

FORWORD

Parts of Punjab and North Western Frontier Province had been the permanent habitat of generations of Mohyals for several millennia. This territory became part of Pakistan after the Partition of India in 1947. Mohyals and other Hindus, who were not killed, trekked to India leaving behind home and hearth. It was a stroke of luck that while Pothi Rai Seegarh, which was the ancient history book of Mohans, was no longer accessible, a copy of Jang Nama Mohanan, based on the Pothi, could be retrieved from a source in Jammu. It is in the Punjabi language and Urdu script. I am happy that it has been rendered into Dev Nagarii script and is now being published.

History of Mohyals has two distinct phases. Our ancestors ruled, with power and glory, over the borderlands of India, pushing back the thrust of Musalmans, for as long as they could. After India lost its independence, Mohyals continued to offer supreme sacrifices against the tyranny of the foreign rulers. I find that in the narration of Mohyal History, the sacrifice of Mohans has not been adequately recognised. While in other cases individuals offered martyrdom, here the whole clan of Mohans at Mamdot sacrificed themselves at the battlefield. They challenged the emperor of India for forcible conversion of one of their youngman to Islam and marrying him to a royal princess.

I hope more books highlighting various aspects of Mohyal History will come up, following the current trend.

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जंगनामा मोहनां

- बोल शुभ जग आदि सृष्टि ब्रह्म उपजाई
कशप सुत बलवान समरो सरस्वति माई 1
- त्रेता युग अवतार प्रथम जमदग्नि भयो
उनके सुत परसराम हुए छतरी मार हरायो 2
- द्वापरयुग में पाण्डव सुत दरवासा गुरु को मान
ताके कुल में सूरमा मोहन प्रगटे आन 3
- मोहन पढ़ भगवानदास मथरा से आए
गोकल मथरादास पुत हरीकेश जाए 4
- गुरुकुल से पढ़ फिर आए बीच काशी
हरीकेश के वंश फिर पुत भए अबनाशी 5
- अबनाशी दिल्ली शहर के गंगा जमना जायो
तिमरु शाह बादशाह ने पास वजीर बनायो 6
- मोहन मैया दास बादशाह पास बिठायो
सरोपा दे हुकम मीरशाह मन हर कहायो 7
- मैया दास के पुत दोनो शौरी जानो
हरिचन्द, हरनन्द फौज ले दखन छायो 8
- करन युद्ध सूरे लड़न विच मैदान
मीरां शाह बादशाह ने राखे पास दीवान 9

बादशाह सुल्तान मुहम्मद खान जी	
मीरां शाह के पूत बड़े बलवान जी	10
हीरानन्द दीवान बचन दृढ़ राखियो	
बसत रहे बेटा सोभा भाखियो	11
धनकोट शहर बनवाए शोभा करे जहान	
चूनी से पुरोहित, राय सीघढ़ हुन मोहन प्रगटियो	12
प्रथम कोट धनकोट मोहन मबहन ने कोट बनाया	
बसे कई बार बंस ओथों आया	13
बादशाह के हुकम मोहन सब मन लेते	
बीते कई सहस्र बरस जस बहू कीते	14
बादशाह बाबार के हरजस राय दीवान	
सात मूही सरमुकट है भया मोहन सुल्तान	15
प्रथम शीश भी दया में कुछ नाहीं	
बाबा सिद्ध समरो जिस कृपा यह जस गाएं	16
सारंग मानक मोनू और महते इनको कुल मोहनां के हाइं	
ऋद्धि सिद्धि वर्धिनी करना करतूतां ताइं	17
कश्यप गोत्र माधनी शाखा प्रवर पंज बखान	
हुकम हुमांयू शाह के सदा मोहन बरतान	18
अब तेरह सौ तरेसठ सम्वत जो बीते	
मोहन कृपा राम मुलक जीतो सारे	19

अबकर शाह के पे बीरबल वजीर सदा रहो ब्राह्मण कौम का उपकार करन करतूतां आओ	20
ढंग मंग देखे अन्दर भाग बरसाए महम्मद शाह बादशाह ने मनसाराम बुलायो	21
महम्मद शाह आखे साथ लै सरोपा मनसाराम तूं पंजाब अन्दर जा	22
यह हुकम पाये पंजाब अन्दर चले आओ दीवान मनसाराम का प्रह्लाद राय जस गाओ	23
लाहौर का दीवान सूबा किया है मनसाराम मुगल और पठान जीते करन आये सलाम	24
दीवान मनसाराम का पुत सेवा राम सपूत है सेवाराम का पुत जयराम	25
जयराम चन्द्र स्वरूप बादशाह लुभायो पकड़ जबरदस्त पंजाब से ले आयो	26
बेगमां बादशाह से कही बात बना जयराम सेती आप बेटी का करो निकाह	27
ऐसी बात सुन बादशाह ने खूब पाई छल तुम लेओ बेटी शाहज़ादी, नाल साडे रल	28
जयराम न जाए कही सेवाराम से सारी गल नस चलो बाप जी पंजाब अन्दर चल	29

मिल के बाप बेटा चले मार्ग छाए	
समय नाल लाहौर अन्दर भए प्राप्त जाए	30
यह बात सुन बादशाह ने दिल्ली मंगाए फेर	
जय ताइं सद अन्दर तुर्का लिया घेर	31
बेटी ब्याह के आप दीना थाल नाल खवाओ	
जयराम ताइं मुस्लमान सब कहन ठाकर शाह	32
हुन खबरां गइयां मुल्क सारे शाह कीतो कहर	
सुन बात मोहन करुपे चढ़े दिल्ली शहर	33
मोहन बंस खड़े हैं दल जोड़	
जयराम सेती छोड़ काफर सीस दिए फोड़	34
जयराम सेती कुल मोहनां, सीस दिते आन	
उठ चले ममदोट मोहन अपने मैदान	35
मोहन इकट्ठे हो गये सब फौज में लख एक	
ममदोट कलस चढाओ सत गुरां राखी टेक	36
मोहन इकट्ठे हो गए सब दीनी पाती पट	
लड़ांगे मैदान सेती ला कर असी हठ	37
एह बात सुन बादशाह ने लिख हुकम कीतो तां	
ममदोट शहर मोहनां कतल करयो जा	38
विच सभा दे बैठ के बोलया हशमत खान	
हुकम होवे बादशाह दा जित लियावां तां	39

शाह देयो सरोपा संग फौजां देयो भारी तोप गुबार फील रथ घनी सवारी	40
चढया मुगल पठान कोपना वर कूच बुलाइयो गढ़ धनकोट तीस कोस पर डेरा लाइयो	41
सद इक वकील नूं हशमत खां फरमाईयो जा कहो तू मोहनां करन लड़ाई आइयो	42
एह वी कह दे जाये के दो लख घोड़ा आया पांव पड़ो जो जीवणा खां साहब फरमाया	43
मोहनां कन वकील जा एह बात सुनाई आया हशमत खां संग मोहनां करन लड़ाई	44
एक सलाह फिर मोहनां आपस विच ठहराई जा कहो हशमत खां से करसां खूब लड़ाई	45
कहियो ने वकील नूं जा आखीं हशमत खान जानीं राजपूत तां जे कीनो पगड़ भान	46
कह दे जा के खान नूं सब कुछ हमरे पास मोहन तां तूं जानना जे तुझे कटाऊँ घास	47
कहया जा वकी ने सुन हशमत खां राजा सच सुनाऊं तुझ को जो मोहन साजन साजा	48
मोहन आखन गल जो मुगल सुन लीजो कनी रण सूरे राजपूत जो तेग बहादर धनी	49

