitioners in Baghdad during the reign of Harun, Iba 'ibn and Salih, and the names of 15 Indian medical works rendered into Arabic during the Abbasid Calipate are known. From that time onward Indian physicians and Indian medicines played an important part in the scientific renaissance in Baghdad. In his rare work of simple drugs, 'Kital as- Saidala', al- Biruni makes the significant observation that, "On the East there are no people inclined towards the sciences except the Indians."

Equally important in the context of Indo-Arab relations is the influence of Indian astronomy. The celebrated Indian astronomical text 'Surya Siddhanta' brought by the physician Kuttka to the court of the newly founded capital Baghdad was translated into Arabic under the name of 'Sind Hind. It served as a handbook till the time of al-Hamun when it was abridged and even improved by 'Abdul-Abd-Allah, an astronomer. It also

35. IBID, p. 427
prepared a book on Indian calculations which has come down to us. There were other Indian astronomical works such as 'Kar Khanda Khadvaka' of Brahmagupta, and Varaamihira's works on astronomy which were translated into Arabic. It is interesting to recall in this connection that the astronomical terms 'qubbat- ul- arin in Arabic (the supposed division of the polar axis from the meridian line) is derived from the name of the Indian city Ujjain which was believed by the Indian astronomers to be the dividing part of the earth. Such terms as 'jib' (heart) and 'aushi' (the highest point of sky) has originated from Sanskrit 'jiva' and uchha respectively. We may also refer to the work produced by that great indologist al-Biruni after hard labour of six years, 'Jawami al-Dinjik Li- Khawatir- al- Hana'id completed in 422 A.D., as a comprehensive work on Indian astronomy. He was much indebted to the earlier works of Indian astronomers especially for their solar and lunar theories and the treatment of eclipses. Thus, through al-Biruni Indian astronomy exercised a far reaching influence on Muslim astronomical sciences of subsequent generations. In the field of Mathematics, it was the conception of sine which contributed to and revolutionised the science of triangles. Even the famous Almagest employed chords. The Muslims learnt the principles of this science from the Hindus and taught the same to the Europeans facilitating the problems of trigonometry. The Greeks studied these works based on the researches and inventions of Indians. The Egyptians and Mesopotamians had carried on fresh inquiry in the field of Mathematics. The Arabic numerals 1, 2, 3 as they are called in the west were borrowed by the Arabs from India and were consequently known as Al-Arkan- al-Hindiin or Indian numerals. The Indian science of music also made a deep impression on
Arabic musicians. According to Ibn-al-Qifti, an important work containing the fundamental principles of Indian music was translated into Arabic. This impact helped to produce the greatest Muslim musician of medieval India, Amir Khusro. It was during the reign of Iltuqin Khilji that a Muslim convert Brahmin Kamarup translated the abstraited 'Amrit Aund' into Arabic. This exchange of ideas continued even after the advent of the Arabs in Sind in the 8th century A.D. due to the cordial relations that prevailed between the Arabs and Hindus. While five or six Indian musicians resided at the court of Baghdad, several Indian works on medicine and philosophy were translated into Arabic by the scholars. Ibn an-Nadim and Ibn-al-Jayyibah, al-Kilâbi al-Kihal refers to a religious discourse between the Arabic scholars especially deputed by Harun-ar-Rashid and the renowned pandits at the court of the Raja of Sind. A young Arab resident of Hansurah, the capital of Sind even composed a poem in praise of Raja Mahrug of Alora, who sent a special messenger to escort the poet to the court where he was greatly honored and rewarded. He stayed at the Raja's court for three long years and at his behest translated the holy Wûrân into Hindi. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Arab travellers and geographers whose works are important sources, though yet unexplored in the reconstruction of the history of India, particularly after the 9th century A.D. The names of Al-Biruni and Ibn Battuta are too well known to need any introduction. While Mahmud of Ghazni was carrying out expeditions in India, this great Arabic scholar was engaged in studying the culture and civilization of our country. The bulky volume which he
produced is in many respects the most rational and comprehensive account of India ever written by a foreigner until modern times. Some of the important Arabic writers on India who deserve mention are Ibn- Khurdadbeh, al-Kasalik Julaiman, the merchant Abu ‘aid ‘airazi, Abu ‘ulaf- Ibn- alhalil, Buzurg- Ibn- Shahryar, al-Kasudi and Ibn- Haukal. Al Ya’ubi lavishes praise on Indians for their advanced knowledge in science, astronomy, medicine, philosophy and for the large number of scholarly works produced on these subjects. Abdul Fazl, too in his celebrated work Ain-i-Akbari takes note of several Arabian towns including Madina, Baghdad, Shiraz, Basra etc. and has given their longitudes and latitudes.

Fellowship and amity has been the cardinal note of Indo-relations since the dawn of history. We have it on the authority of Muslim historian that the Hindu Rajas gave full liberty to the Arab traders settled on the western coast of India, to build masques and to practise their religion without any hindrances. Not only this, Muslim magistrates were also appointed to administer the Civil Code of Islam to their co-religionists. Samuel and Balazuri (Futuh-as-Sind) praised the Rajas of Sind, Balhari and Ali, for their just and generous treatment. The Arabs too, on their part, when they came to Sind, reciprocated by readily adopting Indian titles and Indian names. The employment of professional performers and courtesans seems to be a development inspired by Indian practices, for in Central Asia and even in the Arabian countries, free born professional musicians of the female sex was a rare social phenomenon. The Indian courtesan of the nagehar was not paralleled by the trained 'Jariya'. The impact of Arabic thought on Hindu religion and practices is linked with the advent of Islam and the

36. IBID, pp 428-30
establishment of Muslim power in India. It may be pointed out that traits of the Hindu revival such as the increasing emphasis on personal, emotional worship, self-surrender, the need for devotion to a personal teacher, as well as the growing laxity in caste rules and indifference to rituals at least among some sects have all been held in some way or the other to be the outcome of Islamic influence.

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(28)