

The Memon COMMUNITY HERITAGE AND IDENTITY



By: Abdur Razzaq Thaplawala

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- Bantva Maazi Aur Haal
ISBN No. 978-969-8935-01-6

DEDICATION

I Dedicate This Book To All Those

Persons And Organizations Who Are Always

Ready To Support The Efforts To Preserve Our

History, Culture, Traditions and Language For

Our Youngsters And Posterity.

Abdur Razzaq Thaplawala

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born at Bantva Kathiawar, Mr. Abdur Razzaq Thaplawala has done graduation in Commerce & Law from Karachi University. He is a Fellow of Institute of Cost & Management Accountants of Pakistan. He has been an active member of the Institute having served as Chairman Karachi Branch Council for 3 years & member National Council for 9 years.



Mr. Thaplawala has been associated with various community organizations since his school days. He was the member of First Managing Committee of Memon Youths Organization & Bantva Memon Student Union. He was the Founder Secretary of United Memon Jamat of Pakistan. Mr. Thaplawala was also Founder Member of Memon Professional Forum & has been its President for the years 1989 and 1990. He is Life Member of World Memon Organization. He was the First Asst. Secretary General for Pakistan until 2004. He has also served as President of Karachi Lions Club and Rotary Club of Karachi (Mehran).

Mr. Thaplawala has been very active in his professional field of corporate & taxation laws. He was President of Corporate & Taxation Law Society for three years and has over 150 articles published in different newspapers & professional journals.

Mr. Thaplawala feels that the Memon community is a very well-known community in the subcontinent of India and Pakistan as well as in South Africa, Middle East and some of the Western countries as a very enterprising business community. The community has made and is making handsome contribution to the growth of industry, trade and business in many countries. However, very few people know that it is a very small community. Although, no formal census has been conducted but reasonable estimates of the total number of members put it to not more than 1.5 Million.

Before partition, most of the members of this small community resided in Kathiawar, a part of present Gujarat state of India & South Africa. After partition, almost 50% of the population from India migrated to Pakistan and settled in Metropolitan cities of Karachi & Hyderabad. In India also there has been shifting of the members of the community from the ancestral towns to big towns. This migration and shifting has resulted in close contacts and intermingling of the community with other larger communities. In this process, they are gradually adopting the life style common to other communities including adoption of the language generally spoken in their new areas of settlement and their culture & tradition.

Mr. Thaplawala is very much concerned with the migration and shifting of the community mainly because of the fear that gradually the community will loose its traits & reputation for which it is famous and ultimately loose its identity as a separate community or a powerful & well known euthenics group in the world. This is specially possible because the community has no separate racial or religious base. They belong to the major part of Muslim community i.e. Sunni, Hanfia School of thought.

This fear of loss of identity in future has prompted him to write on the subject frequently and try to develop the Memoni boli as an independent language. He has also felt that our younger generation and the posterity should know about the culture and traditions of their elders. For this purpose, he has launched a website with the URL www.memon-world.net. In this website, he has included some material which might be of interest to community at large. Some of the material included in the website has been written by him and other has been borrowed from writing of different books on community affairs written by well-known writers.

Publishers

MESSAGE FROM MR. MUHAMMAD NAJEEB BALAGAMWALA

By the Grace of Allah Almighty, the new book of Mr Abdur Razzaq Thaplawala is now compiled and is available for every one in our community to keep it, read it, treasure it, learn it and pass it to the next generation.

When one sees and reads about this community one feels that Allah Almighty is very generous and benevolent towards this community as they are usually humble, kind, generous and charitable.



Pakistan, India and many countries in South Africa, Middle East and USA are filled with examples of mosques, hospital and schools built and operated by this community. The stalwarts of the community, the progress of this community, the noble deeds and noble ventures of these god fearing men and women who due to this nature are prospering in many countries of the world.

And it is among this community that some community leaders and social workers take their precious and valuable time to write, compile books and articles on the community and take pains so that it can reach every nook and corner of the society.

The records and history is preserved for even by these zealous and energetic individuals and they do it not for love of fame and fortune but for the very essence of community responsibility.

And it is this effort which is commendable and as such I wish to recognize and commend Abdur Razzaq Thaplawala a stalwart of the Memon Community for compiling this publication **THE MEMON COMMUNITY- HERITAGE AND IDENTITY** for a job well done.