जीना लोड़े भाग जा महम्मद शाह के पास नहीं ते सुन लै हश्मता तुझे कटावें घास	50
हशमत खां अमरा ने अपना हुकम सुनायो आये मुगल पठान सब आन सलाम बुलायो	51
दारू गोला लै के हथ फौजों के दीजे बाशाह का नमक जगत विच जाहर कीजे	52
कंगन घोड़े मुलक लेओ युद्ध करो घमसान मारो मोहन ममदोट आखे खान सुल्तान	53
रण सूरे राजपूत सुत तेगां हथ पाए धोंसे खूब निशान आन रण आगे आए	54
गरजन लागे तोप करोप से चले जंबूरा उडे हशमत खां मोहन संग लड़दा सूरा	55
हल्ला कीता मोहनां दिते मुगल भजा सेना मारी सन अफसरां पकड़ लए अमरा	56
भागी सेना शाह दी वेखे कुल जहान हशमत खां को कैद कर मोहन पकड़े जान	57
लिख अरजी वकील ने पादशाह पास पठाई मोहनां कीती जंग करी खूब लड़ाई	58
पादशाह को खत वाच वजीर सुनाए हशमत खां मोहन पकड़यो धनकोट सधाय	59

पिछली पैरीं नस गए जो तेरे उमरा	
जे तुध मोहनां जीतना बहुत फ़ौज मंगा	60
सुनी बात जब बादशाह करोप बहुत मन आयो	
बादल वांगो गरज्यो खौफ सभी ने खाइयो	61
पीर बखश अमीर ने सत सलाम उठाये	
खरली खां पठान आन पैरी हथ लाये	62
दोवें आखन बादशाह नूं सुन लै धर के कान	
मारो मोहन ममदोट आखे खान सुल्तान	63
एह गल सुन के पादशाह कासद भेज्या चा	
भेज कासद खुरासान तों लई फ़ौज मंगा	64
लै फ़ौज महम्मद शाह आप सेना संग लाया	
हाथी घोड़े पालकी बहुत सामान लै आया	65
तोप गुबारा रहकला तरंग जंबूरा ला	
जंगी फ़ौजां साज के चढ़ आया बादशाह	66
मोहन वल वकील नूं दीतो बेग पठाए	
जो कुछ केहा बादशाह सब दिता जा सुनाए	67
मोहनां कन वकील ने जा एह बात सुनाई	
आइयो महम्मद शाह साथ तुम करन लड़ाई	68
मोहनां का सरदार अपना बंस सदावे	
ऐसा कीजो जंग पुरुष नारी जस गावे	69

गोविन्द मथरादास ने जा कर करी सलाह पाती हथ वकील दे दिती हथ फड़ा	70
जो कुछ मोहनां मथया लिख वकीलां कीनो लिख पाती वकील जगत में ज़ाहर कीनो	71
हमरा मुस्लमान तुध जयराम बनायो ऐस कभी अनर्थ दुष्ट सुनना नहीं पाइयो	72
जे तुध लोड़ी जिन्दगी अपना आप बचा मोहन नमक हलाल हैं मरसन हथ दिखा	73
ऐसा खत वकील ने महम्मद शाह दे वल जो कुछ मोहनां आखिया खोल सुनाइ गल	74
पाती सुन के शाह क्रोध मन बहुत रसायो बीच कचहरी बैठ सभी को हुकम सुनायो	75
चढ़ी फ़ौज चतरंग तुरत सेना बहु भाजी ऊंट हाथी संगी बेग तरंगन गाजी	76
महम्मद सेना ले चढ़े तुरत भये असवारा कौन करे ता गिनती सेना कटक शुमारा	77
थर थर कम्बे भूमि चल मार्ग जे सेना बड़े बड़े सरदार वड़े हैन बलवाना	78
गढ़ धनकोट के तीस कोस उतर कर डेरा दीनो दूत बिठाए चार चौफेरे घेरा	79

चढ़ आई सेना शाह की तुम पे हुआ सवार ऐसी मोहन श्रवन सुन करी फौज तैयार	80
सीधे गए मैदान युद्ध को सन्मुख धाय रण सूरे राजपूत तोप ले मरड़ी लाय	81
दो दल हुए असवार तोप महताबी लाई मोहन महम्मद शाह आपे विच करन लड़ाई	82
आठ पहर जंग रहयो बहु कीनी मारो मार हटे नाहीं मैदान तों नाहीं खलोते हार	83
मोहनां सेना फटी मार तोपां सो छाई महम्मद के दल मां आए बीच करें लड़ाई	84
चार चौफेरा बादशाह दल घेरा पाए हटना नहीं मैदान से जंग ओह करन सवाए	85
तोप गुबारा रहकले दिये जंबूरे डाह इस युद्ध मोहनां अपने सीस दीने कटाये	86
खेत पास आप पादशाह पहरे खलवाए इन मोहनां दे साथ तुर्क छूने न पाए	87
आवन आन के नार देख के मुरदे चावन आपन परखां साथ नार सती हो जवान	88
अत्तर गुलाब मंगायो करवायो इशानान चन्दन नाल सटराइयो महम्मद खड़ा हैरान	89

- सतियां अपने जत सत मुरदियाँ हथ पाए
अपने पुरख सैयां आन झोली पाए 90
- सतियां संग पुरखां सिर पर पहंचे आन
चारों युग बैकुण्ठ दा मोहन राज कमान 91
- प्रह्लाद राय कोई सहगड़ा पुर भेरा अस्थान
तब तेरह सौ त्रेसठ सी जिस सने बधवान 92
- जो मोहन सी इस खेल में सेना के सरदार
दो सौ अठासी मोहन सी कुल करे कौन शुमार 93
- प्रथम पंजाबा, गुलाबा, फिर शामा मल
दीवान राधाकिशन सी, प्रधान शंकरमल 94
- सावन, काशीराम, गोकल, गण्डा, झण्डा, काहन
भजू, गुलाबा, तध, धनपत, धर्मू, दानधनी, राम, बसू, होर मोह~~95~~
- वस्ती, आयू, हाकम, हजारी ते बिहारी रंग ऐसे लाइयो
सोभाराम सखा मोहन बड़े महरबान भजु भगवानदास
जेहा दान करन आइयो 96
- गोहरसिंह, मैयासिंह, मानसिंह बुलाइयो
दो सौ अठासी मोहन का प्रह्लाद राय जस गाईयो 97
- गंग, सम्भा, दास, मल फिर चारे यार
मूला ते दूला करनदास लाभसैन करें पियार 98

जसवन्त, नथूमल, सारजस, मखन, मोती, मानिये घसीटा, राम, लछमन, जय, दया बखानिये	99
कुलकर्ण, केसरमल, दाता जैसे जंग मचाइयो महम्मद शाह का कटक मोहनां बहुत मार मुकाइयो	100
दुनीचन्द, चन्दाराम जी महताब, राधेमल जयमल, ज्वाला, मथरा करन रल के गल	101
बसंत, बादल, शामजी, नथूराम कांशीराम, भगवान, राजाराम, बिशन और गीधाराम	102
मतवाल चन्द, निहाल, नानक मोहन मनसाराम, उत्तम ते अर्जन मोहन	103
मखनमल, बूटामल शादी हाइयो दो सौ अठासी मोहन गिने जाको अंत न पाइयो	104
मोए मरद मैदान बहतर संग बालक नार दो सौ अठासी मोहन सी कुल कौन करे शुमार	105
सब बंस मैदान अन्दर सीस देने आइया मोहनां दे जंग नूं कुल जहान देखन आइया	106
पिछे इक न रहया बादशाह ने एह मुनादी कीना लोक सारे आखदे अब मोहन कोई न रहना	107
एह बात सुन प्रहलाद राय बेग दहली छाए तां खिज़रे मोहन नूं एह गल जा सुनाई	108

