# SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT:

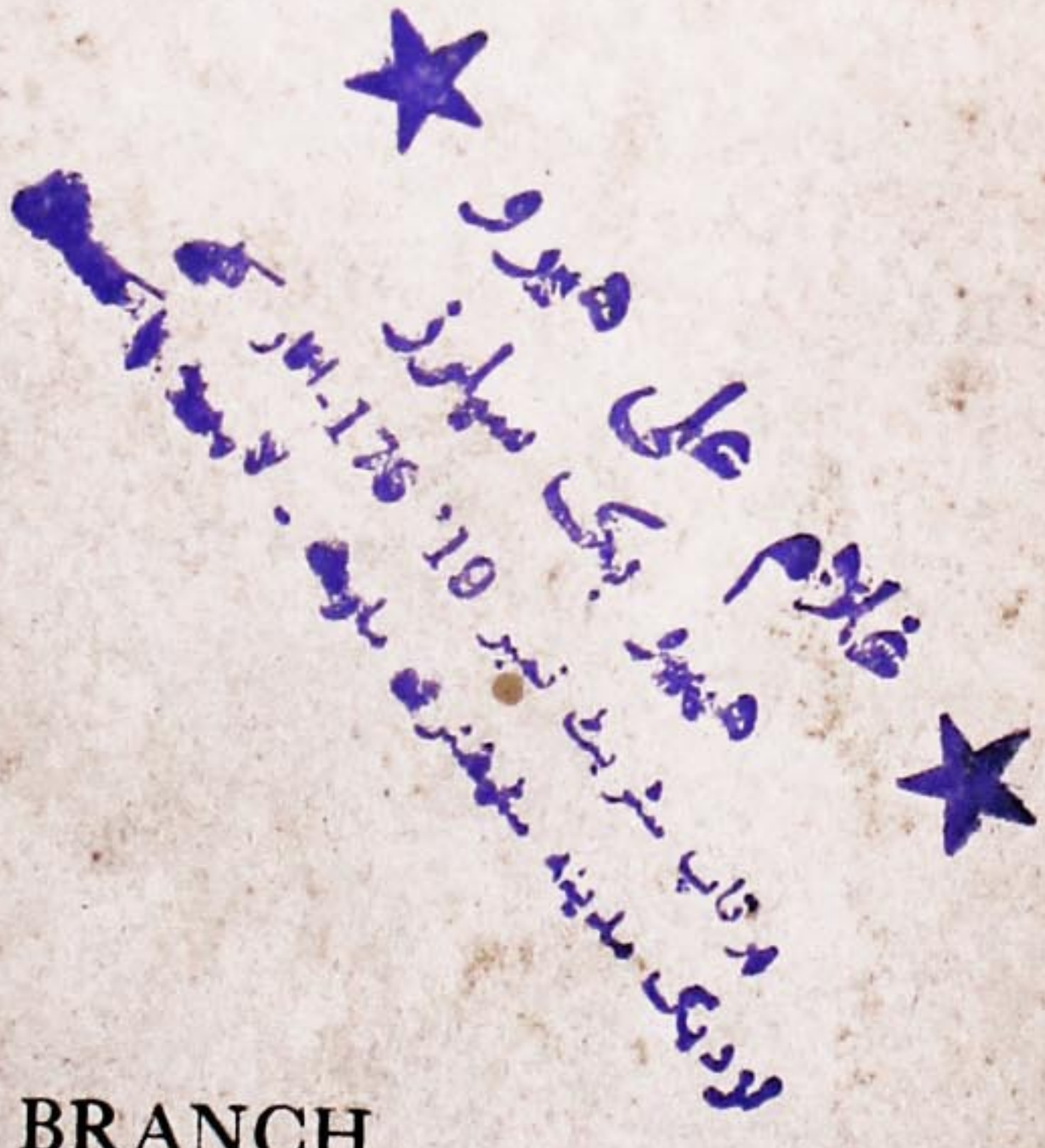
## HIS POETRY, LIFE AND TIMES

*A Study of Literary, Social and Economic Conditions in Eighteenth Century Sind*

BY

H. T. SORLEY, D.Litt., C.I.E.

*Indian Civil Service*



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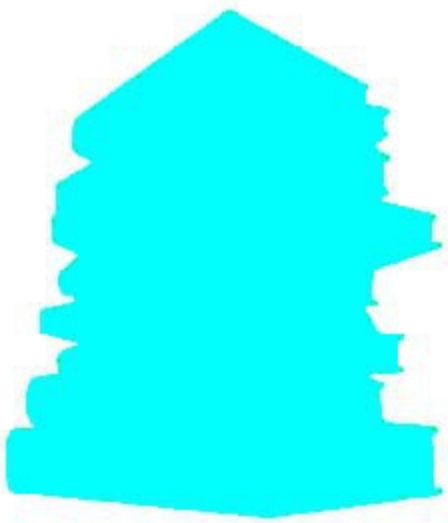

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# SHĀH ABDUL LAṬĪF OF BHIT

## HIS POETRY, LIFE AND TIMES

In Three Books:

I. History

II. Literature and Criticism

III. The Risālo of Shāh Abdul Latīf

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# PREFACE

THE collection of mystical poems known as the Risālo of Shāh Abdul Latīf of Bhit is the only classic which the language of Sind has yet produced in the realm of deeply imaginative literature. The poems were composed in the first half of the eighteenth century. They are the work of a natural poet of Sūfī leanings. Their poetical excellence is as remarkable as the depth of the philosophy and religion which they display. It is the misfortune of Shāh Abdul Latīf that his poetry has remained a closed book to all but those acquainted with the Sindhi language. In Sind his poems are held in such universal and popular esteem as is accorded only to poetry which has successfully interpreted the most intimate thoughts and the sincerest feelings of a people. In some form or other the verses are known to all classes. They have still the advantage, lost in these practical days by all the poetry of the Western world, that they have not yet been divorced from their origin in spontaneous music and natural recitative.

The object of the present work is twofold, first to introduce English readers to the achievement of Shāh Abdul Latīf, and second, to explain, by reference to the historical and social environment of the age in which the poems were composed, something of the message and meaning they convey. Except for a few scattered extracts no English translation of the Risālo has yet been attempted. The present work has occupied much of my leisure time for the last twelve years and has not been lightly undertaken. It has been partly carried out in the fascinating land of Sind itself.

I have translated not the complete Risālo but the abridgement known as the Muntakhab collected by Kāzī Ahmad Shāh. This abridgement is probably the best known and the most popular collection of Shāh Abdul Latīf's verse. For permission to translate the Muntakhab I am indebted to the kindness of Messrs. Pōkardās & Sons, the well-known publishers of Shikārpūr, Sind, who hold the copyright. They have done much to encourage and popularize the output of modern Sindhi literature. I am grateful to them for allowing me to use the text.

There are many formidable difficulties in translating poetry so abstruse as the Risālo. Not only are the poems written in a form of Sindhi that is no longer the current spoken and written language but syntax and vocabulary alike present many exceedingly hard puzzles for grammarians and scholars. Furthermore, the



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expression is often as highly concise, elliptical and allusive as that of Pindar and Persius, to cite two well-known and recondite classical authors. The thought is also everywhere permeated with the deep subtleties of Sūfī philosophy. The images and metaphors commonly employed are hard to explain satisfactorily to persons brought up in the understanding of the very different cultural heritage of Western Europe. I do not pretend that my rendering is free from error. Indeed in many passages I am doubtful of the meaning which the poet wished to convey. I have, however, taken the greatest care to ensure that the translation, while remaining close enough to the text to satisfy scholars of language, shall be a literary and not a literal translation, so as to be capable of being read for its own sake without reference to the Sindhi original.

In Part II of this work the meaning of much that may seem obscure in the translation will, I hope, be clarified. The subjects discussed in Part II ought, in conjunction with the historical account of the Moghul and the Kalhōro age in Sind which forms Part I, to prove useful to all who may at some future time wish to improve upon my work. I have gratefully to acknowledge the permission granted me by the Government of Bombay to examine the wealth of historical material in the Bombay Record Office. I have used many extracts from the Government records in Part I and I believe that this is the first occasion on which most of the extracts relating to the East India Company's Factory in Sind in the eighteenth century have been published. For the benefit of students interested in the subject matter of this book I have compiled select bibliographies of the more important works which I have consulted or to which I have referred. I have also found much assistance in the excellent library of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

It remains for me only to add that writing this book has been a labour of love. I dedicate it gratefully to the people of Sind from whom, during the years I lived amongst them, I have experienced nothing but kindness and consideration. If my work helps scholars outside Sind to obtain some idea of the true thought and feeling of the people who dwell in the Lower Indus valley I shall believe myself more than handsomely repaid for all my labour.

*Haec olim meminisse iuvabit!*

H. T. SORLEY

Bombay

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## Dedicated to the People of Sind

O friendly folk, with whom I've lived
And felt the beat of violent sun,
And heard sharp argument and seen
How Indus waters errant run,
No chronicle of kings and wars
Your lowly hamlet bard unfolds :
The wonder of his melodies
Enthralled a rustic people holds.

Gone are the days when tempered blade
And matchlocks' fire laid waste your fields.
The drums of peacefulness are struck :
Your land a full abundance yields.
So now, to contemplative mind
Is Sayid-lore a nobler key
For opening wide the door of God
That leads to God's great mystery.

No might is here of Rūmī's verse.
No Jāmī's soul-wrapt music swings.
No high-tuned note of Hāfiz' wit
Within your humble minstrel rings.
And yet !—strange paradox it be,
That not less searching is the calm,
The simple magic of his lays
Than wise, deep utterance of Islām.

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# BOOK I

# HISTORY


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# CHAPTER I

## SIND 1690-1760; THE TWILIGHT OF THE MOGHULS

### I. *The character of the period 1690-1760, with reference to conditions in Sind*

THE decline of the Moghul Empire in India was a leisurely process. But signs of the *débâcle* to come were obvious to discriminating observers long before the occurrence of the spectacular events which figure prominently in the history books. It is unfortunate that the Moghul Empire has not been served by historians so efficiently as the Roman Empire was. No Gibbon has yet written the connected story of the political power which, started by the energy and downrightness of the invading Bābur in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, came to its virtual and inglorious end in the imbecilities of the Imperial Court in the days of Clive. Nowhere is the need for an adequate description of the Moghul power in its decline felt more than in the case of Sind. There the growing ineffectiveness of the suzerainty of Delhi produced local events which shaped the destiny of the province in a manner definitely individual. To throw some light on the nature of these local events will be part of the purpose of this book. The task is one of great difficulty owing to the extreme paucity, indeed the almost total absence, of reliable contemporary record of any description whatsoever for the actual years of the period 1690-1760. This period, covering seventy years, commences from the last decade of the seventeenth century and ends about the time of the great disruption of authority in India, when the second battle of Pānīpat had broken the hope of the Marātha confederacy as a permanent power in India, when Clive had won the battle of Plassey and British dominion over the entire continent was in the opinion of most contemporaries being unwittingly but none the less surely established.[1] Thus a period which begins with the sleeping paralysis

[1] It is not true, however, to say that full territorial dominion over India was never before the eyes of the East India Company as a definite policy. In 1688 at the instance of Sir John Child was passed the resolution which stated 'the determination of the Company to guard their commercial supremacy on the basis of their territorial sovereignty' and foreshadowed the annexations of the next century. Ilbert: *Government of India*, p. 24. 'The increase of our revenue', it runs, 'is the subject of our care as much as our trade: 'tis that must maintain our force when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade: 'tis that must make us a nation in India.' Ibidem, p. 27. The object, in the words of the Directors, was to 'lay the foundations of a large well-grounded sure English dominion in India for all time to come'. See Marriott: *The English in India*, pp. 63-4.