Proud to be a Memon

Muhammad Najib Balagamwalla
Chairman
Seatrade Group

A GREAT TASK

I have great pleasure to find the fourth book written and compiled by Mr. Abdur Razzak Thaplawala which would certainly be an addition to the Memon history.

I sincerely congratulate Mr. Abdur Razzak Thaplawala and do hope that he will continue his efforts to research and write in this direction.



His current book "THE MEMON COMMUNITY-HERITAGE AND IDENTITY" is a part of his Memonology series which has created in new dimension in the Memon history. I appreciate his object-oriented writings which have introduced him as a committed writer and history compiler in addition to business executive and social figure.

I wish him all success.

Muhammad Siddique Polani
Patron-in-Chief:
Memon Book Foundation

A NEW EXCLUSIVE PUBLICATION

The author of "THE MEMON COMMUNITY-HERITAGE AND IDENTITY" Mr. Abdur Razzak Thaplawala is a multifaceted personality. My friendship and social relationship with him is broad based and spread over more than 2 decades.

I have the honour the work with him on various social and community occasions and learnt a lot from his Memonology ventures and publications.

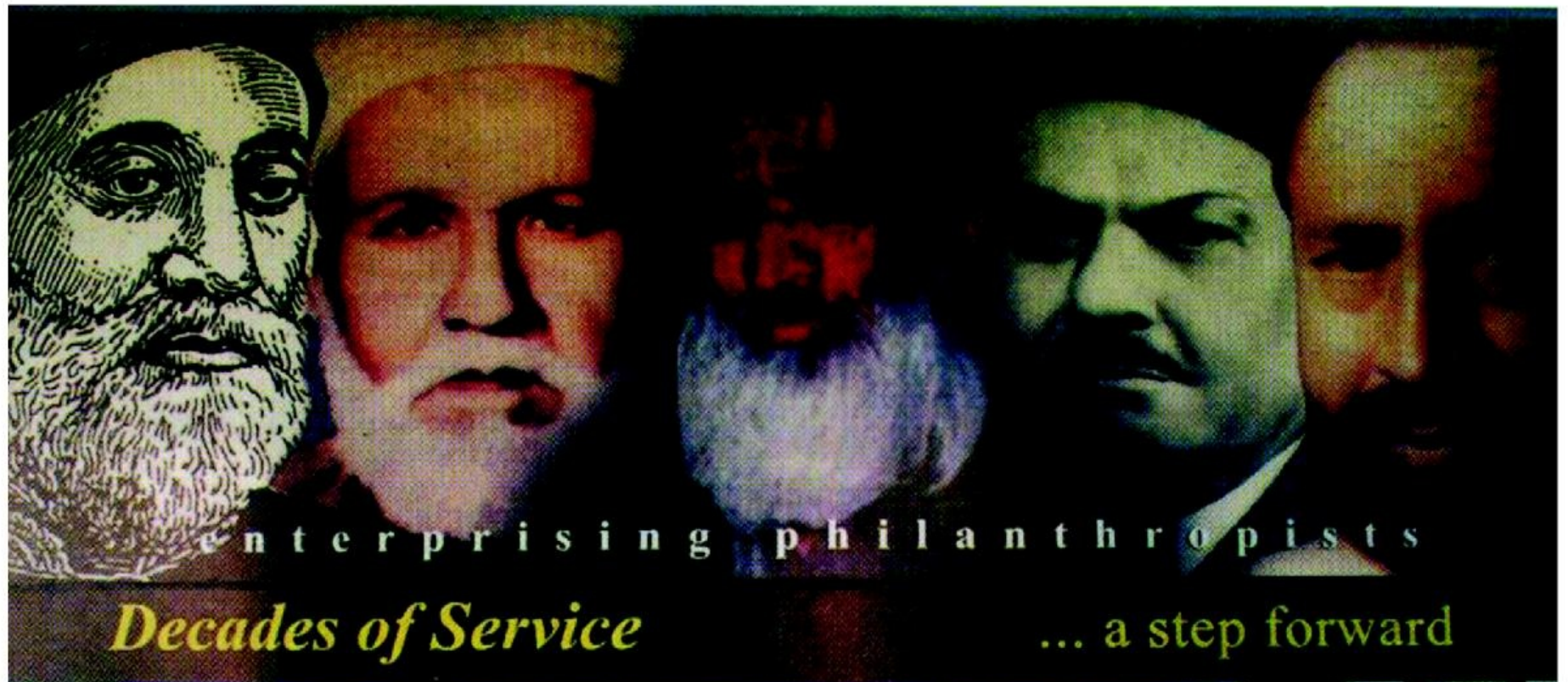


The Memon Book Foundation of Pakistan has already published his tow well received books i.e. "THE MEMON COMMUNITY" and "BANTVA-MAAZI AUR HALL" and it is again our proud privilege to publish this current volume.