जे ठोर हैसी खिज़रा मोहन ओहां पहुंचे आन कुल बंस उपमां मोहन की अब करते ताई बखान	109
इक बच्चे पिछे बंस मोहन कुल होया घायल तू मोहन असाडे बंस दा उठ चल साडे नाल	110
अफ़सोस कीना खिज़र ने जां एह सुनी गल कहन्दा ओह प्रहलाद नूं तूं राय हुन चल	111
सत घोड़े सत जोड़े सत लै सरोपा मैं दो माह नूं औसां तू शताबी जा	112
खिज़रा राय नूं टोर के गया शाह के पास हुकम होवे पंजाब का अब एह दिल की आस	113
शाह ने दे के सरोपा मलक का हुकम सुनाया चतरंग दल साजे आन पंजाब धाइयो	114
दिल्लीपत सुल्तान मान खिज़रे का राखियो करके बचन अधीन शाह मुख ऐसे बाखियो	115
खिज़रा ठकर शाह बन चढियो सेना सहज पहुंचा विच लाहौर दे लै के साज समाज	116
मिलया ठकर शाह बाप साधू ते तांइं मिलया बाप बेटा तन भरया असी बर आंइं	117
साधू ठकर शाह ने राखी कुल की लाज ठकर साधूराम का फिर करेसी काज	118

ठकर कहे प्रहलाद राय जी तुसी असाडी बांह ढूंढो साक दीवान दा बंस वधेगा तां	119
ठकर प्रहलाद राय खोल सुनाई गल कंजरूड़ अन्दर दत भागा मलक बैठा मल	120
घर उसदे कन्या तू जा झोली डाह दीवान साधूराम का अब करो होर व्याह	121
कंजरूड़ अन्दर भागामल बड़ा जां को बल जा मिलया मोहन ठकर दत भागे दे गल	122
घर तेरे कन्या तू मेरी झोली पा दीवान साधूराम मोहन इस दे नाल वियाह	123
दत भागेमल ने पंचायत सदाई आय साक मंगदा मोहन ठकर करां कौन उपाय	124
शहर दत पंचायत बैठी करके इक सलाह तूं पुन्न कर दे आप बेटी बंस वधे तां	125
मिश्र नूं सदवाइयो इस साह कढ़ीयो आन गुरुवार तिथि त्रिओदशी पख नछतर जान	126
रुचिराम पुरोहित बात सोच बिचारी केसर टिका लेयो सेर भर मिसरी सारी	127
रोक रुप्या गुड़ साथ ब्राह्मण को दीजे जाओ शहर लाहौर बेग कुछ विलम न कीजे	128

दत कन्या शुभ लछमी भागवन्ती शुभ नाम ले के शगन पुरोहित चले मोहन के धाम	129
सेना सहित पुरोहित शाह ठकर मढ़ धाया साधूराम लै के शगन तिलक मस्तक पर लाया	130
ढोल तुरयाँ मरदंग गीत नारी मुख से गावन भाट मांग सब लोग आन वधाई पावन	131
रोक रुप्या ते मिसरी इक इक लागी पाया शहर गन्दौड़ा फेरिया साधूराम वियाह सुधाया	132
प्रथम कोट धनकोट दागो दागो लायो तेरह सौ तरेसठ विच पंजाबे आयो	133
पुर पटन ममदोट देस धरती सब मिली आन मोहन प्रगटियो बादशाहां गल मनी	134
सत्र सौ खान पिछे चढ़े जिस हवा मण्डल छायो महम्मद शाह बादशाह ने सब कूप भरायो	135
असवज सी मास पख नछतर भावे पख महीने छटवें बुधवार चन्द्र गन गावे	136
सत घोड़े सत सरोपा मोहरां संग पाइयो बुदगी केसर सब लाग लागियां पाइयो	137
इस बिध मोहन जस लियो दौलत दी लुटा ओह दत बेटी लछमी मोहन लई बियाह	138

ठकर करे सलाम बाप नूं अरज सुनाई कहे साधू ठकर शाह प्रथम मने तुझे भाई	139
जो कोई होसी मोहन रीत तेरी कर लेवे मैंनूं मनसी फेर प्रथम तैनूं सब सेवे	140
ठकर सत सलाम कर चलयो दिल्ली धाय इस बिध खजरे बाप दा हथीं किया बियाह	141
सत महीने भये नारियां मंगल गाइया रात समय दत सुता मोहन नूं एह हस कर आया	142
हम को तेरा पेट खुशी कीजो जग सारे तुमरी रत बलवान मोहन होसन जग सारे	143
साधूराम स्वर्ग में इस बिध कीनी बास पत जन्म सी राज रख महता दास	144
सिद्ध बेद आन असीस दिती, मनो मोहन तार इक बूटा कई टहनियां, पत होवन हज़ार	145
दत बेटी मोहन कीनी इस बिध सत दीना विहार सारंग, मानक और फोनू महता फल परिवार	146
हरदास, बख़त बलन्द, मोहन और राय राधामल करतूत करदे करन जैसी, जिसदा मिलदा फल	147
सारंग, मानक और फोनू अब बंस वध्या आन कुल बंसी साधूराम दा, सब राजसी सुल्तान	148

प्रथम पूजे बेद, भेद इसमें कुछ नहीं बावा सिद्ध सखों, जिस कृपा को गाई	149
सारंग, मानक, फोनू महते, कुल मोहन की माई ऋद्धि सिद्धि वर्धिनी, करन करतूतां ताई	150
कश्यप सुगोत्र माधनी शाखा, प्रवर पंज बखान हुकम हमायूं शाह दा, मोहन सदा बरतान	151
जो कोई मोहन मरद सी, नाले दुर्गादास तां को सुत बलवान सी, लच्छमी दास	152
बेटी लाए प्रथम जादव राय फिर वे अंत चन्द बंस को बढ़ाय	153
तां के तारा चन्द करने जस भारी लाला सिंह, गुलाब राय जस करन बहकारी	154
तां के बेटे चार सन, चारों थे दीवान ऋद्धि सिद्धि अरको धनी राजपूत जसवान	155
प्रथमी सहाय मल जयसिंह रो थे भाई किशनचन्द जसवान मुगलचन्द कला दिखाई	156
पूत भवानीदास बाप जाईयो भवानीदास सदा रंग पित्रां को लाईयो	157

सुल्तान सिंह, दीवान सिंह, जां को बड़ परवार राजपूत रिज़क धनी सब आला सरदार	158
सुल्तान सिंह पूत चार सुपात्र आए पहले मजलस राय धन कोख में आए	159
चोहड़मल सी जिसने बस की सेज सवारी कपूरमल दयावान कहे परख नर नारी	160
सरूपराय सूरमा जो तलवार का धनी चारों पूत सपूत हैं जो हाथ के सखी	161
अनन्त बसंत मोहन राज भाग धाम जां को बंस में दीवानसिंह, शिवसिंह नाम	162
दीवानसिंह के चलूत दो सपूत जाए प्रथम राजमल भाग सोभा माए	163
बड़े मोतीराम हैं लोड़ीन्दा भाई सुलखनराम गोवर्धन कोख जीनो माई	164
मोती के दो सुत भयो बहादर होड़ामल बिन्दराबन तुलसी पोता सदा बंस अब चल	165
लोडीदचन्द मोहन मूलानाथ पुत जाईयो दूजा पिंडीदास रास कारज कर लाईयो	166
सुखदयाल दयावान बात देवारास विचारी दीवान का बंस बढ़या जग भई खुशी सारी	167

सुलखनमल के बंस में उपजे शंकरदास निहालचन्द गणेश जी सब के कारज रास	168
तू लाला हैं राजकोर बेटा कचहरी मल तू लख ते हज़ारी बरकतराय दे वल	169
भागमल के चार सुत चारों भये जसवान गंडामल के बंस को अब करे व्याख्यान	170
फिर लाला कांशीराम राज से करतब काम लाला जी जगन्नाथ राज रीत के पाए नाम	171
राजन के पास वे निवास करन आइयो साधूमोहन का अब बंस बधाइयो	172
कांशीराम तू राजा नाल पाला है जगन्नाथ, गंडामल करें असीस सफल कमाई है	173



PROLOGUE

CHHIBBER, DATT AND VAID SOVERIGNS RULING THE BORDER REGIONS OF INDA

India has a glorious history. Our Mohyal sovereigns ruling in the frontier regions of India when Islam came knocking, and our martyrs even in centuries thereafter, are a part of that glory. During the long foreign rule, the victor's account of history suppressed whatever was good and great about India. Here you will read the story of a whole fraternity of Mohyal MOHANS who accepted martyrdom at the battle field of Mamdot, in an unequal fight with the Mughal Emperor of Delhi, to protest at the forcible conversion of a young Mohyal. The father of the young man was at Lahore, on a sensitive senior assignment from the Emperor but it was not just a family feud. It was an issue of the fraternity's honour and self-pride. However, before we unfold the sequence of events these need to be contextualized in their historical perspective. The issue revolves around forcible conversion to Islam and we start with the history of that religion.