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of Moghul power in the latter days of Aurangzēb's reign ends in an orgy of turbulence in the midst of which the foundations of modern India were laid with a strangely haphazard casualness.

By the end of the seventeenth century it was plain that Aurangzēb, the gaunt, austere and obstinate doctrinaire whose powerful hand had succeeded in arresting the fissiparous tendencies of the Moghul dominion, had not many more years to live. It is a tribute to the strength of determination and the ability of this man of remarkable genius that he succeeded as well as he did in preserving the unity of the ramshackle Delhi empire. It is, however, the characteristic weakness of Oriental autocracies that they fail to provide any adequate means for ensuring a peaceful succession of rulers. When the ruling autocrat dies there is at once a conflict amongst rival claimants for power and this inevitably results in civil dissension, revolution and war to be suppressed only by a man strong enough to overcome all opposition. By the time Aurangzēb was nearing his deathbed signs were not wanting that upheaval and violent change were inevitable. The world had altered greatly from the days of Akbar's glory and Shāh Jahān's magnificence. The transition to modern times had indeed already made itself clear in many ways. India was no longer likely to remain a closed continent. The development of trade between the various countries of the world was taking a form that is familiar to present-day people. Sea power had become a driving force such as the world had never previously known on this scale. It was no longer possible for an autocrat at the head of a dying feudal system to control an over-centralized political machine which worked very creakily in the vast areas remote from Delhi. The days of the semi-feudal levy inadequately provided with artillery and but imperfectly disciplined were in fact numbered. Methods that had succeeded in a simpler and less intricate age were now completely out of date. Some capable historians have held that the fall of the Moghul Empire was due to the want of a competent succession of autocrats to follow in the footsteps of Aurangzēb, able to do what he did, to the corruption of the Court at Delhi and to the futility of the ruling class of feudal chiefs and governors. This view can be demonstrated to be completely mistaken. The Moghul Empire declined and fell because it was no longer fit to perform its task of keeping order and ensuring the kind of local government which the circumstances of the day were demanding. The reasons of the fall were the inherent military weakness of the Empire which had neither military nor naval power fit to deal with the dangers which threatened its disruption, and its utter incompetence to provide for the growing needs of a better local government. Better local

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government was essential for dealing with the rising importance of many localities of India consequent on the narrowing of the world brought about by better sea communications, more effective finance and the rivalry of those countries which sought to draw India into the economic unity of the eighteenth century world. To a problem of this kind the Moghul Empire was completely unable to provide any satisfactory solution. The pride of Akbar and the splendour of Shāh Jahān had prevailed only because neither Akbar nor Shāh Jahān had been faced with the difficulties which, setting in about the commencement of Aurangzēb's reign, became more and more insistent as the seventeenth century drew to a close. In the end these difficulties became so compelling that no political authority of the kind which the Moghul Empire offered could possibly have met them successfully. In 1746, eleven years before the battle of Plassey, a shrewd European adventurer who had lived in India for twenty years foresaw clearly the coming end. Colonel James Mill in that year said, 'The whole country of Hindustān or the empire of the Great Moghul is and ever has been in a state so feeble and defenceless that it is almost a miracle that no prince of Europe with a maritime power at command has as yet thought of making such acquisitions there as at one stroke would put him and his subjects in possession of infinite wealth. The policy of the Moghul is bad, his military worse and as to a maritime power to command and protect his coasts he has none at all. The province of Bengal though not to be reduced by the power of the Moghul is equally indefensible with the rest of Hindustān on the side of the ocean and consequently may be forced out of the rebels' hand with all its wealth which is incredibly vast.' This sagacious prediction was completely fulfilled within twenty years on the battlefields of Plassey, Pānīpat, Wandiwash and Buxar. In fact the Moghul Empire fell for two predominant reasons neither of which had any connexion with the competence or incompetence of the occupant of the throne of Delhi or the lack of quality in the feudal aristocracy. These two reasons may be stated simply as the military defencelessness of the Empire and its inability owing to over-centralization to control the keen new world that was stirring to life everywhere with the development of world trade and commerce. The futility of the feudal aristocracy was the natural result of years of abused power and self-indulgence suffered to continue because there had been no power able and willing to stop it.[1] It is not surprising, therefore,

[1] 'Their' (i.e. the East India Company's) 'earliest victories were over troops that were no better than a rabble of hired soldiers without coherence or loyalty. An Indian army of that period was usually an agglomeration of mercenaries collected by captains of companies who supplied men able to pay for them having enlisted them at random out of the swarm of moving

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that as soon as the empire of the Moghul was attacked in its Achilles heel it collapsed as thoroughly as a heap of cards. 'On Friday, the 4th of March 1707', says Lane-Poole, 'in the fiftieth year of his reign and the eighty-ninth of his life after performing the morning prayers and repeating the creed the Emperor Aurangzēb gave up the ghost. In accordance with his command, "Carry this creature of dust to the nearest burial place and lay him in the earth with no useless coffin" he was buried in all simplicity near Daulatābād beside the tombs of Muslim saints.'[1] The death was a portent and his passing closed an age. Half a century after this sad, grim and lonely doctrinaire's death the Moghul Empire was in ruins and the Indian continent in a welter of unsettlement and commotion. As Sarkar has said, 'The dry rot in the heart of the Moghul state manifested itself publicly when Bājī Rao's cavalry insulted the imperial capital in 1737 and his example invited Nādir Shāh's invasion and the utter collapse of the Government of Delhi in 1739.' In vivid language Sir Alfred Lyall has painted an unforgettable picture of the condition of India at this period. 'Nādir Shāh', he has written, 'added one more massacre to the blood-stained annals of that ill-fated city, wrenched away from the imperial crown all its possessions west of the Indus and departed home leaving the Moghul Empire which had received its death blow in a state of mortal collapse. The barriers having thus been broken down Ahmad Shāh of the Abdallī tribe of Afghans followed two years later. When Nādir Shāh had been assassinated by the Persians in his camp in Khorasān Ahmad Shāh who commanded a large body of cavalry in Nādir Shāh's army rode off eastward to capture Afghānistān and from that base he seized the whole of the Punjāb between 1748 and 1751. Meanwhile the Marāthas were spreading over Central India from the south-west like a devastating

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free-lances and swordsmen, chiefly Asiatic foreigners, by whom all India was infested. These bands had no better stomach for fighting than the condottieri of Italy in the sixteenth century: the close fire of the European musketry was more than they had bargained for and artillery properly served they could not face at all.' Sir Alfred Lyall: *History of India*, Vol. VIII, p. 170.

'It is on record that any number of foot-soldiers might be enlisted although they "deserted in shoals" when a distant march was in prospect and that the best cavalry of Hindustān (Afghans, Tartars, Persians or Marāthas) might be had in abundance at six weeks' notice, "many of them", as the East India records state, "out of the very camp of the enemy."' ibidem, p. 172.

[1] S. Lane-Poole: *Aurangzēb*, p. 204.

'Amongst the last words that this sad austere man wrote were "My years have gone by profitless. God has been in my heart yet my darkened eyes have not recognized the light, hope is transient and the best moment never comes back. Nothing brought I into this world but I carry away with me the burden of my sins."' S. Lane-Poole: *India under Muhammadan Rule*, p. 408.

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flood. The Indian people were becoming a masterless multitude swaying to and fro in the political storm and clinging to any power, natural or supernatural, that seemed likely to protect them.[1] This was a sad ending to the pageant of power and glory displayed in the Āīn-i-Akbarī, to the opulence of Jahāngīr's court, to the royal magnificence of Shāh Jahān, the builder of the world's finest gem of ornate and artistic architecture, and to the unbending vigilance of the tyrannical and ascetic Aurangzēb.

Such are the main features of the period with which in this work I am chiefly concerned. The decline of Moghul power is only incidental to my purpose, which is to trace how Sind fared during this time of rapid and far-reaching change, and to reconstruct, so far as the available evidence will allow, the social life of Sind during those vanished days. Scanty and inadequate though the contemporary historical material be, it is not easily intelligible unless the greater happenings outside Sind are seen in true proportion. Sind was added to the Moghul Empire by Akbar in 1592. It remained an integral part of the Empire till the disastrous advent of Nādir Shāh in 1737 when it fell first under Persian and then in 1747 under Afghan dominance. In the thirty odd years between the death of Aurangzēb and the invasion of Nādir Shāh, Sind presents the spectacle of the growing weakness of the Moghul authority, of a weakness manifesting itself in the increasing independence of the predominant local dynasty of the Kalhōra, which followed the typical oriental plan of seizing what it could and holding what it seized in the belief that Delhi was too far away to matter. Thus the Moghul governors appointed from Hindustān gave place to Sindhi governors bowing the knee as little as they dared to Moghul, Persian and Afghān in turn. By 1760 the ruling dynasty of the Kalhōra was almost in fact but not at all in theory independent. The success with which the Kalhōra strengthened their authority and enhanced their importance is no great tribute to them. It was the inevitable result of the increasing helplessness or imbecility of the holders of the Delhi throne. The Sindhi governors thus precariously became rulers themselves but they were always ready to retreat at any sign of serious assault and were forced to pay varying amounts of tribute to their suzerains from time to time. The Kalhōra in their turn fell for the same reason that the Moghul Empire itself fell—weakness in the field before a superior military power. But even the Tālpūrs who succeeded them, as the Mayors of the Palace succeeded the Merovingians, were never in fact completely independent of their Afghān overlords till the first decade of the nineteenth century. The combined efforts of the

[1] Lyall : *History of India*, VIII, p. 78.

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Kalhōra and Tālpūrs together for one hundred years did, however, succeed in establishing in Sind a petty Muslim state which preserved, up till the time of the British conquest in 1843, the characteristic features of Moghul administration and added to that a peculiar brand of Islāmic quasi-theocracy, a kind of political power determined to retain its individuality as far as it could and uphold a policy of splendid isolation. By the time of Sir Charles Napier this isolation refused to blend harmoniously with the general trend of Indian polity in the mid-nineteenth century. Thus Sind exhibits in a way peculiar to itself the deterioration of the Moghul administrative machine, with life prolonged artificially by the circumstances of the semi-independence that grew with the decline of the Moghul power. Neither the Kalhōra nor the Tālpūrs did much to alter the political and social system which they found. It is for this reason that the battles of Miānī and Duābo in 1843 brought under British dominion an oriental state run largely on the broad lines of the Moghul Empire, albeit weakened and debilitated from the standard of its best days. While, therefore, the absence of reliable contemporary record for the period 1690-1760 in Sind makes direct evidence of the social conditions in which the people lived impossible, there is little reason to doubt that the peoples of Sind in the first half of the eighteenth century lived more or less in the way in which Sir Charles Napier found them living in 1843. There is ample record of the social conditions in Sind at the time of the British conquest and for ten years before that. There is also copious information on social and political conditions in Sind for about thirty years ending 1662, when the Moghul Empire was at its strongest. It is thus possible by means of reasoned deduction and critical judgement to complete the gap that lies between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century. To do this is the object of this book in order that we, the creatures of another day inspired by different ideals, may understand in some measure the countryside in which was composed the beautiful mystical poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf of Bhit—the only classic work in the Sindhi language—and may learn what sort of beings were the people for whom these songs were written and by whom they were sung.

