The Saljuqs were basically nomadic Turks who lived in an area where the peaceful arts of civilization, such as learning, were uncommon if not unknown. Therefore the origin of this family is wrapped in obscurity due to the lack of contemporary accounts. It was only with the rise of their descendants like Tughril Beg (A.D.1040-63), to power and eminence that chronicles began to be composed about them. The earliest works which have referred to the

1. Claud Cahen, op.cit, P.3
origin of Saljuqs are the Târikh of Abul Alâ Ahûl and Malik Nâma.

But unfortunately none of the two is extant. Yet the information recorded by these two sources about the origin of the Saljuqs has come down to us through the later works like Chronography of Bar Hebraeus and Târikh-i-Guzida of Hamdullah Mustaufi. According to this information the Saljuqs belonged to the


2. An anonymous history of the Saljuqs written in the middle of 11th century at the request of Sultan Alp Arsalân (1063-1072 A.D.). This work too is lost but several authors made considerable use of it, until the end of the middle ages, and we can therefore form a reasonably clear idea of it. (Pre-ottoman Turkey, ibid.)


4. Târikh-i-Guzida, ibid.

Qiniq tribe which was a branch of the Ghuzz/Oghuz Turk. It is

Continued...


1. Tārīkh-i-Guzidā while quoting from the Saljuq Nāma of Zahiri Nishāpūri, spells out the name of the tribe as `Qiq' instead of Qiniq(Qiniq(Tārīkh-i-Guzidā, ibid.)) However none other than Nishāpūri has termed the name of the tribe as `Qiq', therefore `Qiniq' has to be accepted as correct version. cf. S.A.Hassan, Some Observations on the Problems Concerning the Origin of Saljuqs, Islamic Culture, July, 1965. P.195.

2. "Ghuz" is the Arabic form generally used by Arabic authors for the name of the Turkish Oghuz people. (Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.II, Leiden, 1983, p.1106).
however interesting to note that out of twenty four tribes of Ghuzz confederacy, it was only the Qiniq tribe that produced great swordsmen, statesmen and administrators.¹

In order to better understand the origin of the Saljuqs, it is therefore, necessary to know in some detail about the Ghuzz itself, as, needless to repeat, the Saljuqs are only a part of that vast Ghuzz realm which was an umbrella of all Turkic peoples and which stretched throughout Central Asia and had its branches in Europe also².

The origin of the Ghuzz is obscure because of the diversity of transcriptions of the names of peoples in the Chinese, Arabic, Byzantine and other sources.³ They are the people to have united, in the 6th century A.D. all the nomad tribes from China to Black

³ Cahen, op.cit, PP.1,19.
Sea and founded a nomad kingdom. According to 10th century Persian Geographer Mahmūd Kāshghari and Rashīd ud-dīn, Oghuz were a confederacy of twenty four clans which all stemmed from the common ancestor Oghuz Khān, the progenitor of all Turkish peoples who had six sons, each of whom had in his turn four sons. The names of only twenty tribes have been mentioned by the said authors since the three tribes out of twenty four had already separated themselves from the Oghuz. The names of tribes as mentioned by Mahmūd Kāshghari were:

1. Qinīq  
2. Qayīgh.  
3. Bukduz  
5. Urekir or Yurekir  
6. Tutirqa

3. Jāmi` ut-Tawārikh, op.cit. P.5. Rashīd ud-dīn also recognizes all the Turkomans/Turks, as many as there are in the world, as descendants of the twenty four grandsons of Oghuz Khān. (Barthold, op.cit, P.116.)  
5. ibid.  
6. See also: ibid.
The Ghuzz were for the most part, nomads; yet there is some evidence which suggests that among them, there were settled groups occupied with agriculture in the oasis and particularly on the boundaries of the Muslim world and along the routes leading to Bulgārs.¹

¹ The descendents of Huns, who after their dispersal inhabited Volga and came to be known as "Bulgārs". From the Bulghārs, at the end of the century, a branch was to break away and eventually to join what, when slavized, became the modern Bulgaria. (Cahen, op.cit, P.2).
or the Khazars' markets. In the empire of Ghuzz, however, each tribe kept its autonomy and it was almost wholly a matter of loose federation, with loyalties shifting from one chieftan (Khān or Khaqān) to another.