During the seventh century CE, a new religion – ISLAM – came up in Arabia. Soon this religion spread, conquering with ease and speed, Syria, Iraq, Egypt and then Iran (Persia) in 640 CE. Here, the Arab advance came to an almost abrupt halt when they tried to subjugate the neighbouring Hindu kingdoms of Zabul and Kabul in (what is now) southern Afghanistan. This was a shock after their earlier experience of quick acquisitions everywhere. There were many raids – some successful with acquisition of booty, mainly cattle and slaves – but the occupation of land was difficult¹. According to Muslim chronicles, Rutbil (Zunbil, Ranbal ...etc) was the designation of the King of Zabulistan.

Arab Failure in Afghanistan

To achieve this main objective of occupation of this territory, through which passed the strategic trade route to India, Al

Hajjāj, the governor of Baghdad (694-713), equipped and dispatched an army under his experienced general Ubaidullah b. Ali Bakra in 698, with the order to 'lay waste the Rutbil's lands, destroy his forts and kill and enslave the people' if necessary. 'Artfully retiring, the Rutbil drew the Mohamedan army into the defiles, and blocking up the rear, cut off their retreat and Obaidullah was compelled to purchase his liberation by the payment of seven hundred thousand dirhams'. Obaidullah had to promise never to raid this territory again and he died of grief at the plight of his forces.

In 700-701, AbdurRehman bin Mohammad bin Ashta was dispatched at the head of a 'magnificently equipped' army with forty thousand men to retrieve the Muslim honour. He was able to collect considerable booty but failed to have any territorial gains, nor would he dare to cross swords with Rutbil – thus incurring the displeasure of Hajjaj. Exasperated by the threats of being superseded, he determined to carry arms against his masters and, in order to strengthen his power, conducted a treaty with the enemies of the faith (i.e. Rutbil) that in the event of the success of AbdurReman's campaign against the Caliph, the prince of Zabul would be exempt from any species of tribute or contributions but in case of its failure the latter would afford him asylum. A great *fitna* (strife) followed. The Caliphal throne and the autocratic rule of Hajjaj were jeopardized for a while but AbdurRehman and his allies were ultimately trounced in 704. Finally, AbdurReman found shelter under Rutbil.

This ignominious defeat inflicted by a small frontline sate of Hindu India was the first major failure faced by the Arabs. The only comparable event occurred next in

¹ Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. II, p.415: 'Biladuri informs us that under the Caliphate of Muaviya Abdur Rahman son of Samra penetrated to the city of Kabul and obtained possession of it after a month's siege (mentioned as siege of 'one year' on p. 414) ... The king of Kabul made an appeal to the warriors of India and the Mussalmans were driven out of Kabul'.

732 when the French successfully pushed back the Arabs trying to cross over from Spain to France.²

Chhibber rule in Sindh

Frustrated at their dismal failure in Afghanistan, the Arabs diverted their attention towards Sindh, another border state of India. The kingdom of Sindh was under the rule of a Brahmana dynasty (c. 632-712) – the ancestors of the present-day Chhibber caste of Mohyals. Raja Dahar was its sovereign ruler. Al Hajjaj sent two expeditions against Sindh, both of which proved disastrous. Their Arab commanders were killed and many soldiers taken captive. Incensed by the repeated failures, another army was assembled with great care, under the command of Hajjaj's son-in-law Imad-ud-Din Mohammad son of Qasim. "Muhammad with 6000 Syrian horse, flower of armies of Caliph, a camel corps of equal strength and a baggage train of 3000 camels marched by way of Shiraz and through Makran – where he was joined by more troops. His artillery which included a great *ballista* (i.e. catapult) known as the "Bride", worked by 500 men, was sent by sea to meet him."³ By then Sindh had neutralized fourteen attacks by the Arabs, two of these recently. Raja Dahar took this contest also sportingly and lost (712). This was the first, and the only acquisition by Arabs in mainland India. The surrounding Hindu states of Gujrat, Sindh and Punjab, managed to contain the Arabs within Sindh – but did not try to oust them.

Rutbil Murdered Treacherously

After their failure, the Arabs did not attack Zabul again and the state was in peace for the next century and a half. Gradually the Arab power waned and the converted Muslims set up independent kingdoms in the eastern Caliphate – the region

² *This account of Arab invasion of Zabul, based on Khalasat-al-Akhbar of Mir Khwand (Khondamir), is from narration by Major David Price in his Mohammedan History ... , Vol I, Chapter XIII, pp. 454-63.*

north and west of Hindu Kush Mountains. One of these was the 'Samanids' of Samarkand/Bukhara. The other was the 'Saffarids' of Sistan, established by Yaqub-i-Lais (r. 867-79). He had acquired considerable power and started attacking Rutbil's territory. Overawed by 'huge hordes of enemy' on the battlefield, Yaqub lured Rutbil to a peace meeting, with the ruse of paying homage and managed to kill him treacherously, in 870. 'The victory he achieved was the result of a treachery and deception such as no one had ever committed'. (Mohammad Ufi)⁴The valourous role of the Hindu state of Zabul in protecting India, was completely omitted from the narration of the history of India.

South-western Afghanistan, the whole territory west of Ghazni, was lost to India. The Hindu Shahi state of Kabul thus became the north-western frontline state of our country.

Datt Rule in Kabul

By then a Brahman Dynasty had taken over the kingdom of Kabul. An ancestor of the present-day caste of Datts, Samantadeva (a.k.a. Lallaya), had been anointed the King of Kabul during that period. *Rajatarangini*, the history of Kashmir, praises him in these words:

Alakhana's support, the illustrious Lalliya Shahi – who placed between the rulers of the Darads and Turushkas, ... in whose town of Udabhanda other kings found safety, ... whose might glory outshone the kings in the North, ...

This Mohyal sovereign was during that period the most powerful King in Northern India. His son, Kamalavarman, enjoyed similar power. When a Muslim governor of Gazni,

³The Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, p. 2. ⁴Nuruddin Mohammad Ufi, *Jami ulHikayat*, extracts in Elliot and Dowson, *History of India by Its Own Historians*, II, pp. 176-77.

desecrated a famous Hindu temple located within his own territory, Kamalavarman invaded and chastised the despoiler. Samantadev's grandson, Bhimadev, also continued to rule with power and glory. *Devai Stone Inscription*, describes him as *gadahast, parambhattarka, maharajadhradj*(supreme sovereign, superior king of great kings, and supreme Lord).

Vaid Rule in Punjab

Bhimdeva did not have a male heir and his kingdom of Kabul passed on to the VAID dynasty that had been ruling in Punjab alongside the DATT rule in Kabul. Jayapala thus became the sovereign ruler of a vast territory between Sirhind and Kabul. He ruled peacefully for the first two decades of his rule.

Meanwhile, a mutinous Turk commander of the Samanids, established his own fiefdom in Ghazni, which gradually gained power under its Amir, Sabuktagin. To nip this budding evil in bud, Jayapala twice attacked Ghazni but failed in his objective. In the ensuing hostilities, the Afghanistan part of the Hindu Kingdom was lost. Sabuktagin of Ghazni was succeeded by his son Mahmud in 997, who destroyed their erstwhile masters, the Samanids of Bukhara and the balance of power tilted heavily in favour of Ghazni. Having secured his western front, Mahmud then turned east and started his raids into India proper.