## II. *Sind and some characteristic features of its history*

Sind is difficult country for the historian. The reason why this should be so is plain enough. Despite the fact that Sind is an area where an advanced civilization found early lodgement in India the terrain is, except for certain scattered periods, woefully devoid of informative historical monuments, inscriptions and all those physical aids which enable archaeology to supply the blanks of a

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written record.[1] Few buildings exist in sufficient preservation to display the civilization of any century previous to the fifteenth and, with rare exceptions, the buildings that are now accounted old are generally not earlier than the seventeenth century and most are even later in date. There are no relics of old seats of learning, no old libraries and no collections of ancient[2] documents. The men of learning who in earlier centuries lived in Sind have disappeared, leaving behind them only trifling remains for the use of modern scholarship. The absence of architecture is capable[3] of easy explanation. The land is an alluvial tract over which throughout the centuries the Indus has wandered in a multitude of shifting channels. The buildings were constructed mostly of mud, sticks or wattles, just as they are outside all the large towns today. Even the buildings of burnt brick (and these are nearly all mosques and tombs) have suffered from the assault of the river, the salinity of the soil and the rigour of a climate which for six months in the year is as hot as anything to be found in India and is cursed with dust storms that carry grit into every interstice which a violent wind can penetrate. The large towns[4] of today, Karāchi, Hyderābād, Sukkur and Shikārpūr, are recent growths of the modern age of the eighteenth century. The early towns have either disappeared or still exist merely as collections, ancient and medieval, of mud-built houses erected on the sites of older mud-built houses that have tumbled down so that the oldest inhabited sites have gradually risen on mounds of debris devoid of permanent relics, except broken pottery of no archaeological value. A shifting alluvial plain liable to inundation, surrounded on every side but that of the sea by forbidding desert or barren hilly country, is no place in which to look for a Kutab Minār, a Vijāyanagar or a temple of Madūra. Thus the historian of Sind is handicapped from the start, and one of the most reliable keys that unlock the doors of the past is broken and useless. He must use other and more subjective means to unfold the dead pages of days that are gone.

[1] The ruins of Mōhanjōdarō and Chanhūdarō, the dead sites of Ālōr and Brahmanābād, an occasional stupa, the ruckle of decay that is Tatta are no substitute for the aged buildings extant in numbers in most other parts of India.

[2] Burton : *History of Sindh*. Note 16 to Chapter I, p. 377.

[3] Goldsmid : *Historical Memoir on Shikārpūr*, p. 5. Bombay Govt. Records, New Series, No. XVII.

[4] Both Hyderābād and Karāchi date from the second half of the eighteenth century. Shikārpūr, founded by the Dāūdpōtras in 1616, did not attain any size till the later decades of the eighteenth century when the Shikārpūrī Hindu merchants began to ply a successful trade through Afghānistān with Central Asia. Sukkur as it now exists is a very modern place. Prior to the nineteenth century it was a small riverside village in no way so important as its neighbour on the opposite bank, Rōhrī, which it has managed to outgrow to almost four times the size.

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Looking down the centuries the observer will notice certain peculiarities of Sind's history. For the most part Sind has remained apart from the really crucial events happening in the rest of neighbouring Asia. Some of the more important of these have affected Sind deeply but in most cases the repercussions have been slight. This aloofness in the story of Sind and its peoples is best illustrated by comparing the life of Sind to a pool into which from time to time a pebble is thrown from outside. There are a few ripples after the splash and then all is still once more: or to vary the metaphor, the restless tide of Indian history beats upon the barren reef of Sind's isolation and only a few mild waves break gently upon the sandy beach. It would not be incorrect to describe Sind's history as episodic, isolated, characteristic of the non-bellicose nature of the bulk of its population throughout time, and as showing to a late date the theocratic foundation of Islāmic society in a very marked way. These judgements can be briefly substantiated. Many episodes in Sind's history have had great historic interest, but have not in themselves had important effects outside the valley of the Lower Indus. The history books seize upon such incidents with avidity. Indeed in most histories of India references to Sind are usually confined to them. The incidents, however, have a picturesque interest of their own for colour and variety. The Mōhanjōdarō civilization, of doubtful age between 3250 and 2750 B.C., displays affinities not yet fully explained with the Sumerian and Elamite cultures—a culture that is chalcolithic and also urban, which may or may not have extended into the Ganges valley.[1] At any rate traces of it have not been found yet anywhere except in Sind and one region of the Punjāb.[2] In 325 B.C. Alexander the Great concluded his ambitious adventure into India by taking his army down the Indus. Tradition still attributes to certain places in Sind a memory of his passage. In A.D. 711 the young Arab conqueror Muhammad Bin Kāssim brought the invading armies of Islām to the plains of India, where in the Lower Indus valley Islām established an outpost of Muhammadanism that persisted, with more or less deeply penetrative effects in this part of Asia, till the epoch of the systematic Muslim invasion of India three hundred years later changed the whole history of India. In A.D. 1351 the Delhi Emperor Muhammad Bin Tughlāk on his return from Gujārāt and Kāthiawār, whither he had gone to put down rebellion, died of fever near Tatta in Lower Sind and in the picturesque words of Badāoni 'the king was freed from his people

[1] See Mackay: *The Indus Civilization*, p. 7.

[2] The latest information, however, seems to show a few traces in the Ganges valley in isolated sites.

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and they from their king'. In 1540 in the civil war between Humāyūn and Shēr Shāh, Humāyūn was driven from his kingdom and wandered as a fugitive. For a time he took refuge in Sind and in 1542 at Umarkōt a famous child was born, later to be Akbar the Great Moghul. Sind figures afterwards in the civil war between Dārā Shikōh and Aurangzēb who, himself a Governor of Multān during 1648-50, had resided in Sind for part of the time of his Governorship. In 1658 Dārā Shikōh was pursued by Aurangzēb's generals through Sind down the Indus from Bakhar to Tatta, but managed successfully to run the gauntlet of the Imperial army and fort at Sehwan in a skilful river-war, only to be pursued back out of Gujārāt, captured at last on the borders of Sind, and sacrificed to the ambition of his younger brother. The siege of Bakhar, at which Manucci served as an artilleryman, is one of the most vivid episodes in the memoirs of that versatile Italian adventurer. No event of prime importance graced the annals of Sind between 1659 and 1758, when the East India Company established its second, short-lived factory on the Indus delta. In 1843 Sind provided the East India Company with one of its last conquests in India. By that time the position which Sind occupied territorially had made it an important factor in the complicated political game in which Afghānistān, the Sikhs and the Company were deeply engaged, and Sind suffered the penalty of annexation for what the British government of the day considered the intransigeance of the ruling house of Tālpūr. These picturesque events apart, the history of Sind has been strangely monotonous, self-contained and of little interest to the outside world. The most characteristic feature is in fact its isolation. It has had a full and vivid life of its own, as this book will disclose, for one period of the eighteenth century, but this life has had few contacts with any but the country's nearest neighbours. To explain the isolation presents no difficulty. There are two main reasons for it, first, the nature of the country with its fortresses of desert and barren land on all sides and its climate which confines active campaigning to a period of a few months annually, and second, the comparative unattractiveness of a river valley, capable of yielding crops of wonderful fertility but subject to the caprice of an incalculable river that did enormous damage by flooding before irrigation works had reached their present stage of sure efficiency. Thus the wandering hordes which poured over the frontier barriers of the north-west, until these were for ever closed by the growth of the kingdom of Afghānistān in the mid-eighteenth century and the rise of the Sikhs, passed rapidly to the more promising fields of the Punjāb rivers and the Gangetic plain in their assaults on the peninsular land of Hindustān. In all the

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long chronicle of fighting and war which is Indian history from 1000 A.D. onwards Sind receives hardly any mention. Sind had its own trouble with short-lived dynasties, civil wars and the depredations of the hill hordes from Balūchistān. But such was Sind's own domestic trial. It was not till the end of Akbar's reign that the Moghul thought Sind worth adding to his empire. This he accomplished in 1592. But even as a part of the Moghul Empire Sind continued to play an isolated part of such small distinction that Moreland[1] has found it impossible from the available historical record to include Sind in his economic reconstruction of the Moghul Empire.

The peoples of Sind, whether indigenous or immigrant, have never shown any .military genius. The land has produced no conquerors whose name is handed down in the pages of history. The people as a whole have always been peaceful and industrious, fully occupied in the local affairs of the Lower Indus valley and tilling with skill such land as the vagaries of the great river made capable of yielding crops in the days of haphazard and careless irrigation. Finally, since the time of the Sūmra in the thirteenth century and onwards, the land has been predominantly Muslim in population and the government had a strong theocratic basis with much virtual power in the hands of the priestly class of Sayids. When Moghul control weakened in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Kalhōra, a local dynasty that claimed descent from a holy mendicant, became all but independent rulers. Though the Tālpūrs, who succeeded the Kalhōra, boasted no such ancestry and traditions but were plain blunt shepherds who proved capable men of action and relied on the power of their Balūchī clans to maintain order, they were just as determined as the Kalhōra had been to preserve the isolation of the land and safeguard the continuance of a petty Muslim state whose administration was based partly on the theory of the Korān and partly on the system which the Moghuls had perfected. Thus through all these influences Sind has preserved an individuality and a separateness which are rare in India, so that when at last 'the changeable, puerile and divided chieftains' as Outram[2] calls the Mīrs of 1843, played into the hands of Lord Ellenborough, the British entered on Sind as if it were almost an unknown land. So much is this the case that a flood of literature dealing with this period poured forth for the enlightenment of the British public. It is this literature, together with the records of the East India Company's short-lived factories in Sind in the

[1] Moreland : *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, pp. 322-3. Appendix C. Mogul Revenue Statistics.

[2] Goldsmid : *Life of Outram*, Vol. I, p. 331.

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seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, which forms the chief evidence of the nature of the land, its government and the social life of its people during the period 1690-1760 with which this book is chiefly concerned.

### III. *The historical sources and their inadequacy*

The historical sources on which reliance must be placed for a reconstruction of the period 1690-1760 fall into five classes: first, there are the works of the native historians dealing especially with Sind: second, there are the works of the native writers dealing with the Moghul Empire or aspects of it during this period or previous to this period but containing few references to Sind in detail: third, there are the records of the East India Company during two stages of its career when it maintained a factory in Sind (*a*) 1635-62, (*b*) 1758-75: fourth, there are the accounts given by European travellers who visited Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: fifth, there is the evidence provided by the British occupation of Sind, consisting of a vast mass of papers, administrative and private, dealing with most aspects of the state of the country immediately prior to and immediately subsequent to the date of annexation. Of secondary authorities the number of reliable books dealing with social life in the days of Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān, Aurangzēb and his successors is immense but there are few which make more than brief and superficial reference to the Sind of the period with which I am concerned here.