Although all the Arab Geographers, including al Yaqubi and Ibn-i-Rustah refer to them but they do not tell us anything about the area where they lived. Baladhuri, however, is the first to refer to

1. The Khazars too were the descendents of Huns who, after intermixing with the indigenous populations whether Finnish or Slav, were to dominate, in the 7th and 8th centuries, the Black Sea coasts to the East of the Crimea and the steppes lying between it, the Gaspian and the Caucasus (ibid). For a detailed information see Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. V, "Khazar" PP.1172-81.


3. ibid. The King of Ghuzz was called "khaqān" (Gardizi, P.266).


their presence in Central Asia.\(^1\) It was only during 4th/10th century that they seem to have occupied a territory roughly bounded to the south by the Aral Sea and the lower course of the Sir Daryā, to the west by the river Urāl or the lower Volga and the Caspian Sea, to the north-East by the upper Course of Irtysh.\(^2\)

The Ghuzz had other Turkish peoples as neighbours. To the North the Kimak, a branch of Kipchak, to the East Karlūk (Karłūk), to the West the Pecheng and the semi-sedentary Turkish State of the Khazārs and finally to the south and particularly along the Sir Daryā, they bordered on the Muslim world\(^3\). But Istakhari,\(^4\) a 10th century geographer says of the Ghuzz territory as situated between the Khazārs and the Kimaks, between the lands of the Karlūk (Karłūk) and the Bulghar and between the boundaries of the lands of Islām from Jurjān

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\(^3\) Cahen, op.cit, P.5.

to Fārab and Isfījāb (East to West).¹

From all available sources it becomes quite clear that the Ghuzz occupied the region north and east of the Caspian Sea, and North and West of Khawārizm. On their west were the Khazārs, on their north the territories of Kimak and Bulgars, on their east the Karlūk and on their south Khawārizm and lands of Islām.² The sources using the tradition of Malik-Nāma³ state that Duqāq⁴ the Father of Saljūq, had an

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¹ According to Hudūd ul-ʿĀlam, an anonymous geographical treatise compiled in 372/982, on the East of the Ghuzz country lay the Ghuzz desert and the towns of Transoxiana, on the South some parts of the same desert and the Khazār Sea, and on the West and the North flowed the river Atil. (V. Minorsky: Hudūd ul-ʿĀlam Tr. and explained, G.M.S., London 1937, P.160.).


³ Habīb us-Siyyar, op.cit, P.479.

⁴ Duqāq was also called 'Demir Yalīḫ' meaning the 'Iron bow' in Turkish (Mashkawi, P.1); This name is found in the sources in three different forms: Tuqāq, Duqāq and Yaqāq. (S.A.Hasan, ibid).
important position in the administration of Yabghū the King of Ghuzz, whose authority ranged over the steppes from Sir Daryā to Volga. On the basis of his popularity among his tribesmen and on account of his administrative and military abilities and unfallible courage, he was given the title of Temr Yaligh (man of strong bow).

1. Camb. op.cit, P.17. The title used by the chiefs of Huns was "Chab-Ju" and at the time when the Huns were at the height of their power, their chiefs of the Jwcn-Jwen Tungus also adopted the same title until at the beginning of 5th century they were strong enough to impose on other people their own title of "Khagān" which eventually became "Khān". (Czaplića, op.cit, PP.70-71; cf: S.A. Hassan. op.cit, P. 190.) Certain sources mention that both Duqāq and his son Saljuq served the King of the Khazars, whose kingdom embraced the lower Volga and southern Russia. But this seems to be merely a memory of earlier Oghuz-Khazar connections. (Camb.,P.18). After studying the issues critically S.A. Hassan (ibid) has genuinely concluded that Duqāq and his son Saljuq both were in the service of the Ghuzz king (Yabghū) and that the later, perhaps, owed some sort of allegiance to Khakān (king) of Khazars.