Jayapala, later his son Anandapala and then his grandson Trilochanapala fought well-contested battles with Mahmud, over a period of more than two decades, to resist the advance of Mahmud into mainland India. Finally Punjab was annexed to the Sultanate of Ghazni in 1021. This bulwark – the Mohyal rule astride the Khyber Pass for about 150 years – thus extinguished, India was open to raids by adventurers of all types from Afghanistan. The hallowed Aryavarta gradually lost its independence and India had foreign rule for several centuries, which it could finally shake off in 1947 at a heavy price. Datt and Vaid dynasties of Kabul and Punjab are known as the *Brahmana Hindu Shahis* in Arabic and Sanskrit chronicles.

Formation of Mohyal Castes and Biradari

The country was in turmoil. By then India had a taste of this new religion – ISLAM – which was ruling in Sindh, Afghanistan and Punjab. To save the Hindu population from mass conversions, as happened elsewhere, “the fundamental values of Dharmshastras were readjusted, not only to restore continuity but to provide defensive ramparts in order to present a solid front to an aggressive and alien culture and religion. ... The Dharmshastras were given a higher sanctity; the edge of social ostracism was sharpened; infant marriages became almost universal. ... Caste divided and sub-divided ... but remained unmixed. ... They made compromises with the rulers when compelled to do so; they served them when could not help doing so. But they would not let them defile their homes and castes, social and religious observances by encouraging indiscriminate contact with the Muslims.”⁵

The Hindus had four *Varnas*: Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. (i) These *Varnas* split up into numerous castes, each caste with a distinct *gotra*. (ii) Clusters of castes of the same *Varna*, known to each other due to common profession and habitat, bunched together to form inter-marriage fraternities or *biradaris* (like Khukhrain, Tyagis, Bhumhars, Mohyals ...) and (iii) for instant identity, each person started suffixing his caste to his name (Krishan Lal became Krishan Lal Kapoor).

Islahe Mohyali (c. 1908) by Raizada Ratan Chand Vaid states (p.18), that Jaichand, the Raja of Kannauj and Benaras, performed a *Rajsua Yajna*, at which chiefs of Mohyal tribes were also invited, as princes of the former ruling Brahman dynasty of Punjab. At this stage, in c. 1190, our tribes of Punjabi militant Bramanas, also formed a seven-caste *biradari*, with caste names Bali, Bhimwal, Chhibber, Datt, Lau, Mohan, Vaid – and MOHYAL as the group-name of their *Biradari*. This is

⁵ K. M. Munshi, Foreword, *Struggle For Empire*, p. xxii.

the history of the formation of Mohyal fraternity (and it also applies to all other Hindu castes and caste-fraternities in present day India).

Foreign Rule

The Ghaznavids ruled over Punjab for more than a century and a half. No Hindu kingdom attacked Lahore to throw out the Turks. A Ghauri dynasty of Afghanistan uprooted the kingdom of Ghazni. Muhammad Ghauri, of that dynasty, defeated Khusrav Malik, the last Ghaznavid ruler of Punjab in 1186 and appointed his own governor at Lahore. Later, he fought two battles with Prithvi Raj Chauhan and gained control over Delhi. In 1206 he was killed, allegedly by (Hindu) Khokhars of Punjab in his tent on the bank of river Sindh, while returning to Afghanistan. Qutabuddin Aibak, Muhammad's trusted slave and viceroy at Delhi, declared himself as sovereign of Delhi – starting the Slave (Mamluk) dynasty. The Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Syeds and the Lodis followed them – up to 1526.

During this period of Sultanates (1206-1526), the Mongol adventurers from Afghanistan, and beyond, continued their frequent raids into India – plundering, slaying and ravishing the unfortunate population, which was already groaning under the bigoted rule of the foreigners. Invasion by Timur Ling, the Turkish scourge, in 1398, was a heart rending episode of bloodshed, rape and enslavement for the Hindu masses of North India. The area astride the first leg of the highway from Afghanistan to Delhi, was the traditional homeland of Mohyals. They must have suffered on each occasion whether these marauders returned with booty or without it. Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last of the Sultans, at Panipat on 21 April, 1526 and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire.

Guru NanakDev, the founder of Sikh religion, was in Punjab at that time. He has described the prevailing situation in such words: "Kings are butchers, cruelty their knife, justice has taken wings, falsity prevails ... wealth and beauty of women both proved to be their bane, they were forcibly taken away

and dishonoured ...” His “*shabd*” to this effect are enshrined in Granth Sahib.

The Mughal political system was based on despotic militarism. They continued the policy of uninterrupted territorial expansion. By the time Aurangzeb, the last of the “Great Mughals” died (1707) the Mughal Empire had expanded to unmanageable proportions. The letter written by Aurangzeb from death bed is very pathetic and touching: “I was devoid of administrative (tact) and care for the welfare of the people. (My) dear life has been spent in vain. ... The whole (royal) army (in Deccan) is confused and confounded. The army is restless like me ...”

The Mughal dynasty failed to produce capable heirs. With the partial exception of Bahadur Shah (1707-1712) none of the successors of Aurangzeb had the qualities of kingship. They were reduced to an unenviable position of being the nominees of their supporters, instead of being their leader. After Bahadur Shah several puppet kings were put on the throne in quick succession between 1712 and 1719. We are interested here in Muhammad Shah who was proclaimed emperor on 29 September 1719 and ruled up to 1748. The main interest of historians in the political sphere during his reign, centers on the expansion of the Maratha influence. They spread the network of their activity from Gujrat to Bengal, and from the Narmada to the Yamuna and even up to the Ravi. There was none to obstruct the terrific onrush of their progress. But the most momentous event during the rule of Muhammad Shah was the invasion of Nadir Shah of Iran in 1739. The wealth accumulated by the Sultans and Emperors (during 348 years, after the sack of Delhi by Temur Ling) “changed hands in a moment”. Nadir Shah decamped with every valuable thing, including Peacock throne (wrought out of 1150 kgs of gold and 230 kgs of precious stones) to the priceless *Koh-i-Nurdiamond*. Having satisfied his lust for money, Nadir demanded the hand of a Mughal princess for his son Nasrullah. There was display of illuminations and lavish entertainment to celebrate the marriage, while the people of Delhi were in a state of mourning for their personal losses.

Before leaving, Nadir Shah obtained a promise of a tribute of twenty lakh rupees annually from Lahore and confirmed the appointments of the governor of Lahore and Multan. Vazirs (Prime Ministers) of both places were Hindus – Lakhpat Rai and Kaura Mal, respectively. But Mohammad Shah grievously antagonized the Mohyals by forcible conversion of their kin. The otherwise loyal Mohyals, would not brook this insult to their self-respect and a whole clan of MOHANS of Mamdot accepted martyrdom at the battlefield against the emperor – for the sake of their honour. That account follows.



THE HISTORY OF MOHANS OF MAMDOT

The history of Mohans was first recorded in the *Pothi of Rai Seegarh* (Book by Rai Seegarh). This book was available to the writers of Mohyal History in the early twentieth century (Russel Stracey and Raizada Hari Chand Vaid) but has since been lost after the Partition in 1947. A detailed *Jangnama Mohanan* in verse had earlier been compiled on the basis of the *Pothi*. Fortunately this was reproduced in his *Mohyal History* (Urdu) by Chaudhry Gauri Shankar Datt 'Sagar' Kanjurvi, which was printed at Lahore, in 1923.⁶ One or two copies of Gauri Datt's *Mohyal History* are still around. Unless *Jangnama Mohanan* is now rendered in Hindi and republished, this rare document, which has the sanctity of an 'original source', will also be lost like its predecessor – the *Pothi*. The post-Partition writers, like Chuni Lal Datt (1955) and P. N. Bali (1986) have mainly followed Stracey and Vaid – apparently without access to *Jangnama Mohanan*.