What is the value of these various classes of historical material? The native historians dealing especially with Sind are of little help for the times of Shāh Abdul Latīf, which cover the period 1690-1760. One reason for their inadequacy is fortuitous, that, with one exception, they do not describe the particular period with which I am concerned, but, with this one exception, are all devoted to the recounting of events that did not extend beyond the reign of Jahāngīr. There are five important native histories of Sind, the Tārīkh-i-Masūmī, the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī, the Bēqlarnāma, the Tarkhān-nāma and the Tuhfat-al-Kirām. These books are all written in Persian, which was the Court language of the ruling houses of the country up to the days of the British conquest. The Tārīkh-i-Sind was written by Mīr Muhammad Masūm of Bakhar and is the most copious account of Sind history. But it does not go beyond the defeat of the then ruling house of Sind by Akbar in 1592 and the capitulation of Mirza Jānī Bēg of Tatta. Muhammad Masūm was the son of Sarfrāzī Hussainī of Kermān and was born at Bakhar. He belonged to a priestly Sayid family. He wrote his history of Sind in 1600 for the improvement of his son's

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mind and has filled his story with reputed miracles of saints and holy men to such an extent as greatly to depreciate the value of his work for scientific historians. The Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī was the work of Mīr Tāhir Muhammad Nasyānī, son of Sayid Hassan of Tatta. The author and his family for two generations before him were dependants of the ruling house of Arghūn and Tarkhān, the dynasty from whom Sind was wrested by Akbar and added to the Moghul dominion. The Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī was completed in 1621 (1030 A.H.) and takes the reader down to 1621 to the death of Mirza Ghāzī Bēg by poisoning at Kandahār. The book has occasional passages of considerable historical interest and is written in a picturesque and attractive style very uncommon in chronicles of this kind. The Bēqlarnāma is the work of Amīr Sayid Kāsim Bēqlar of a family from Tarmēz in Samarkand which had settled in Sind in the time of Shāh Hussain Arghūn and after settlement in Sind married into the Bhattī tribe of Sindhis. The book was finished probably about A.D. 1628 and is historically of little value. Its chief interest is in the minor affairs of the Tarkhān house with particular attention to the marauding expeditions of Wairsī Rāna of Umarkōt into whose family the author had married. The Tarkhān-nāma was written by Sayid Jamāl, son of Mīr Jalāluddīn Husainī Shirāzī. It is indebted considerably to the Tārīkh-i-Sind and the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī and is devoted mostly to the praise of Mirza Muhammad Sāleh Tarkhān who paid obeisance to the reigning Moghul Emperor and was rewarded with various preferments, including first the Subedārī of Tatta and later the Subedārī of Gujārāt, for his helpfulness to the Moghul Emperor. The work was written in 1654-5 and is of little historical value. The Tuhfat-al-Kirām is the most pretentious historical work by an inhabitant of Sind. It purports to be a general history down to the author's own time in three books, and the third book deals especially with Sind. The author is Sayid Ali Shēr Kanīa of Tatta. There is considerable historical material in the Tuhfat-al-Kirām but it is so jumbled up with items of uncritical credulity and stories of saints, miracle workers and holy men that its total value is small. The work carries the history of Sind down to the death of Mīan Sarfrāz Kalhōro and appears to have been finished about A.D. 1773. This historical work does therefore cover the period with which I am dealing and had it been written on sound historical principles would have been invaluable. But it is typical of its class and suffers from all the usual defects of oriental chronicles.

Of the second class of native histories, those relating to the Moghul Empire in general or in particular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries only, the Āīn-i-Akbarī, which is dated a century

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previous to the period I wish to describe, is of much value. Other works, which are numerous, make little or no reference to Sind because of that characteristic of isolation already explained. This type of work is useful merely for throwing light on conditions in the Moghul Empire between the days of Jahāngīr and its decline in the mid-eighteenth century. Most of the materials are available in certain excellent secondary authorities, such as Moreland's *India at the Death of Akbar* and *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, Sarkar's careful studies of the later Moghul period, Irvine's monographs on various aspects of later Moghul administration, Vincent Smith's *Akbar the Great Moghul*, Lane-Poole's *Aurangzēb*, and Farūkī's work on the reign of Aurangzēb. The bibliography in this last book gives some idea of the authorities most valuable for a study of Sind between 1600 and 1750 in the form either of contemporary historical works or of modern secondary authorities based upon them. Much useful information on medieval Sind is found in the writings of the earlier Arabic and Persian historians and chroniclers, some mention of whom is made in the bibliography attached to this volume.

Before leaving the subject of the native historians some remark upon their deficiencies is necessary. No one is better qualified to make this remark than Sir H. M. Elliot whose monumental work on the *History of India as told by its own Historians* is indispensable. Elliot has remarked on this type of writing in general ' of domestic history we have in our Indian annalists absolutely nothing, and the same may be remarked of nearly all Muhammadan historians except Ibn Khaldūn. By them society is never contemplated, either in its conventional usages or recognized privileges, its constituent elements or mutual relations, in its established classes or popular institutions, in its private recesses or habitual intercourses. In notices of commerce, agriculture, internal police and local judicature they are equally deficient. A fact, an anecdote, a speech, a remark which will illustrate the condition of the common people or of any rank subordinate to the highest is considered too insignificant to be suffered to intrude upon a relation which concerns only grandees and ministers, thrones and imperial powers.'[1] Most of the native annalists wrote as Court flatterers, or chroniclers of the achievements of some ruling house. They are not interested in the lives of the poor, the mean and the downtrodden. They did not speculate on or describe the economic structure of the feudal society in which they lived and which they did not in fact understand. This defect is true of all histories written before modern scientific research became a serious subject of study dependent on the correlation of all aspects of a people's culture and their state of civilization. The

[1] Elliot : Original Preface, pp. xix-xx.



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defects are particularly evident in the native historians of medieval and Moghul India whose success depended largely on the favour of an autocrat usually intolerant of anything that displayed his arrogance, his stupidity, or his lack of interest in what did not reflect his own self-importance. The study of social history is in fact a very modern development which was possible only when the attention of serious-minded writers was deflected from the narrow field of the classical writers of antiquity and when the importance of economic factors in the development of mankind's mission was at last realized. Such a form of study depends upon an examination of all forms of evidence, in which the temporary triumphs of a potentate or military adventurer play a very minor part. Even eighteenth century England, where intellectual curiosity was directed on numberless subjects of recondite and uncommon character, shows the same tendency to neglect the details of economic and domestic history. The point has been very well put in the preface to *Johnson's England*.[1] Therein it is remarked 'To present at all a living picture of the life of a past age in all its varied aspects is always a difficult task. . . . What is known as social history is nowadays generally found more attractive than political history, but it is a fallacy to suppose that it is easier. People commonly find the politics of their own day extremely interesting and therefore relate them fully and comment upon them lavishly however dull they may appear to be to a later generation : while upon the other hand the details of their everyday existence which pique the curiosity seem to them too trivial and are too much taken for granted to be recorded.' It is for this reason that the labours of such important social historians as Vincent Smith, Lane-Poole, Moreland and Sarkar are so invaluable for an understanding of the social condition of India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Though none of these writers makes more than passing reference to the Sind of the period 1690-1760, the domestic and social history of Sind in those days would be nearly unintelligible without their thoroughly efficient and painstaking correlation of all the useful authorities. A study of the bibliography on which the writings of these historians have been based is itself an invaluable complement to their own writings. The native historians and annalists taken as a whole must therefore be classed as thoroughly inadequate and unsatisfactory, and without the supplementing which is possible from outside evidence they would be of very little value for the purpose of this book.

When, however, we consider this other outside evidence we find ourselves at once on firmer ground and in a world which unwillingly

[1] *Johnson's England*. Preface, p. vii. Edited by A. S. Turberville.

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begins to yield up its secrets to posterity. There are many blanks in the record to be completed by the use of historical judgement and critical deduction founded on sound principles. It is unfortunate that even this outside evidence is sadly deficient in respect of Sind during the period of 1690-1760. I trust, however, that this work will show by the scientific use of the available material, broken and fragmentary though it be, how the breaks in the continuity of the record can be reasonably repaired.

It is now necessary to examine the nature of this outside evidence which consists of (*a*) the records of the East India Company in Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with a complete break between the years 1662 and 1758; (*b*) the evidence of European travellers in Sind and in India during the last hundred and fifty years of the Moghul Empire; (*c*) the evidence of contemporaries, available in the official records of the British annexation of Sind and the journals of travellers and observers who saw for themselves the remains in Sind of the Moghul system of administration surviving from 1800 to 1850. By the proper use of these materials many of the deficiencies in the native record can be satisfactorily made good.

The East India Company maintained a factory in Sind from 1636 to 1662 and again from 1758 to 1775. The records of these two factories are invaluable direct evidence of the condition of the country, at least to the extent to which traders of the type sent out by the Company were interested enough and able to describe it. Actually some of the official letters of the Company's servants to the head office in Surat, and later in Bombay, present a most vivid picture of the events of the time. The evidence is partly in the Bombay Record Office and partly in the library of the India Office. To the latter the careful research of Sir William Foster has provided an admirable guide for the seventeenth century factory. There are many blanks in the Bombay Government records, but enough material has been preserved to enable the historian to form a consistent plan. The records in the Bombay Record Office for the eighteenth century factory are more complete and are indispensable for a full understanding of the troubled condition in Sind when the Moghul Empire was breaking up, when the Kalhōra were struggling towards independence, and the Sikhs, the Pathāns and the Marāthas were all political rivals for a share in the power that could be filched from the Delhi Empire. It is, however, exceedingly unfortunate that the period covered by the life of Shāh Abdul Latīf (1689-1752) is totally devoid of any reference to Sind in the East India Company's records. The position is that there is evidence of the generation before the poet's birth, and there is evidence of the events that

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happened within a decade after his death, but I have been able to trace in the Bombay Record Office only one reference[1] to any event in Sind occurring during the life of the poet and that event is a trivial one.

Exactly the same blanks in the record are characteristic of the evidence of European travellers. The number of European travellers who visited India up to the end of the seventeenth century was very large, though most of them were confined to certain periods. The forties, fifties and sixties of the seventeenth century were particularly rich in foreign travellers who have left a record of their impressions behind. Again towards the end of the same century many Europeans came to India and left their impressions of the working of the factories they saw and the social and economic condition of the Indian peoples. Sind has of course shared only to a small extent in this wealth of reminiscence, but it was not entirely neglected. Though Bernier, Tavernier and Thévenot did not visit Sind and have next to nothing to say about it, there were Nicholas Withington, the victim of a strange misadventure in 1616, Father Manrique in 1640, Niccolao Manucci who served as an artilleryman at the siege of Bakhar in 1655, and Captain Alexander Hamilton in 1699, all of whom have left behind them unforgettable pictures of this *terra incognita*. The last of these four is the only one who has recorded his impressions of Sind during the period of Shāh Abdul Latīf's lifetime. The record of conditions generally in the Moghul Empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is, however, so full, and the evidence we possess of the form of the Empire as witnessed in Sind during select portions of the seventeenth and select portions of the eighteenth centuries is so voluminous that there is no insuperable difficulty in filling the blanks which exist between 1699 and 1758, when historical material became copious.

