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# **MULTAN AN URBAN CENTER UNDER THE MUSLIM RULERS (FROM 8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)**

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# Multan an Urban Center under the Muslim Rulers (From 8<sup>th</sup> Century to 15<sup>th</sup> Century)

Mr. Sunil Sharma\*

Assistant Professor of History, Govt. College, Gharauda

**Abstract – The famous metropolis of the Multan was originally situated on the Ravi. It was a walled city with a strong fortress situated on opposite banks of an old course of the Ravi which now flows between the city as well as around it.[1] Multan was known by several names but all of them referred either to God Vishnu or the Sun.**

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Alexander Cunningham identified the city of Multan with the ancient city of Malloi on which Alexander, the ruler of Mesodonia, stormed and was got wounded.[2] But the first appearance of the town in history is in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E. when it was seized by Chach, the founder of Chach dynasty of the Sindh. Multan city was originally known as *kasya-papuras* or *kasappur* derived from *kasyapa*, the father of the twelve *Adityas* or Sun God. Multan is simply the corruption of the sanskrit term *Malistan*.

The original form of the name is difficult to discover. Hwen Thsang in 741 C.E. called it *Mu-lo-san-pu-lu* which is said to be a transliteration of '*Mulasthanapura*'. [3] Alberuni writing in the beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> century quoted a Kashmirian author Utapala who calls the town apparently *Mula-tana*. Alberuni further writes that name of town changes particularly in the *yugas*, so the Multan was originally called *Kasyapa Pura*, then *Hansapura*, then *Begapura*, then *Sambhapura* and then *Mulasthana* i.e. original place for '*Mula*' means 'root' or origin and '*Tana*' means 'place'. [4] There was a magnificent temple with golden statue of God richly adorned. The kings of the all parts of India sent their offerings to the temple. Hence, the place commonly became among the early Arab conquerors as a golden temple. [5] The Arabs had further stories as to the city and its name. Ibn Kurdadba says Multan was called 'the Farj' [6] 'the house of gold' [7] and Masudi writes that the word Multan means 'the boundary of God'. [8]

When the Arabs first penetrated the valley, the town was ruled by Chach, a Brahman who usurped the throne on the death of Sahasi Rai. The *Chachnama* relates that Siharas, the father of Sahasi Rai had divided the kingdom into four provinces, the most northern of which had its capital at Multan. [9] Muhammad Qasim marched triumphantly from lower Sindh, and defeated Raja Dahir near Sakkar. Then, he attacked Sikka and ultimately gained molten itself.

Muhammad Qasim proceeded towards Sikka-Multan. The following account of the campaign is given by the author of *Chachnama*:

It was a fort on the south bank of the Ravi when the army of the Arabs advanced towards the fort, the enemy came out and fought for 17 days. They maintained a fierce conflict. Qasim had sworn to destroy the fort. So he ordered the men to pillage the whole city. He then crossed over towards Multan at the ferry below the city and that day battle raged from morning till sunset. Mangonals and Ghazraks were used and stones and arrows were thrown from the walls of the fort. At last, provisions became exceedingly scarce in the camp and the price of an ass's head was raised to 500 *dirhams*. The chief Gursiya, a nephew of Dahir, saw that the Arabs were in no way disheartened. When the Arabs reached the fort and the fight commenced no place was found suitable for digging a mine until a person came out of the fort and pointed out a place towards the north on the banks of a river. A mine was dug in two or three days, the wall was fell down and fort was taken, six thousand warriors were put to death and all their relatives and dependents were taken as slaves. Protection was given to merchants, artisans and agriculturists. [10]

The following account of the campaign is given by Al Biladuri:

Muhammad commenced the siege of town but the provisions being exhausted; the Muslims were reduced to eat asses. Then came forward an old man who sued for quarter and pointed out them an aqueduct by which the inhabitants were supplied with drinking water from the river of Basmad. It flows within the city into a reservoir like a well which they called '*Talab*', Muhammad destroyed this water course, whereon the inhabitants oppressed with thirst surrendered at discretion. He massacred the men capable of bearing arms and the children were taken

captives as well as priests of the temple to the number of six thousand.[11]

The authority of the Caliphs was on decline in 871 C.E., Multan became the capital of one of the two independent and flourishing kingdoms which were established as Sindh and Mansura under the rule of Karmathians. The *amir* of Multan about 915 C.E. is described as Arab of noble house of Khorash named Abu-i-Dalhut al-Munabha, a powerful monarch, his territory was extended to the frontier of Khurasan in one direction and Alor in the other. Multan is said to have been at that time surrounded by 12,000 hamlets. The temple of Sun was still an important source of revenue from pilgrims who flocked to it from all parts.[12] The independence of Multan was lost about 978 C.E., when Hamid Khan Lodhi had paid the tribute to Subktigin but his son Abul Fath abandoned his allegiance to Ghaznavids. He obtained the assistance of Anandpal of Lahore. The kingdoms of Multan and Mansura both had fallen during the Ghazni invasions. Mahmud entered Multan by the route of Bhatinda in 1005 C.E., and was retired after receiving the submission of Abul Fath.[13]