The sister of Jayapala Vaid was married in a Mohan family. His sister's son, Sukhapala, is mentioned in the Muslim chronicles (Utbi) as Nawasa Shah and *aulad maluk Hind* (son of a ruler of India). Sukhapala became a prisoner in one of the earlier battles with the Ghaznavids and was forcibly converted to Islam. He was left in charge of the Indian territories conquered by Mahmud Ghaznavi up to 1006. But he abjured Islam and revolted. In a surprise attack, Mahmud captured Sukhapala and put him in prison. Sukhpala outlived Mahmud, escaped from prison after his death and came to Punjab. Forming a confederacy of chieftains of the hill states he attacked Lahore (in 1043-44), then a part of the Ghaznavid Empire. The Muslim chiefs were then in great disarray but realising the gravity of the situation, they closed ranks. The Hindus besieged the town for seven months but could not conquer it. Sukhpala was slain in that battle.⁷ This campaign by Sukhpala

⁶Chaudhry Gauri Shankar Datt 'Sagar' Kanjurvi, *Mohyal History* (Urdu) (MohyalMittar Press, Lahore), pp. 121-137

was the last attempt by a Mohyal to regain their kingdom of Lahore.

Dhankot, near Kalabagh, on the bank of river Indus was the stronghold of the Mohans. During the time of Mahmud Ghaznavi, when Sukhapala had been converted to the Muslim faith, the power of Mohans began to decline. Through Sukhapala's intercession they were allowed to retain possession of Dhankot for some time but were ultimately dispossessed by Masud I (r. 1030-40), son of Mahmud. The strategic region of Dhankot was made over to Awans, who have continued to inhabit it since then.⁸

The head of Mohan clan passed some time in unsettled state under the Khokhars. (They must have been around when Sukhapala mobilized forces for attack on Lahore in 1043). Having received honours at the *Rajsua Yajna* of Jai Chand, he spent some time with the Raja of Malwa and subsequently at Ratanpur in Chaj Doab (the territory between the rivers Chanab and Jhelum). The name of Ratanpur appears in old ballads but its location cannot be identified now.

From time to time the Mohyals appear in Mathura. "For being Brahmanas, their right to reside there was undisputed, while their military instincts were essential to protect the sacred shrines and temples from pollution or destruction from barbarians and iconoclasts. Thus we find ancestors of the Chhibbers, Datts and Mohans occupying prominent positions at Mathura in this earlier period." (Stracey, p. 39) In course of time one Bhagwan Das migrated to Mathura. He had three sons named Gokul, Mathra Das and Hari Kishan. The last

⁷J. L. Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, p. 53, footnote 33. Also John Briggs, *Rise of Mahomedan Power in India (Ferishta)*, p. 70.

⁸T. P. Russel Stracey, *The History of the Mohyals*, p.43.

The Awans are exclusively Muslim and their ancestor QutabShahb is believed to have accompanied Mahmud Ghaznavi to India. They continued to inhabit the Kalabagh region up to the Partition in 1947. They are a martial tribe and were recruited in large numbers in the British army and even later.

took residence in Kashi (Varanasi). His son Abnashi Ram, desirous of purifying himself in the Ganges and Yamuna proceeded to Delhi during the Muslim rule. Here he found favour with Timru Shah – according to verse six of *Jang Nama Mohanan* (and NOT Timur Ling, as erroneously mentioned by some writers of Mohyal History books). The latter's success induced the Amir to send for "Mohan Maiya Das" who was also held in great esteem at the court. Maiya Das had two distinguished sons – Harichand and Harnand – who were appointed as commanders in the royal army. They marched to the south with a force and acquitted themselves creditably. They were both appointed as Dewans by Miran Shah (?). Sultan Muhammad Khan, son of Miran Shah, was a powerful King. During his reign Dewan Hiranand built "the first fort Dhankot" (*Pratham kot Dhankot Mohan Mabhan ne kotbanaya*). Mohans carried out orders given by the king – and this way time passed. (vide, verses six to fourteen of the *Jangnama Mohanan* and Stracey p.39)⁹

Before proceeding further, a comment about Dhankot. As stated already, Mohans had lost their stronghold of Dhankot on the bank of river Sindh in the eleventh century. Given an opportunity they built "their first fort-town" at a new location and out of nostalgia appear to have named it Dhankot. It was thirty kos from Mamdot – which place finds a mention very much later in the narration. This will clarify the confusion which arises when Dhankot appears several times during the hostilities between the Mohans of Mamdot and the Mughal forces in the reign of Muhammad Shah. Coming to attack Mamdot, the imperial forces would encamp at Dhankot Fort, probably the first fort on the periphery of Mamdot. *Garh Dhankot tis kos par deralayo* (verse 40) and during the second attack *Garh Dhankot ke tis kos utare kar dera* (verse 78).

Proceeding with the history of Mohans as in the *Jangnama*, Harjas Rai Mohan was a Dewan in the court of the first Mughal

⁹ Kings are known by several names and aliases. It is difficult to identify Timru Shah, Miran Shah and Sultan Muhammad Khan (verses 6-10) who extended patronage to the Mohan stalwarts. This relates to Delhi Sultanate period, preceding the Mughal rule.

Emperor Babar who conferred on him the title of Sultan. This honour was without conversion to Islam for the bard again stresses that Mohans were at that time *sarmukat i.e. shiromani* of the seven branches (of Mohyals) and identifies them with their Kashyapgotra and Madhni (*Madhyandini*) *shakha*. Mohans continued to obey the commands of Himayun (?). One Kirpa Ram Mohan conquered many territories. This verse is placed between the references to Himayun and Akbar. But still it is not clear on whose behalf these victories were achieved by the Mohan stalwart. (c.f. verses fifteen to twenty of the *Jangnama*).

The Massacre of Mohans at Mamdot

From the next verse (twentyone) *Jangnama Mohanan* describes the tragic drama of the martyrdom of Mohans of Mamdot on a point of honour, during the reign of the Mughal Emperor, Muhammad Shah, during whose rule (1719-48) Nadir Shah of Iran invaded Delhi.

Muhammad Shah Badshah ne Mansa Ram bulaiyo. (v. 21)

Muhammad Shah Badshah aakhe saath lai saropa,

Mansa Ram tun Punjab andar jaa. (v. 22)

Yeh hukam paye Punjab andar chale aayo,

Dewan Mansa Ram ka Prahlad Rai jas gaayo. (v. 23)

Lahore ka Dewan kiya hai Mansa Ram,

Mughal aur Pathan jite karan salaam. (v. 24)

Badshah Muhammad Shah called for Mansa Ram, duly honoured him and asked him to proceed to Punjab (on a military assignment). After receiving this order Mansa Ram came to Punjab (and completed his mission successfully) for which Prahlad Rai highly eulogizes him. The Mughal and Pathan nobles all came to pay obeisance to Mansa Ram.

Dewan Mansa Ram kapoothaiSewa Ram,

Sapoot hai Sewa Ram ka poot Jai Ram. (v. 25)

Jai Ram chander-sarup Badshah lubhayo,

Pakar jabardast Punjab se le ayo. (v. 26)

Begman Badshah se kahi baat banaa,

Jai Ram seti aap beti ka karo nikah. (v. 27)

Aisi baat sun Badshah ne khub pai chhal,

Tum leo beti shahzadi, naal saade ral. (v. 28)

Jai Ram ne jai kahi Sewa Ram se saari gal,

Nas chalo baap ji Punjab andar chal. (v. 29)

Dewan Mansa Ram's son was Sewa Ram, whose son was Jai Ram. Jai Ram was very handsome (*chandar swarup*). He was forcibly brought from Punjab and the Begum was asked to give her daughter in marriage to Jai Ram. Emperor tried to enthrone Jai Ram that by marrying the princess he would become one of them i.e. member of the royal family. Jai Ram reported the whole plot to his father Sewa Ram and suggested that they flee to Punjab – which they did. The Emperor got Jai Ram back to Delhi. He was taken in custody, the Begum's daughter was married to him and he was forced to dine with the princess from the same plate. Thus converted to Islam, Jai Ram came to be known as Thakar Shah a.k.a Khizar.