With the British annexation of Sind in 1843 there became available a vast mass of historical material of every sort concerned with the social condition of the country as found at the time of the British conquest. But even prior to this, Sind had attracted some attention from officials and travellers of various kinds. In 1799 a Mr Nathan Crowe wrote a valuable account of the history of the Kalhōra after personal experience of the country. In 1809 a British mission led by Mr Hankey Smith visited Hyderābād and some four years later political officers like Colonel Pottinger and Lieutenant Del Hoste recorded invaluable impressions. In 1826 an American traveller named Masson told of an adventurous journey through Afghānistān, Balūchistān and Sind. In 1828 Dr Burnes visited the Court of the Amīrs and wrote a book which is full of the kind

[1] *S.I.L.B.*, No. 4 of 1743-4, p. 191.

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of facts posterity wishes to know. In the thirties of the nineteenth century numerous observers wrote accounts of Sind, some of them specially valuable, like those of Postans and officers of the Royal Navy employed in surveying the Indus. In the forties, owing to the war with Afghānistān, Sind became 'news' and was visited by hosts of travellers as a place to see. The annexation brought still more. To it we owe the magnificent works of Burton, full of minute information which only a man with his peculiar brand of curiosity and linguistic skill could have obtained.

A careful collation of these varied sources enables the historian, despite the paucity of direct contemporary evidence, to draw a fairly reliable picture of social life in Sind during the first half of the eighteenth century. Conclusions based on such collation need not be regarded as inadequate. The reason is that while it is not true to say that conditions in Sind did not differ in 1730 from what they were in 1699 (for which direct evidence is available) nor again were exactly similar to conditions in 1758 (when direct evidence becomes available once more) it is not untrue to say that the nature of conditions prevailing between 1700 and 1758 can be readily inferred from the previous and later evidence. Substantiation for this statement exists in the fact that the main administrative structure of the government remained largely unaltered from the days of Shāh Jahān to the days of Sir Charles Napier. The economic foundation was not greatly changed despite the rise, towards the second half of the eighteenth century, of the four large towns of modern Sind, Karāchi, Hyderābād, Sukkur and Shikārpūr, which displaced Tatta, Nasarpūr, Rōhrī, Sehwan, Kandiāro and a host of small places in the economic scheme, and despite the fact also that the social structure of the classes of society was made static in a manner possible only by the isolation of Sind from the rest of India and the clearly intelligible policy of both Kalhōra and Tālpūrs to maintain Sind as an individual Muslim state holding little converse with the rest of the world. The internal construction of this Muslim state was plainly revealed by the British conquest. Much of the bitter controversy which that event occasioned has led to an undue disparagement of the character of the native governments which preceded the British occupation. It can be readily proved that many of the criticisms of Victorian writers are unjust and have their basis in an exaggerated form of the ethical, self-righteous superiority which characterized that part of the Victorian epoch and was particularly liable to obtrude itself when annexation was held to be justified on the grounds of its civilizing effects. Actually the government of both Kalhōra and Tālpūrs carried on the system of the Moghuls adapted to more modern conditions and had a solid

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justification in the conditions of the time and the ideas which actuated the majority of the population. This was a point of view which escaped the searching eyes of men like Sir Charles Napier and Burton, both of whom attached excessive importance to the stupidities, cruelties and crudities which the Kalhōra and the Tālpūrs had, for their own reasons, no particular desire to eradicate. Thus the Sind of Sir Charles Napier's day, which we can view with the precision of a microscope, was not very different in essentials from the Sind of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro, the prince who reigned about the end of the lifetime of Shāh Abdul Latīf, and the Sind of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro in its turn did not differ, except in the slight improvements of an unprogressive age passing on in years, from the Sind of Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzēb. It will be the object of later chapters in this book to make this assertion good. The sources will be quoted for the judgements given, and the bibliography will enable students and scholars to verify for themselves the validity of the judgements.

## IV. *The first half of the eighteenth century in Sind, showing the passing of power from Moghul to Kalhōro*

For a proper understanding of the history of the Kalhōra it is necessary to make clear what exactly their relation is to the Moghul administration which, after half a century, they succeeded in displacing and how they in turn yielded their power to their successors the Tālpūrs. When Sind was conquered by Akbar in 1592 by the defeat of Mirza Jānī Bēg, a Tarkhān of the Central Asian tribe of Arghūns, Sind was in the ordinary course added to the domains of the Moghul Empire. It was provided with the administrative machinery employed elsewhere in the Moghul dominions. From the Āīn-i-Akbarī we know the essential features of the system and also some of the details of its application to Sind. The extent to which Sind, after the Moghul annexation of it, was a unified area of government is not clearly known.[1] But it seems unlikely that Sind was a compact unit completely under the control of its rulers. What is certain is that Upper and Lower Sind were never definitely united till a much later day. In fact even till the end of the Tālpūr rule in 1843 Sind may be held to have been very doubtfully unified. The peculiarity of the rule of the Amīrs was that the government was in the hands of three distinct persons who had separate areas of authority but managed somehow to conduct the administration without much quarrel amongst themselves—a feature of the Amīrs' rule which has always impressed

[1] See Ray: *Dynastic History of Northern India, passim.*

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historians as an unusual and noteworthy achievement. The point is, however, that even as late as 1843 it can quite definitely be asserted with truth that unification between Upper and Lower Sind was not complete. When Sind was annexed to the Moghul dominions by Akbar the country as a whole was made part of the Sūbah of Multān and sarkārs were established in two places, Bakhar in the north and Tatta in the Indus deltaic region. These two sarkārs were under separate governors, and the extent of their actual authority is not clearly known. For a whole century the governors of Bakhar and Tatta were appointed first from the Tarkhān dynasty and later from Hindustān by the Moghul Emperor and were members of the feudal bureaucracy which controlled the administration. From the time of Shāh Jahān till the first decade of the eighteenth century the actual wielders of the Moghul's authority in Sind were officials sent from other parts of the Empire and might only by chance be occasionally natives of Sind. The importance of the Kalhōra is that from the time they became a powerful political force the system was changed and the representative of the Emperor was a native of Sind. The process was that the Kalhōra began as petty feudal chiefs, became strong enough to be appointed governors of sarkārs, and in the end succeeded in getting the control of both Upper and Lower Sind with headquarters at Bakhar and Tatta till, about the time of Nādir Shāh's invasion in 1737, they reached a position of virtual independence. The independence was virtual only because Delhi was too preoccupied to be able to check petty aggrandizements so far away. In theory, however, the Kalhōra continued to be responsible to the Emperor. They were supposed to collect the revenue, remit what was necessary to Delhi, and maintain law and order. But even as late as the final establishment about 1760 of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro as Prince of Sind (as he is called in the East India Company's letters) there were elements ready to resist a unification of power. This is evident in the reference, in the East India Company's records, to the Kalhōra's struggles against a Jām in Lower Sind, doubtless a Sammo of the Sindhi tribe of Samma who had been rulers of Lower Sind previous to the entry of the Central Asian dynasties finally defeated by Akbar in 1592.

The policy of the Moghuls had always been to make the utmost convenient use of existing institutions and employ the local feudal chiefs as minor dignitaries with a certain amount of their personal authority retained. This was in fact the only way in which a feudal society ill provided with a competent and disciplined standing army could hope to maintain itself and preserve order in distant parts. The system is sound in itself granted certain conditions, of

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which the chief are the obedience of the local chiefs to the imperial governors and the due collection of the imperial revenue. Order had of course to be maintained to assure the latter and the Moghul practice was to allow a great deal of freedom in minor and local affairs provided these two great ends were served. It was the weakness of the system that it provided no real check on illicit exactions by petty chiefs and by governors up to that limit of excess which could not be overstepped.[1] The result of the weakness was a continual conflict between the revenue demands of local and imperial interests. The history of the Moghul occupation of Sind is full of examples of conflict of this kind. It was particularly the exactions of the local authorities which troubled the English traders who had come to Sind for commercial purposes only. The East India Company's records present a very complete picture of this inherent clash of interest usually resulting in the oppression of individuals, arbitrary acts of despotism, financial instability and administrative unsettlement of more or less serious import.

Vincent Smith has described this weakness of the Moghul administration very adequately. 'The whole framework of the government', he says, 'was military. The only considerable officials who did not take rank as army officers were charged with purely ecclesiastical and civil legal duties, such as the Sadars and the Kāzīs. Each of the more considerable Mansabdārs was vested as such with civil administrative powers practically unlimited. A local governor was not bound by any rules of either substantive law or procedure unless in so far as his conscience required him to follow the Korānic precepts. He was the representative of the imperial autocrat and as such could do as he pleased within his jurisdiction subject to the risk of being recalled to court and punished if complaints reached the ears of his sovereign.'[2] He states further: 'The Government in short was carried on by a vast multitude of petty local despotisms kept in order to a certain extent by an overpowering autocracy at the top.' 'The whole administration', he adds, 'was absolutely personal and despotic, directed to the stringent collection of a heavy assessment, the provision of numerous military forces and the maintenance of imperfect public order in a rough and ready fashion under the sanction of ferocious punishments

[1] 'To my mind the correct inference is that in levies of all kinds whether imposed on classes or individuals, officials had to avoid such a scandal as might provoke interference from above, but that short of this limit they had very large opportunities of raising money by methods which would not be tolerated by public opinion at the present day and which were undoubtedly injurious from the economist's point of view.' Moreland: *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 295.

[2] *Akbar the Great Moghul*, pp. 368-9.

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inflicted arbitrarily by local despots."[1] It is not a pretty nor an attractive picture. It will, however, be a mistake to judge its deficiencies by the standards of modern administration with its awakened public conscience and ideals of absolute equality of treatment for all. Nor, indeed, was any other system practicable in a loosely-knit empire held together by imperfect loyalties and maintained as a machine for collecting revenue for an extravagant court, and as a weapon for waging aggressive wars. The internal history of Sind for one hundred and fifty years after its annexation by Akbar shows as clearly as any other part of the Moghul dominions these characteristic deficiencies of Moghul government.

## V. • *The Kalhōro power in the eighteenth century*

The Kalhōra[2] as a dynastic force rose very gradually to predominance. They did not disappear in a sudden *débâcle*. The nature of their vague and indeterminate rise will be obvious to the student who considers the general features of the Moghul period just described. As a ruling house the Kalhōra may be said to date from 1736, but members of the tribe had been prominent in Sind affairs for at least half a century before that date. Similarly the Kalhōra were not swept away in 1778 by a *coup d'état* of Mīr Bījar Khān Tālpūr, resulting in the defeat and death of Ghulām Nabī Kalhōro. They continued to survive as a disturbing influence till the very end of the eighteenth century. The confused politics of Sind, Kelāt, Afghānistān, Cutch, Jodhpūr and Bahāwalpūr were a fertile breeding ground of the turmoil which succeeded the deposition of Abdul Nabī Kalhōro and this commotion had hardly subsided before 1803 by which time the Tālpūrs were firmly established as the family in power. There is no adequate history of the Kalhōra. The best account of them was in 1799 written by Nathan Crowe, an Englishman who knew by personal experience conditions in Sind at the end of the eighteenth century, and this account is amongst the records of the Bombay Government. Postans writing in 1843 took over, almost verbatim and without acknowledgement, much of what Crowe had written ; and the substance of Crowe's account

[1] *Akbar the Great Moghul*, p. 383.

