

A Century of Lodhi Rule Over Multan

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In the middle of the 11th century CE Amir Subuktageen and his son Sultan Mahmud were building the Ghaznavid empire spreading from Bost to Ghazni, Laghman, Nangarhar and the lands as far as the banks of the Indus river which were ruled by the Kabulshah dynasty.

Their winter capital was at what is now Attock, near the banks of the Indus, 28 miles east of Peshawar. The southern part of this region, the foothills of the Suleiman mountains extending to Multan, were ruled by a separate family of kings. This dynasty was started by Sheikh Hamid Lodhi. He was a contemporary of Alaptageen. He and his son, Amir Subuktageen, were the founders of the Ghaznavid empire. He ruled from 961 to 999 CE.

Both Arab and non-Arab historians have mentioned these rulers of Multan but the available documents have little information about them. Historians dealing with the events of the time regarding Subuktageen and Mahmud mention some of these rulers. The oldest source is Zaien-al-Akhbar by Abdul Hai bin Zohak Gardezi who wrote around 1068 CE. Gardezi states: "In 1010 CE Sultan Mahmud captured Daud bin Nasr, the ruler of Multan, and brought him to Ghazni. He was imprisoned until his death in Ghorak, 30 miles southwest of Kandahar."

Arab historians like Ibn-e Aisar and Ibn-e Khaldan write about the confrontation of Sultan Mahmud with Abul Futuh Daud, a Lodhi ruler in 1005 CE. Daud was defeated in the battle and paid a fine of 20,000 dirhams to the Sultan.

A historian of the Moghul period, Mohammad Qasem Fereshta, writes that Sheikh Hamid was an Afghan belonging to the Lodhi tribe. He ruled over Laghman and Multan at the time of Gewapal, a Kabulshah king. He aided the king in his battles against Subuktageen, but when the ruler descended on the throne of Ghazni, the Multan ruler made peace with Subuktageen.

In 1004 CE when Sultan Mahmud captured Multan, during his second raid, the ruler of this family was Abul Futuh Daud the grandson of Sheikh Hamid. Daud was said to be a follower of the Ismaeli and Karamat sects. In 1010 CE the family was defeated by Sultan Mahmud and from then on Multan was a state of Ghazni.

Historians of the East and West, after Qasem Fereshta, also record the story of Sheikh Hamid and say his family belonged to the Lodhi tribe. In the 15th century this

family once again formed a mighty empire, this time in Delhi. The ruler was Sultan Bahlol bin Malik Kala from Multan.

The family of Sheikh Hamid is not well known in Indian history and since Fereshta, as usual, has not stated his references, later historians have not accepted his statement that Sheikh Hamid was an Afghan. Sayed Suleiman Nadwi, the Indian historian, says in his book on Indo-Arab Relations which was published in 1931, the Lodhi descended from Jalm bin Sheiban, an Arab ruler and a native of Sind.

In 1944 I discovered the book *Pata Khazana* (Hidden Treasure) which gives some valuable information about this family. The text of this important document supports the theory that Sheikh Hamid and his family were Afghans and their mother tongue was Pashto. The book includes an exchange of poetry between the rulers. We do not have any information about these poets from any other sources.

The publication of *Pata Khazana* and the articles which I wrote in Urdu language for some magazines in Lahore attracted the attention of Indian and Pakistani scholars. In 1951, I met Sayed Suleiman Nadwi and he asked me what *Pata Khazana* states about the Lodhis of Multan. After hearing a brief account of what the book says about this family, the late historian commented: "Mohammad Qasem Fereshta was not in the habit of mentioning his sources. It is possible that the Moghul historian had seen this book. While I was writing Indo-Arab Relations I did not know of this document. The Pashto poetry by members of this family in *Pata Khazana* affirms they were Afghans and not Arabs."

Nadwi then brought into discussion the word "sheikh" which has been used with the names of Hamid and other members of this family and said that it is usually used in Arabic. To show that the work is not alien to Afghan names I gave examples like Sheikh Mati, a chief of the Ghoryakhel tribe, Sheikh Mali Yusufzai, Sheikh Qasem Suleimani, and others.

In any case it appears that the family of Sheikh Hamid is the first exponenter of Afghan culture and language in Multan which for one century ruled over this land and spread Islam to the Indian sub-continent. By 1450 CE Malik Bahlol brought this family to power for the second time in the Indian sub-continent.

Gardezi in *Zaien-al-Akhbar* says that with the defeat of Abul Futuh Daud the reign of this family came to an end. Fakhr Mudabir in *Adab-al-Harb*, written during the Ghorid rule in the 13th century, says the Sheikh, son of Daud, in 1040 CE rose against Sultan Mahmud. The Sultan sent an army under the command of Ahmad Hajib to Multan.

When the army reached Multan, the Sheikh fled and took asylum in Mansura, capital of Sind and the Ghaznavid army took control of Multan. That is the last we know of this family.

Some of the prominent rulers of this family are:

Sheikh Hamid Lodhi, circa 980 CE

Sheikh Razi, nephew of Hamid, circa 980 CE

Abul Futuh Daud bin Nasr, circa 1004 CE

Sheikh bin Daud, circa 1040 CE