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## Lahore in the 18th Century

Punjab gets its name from Punj meaning five and Aab meaning water which means a land of five rivers. The whole area of Punjab is divided in five Doabs (A tract of land lying between two converging or confluence rivers). Lahore falls in the Bari Doab region. "The uplands of the upper Bari Doab particularly the tracts around Lahore and Amritsar were known as the Majha."<sup>1</sup> This area formed the core or centre of Punjab and the literal meaning of the word Majha means middle. The people of this area spoke Majha dialect of Punjabi language.

Lahore is a historical city. The known history of Lahore spans over 1500 years though its mythology takes it back to the times of Ramayana. According to a legend, the city of Lahore and a small town Kasur near Indo-Pak border in Punjab were founded by the two sons of lord Ram, Luv and Kush. The first documented mention of Lahore is found in the works of the Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang who had visited Lahore in 630 A.D.

Lahore was mentioned as a city for the first time in an Arab account "Hudood-a-Aalan" written at the end of the 9th century. At the end of the 10th century Lahore was ruled by a Hindu ruler Raja Jaipal. At the beginning of the 11th century after its conquest by Mahmud of Ghazni, Lahore city came under Muslim rule. Alberuni, the well known Arab traveler and the celebrated author of "Tarikh-ul-Hind" who accompanied the invading armies of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1018-19 has mentioned Lahore as a province in his account. Lahore was ruled by different rulers during 13th and 14th Century - Turkish slave officer Qutub-ud-din Aibek of Muhammad Ghorī who set himself as an independent ruler of Lahore, Iltutmish a slave officer of Aibek, Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq. It found some peace under Pathan rule that lasted for nearly one hundred years. During the reign of Ibrahim Lodi, his governor at Lahore Daulat Khan staged a palace revolt against Lodi and invited Zahir-ud-din Babur to invade India.

Babur captured Lahore in 1524 and soon India came under the Mughal rule in 1526. His grandson Akbar transferred Mughal capital from Agra to Lahore in 1585 and stayed on the city for the next 13 years. He invaded Kashmir several times from Lahore and also fought with tribes from the frontier region in the West.