At the spread of the news, the Mohans, whose capital was at Mamdot, determined to rescue Jai Ram and challenged the king to the battle. The king ordered his commander Hashmat Khan to be equipped with the armaments of war and to march to Mamdot. When the commander reached within thirty *kos*, at the fort of Dhankot, he pitched his tent. Hashmat conveyed to the Mohans that he was equipped with two hundred thousand horse and if they sought their safety they should submit to the imperial troops. The Mohans discussed the issue among them and conveyed back that they were ready to decide the issue at the battlefield. (*Eh salah Mohanan aapas wich thehrai, Jai kaho Hashmat Khan se karsan khoob larai.*) Hashmat Khan thereupon directed his Mughal and Afghan forces to commence the attack on Mamdot. The Mohans resisted bravely and eventually succeeded in defeating the imperial force. Many of their officers were taken prisoner – including Hashmat Khan. The disaster incensed the king who directed that a vast army commanded by himself in person should proceed to Mamdot and extirpate the Mohans. Gobind and Mathura Das who were the heads of the clan

consulted their people and advised them to fight in a manner that their prowess may be sung by the generations to come. (*Aisa keejo jang, purush naari jas gave*). A pitched battle ensued near the fort of Dhankot for twenty four hours. A large number of Mohan warriors – 288 of them were martyred. Names of 72 leading men among them have been given in the *Jangnama* (names reproduced by Russel Stracey and P. N. Bali). “The king had it proclaimed that there was no surviving Mohan and the people said that thereafter there would be no Mohan.” The King however ordered his men that none of the victors should touch the bodies of the slain, and permitted their women to come to the battle field to identify and recover the bodies of their brave husbands:

Aawan aan ke naar dekh ke murde chavan,
Aapan parkhan saath naar sati ho jaawan. (v. 87)

The ladies would identify the bodies of their brave husbands and commit *sati* with due rituals. The few survivors of the battle fled and settled in different parts of the country. After this grim tragedy Mohans led a bereaved and haunted life for a long time. Small in numbers, the Mohans do not seem to have regained the famed “Mohyali swagger.”

Prahlad Rai *bhatt* (the bard of the family) went to Delhi and apprised Jai Ram alias Thakar Shah about the blood shed at Mamdot. He made a fervent plea to him to return. “For the sake of a lad the Mohan clan is hurt; you are the darling of our family, get up and accompany us back”. (*Ekbachepichhe Mohan kulhoyaghayal, tu Mohan saade bans da uth chal saade naal*). Thakar Shah was deeply shaken and distressed at the thought of his family being obliterated, as he himself stood ostracized from Hinduism consequent upon his conversion to Islam. With the king’s permission he travelled to Lahore and met his father Sewa Ram a.k.a. Sadhu Ram.

Milya Thakar Shah baap Saadhu de tain,
Milya baap beta tan bharya aaseen bhar aayin. (v. 116)

After a very sentimental meeting Thakar Shah persuaded his father Sadhu Ram to remarry. Through Prahlad Rai he arranged Sadhu Ram’s marriage with Bhagwanti, daughter of

Bhag Mal Datt of Kanjrur. With approval from the king, the marriage was solemnized at Dhankot. The old age nuptials of Sadhu Ram blossomed. (*Ek boota kai tehnian, pat hovan hazar*). He settled at Veeram – a village close to Kanjrur. It appears that three sons – Sarang, Manak and Phonun – constituted the first generation descended from Sadhu Ram. (verses 145, 147 and 149) The *Jangnama* gives several names of the members of the early generations of this Mohan family but their mutual relationship is not very clear.

Mohans of Pind Dadan Khan

According to Mohyal History books these Mohans stayed in Veeram for about three generations but were compelled to migrate from there, except for one family that stayed back. One of their leaders, Dilbagh Rai (or Dujan Rai), made Bhera his home from where his wife hailed. His grandson, Gulab Rai son of Tara Chand, shifted from Bhera to Pind Dadan Khan, where he founded the Mohalla Mohanan. From time to time some member from the descendant generations of Gulab Rai would leave Pind Dadan Khan and settle elsewhere in the region. According to Stracey (pp. 42-44) during his time such 'emigrees' were settled at Sagri, Rawal Pindi, Tehi, Talagang, Musa Khel, Ahmedabad, Mirpur and Mohbazpur (now all in Pakistan). Apart from the Mohans of Pind Dadan Khan stock, there were several other families also that styled themselves as Mohans from Mamdot. Not descended from Gulab Rai of Pind Dadan Khan they were the progeny of the survivors of the battle at Mamdot who managed to escape.

Vanshawali of Mohans of Pind Dadan Khan

The Mohans of Pind Dadan Khan possess a rare legacy. They have a full-grown Family Tree (*Vanshawali*) covering almost the entire stock descended from Gulab Rai. This document had been with my family for about one century and was brought along with a few possessions that could be carried during migration from Pakistan at the time of the Partition. Its manuscript (in Urdu) is written by the pen (*bakalam khud*) of my father Sardar Chand Mohan in 1920, who during his life time continued efforts to update it. Concerted efforts were made by me some time ago, through Mohyal Mittar, to bring

it up to date. Several brethren supplied their detailed pedigrees which were carefully dovetailed into the master document by identifying names of ancestors of earlier generations, common in both. Computer typed/printed copies, of the compilation (of 24 A-4 size pages) were supplied to a dozen correspondents, ensuring that this data will not be lost to the posterity. Later, a limited number of copies have been got printed beautifully on thick paper by Sh. O. P. Mohan, Senior Vice President of GMS. A copy can be obtained from him/GMS on request. Someone should come forward to assume the 'guardianship' of this *Vanshavali* and make efforts to keep it updated, by adding the names of new generation in a 'master-copy'.

Towards the end, *Jangnama Mohanan* gives the names of the members of a few generations of one particular branch of Mohans of Pind Dadan Khan, descended from Gulab Rai. These names mostly tally with the data in the *Vanshavali*, further substantiating its authenticity.

EPILOGUE

Young Jai Ram Mohan – son of Sadhu Ram and grandson of Mansa Ram Mohan, both of whom held high offices in the court of a Mughal Emperor – had to marry a royal princess. Ordinarily it would appear to be an honour and a normal event during the Muslim rule. The upper elite of a kingdom is usually knit together through marital bonds. But the event convulsed the Mohyal (Mohan) clan. Notice the poignancy of the wrath and pain as expressed in their letter to the Emperor:

*Hamra Musalmaan tudh Jai Ram banaayo,
Aisa kabhi anarth dusht sunanaa nahin paayo.* (v. 71)

"You have converted our Jai Ram (forcibly) to Islam,
Ye, O, tyrant such a wrong-doing is unheard of."

As we know from the Mohyal History earlier, during the rule of Babur, a girl (of Marwaha caste) who was being forced by a Muslim *faujdar* to marry him, sought shelter with the Datt clan of Paniar, who sacrificed themselves, again in an unequal contest, to protect the honour of the girl. Some of our young

readers may be surprised at the violent reaction of our Mohyal ancestors in both these cases. The protest was not so much against the marriage but the inevitable 'forced' conversion of Jai Ram, as also the Marwaha girl, to Islam for the marriage to be legal according to Muslim law. And because in both cases the proposal came from persons in power, the conversion would be executed by force.