Duqāq died while still a young man, when his son Saljūq was scarcely more than an infant.¹ The Ghuzz ruler (Yabghû) took pity on the orphaned prince and placing him under his personal protection, arranged for the boy to become a member of his household, and to be educated at his court.² Impressed by capabilities of Saljūq, Yabghû promoted him to the post of Su-bashi (chief of the army).³

But it appears that the relations between the Khān and the young prince (Saljūq) became strained. The sources give two different versions for this. According to Tamara Talbot Rice Saljūq was speaking disrespectfully about the Khān. The queen overheard him saying so and immediately informed the Khān about it. The king (Khān) and the queen decided to cut him to size. They thought of pulling Saljūq to death but ultimately decided to banish him⁴. However, the author of Habīb us- Siyyar says that one day Saljūq entered the harem (ladies chambers) of the king without seeking permission. This was

¹ Rice, ibid.
² ibid.
³ ibid; Mashkawti, ibid; Barthold, ibid; Camb. P.17.
⁴ Rice, op.cit, PP.26-27 cf: Mashkawti, ibid, Camb. P.18; Mir Khawand, op.cit, P.4; Barthold, op.cit, P.100.
resented by the royal ladies present there. They complained to the king about the arrogant behaviour of Saljūq. Fearing that the king may take some harsh action against him Saljūq migrated, along with his followers to Jand, a town situated on the banks of Jaxartes in Bukhārā.

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The date of Saljūqid migration into Transoxiana is given as 375/985 (see: Tarikh-i-Guzida, P.434); cf. Abbās Parviz, ibid. Some scholars put the date of their migration into Transoxiana around 950 A.D. (see J.J. Saunders, op.cit, P.145) while as C.M.S. Hodgson reckons the date of their migration as 960 A.D. (Venture of Islam, vol.II, P.5, Chicago, 1974); cf: Abbās Perviz, ibid.
province. It was after this that Saljuq along with his followers abandoned Shamanism and embraced Islam.

The entry of Saljuq Turks to the fold of Islam forms


2. According to Tarikh-i-Salajiqa wa Khawarizm Shahan, (op.cit, P.98) Saljuq was accompanied by one hundred able-bodied fighters with a (caravan of one thousand five hundred camels and fifty thousand sheep:

3. Saunders, P.145; Mashkawti; P.1; Camb. P.18; Barthold, op.cit, P.120; Rice P.28; Abbas Parviz, P.98.
one of the great epochs of world history. It added a third nation, after the Arabs and Persians, to the dominant races of Islam. It had far reaching consequences of profound importance to the history of the world in general and that of Islam in particular. Firstly it provided a further lease of life to the moribund Caliphate for another two centuries⁠¹. Secondly Asia Minor was wrested from the Christiandom, which, ultimately, contributed to the conquest of Europe by the latter Ottomons. Further it put an end to the political domination of the Arabs in the Near East; and helped in spreading the language and culture of Persia over a wide area from Anatolia to Northern India. Lastly the Christian world was posed with a great threat which ultimately resulted in the 'crusades.'²

Before coming under the influence of Islam, Turks were, for the most part, Shamanists attached to various beliefs and

1. It may be recalled that the Caliphate of Baghdad was already disintegrated and the whole Islamic world was divided into small and big independent dynasties. For details see: Lane Poole, ibid; M.A. Shaban "Islamic History, A New Interpretation." Camb. 1976, PP.115-120; Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 1A, Cambridge, 1970, PP.143-500; Hodgson, II, op.cit, PP.12-13; E. Ashtor, A Social And Economic History of the Near East, London, 1976, P.113ff.