[2] 'The Kalhōra were originally Channo Sindhis and therefore converted Hindus. When the family rose to distinction it asserted a right to be called Beni Abbās, but their Shajarō or genealogical tree was pronounced by the learned to be a complete failure. Upon this they sent a messenger to copy the documents in the possession of the holy men of Sehrah Khatibah and when the latter offered some objection, the Kalhōro confiscated their feofs, attacked and destroyed their villages, carried off the copper plates upon which the Shajarō was delineated and then became undoubted descendants from Abbās and Murshīds.' Burton : *History of Sindh*, p. 410.

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will be found in Postans' *Observations on Sind*. The object of this book is not to describe in detail the history of the Kalhōro power but merely to indicate its salient characteristics with reference to the social history of Sind during the period 1690-1760. The chief stages in the life of the Kalhōro power may be briefly summarized. There are five such stages, first, the acceptance by the Moghul Emperor of members of the Kalhōro tribe as Viceroys or Governors in Sind—a period which began in 1701 ; second, the extension and consolidation of the local power of the Kalhōro Governors till Delhi had by 1736 recognized them as semi-independent rulers of the country ; third, after the invasion of Nādir Shāh in 1739, the transfer of theoretical suzerainty over Sind from the Moghul Empire to the Persian kingdom, which resulted in the Kalhōra becoming subordinate to the Persian monarch and liable to pay tribute to him ; fourth, about 1747, the transference of this suzerainty from the Persian king to the Pathān kingdom at Kābul consequent upon the military successes of Ahmad Shāh Durānī, the founder of modern Afghānistān, by which change the Kalhōra became feudatories of Kābul and had to pay tribute to that power ; fifth, the struggle between Kalhōra and Tālpūrs which began in 1778 and lasted more or less continuously till the end of the century, a period of civil war in which the Tālpūrs, with the aid of the Balūchīs, then settled in Sind in considerable numbers, were at last able to destroy the failing powers of the Sindhi ruling family. Throughout the whole period from 1737 onwards the Kalhōra were never actually full masters in their own house. They were required to pay an annual tribute and usually did their utmost to avoid doing so. They were so far successful in that, by their obstructiveness and local influence, coupled with the fact that Sind was difficult campaigning country for a power resident at Kābul and that the Afghān kingdom itself after the death of Ahmad Shāh in 1773 showed the usual signs of weakness typical of oriental autocracy, the tribute was gradually reduced in amount and was usually very much in arrears. In this way a gradual but uncertain independence was with difficulty established to such an extent that, when Britain appeared in Sind in the first decade of the nineteenth century in a character other than that of a commercial people bent mostly on the profits of foreign trade, the ruling house of the Tālpūrs had become virtually independent of control. Sind was then to all intents and purposes a sovereign and petty Muslim state, which was its condition when Sir Charles Napier added it to the East India Company's possessions in 1843. The aim of all Sind policy from 1701 onwards was to make Sind independent of Moghul, Persian and Pathān, to diminish the payment of tribute to the suzerain authority, to preserve the land

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as a closed terrain into which no foreigners of any sort were allowed entrance except with the utmost difficulty. These facts adequately explain the remarkable phenomenon that, despite the presence of East India Company factories in Sind in both seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the beginning of the nineteenth century the country was to Europeans a *terra incognita* to such an extent as to evoke the flood of descriptive works on the country which poured upon the world in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Kalhōra themselves showed no special genius for government except that they followed a consistent policy of determined isolation and recognized the importance of irrigation works. They were a Sindhi tribe of obscure origin of the type that is now classed as Jāmōt,[1] that is, non-Balūch original inhabitants of the Indus valley, settled in a portion of Upper Sind in the area that now forms part of the Lārkāna and Sukkur districts. They were the first Sindhi dynasty to wield permanent power since the fall of the Samma, the builders of Tatta, who had ruled Sind for two hundred and thirty years before the advent of the Arghūns and the Tarkhāns from Central Asia. Their rule had therefore some elements of popularity in the countryside. This popularity was strengthened by the peculiar character of their reputation as holy men, descendants of a sainted mendicant, a kind of being who has always made a very vivid appeal to the Muslim inhabitants of the Lower Indus valley. The reign of the Kalhōra was interrupted by three acute spasms of civil war, the first on the death of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro in 1754, the second on the deposition of Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro in 1775, and the third and fatal internecine conflict that resulted in the supersession of Kalhōro by Tālpūr. Apart from these periods of commotion and unrest in the country itself there were continual threats of invasion of Sind occasioned by the intransigeance of the Kalhōra in the payment of tribute to their suzerains of Persia and Afghānistān. It will therefore be readily realized that Lieutenant James is not very far from the truth when he says in his interesting account of the Chāndookah pargana : 'Chāndookah in common with the rest of Sind has been the scene of many a bloody conflict, its fields of corn trampled under by the invading horde and its plains saturated with the blood of hundreds shed in civil strife or in contests with the vicegerents of the Delhi Empire. In earlier ages it is true we may feel interested in the bold struggle of the country for its freedom but as each succeeding dynasty ascended the throne and retained the throne solely by the sword we can subsequently see in Sind but one continued battle-field, the scene of usurpation, tyranny and bloodshed. The steel

[1] See *Census of India* : 1931, Vol. VIII, pp. 495-sqq.

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of Damascus has glittered on the plains, the miraculous[1] club of the Kalhōra placed the descendants of mendicants on its throne : the matchlock of the Tālpūr in avenging a series of diabolical murders gave it a new dynasty of shepherd princes till finally the British bayonet gave the worn-out country peace.'[2]

The rise of a family of religious mendicants to a throne of territorial dignity is one of those incidents in which oriental history is so rich. During the time of the Samma a fakir called Mīan Muhammad Mihidī[3] came and settled in Sind attaching to himself a number of followers of his ascetic cult. Amongst these followers was one Ādam Shāh Kalhōro, who acquired in his turn about 1558 as great a reputation as his teacher for sanctity. As his fame grew he appears, however, to have interested himself in more mundane affairs with considerable effect ; in fact to such an extent that his efforts and those of his tribe led him to seize lands and oppose the royal power with the result that he drew upon himself the wrath of the Governor of Multān who defeated his horde of rebellious followers and had him put to death. The result was to canonize him and make his name more potent than ever. His tomb today, perched on its rocky hill at Sukkur, is still a place of veneration and respect, and stands out prominently as an acropolis above the surrounding alluvial plain. As Postans writes : 'Ādam Shāh's followers multiplied in great numbers and after his death his fame and influence were perpetuated through six generations of lineal descendants all regularly succeeding to the patriarchal chair. The great accumulation of adherents and attendants forced them to increase means of maintenance beyond the contributions of their disciples and they forcibly possessed themselves about the latter end of the seventeenth century of lands of different Zamindars.' This called in the intervention of the Moghul army which defeated the band of 'sturdy saints', as Postans calls them, took their leader Dīn Muhammad Kalhōro a prisoner, and forced the tribe to flee to Kelāt. The tribe of religious mendicants were, however, not to be denied their claim to ascendancy, and the son of Dīn Muhammad,

1 'The reference to the miraculous club of the Kalhōra is to the conquest of the Panhwar tribe by Mīr Mahomed Kalhōro, a conquest effected with such ease that Yār Mahomed Kalhōro directed a number of clubs to be suspended in front of his tomb as a memorial to his having conquered the country with clubs alone. The clubs remain suspended to this day in front of the tomb at Khudābād.' Report by Captain Preedy. Bombay Government Records, No. XVII, New Series, p. 671.

2 Report on Pergunnah of Chāndookah by Lieut. James, 1847, in Bombay Government Records. Selections, No. XVII, New Series, pp. 709-74.

3 Described by Goldsmid as 'Shea Sayed of Jāmpūr', *Historical Memoir on Shikārpūr*, p. 22. Selections from Bombay Government Records, No. XVII, New Series.

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by name Nasīr Muhammad, realizing that discretion was the better part of valour, went some years later to Multān, pleaded for forgiveness and obtained the royal mercy and an amnesty. This was about the very end of the seventeenth century, and about the beginning of the period with which this book is concerned. The son of Nasīr Muhammad Kalhōro was Yār Muhammad Kalhōro, who may be regarded as the real founder of the Kalhōro dynasty. About 1701 Yār Muhammad succeeded in wresting Shikārpūr from the Dāūdpōtras, a weaver tribe who had founded it in 1616 after a conflict with the numerous tribe of Mahars then powerful in Upper Sind and still represented in the ruling house of Bahāwalpūr. Yār Muhammad made Shikārpūr his court and obtained from Aurangzēb a grant of the tract between the Indus and the Nāra and the right to call himself Khuda Yār Khān. He was not, however, content with this aggrandizement, for by 1711 he had overrun the Kandiāro and Lārkāna tracts in addition to the country round Sukkur, so that he had claims to being the really effective power in Upper Sind. Yār Muhammad Kalhōro died in 1719 and was succeeded by his son Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro who increased his father's dominion by adding the Shikārpūr country of the Dāūdpotras, having first taken the precaution to make his obeisance to the Emperor Muhammad Shāh from whom he received, like his father, the title of Khuda Yār Khān, and the province of Sewistān in 1719.[1] The chief of Kelāt, the Brāhuī Mīr Abdullāh Khān, had in the meantime attacked the Kalhōra and been ignominiously defeated, losing his own life in the fighting. This still further increased the power of Nūr Muhammad and when a vacancy occurred in the government of Tatta, the Moghul Emperor, following the traditional course of giving authority to persons of local importance, appointed him as Governor of Tatta, by which act Nūr Muhammad became virtually the ruler of Sind, Upper and Lower, from the deserts of the east to the rocky hills of the west. It is significant, however, as showing the curiously incomplete nature of this sovereignty that the fort of Bakhar, the strongest place of defence in Sind, did not come into the possession of the Kalhōra till 1736. The invasion of Nādir Shāh, however, in 1739 put an entirely different complexion upon things and removed from Nūr Muhammad's mind the fear of Delhi, which hitherto he had hesitatingly acknowledged.[2]

[1] See Imperial Gazetteer—Sind.