Mahmud passed through Multan on his way to Thaneswar and Somnath in order to fight with the Jats who lived in Jud mountains. But no long afterwards, Multan is supposed to have shaken off the Ghazni allegiance and have become a part of the dominions of Sumars, a Rajput dynasty which had arisen in Sindh. The history of event is obscure but there is no doubt that towards 1192 C.E. Multan was reduced by Shihab-ud-din Ghorī. He led his forces to Multan and captured that place from the hands of the Karmathians who had regained its possession for some years previously.[14]

Shihab-ud-din Ghorī captured Lahore and put it in charge of Ali Karmakh, the *wali* of Multan.[15] Nasar-ud-din Qubacha, the governor of Multan declared himself as the Sultan of Sindh and extended his territory to the east of the Sutlej towards Sirsa and Hissar.

During the Delhi Sultanate, the normal condition of Multan was the nominal subjugation to Delhi Sultanate but twice during the Sultanate period, Multan was, for all practical purposes, a separate kingdom independent of Delhi viz, in 1210-1227 C.E. when Qubacha ruled over Multan[16] and again in 1445-1527 C.E. when the Langahs governed Multan independently to the Delhi Sultanate.

At many times, the province was held by vigorous governors who were powerful factor in the dynastic change of the time such were Malik Kabir Khan who in 1236 C.E. joined the conspiracy to put Razia off the throne.[17]

Bahram Abia or Kishalu Khan who in 1321 C.E. acted as the right hand man of Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq in the later successful usurpation[18] and Saiyyad Khizr

Khan who marched towards Delhi and founded the Saiyyad dynasty.[19]

The Sultans whoever ruled it, their attention was mainly fixed on repelling the hideous and incessant ravages of the Mongol hordes from Khurasan and Central Asia. At least ten important invasions on the southern Punjab by Central Asian hordes are recorded in three centuries between 1221 to 1526 C.E.

First was on the escape of Jalal-ud-din Khwarizm Shah who crossed the Indus was pursued by the hosts of Chinghiz Khan.[20] Then in 1239 C.E., another tribe, the Karlugh Turks, being ousted from Ghazni raided Multan and was followed by pursuing hosts of the Mongols under Mungutah.[21] In 1257 C.E., the Mongols under Nuin Saleh, treacherously invited to Multan to aid the local governor in his intrigues were only dissuaded from wholesale massacre by a handsome bribe. The saint Bahawal Hakk had to pay 1,000,000 *dinars* to save the place from being sacked.[22] In 1284 C.E., the Mongols under Timar Khan defeated and killed Prince Mahmud, a son of Balban, known as *khan-i-shahid* (the martyr prince) who then rated in Multan.[23] In 1305 C.E., an invasion under Aibak Khan was repelled by Ghazi Khan Tughlaq who is said to have twenty-nine times defeated the invading hordes.[24] In 1327 C.E., a force under Turmshrain Khan overran Multan only repealed on paying a bribe.[25] In 1397 C.E., came Timur whose troops occupied Uchch, Multan and sacked Tulamba and passed on crossing the Beas to Pakpattan and Delhi.[26] In 1430 C.E., Shahrukh, a grandson of Timur, dispatched a force against the province which advanced to the gates of the city before it was defeated. Finally, in 1528 C.E. there was a peaceful transfer of province to Babur.[27] For three centuries, Multan bore the brunt of great disturbance caused by the Central Asian upheavals. The difficulties of Khaiber routes and powerful hostility of the Khokhars drove the majority of the invading hosts to attempt the Multan route to Delhi. In one respect, the devastation of Khurasan and Iran was benefited to Multan, a considerable number of pious and learned men have settled there. The primarily disturbance of Ghorī times had driven Gardezi Saiyyad to the town of Multan. At the same time, Pir Shams Tabraze and Sabzawar Qazi Qutbu-ud-Din came from Khurasan.[28] The earliest and most celebrated building in the town was the temple of the Sun which was also mentioned by Hwen Thsang[29] and Arab geographers in 8<sup>th</sup> century, was apparently destroyed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. On the southwest of the city, there was a magnificent tomb of Rukn-i-Alam, the grandson of saint Rukan-i-Alam.[30] The city of Multan is mentioned in *Ain-i-Akbari* as a *mahal* in *subah* Multan with estimated revenue of 1,719,168 *dams*. [31]

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#### **Corresponding Author**

#### **Mr. Sunil Sharma\***

Assistant Professor of History, Govt. College,  
 Gharauda