2. Saunders, op.cit, P.141.
practices in which they were guided by Shamān, a kind of sooth sayer and wizard. In fact they had always been influenced by the neighbouring cultures and religions with varying degrees in accordance to their dispersals which they made either by aggression or peaceful penetration but which, undoubtedly, was a continuous feature of their socio-political behaviour. Consequently, those nearest to China underwent Chinese influences and those nearest to Byzantium, were influenced by it, and those bordering Iran and its Soghdian and Khawārazmian border lands came under the Iranian influence. However along side Shamanism, the Chinese and Hindu pilgrims, Nestorian, Christian and Manichean missionaries passing from Iraq across the forbidden land of Iran, and lastly to the West, Jewish merchants—all influenced Turks and many of them embraced those respective religions.

By the end of the 7th century the Turks of Central Asia had new neighbours to the south, the Muslim Arabs. The populations, whom the Arabs had overcome, became progressively Islamised. Therefore the religious preachers and merchants, penetrated


2. Cahen, ibid.

3. ibid.
into Turkish territory along established routes. Even the military encounters took place followed by exchange of prisoners helped to make the new religion and neighbouring culture, or at least some aspects of them, known to the Turks. But this is also a fact that Islam had made already some slight penetration among the Khazars much before the Seljuqs deserted their kingdom for the lands of Islam.

This must have been the result of a fairly long interaction between the two peoples by way of the vast commercial activities of the Muslims into the Ghuzz lands. The oldest version of the legend about the spread of Islam in Kāshgaria tells how the Turks appreciated the goods brought by Muslim caravans, such as rich stuffs and sugar, and how later on this led them to be acquainted with Islam as a religion. The regular increase in the number of the Arab traders in Central Asia began to make their presence felt, and by the middle of the 9th century the larger cities of the Oxus had to provide mosques for the Arab community resulting in a reasonable awareness of Ghuzz

1. ibid.
2. ibid.
The extent of interaction and the resultant Islamic influence on the Ghuzz can be further judged by the fact that within the territory of Ghuzz and dependent on them, there existed in the 10th century A.D., several towns founded by the Muslim immigrants. The principal among these towns was the one called "Al Qaryat al Haditha" (Arabic) "Dih-i-Naw" (Persian), later "Yangi-Kant" (New settlement) (Turkish)\(^2\). In the same region there stood the other smaller towns namely Jand and Sughnāq which were inhabited by Muslims as well as the Ghuzz. Another important settlement on the left bank of Sir Daryā was Sutkand, the ruins of which can be seen to this day. Many of the Turks living here had accepted Islām. In the same region along both banks of Sir Daryā, lived also nomad Turks numbering some hundred tents to whom grazing grounds had been allotted. They had become Muslims and had bound themselves to defend the frontiers of the

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\(^1\) Rice, P.28.

In the 9th century there are records of copies of the Qurans being found even among the Bulgars in the Balkans, although they were in process of adopting Christianity. Still it was among the Bulgars on the Volga that the most celebrated and spectacular advance was made by Islam, into what was in some measure Turkish territory.

For reasons among which political and military factors played as important a part as propaganda and religious evolution, the prince of Bulgars on the Volga sent a request in 920 A.D. to the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, not only for an engineer for fortifications but also for a scholar capable of instructing him in the Islamic religion. Included in the mission, that was sent to him by way of Central Asia, was a certain Ibn Fadlan who has left us his account of it, a document of the highest importance on the subject of the customs, which he observed excellently, of peoples about whom, but for him, we should know almost nothing. The amount of Muslim influence on Chuzz and

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2. Cahen, p.5.
4. Ibid.
Khazârs can be viewed by the statement of Ibn Fadlân saying that whenever they found a Muslim passing through their territory, they would utter the Kalma-i-Shahâdat: "There is no God but Allah; and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah."\(^1\) It seems this was said to attract Muslims towards them or at least give them the impression that they were acquainted with Islam and that the latter were not in a hostile land. Some of them even informed Ibn Fadlân that they had heard the Quran being recited, and that they considered it good\(^2\). Even one of their nobles called 'Yinal' the 'subordinate army officer' accepted Islam but had to give it up because his people disowned him\(^3\). This shows that Saljuqs as members of the Ghuzz Turks, had already come under the cultural influence of Islam before their migration into Transoxiana.