[2] 'Upper Sind at the period of the invasion of Hindustān and the sack of Delhi by Nādir Shāh formed part of the Sūbah of Multān. On the dismemberment of the empire of Delhi the portion named Moghulee, comprising Sukkur, Bukkar and Shikārpūr and its dependencies was annexed to the Durānī kingdom by Ahmad Shāh Abdalī whose capital was Kābul. The Afghān possessions in Sind extended on the north-east to Kashmōre on the

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He was emboldened to oppose Nādir Shāh and paid dearly for his temerity, for Nādir Shāh on his return from Hindustān to Persia invaded Sind, shut Nūr Muhammad up in the fort of Umarkōt and forced his submission, granting him pardon on his promising to pay a tribute of twenty lakhs of rupees. As security for the payment of the tribute he took with him the vanquished Kalhōro's three sons, Murād Yār Khān, Uttār Khān and Ghulām Shāh Khān, as hostages to his court, where they remained for several years.[1] In 1747 Nādir Shāh was assassinated and these three sons held as hostages at the Persian Court returned to Sind. Even yet Nūr Muhammad had not learnt his lesson, for when Ahmad Shāh Durānī succeeded Nādir Shāh as the despoiler of Delhi, Nūr Muhammad again sought to temporize about the payment of tribute. To enforce payment Ahmad Shāh threatened invasion of Sind in 1754 and even encamped at Sewistān, an act that made Nūr Muhammad later take to precipitate flight to the desert on the east. There he died. The result was a very confused civil war between his three sons. Into the details of the civil war it is unnecessary to enter, but the effect was that from 1756 to 1758 Sind was in a pitiable condition of unrest which did not terminate until Ghulām Shāh finally emerged the victor in 1758, at the very time when the East India Company were endeavouring to establish their second factory in Sind. A more inopportune moment they could hardly have selected, as subsequent events showed. But the troubled condition of Sind at this period, 1754-8, was merely typical of what was happening elsewhere in most parts of India. In the end Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro became the 'Prince of Sind' (as he is called in the East India Company's letters of this period), but he was forced to acknowledge the sovereignty of Ahmad Shāh and pay a yearly tribute to Kābul. During this unhappy generation not only were the Kalhōra fighting amongst themselves, but they were also engaged in a complicated political game of chess with the Pathāns, Kelāt, Cutch, and the Chief of Kukrāllo, presumably a Sammo of the lower delta of the Indus who had somehow managed to retain a little petty authority of his own. Once established on the throne of Sind, Ghulām Shāh, the most capable of the Kalhōra, did a little to restore some kind of order to the disturbed countryside.[2] But he died in 1771, and was

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Multān frontier, north to the Rōjhan and the desert and south to Mundajee in the Lārkāna River.' Report by Major P. Goldney. Bombay Government Records, No. XVII, New Series, p. 688.

[1] For a slightly different version see Goldsmid: *Historical Memoir on Shikārpūr*, pp. 17-18.

[2] Though his actual achievements were not very remarkable, namely, successful hostilities against the Khōsas of Sewistān and Bahādur Khān's

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succeeded by his eldest son Sārfarāz Khān, a particularly short-sighted, unfeeling and incompetent tyrant, who undid in a few years most of what good had been achieved by his father. It was Sārfarāz Khān whose capricious exercise of authority forced the withdrawal of the East India Company's factory in 1775 and whose senseless action in achieving the murder of Mīr Behrām Khān Tālpūr in circumstances that scandalized the public conscience of the day led to the final overthrow of the Kalhōra by the Tālpūrs. The Balūchīs had by this time become the strongest military force in the land. The earlier Kalhōra had encouraged Balūchīs to settle in Sind in order that the Kalhōra might take advantage of their military superiority in the battlefield. By the murder of Mīr Behrām Khān Tālpūr, the Tālpūrs, the Balūchī tribe that had come to exercise the chief power at the Sind Court, were embittered and estranged and Sārfarāz Khān was deposed at their instance for his misrule and mismanagement. The deposition of Sārfarāz Khān provoked another civil war during which Mīr Muhammad Khān, Ghulām Shāh and Ghulām Nabī Kalhōro were successively incompetent occupants of the Sind throne. With the details of this second civil war and the eventual emergence of the Tālpūrs as the ruling house we are not concerned in this work, but it is necessary here to say that the period of unrest lasted from 1778 to 1800, when the power of the Kalhōra to disturb the peace had been at last effectively quelled.

The whole episode of the Kalhōra supremacy makes very sad reading. It was certainly unfortunate for the masses of the Sind population that a dynasty of their own people, which drew its original driving force from the appeal it made to the religious predilections of the common man, should have proved so poor a substitute for the government of the Moghuls. The Tālpūrs who succeeded the Kalhōra never made the same appeal to the common man since they did not pride themselves on saintliness nor did they claim long descent in the manner of the Kalhōra, who succeeded in imposing on their Sind subjects the belief, however little foundation there may have been for it, that the family of Ādam Shāh could trace its origin from Abbās, the Uncle of the Prophet. The Tālpūrs were plain, blunt men, and if the government they imposed on Sind did not meet with the favour of a later Victorian age of British statesmen and did not inspire the British public with any feeling except disgust at the intolerance and the savagery of many of the practices current till the British annexation, there is this to be said for them, that they did succeed in giving a distracted land peace for

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territory of Bahāwalpūr, an expedition against Cutch, the foundation of Hyderābād (1764) and an ungrateful attack upon his old friend and helper Jām Hijajī of Kukrāllo.

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forty years and that within the limits of their administrative ideals their government was neither inefficient nor contemptible. It has to be remembered that the Kalhōra and Tālpūrs between them succeeded in keeping Sind shut to the influences of the outside world for a hundred and fifty years. Thus in 1843 Sir Charles Napier was able to see in being a survival of Moghul administration unaffected by the softening and civilizing influences which, working in full force in other parts of India for a century, had changed men's ideas of how a government should behave if it is to deserve the respect and willing obedience of its subjects. The first arrival of the Tālpūrs in Sind has been graphically described in a famous passage by Burton. 'Mīan Mīr Mahomed, the first prince of that (Kalhōro) dynasty made the fatal mistake of sending to the Balūchī country and inducing by offers and promises of feofs and favour, two of his mountaineer Murīds, Mīrs Alūdo and Masūdo, to emigrate from their barren hills and settle in the low country. The entrance of the barbarians is thus described by the native annalists 'when the Balōchīs arrived within fifteen miles of Khudābād the prince sent out several of his ministers and nobles with presents of clothes and horses with gold saddles to receive and escort his distinguished guests to the capital. As the procession advanced, it met a troop of beggarly shepherds followed by their flocks, and women mounted on asses. The ministers enquired for Mīr Alūdo, and were much astonished when told that the ragged wayfarer with the "dhērī" in his hand and the "kambō" on his shoulders was the personage whom they were sent to conduct with such ceremony.'[1] Little indeed did the Kalhōro of that moment realize that in this beggarly procession of hill shepherds lay the force that would one day drive his descendants from their proud throne, and that the autocracy of saints would fall in a welter of blood before the shepherds with their spinning whorls and their slings in which they carried lambs across their backs.

[1] Burton : *History of Sindh*, p. 235.

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# Chapter II

## Adventure and Trade

### I. *Sind's contact with the European world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*

For the period 1690-1760 the direct contemporary evidence available has already been described as remarkably deficient. The reason is that the native historians have failed to make up for the lack of English record which is absent except for one striking instance of an English traveller. There is no European record for Sind between the years 1662 and 1758, because there were no Europeans in Sind who have left any reminiscences of their experiences for posterity. From 1755 there are references in the Bombay Record Office to the sending of ships to Sind for purposes of trade and notices of their arrivals and departures but nothing of any greater interest. There were, however, some Europeans familiar with the land because a Mr Edward Cooke, of whom nothing is known, died in Tatta in 1743, and his tomb is still visible in the ruins of Sind's one-time metropolis. There was a Mr Symmonds who was asked to send rice to Bombay for the East India Company in 1744, and it is clear that Mr Robert Sumption, who negotiated the agreement for the re-establishing of the factory at Tatta in 1758, was familiar with the country, spoke its language and on this account was regarded as a suitable agent for the company to employ on a difficult and delicate task of diplomacy. The whole period 1662 to 1755 is, with one noteworthy exception, an uncharted sea. That exception is Captain Alexander Hamilton, who has left a most interesting and entertaining account of what Tatta, Lāribunder and the country between them were like in 1699. This will be considered in its due place. It is in these circumstances that the records of the East India Company's factory in Sind, first for the period 1635 to 1662, and later, for the period 1758-75, become of paramount importance for the historian who wishes to describe the social conditions prevailing in Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The records of the East India Company for the Sind factories are extraordinarily illuminating and but for them the period 1600-1760 would be almost a blank. The only evidence otherwise consists of the accounts of the travels of three adventurers,



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whose business or love of excitement induced them to visit Sind in the seventeenth century. These adventurous beings were Nicholas Withington (1614), Frey Sebastian Manrique (1640), and Nicolai Manucci (1655). These annals are of first-rate value because the writers were all persons of unusual intelligence, and reliable observers of events and places that were within their personal knowledge. Without the record of the East India Company, however, Withington, Manrique, Manucci and Hamilton would be but poor material for a period extending over a century and a half during which time Sind, India and the East India Company itself suffered vast internal changes. Not one of the outstanding commentators of the Moghul Empire visited Sind and few of them make more than cursory mention of it. Tavernier, Bernier, Thevenot are alike of little value for social conditions in Sind. The same is true of the host of minor travellers and commentators like Terry, Fryer, Ovington, Mandelslo, Montserrate, Herbert, de Laet, Barbosa, della Valle, Linschoten, Mundy, Ives, Bartolemeo, Luiller, Grose, Hedges and Stavorinus, though their works are valuable for an understanding of the general tendencies of the time and the condition of India during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The first Europeans to gain personal experience of Sind were the Portuguese, the pioneers in the sea exploitation of the Indian coasts. The Portuguese had had acquaintance with Sind for at least sixty years before the first appearance of the English in 1612. In fact as long previously as 1555, in the civil war between the Arghūns and the Tarkhāns, the Portuguese had been engaged as mercenaries and had served their Arghūn employer, Shāh Hassan Arghūn, very badly. During his absence from Tatta in hostilities against Mirza Īsa Bēg they actually sacked and burnt Tatta, a fact which is chronicled in the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī. When the English in their quest of sea-trade endeavoured to find a footing at Lāribunder and Tatta, they discovered the Portuguese already well established with a practical monopoly of the carrying trade to the Persian Gulf, Gujārāt and Goa and possessing a church at the port. Moreland has written : ' Local shipowners were few and most of the trade was carried in Portuguese coasting vessels, known at this time as frigates. At the beginning of our period the Portuguese dominated the commerce of the region and their influence with the Moghul authorities sufficed to defeat the first English attempt made in the year 1613 to obtain a footing in the port. Their arguments were not in this case based on their naval and military power, but they threatened to desert the port if the English were admitted and the Governor who held the farm of the customs could not face the risk

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of the resulting loss ' (Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 41). The interests of the Dutch lay farther afield in the East Indies where after the ' massacre of Amboina ' they retained complete hold of the important spices trade. They did, however, attempt to open trade in Sind in 1631, but did not take the business up seriously. They returned a few years later and from 1652 onwards were regularly engaged in the trade, but only on a quite inconsiderable scale, Sind being clearly from the Dutch point of view a very minor part of their trading activities in the East.[1] Apart from these meetings with the people of the West, Sind remained throughout the seventeenth century an area of little contact. The English factory at Tatta during 1635-62 constituted a remarkable enterprise which it is necessary to describe more fully as its records give the only continuous picture of what Sind was like during the time of Shāh Jahān and the opening years of Aurangzēb's reign. This period was contemporaneous with the lifetime of Shāh Abdul Latīf's grandfather, and coincided with the epoch of the Moghul's greatest magnificence.