Islam does not permit a believer (Muslim) to marry a non-believer (Non-Muslim). A Muslim is not permitted to opt out of Islam, for *any* reason – the penalty for this is death. So it is always the other party in this incompatible pairing that has to convert to Islam before marriage. As rulers, the Muslims could enforce this. It was for this reason that during the long period of Muslim rule, the Hindus made certain social adjustments so that they could carry on trade or employment with the Muslims. But they remained two distinct groups within the Indian society, without ever sharing *betior roti* i.e. completely eschewing inter-marriages and inter-dining. It was a part of the defensive rampart against an alien and aggressive religion. This basic enigma remains unresolved because Islam believes that its religious injunctions are immutable and do not permit any deviation.

That some Rajputs gave their sisters or daughters in marriage to the Mughal princes was not social integration: it was a one-way process. No Mughal princess ever married a Rajput. And if there was such a case, the Rajput male, by virtue of his having to convert to Islam, lost his Rajput identity (bonds with his parent family) permanently.

The Mohyals were not prepared for such a compromise. Ready to accept government jobs and, serving loyally, they would not forsake their own faith and beliefs. Professional loyalty was a matter of pride for them. Personal faith (their Hindu religion) was a matter of honour and belief. There was a *LakshmanRekha* (un-crossable boundary) between the two and a Mohyal would not compromise on this – even if he had to sacrifice his life and the lives of all others dear to him.

It should not go un-noticed that the forcible conversion of Jai Ram was not a personal issue pertaining to the family of

Sadhu Ram: it was an affront to the honour (*izzat*) of the whole *bans* (Mohan fraternity) of Mamdot. It is not Sadhu Ram who is seen agitating the clan or organizing the defence. Gobind and Mathra Das, the elders of the Mohan fraternity at Mamdot, are holding confabulations and decide to give a befitting response through martyrdom – for it was an unequal fight. *Ek bache pichhe bans Mohan kul hoya ghayal*: The whole Mohan clan was destroyed for the sake of a child. This togetherness, or unity and self-esteem, of Mohyals was proverbial throughout the ages. Through this code of honour, and sacrifices, they saved the Mohyal identity of their flock.

Mohyal Kavits

During the long foreign rule, most of the history of Mohyals was preserved through ‘kavits’ or verses, composed by their bhattas (bards) who recited these during special gatherings to inspire them. An effort was made, at a very late stage, to get these and record them in writing – first in Stracey’s book (1911). The following are reproduced from Stracey (pp. 69-70):

Lau Lakhiye kartuti bhare, Sakhi, sati, santokhi sare.

LAUS are the doers of deeds of much respect. They are charitable, truthful and content. (1)

Chhibber chhab ke dhani ghanere, Janki sobha karen changere.

CHHIBBERS hold masterly accomplishments and are admired by all who are lovers of good. (2)

Bali bal ke bali kahaven, Ran men jhujen pichhan na javen.

BALIS are known as leading in the field with no thought of turning back. (3)

Viadan hath katari sobhe, Chartal sheran ran wich sobhe.

VAIDS look their best with sword in hand, Valiant and staunch, a lion band. (4)

Date Datdan de poore, Hath de sakhi teg de sure.

DATTS give freely in charity to attain the ends of peace. But claim the power of the sword till strife and warfare cease. (5)

Sabhon saras Bhimwal jo hovan, Jahan hath karen da liddar dhovan.

The BHIMWALS to Utopian heights aspire,
Where idleness shall cease her sway.

And by industry and zeal, to take,
The thorn of poverty from out the way. (6)

*Mohan baithan masnad la ke,
Saras Mohyal Nand Bhat akhe.*

Where all do work and bear,
The burden of toil and heat,
MOHAN exchanges the curse of drudgery,
For the comforts of the cushioned seat. (7)

Under mentioned Kavits (Ballads) then follow:

*Lakh baksh Lau Saras Datt Daliddar badaren, Badyai nit Vaid
dharam Chhibber man dharen.*

LAU, the bestower of lakhs, DATT the remover of penury,
VAID commanding admiration, CHHIBBER the love of Dharam
duty. (1)

*Budh bali Bali Bhimwal dan dene uजार, Mohan sab jag saras
dan sure mat sagar.*

BALI, the strong in and BHIMWAL famous for offering charities;
MOHAN the admittedly superior all over the world, courageous
in bestowing gifts and all-wise. (2)

And to wind up:

***Muhyal kahaven so karen kartut changeri, Muhyal kahave
so dan den karan daleri.***

He who aspires to the Muhyal's part, must, Praiseworthy be
and have a generous heart,

He who would a Muhyal be,

Must act courageously and freely give in charity. ***Muhyal
kahavan kathan hai, mukh kahe na ho Muhyal; Deve
dilave ran bhire, tab kahiye Muhyal.*** It is not easy to be
counted a Muhyal, He is fit to be called a Muhyal, Whose ear
is attuned to the battle call.

R.T. Mohan,
Panchkula

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CREDIBILITY OF MOHYAL HISTORY

For one hundred years, written history of Mohyals has remained a private Gospel of the community. The professional historians (Mohyals included) indexed it as fables and legends because its claims were not supported by any historical sources.

The position has since changed with our authenticated narration in the book *AFGHANISTAN REVISITED: The Brahmana Hindu Shahis of Afghanistan and Punjab (c. 840-1026 CE)* by R. T. MOHAN. Mohyal History is now receiving recognition and acceptability as an interesting sub-chapter of History of India, which was earlier missing from its narration, having been suppressed by foreign rulers. This Mohyal History book has since been REVIEWED in the following prestigious Journals:

1. THE JOURNAL OF THE UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION OF INDIA, Vol CXLII, April-June 2012, Pages 307-308.
2. ITIHAS DARPAN, Vol. 16(1), April 2011, pages 120-125. ITIHAS DARPAN is the prestigious Research Journal of Akhil Bhartiya Itihas SankalanYojna, New Delhi.

Research Papers published in ITIHAS DARPAN:

3. ORIGIN OF CASTE AND MOHYAL BRAHAMANAS ITIHAS DARPAN, Vol. XIX (1), April 2014, pages 83-88.
4. THREE GLORIOUS CENTURIES OF HINDU HISTORY: Early Indo-Islamic History (c. 640-1000 CE) of Afghanistan and Punjab. ITIHAS DARPAN, Vol. XX (1), April, 2015 (Varshapatipada).
5. SYNOPSIS of MOHYAL HISTORY / Mohyal Itihas Praveshika, a booklet summarising Mohyal History, is available free of charge from Mohyal Sabha, Panchkula.

मोहन जाति की शहादत

मुग़ल साम्राज्य के समय ममदोट मोहन जाति का गढ़ था। मुग़ल बादशाह महम्मद शाह (1719—48) ने एक सुन्दर युवक जयराम मोहन को बलात मुस्लमान बनाकर एक शाहज़ादी के साथ विवाह कर दिया। मोहन जाति में इस अपमान जनक घटना से बहुत रोष फैल गया और प्रतिकार में उन्होंने बादशाह को युद्ध करने की चुनौती दी। दोनों पक्षों की शक्ति में असंतुलन के बावजूद सब मोहन बड़े साहस से लड़े। पूरी मोहन जाति आत्म-सम्मान और मोहयाली मर्यादा के लिए शहीद हो गयी।

- हमारा मुस्लमान तुध जयराम बनायो
ऐसा कभी अनर्थ दुष्ट सुनना नहीं पाइयो 72
- मोहनां का सरदार अपना बंस सदावे
ऐसा कीजो जंग पुरुष नारी जस गावे 69
- चढ़ आई सेना शाह की तुम पे हुआ सवार
ऐसी मोहन श्रवन सुन करी फौज तैयार 80
- सब बंस मैदान अंदर सीस देने आइया
मोहनां दे जंग नूं कुल जहान देखन आइया 106
- पिछे इक न रहया बादशाह ने एह मुनादी कीना
लोग सारे आखदे अब मोहन कोई न रहना 107

(जंगनामा मोहनां से)