I congratulate Mr. Abdur Razzak Thaplawala on this occasion and pray for his more achievements in the field of Memon history.

Usman Batliwala
President-Memon Book Foundation
of Pakistan

DECADES OF SERVICES



PREFACE

Memon community is a very well-known community in the subcontinent of India and Pakistan as well as in South Africa, Middle East and some of the Western countries as a very enterprising business community. It has made and is making handsome contribution to the growth of industry, trade and business in many countries. However, very few people know that it is a very small community. Although, no formal census has been conducted but reasonable estimates of the total number of members put the figures to not more than 1.5 Million.

Before partition, most of the members of this small community resided in Kathiawar, a part of present Gujarat state of India & South Africa. After partition, almost 50% of the population from India migrated to Pakistan and settled in Metropolitan cities of Karachi & Hyderabad. In India also there has been shifting of the members of the community from the ancestral towns to big towns. This migration and shifting has resulted in close contacts and intermingling of the community with other larger communities. In this process, they are gradually adopting the life style common to other communities including adoption of the language generally spoken in their new areas of settlement and their culture & tradition.

I have always been concerned with the migration and shifting of the community mainly because of the fear that gradually the community will loose its traits & reputation for which they are famous and ultimately loose their identity as a separate community or a powerful & well known ethenic group in the world. This is specially possible because the community has no separate racial or religious base. They belong to the major part of Muslim community i.e. Sunni, Hanfia School of thought.

This fear of loss of identity in future has prompted me to write on the subject frequently and try to develop the Memoni boli as an independent language. I have also felt that our younger generation and the posterity should know about the past, our culture and traditions of their elders. For this purpose, I launched a website with the URL www.memon-world.net. In

this website I have included whatever published material which became available to me about the past and present of the community and met my selection criteria. I have also written and published some books :

1. **Memon Community & Future of its identity**
2. **Memoni – A New Language is Born**
3. **The Memon Community – It's origin, history, culture, tradition & language**
4. **Bantva Kul Aur Aaj**
5. **Bantva Maazi Aur Haal**

I have a feeling that the community needs a comprehensive book in English which tells them about their origin, history, culture and language – everything in one volume. This feeling has inspired me to compile this book under title of “Memon community, its heritage and identity”. For the sake of readers’ convenience, I have divided the book in three parts:-

Part-I History

Part-II My Birth Place

Part-III Memoni Language

I hope that this comprehensive book will provide sufficient information to the members of Memon Community whether young or old and they will have the information which they may need. May I quote here Mr. Mohammad Ali Rangoonwala – a well-known leader of the community who said that:

“We need to know, our children and grand children need to know, where our ancestors came from and what they did”.

I take this opportunity to thank all the persons who encouraged me to write this book. I am particularly thankful to Mr. Najeeb Balagamwala of Seatrade Group who has sponsored this book and has agreed to bear all expenses of its publication. I am also grateful to Petrons & President of Memon Book Foundation.

I must take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my colleague Mr. Muhammad Aslam Saamla for formatting the book, to Mr. Aziz Suleman and Mr. Abdul Karim Sheikha for Black & White photographs of the visit of Bantva in 1964 and in 1982 respectively. I must also express my gratitude to Mr. Abba Ali Yusuf, Mr. Abdul Ghaffar Variend, Mr. A. Razzak Moti, Mr. H.M. Shehzad & Mr. Pir Muhammad Dewan for providing me photographs.

The book is now in your hands and I will welcome your views & comments. This will help me in making improvements in my website with immediate affect and in future edition of the book, if any.

Abdur Razzaq Thaplawala

Karachi: 14th August 2009

www.memon-world.net

This site provides comprehensive information on Origin, history, culture, language and welfare organizations of Memon Community including WMO. It includes my article "Birth Place Revised" with colour photographs of Rajkot, Junagadh, Vanthali, Bantva, Thapla & Kodvav. The site also gives short stories & poems in Memoni language, Lessons on Teach yourself Memoni and Book Reviews.