Although our sources are unanimous about the fact that Saljuq was the first to have accepted Islam after migrating into Transoxiana, we have still the account of Gardizi according to which it was Duqaq the father of Saljuq who was first to have been converted to


\(^2\) Here the presence of Muslim preachers and missionaries, apart from Muslim merchants and traders, can not be out of question.

\(^3\) *Camb.* P.17.
According to Ibn al Athir, Dūqaq already showed some leanings towards Islâm and Quarrelled with Ghuzz yabghū (Khazar king), when the latter assembled an army for an expedition against Muslim provinces. They even came to blows over it but with the help of the mediators from both sides, the two eventually became reconciled, and Dūqaq continued to remain in the service of the yabghū. This account presupposes their conversion long before their migration to Jand and perhaps that is the reason why Dūqaq did not like the Yabghū’s idea of raiding the lands of Islâm. Pristak has on the basis of Gardizi’s Zain ul Akhbār, established the view that the Yabghū (king) of the Ghuzz was converted to Islâm in 394/1003 and that he became a blood brother of the last Samanid ruler Abū Ibrāhim b. Nūh. (d.396/1005).

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The accounts of contemporary chroniclers further strengthen our opinion that the Ghuzz Turks (Saljuqs being a part of them) had frequent cultural and political contacts with Muslims and that the process of their Islamization had been more pronounced than had been hitherto admitted by the scholars. From Ibn Rustah we come to know about the presence of Muslims in the two Khazar towns who possessed mosques and schools\(^1\). Ibn Fadlān\(^2\) reports the existence of a cathedral mosque with a tall minaret, which, according to Al-Masūdī\(^3\), rose above the royal palace. He also states that Muslim children were instructed in the reading of the Quran. Al-Istakhri\(^4\) reports that the Muslims numbered about more than ten thousand and there were thirty mosques. The kings' attendants numbered four thousand and were composed of Muslims, Christians, Jews and idol-worshippers. It seems that the Muslims and Christians were more numerous than the Jews, who were few in number, including only the king and his courtiers. But

\oublespace

\(^1\) Ibn Rustah, op.cit. P.140.

\(^2\) Ibn Fadlan, op.cit. P.45.

\(^3\) Al Masudi, Muruj, II,P.12.

\(^4\) Al Istakhri, PP.220-222; Ibn Hawkal, PP.278-279.
according to Al-Mas'ūdi\textsuperscript{1} and Ibn Hawqal\textsuperscript{2} the Muslims out numbered all others. Al Muqaddasi\textsuperscript{3} states that the majority of the population of Atil, the Khazār capital, were Muslims. Al Mas'ūdi\textsuperscript{4} further states that the standing army of the king consisted of the Muslims, who were called al-Larisiyyah, emigrants from Khāwarīzm. Al-Istakhri\textsuperscript{5} speaks of the seven judges of the king, who according to Al Mas'ūdi\textsuperscript{6} were drawn two from each of the three communities, namely the Muslims, the Christians and the Jews and one from the pagans, even the minister in his time was a Muslim by name Ahmad b. Kuwayh\textsuperscript{7}

In the light of all these details one is reasonably convinced that inspite of the relatively strong and different religions, Islam was also an established religion in the Khazar kingdom and its impact was equally felt on the Ghuzz populations.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Al Masudi, \textit{Muruj}, II, P.10.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibn-Hawqal, op.cit. P.279.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Al Muqaddasi, op.cit. P.360.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Al Mas'ūdi, op.cit. P.11.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Al-Istakhri, P.221.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Al Masudi, op.cit. P.11.
\item \textsuperscript{7} ibid.; cf. S.A.Hasan, op.cit., PP.200-202.
\end{itemize}