## II. *General features of the East India Company's career in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with reference to Sind*

The first venture of the East India Company in Sind was launched in 1635. There were two reasons why this time was selected. The first was that not till Methwold had negotiated an agreement between the English and the Portuguese to preserve peace with each other had the Company any chance of doing successful business at Lāribunder, the port of the Indus delta, and Tatta, the capital of Sind and a very rich and imposing emporium of commerce in the seventeenth century. The second was that the East India Company had succeeded in catching the fancy of the London market with Indian cotton piece-goods, the demand for which appeared insatiable at the time, and since the famine of 1630 Gujārāt, then the largest source of supply, had been quite unable to cope with the demand. There were, of course, other reasons, not the least of which was the surprising success of the separate voyages of the Company in the days of Charles I, before the financial needs of that misunderstood and rather ill-treated monarch led him to support a rival and short-lived organization financed and managed by Sir William Courteen, a Flemish silk merchant settled in London, Sir Paul Pinder, another London merchant, and Endymion Porter, ' groom of the bed-chamber and

[1] It is in these circumstances highly unlikely that the records of the Dutch Company would do much to supplement the evidence available in the English Company's records.

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his master's factotum for secret affairs'. The profits of the East Indian trade at this period were very considerable. It was not surprising that interlopers should wish to share in the wealth, and that the King should use their keenness as a means of filling his own depleted privy purse. The settlement which Methwold concluded in 1635 with the Portuguese overcame the objection the Moghul governors had hitherto offered against the English, namely, that if they came the Portuguese would threaten to go and their departure would leave no efficient carrying organization for the export of the cloth and leatherwork of Sind.

Thus the East India Company found itself presented with a very promising commercial opportunity of which it was not slow to take advantage. The Company entered actually into the Sind trade with three objectives, to keep up the supply of cotton cloth for the London market, to obtain indigo, and to get as much as it could of the profits of the carrying trade to the Persian Gulf and down the western coast of India. The Company was engaged in the buying and selling of commodities and was also in fact looking for freights and sought to play the part played by the mercantile marine of later generations. About this period the Company showed a surprising amount of enterprise, as is evidenced from the number of trading stations it established, though not all were long-lived. In 1633 Harihārpūr in Orissa, on the delta of the Mahānadi, had been opened. Dābhol was opened in 1635, the same year as Sind, Rājāpūr in 1637, Armagon in the territory of the Rāja of the Carnatic in 1639 and in 1640 that factory was removed to Madrāspatam, where the castle called Fort St. George was built. The troublous times that followed the organization of Courteen's Association and the difficulties of the Civil War in England brought great embarrassment but somehow or other the Company managed to survive its anxieties, though in respect of some of its factories it suffered casualty. During this troubled time 'voyages were discontinued and in 1649 a resolution was passed to close the factories in the East, recall the Agents of the Company and wind up its business. Happily this resolution was not carried out, the Agents remained mostly at their posts and maintained themselves by private trade till the troubles at home were over. When in 1657 Cromwell renewed the charter, the Company absorbed Courteen's bankrupt Association and resumed its monopoly.'[1] During all this time the Sind factory at Tatta and its outpost at Lāribunder continued to flourish in a modest way. When the factory was disbanded in 1662, the cause of the winding up of its affairs was the lack of profits in trading due to the unsettlement and turmoil

[1] *The English in India*, p. 61.

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in the Moghul dominions during the unrest that coincided with the first five years of Aurangzēb's reign.[1]

In 1758 the East India Company again entered the field of Sind commerce. Conditions then were very different from what they had been in 1635 and 1662. Sind no less than the rest of India was in confusion. The Kalhōro brothers were fighting amongst themselves for a supremacy which fell at length to Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro, and Afghāns, Sikhs and Marāthas were at each other's throats in the plains of the Punjāb. The lure which drew the Company to Sind in the midst of this turmoil was the chance of obtaining a monopoly in saltpetre, with two minor objectives, one to sell woollen goods to the armies of Afghānistān, the peoples of Central Asia and residents of the northern plains of India, and the other to transport some of the excellent cattle of Sind to Bombay for sale. The instructions given by the Court of Directors at Bombay Castle on 18th December 1758 to George Bourchier, charged with the duty of opening trade in Sind, are very clear.[2] Postans has described the opening of the trade relations between the Company and the ruler of Sind. 'The connection', he states, 'of the British Indian government with Sindh had its origin in A.D. 1758 when Ghulām Shāh Kalhōra on the 22nd September of that year granted a perwannah or order to Mr Sumption of the Company's service for the establishment of a factory in the Sindhian territories, with a view to the encouragement of trade between the Indian territories and Sindh: and added to this permission certain

[1] Thus the Sind factory was shut down just as the East India Company itself was entering upon a period of great prosperity. But Sind did nothing to contribute to the result. Marriott has stated, 'The dividends averaged 25 per cent during the years 1657-91 and during the decade 1672-82 were so much higher that in 1683 the market price of the £100 share was £500.' *The English in India*, p. 66.

[2] See Bombay Government Records. Selections, 1802. 'Having appointed you Resident for establishing a factory at Scindy we shall give you the following instructions for the better transacting and managing the Hon'ble Company's affairs there . . . We are in the first place to acquaint you that our Hon'ble masters' principal motive for settling at Scindy is to secure to themselves the whole produce of saltpetre in that country which you will observe is made to them alone in the accompanying translate of the Phirmaund obtained from the Prince. You are therefore carefully to attend to the engrossing of this important article on their account at the most reasonable rate and exert yourself in getting it refined as well as possible for which purpose we deliver you such calterons as can be spared and shall indent to England for others by the first ship (ordered also to make inquiry about chints and cloth made in Sind and send musters) . . . There now being an open trade through Candahār into Persia we have hopes you will be able to dispose of woolen and other staple goods through that channel which you are to encourage all in your power . . . As your supplying us with horned cattle will always be an acceptable service and more particularly at this juncture . . . we would have you provide as many as you can. Bombay Castle 18th December 1758.'

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immunities and exemptions from customs which were in those days considered of great value. . . . The various officers and customs of revenue are directed in these documents to charge no more than one and a half per cent duty above the market price on all goods purchased by the British agent for export and to levy on importation only one half of that paid by other merchants.'[1]

The Company of 1758 was a very different affair from the board of merchants it had been in 1635. It was a powerful corporation supported by the English Parliament, wealthy and well disciplined, with a regular establishment of covenanted officers, possessed of fleets of armed merchantmen manned by soldiers and sailors. The old system of separate voyages had long since given place to the joint-stock company with capital invested in ships and goods and factories. Its shares could be bought and sold in the market. The charter of 1661 had empowered the Company to appoint Governors and other officers for the government of its fortresses in the east, and had authorized it to fit out ships with armament, munitions and crews, had given commercial and civil jurisdiction in its own areas of control, powers to erect fortifications and enlist men to defend them. The charter of 1669 had authorized the Company to take into the service of the King such officers and men as were on the Island of Bombay when it was handed over by the Crown, to maintain justice and enforce order. In 1677 a charter had given the Company power to coin money ; another in 1683 had given the power to raise armed forces, exercise martial law and establish an Admiralty Court. In 1687 the headquarters of the Company had been moved from Surat to Bombay and in the same year the Company obtained what was almost a royal prerogative, the right to set up in Madras a Municipality and a Mayor's Court. In 1707 the conflict of interests brought about by the political animosities of the revolution of 1688 was finally ended by Godolphin's settlement of the dispute between the old East India Company and the new General Society which had drawn its strength from the ranks of the Whigs opposed to the old monopoly and anxious to share in a business that promised enormous profits. With the fusion of the old Company and the General Society in 1708 the old Company, now renewed in life, continued to thrive in prosperity and wealth till the acceptance by Clive in 1765 of the Dīwānī of Bengal changed its nature as a corporation interested almost entirely in the profits of trade. From 1758 till 1775 the Company maintained its factory in Sind, with its head office at Tatta and its outpost in Shāhbunder, and during the reign of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro it was most prosperous. The excesses, however, of the

[1] Postans : *Personal Observations on Sindh*, pp. 283-4.

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insensate and blood-thirsty tyrant Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro, which ended in his deposition and civil war, ruined all prospect of successful commerce and the factory was withdrawn. Thus the East India Company in Sind maintained its establishment there for twenty-seven years in the seventeenth century, and for seventeen years in the eighteenth century. Between the two periods there was a complete blank of ninety-six years. Thus it came about that Robert Sumption, Robert Erskine, Samuel Beaven, whose names are familiar in the second period, seem to have known little or nothing of John Spiller, William Fremlen, Henry Garry and Nicolas Scrivener, whose names are associated with the first factory. Similarly when about 1816 Englishmen again began to visit Sind and learn something of the country and its people, there is no evidence that they were aware of what Robert Erskine and Samuel Beaven had experienced there more than half a century earlier.

## III. *The English in Sind in the seventeenth century, 1635-62*

It is best to let the records speak for themselves. They are certainly arresting and dramatic enough. The scene opens with the intention of the factors at Surat to establish a branch factory in Sind. This was in 1630 before the settlement between the English and the Portuguese concluded by Methwold in 1635 had made peaceful trade possible at Lāribunder. The idea of establishing a factory in Sind had been debated a considerable time before it came to fruition, as we know from the following letter :

> 'Mr. Wildes proposition of setling a residency in Sinda hath bin a dispute of long antiquity and therein such difficultyes doe present themselves as it stands not with your safety to wade farr in that business were it for noe other reason then the unaccessableness of your shipps to command that shoare which indeed was the mainest obstacle why there was not an established factory in that place long.heretofore.'[1]

It apparently was contemplated to make something out of the business of indigo. The unsettled nature of the country between Surat and Sind via Gujārāt is brought out in the letter :

> 'One broker wee sent at Sindee to bring musters (patterns ; Port. mostra) of every severall comoditie made in that place is at last againe returned after much trouble and danger upon the way having been deteined upward of 8 months by reason of warrs and diffirencies betweene the Rajaes through whose country hee was to passe. Two bales indicoe with sundry musters of white cloth wee send upon these shipps ; if they shal be found usefull in England and beneficiall to recompence the expence and charge of settling a factory in that place your Worships may determine and wee shall endeavour itts performance.'[2]

The attempt of the Dutch to secure a share of the Sind trade in 1631 is also commented upon. In that year the ship

[1] *E.F.I.*, 1630-3, p. 123. [2] ibid., p. 35.

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*Brouwershaven* was sent to a place 'called Tata by the inhabitants but named Sindee in the charts'. So states Philip Lukaszoon (Hague Transcripts, series i, vol. ix, No. 318). Foster notes on this:

'In spite of the miserable state of the district owing to famine her cargo was sold at good prices realising a profit of 14,000 gulden. Samples of piece goods, cotton-yarn, saltpetre and an inferior sort of indigo were brought back but the prices were found to be far higher than those usually paid though this might have been due to the inexperience of the Dutch merchants, the prevailing scarcity and the machinations of the Portuguese as there is a considerable trade in such articles from that place to Persia, Arabia, the east coast of Africa, etc. There were many Portuguese residing there who were much annoyed by the arrival of the ship and threatened the Governor that they would depart if the Dutch were permitted to trade.'[1]

The first arrival of the trade mission in December 1635 is graphically described. The company arrived at Lāribunder, were all received there, and thence proceeded to Tatta where they met the chief local officials.

'Yet with help of tyde and oars we arrived at Bundar about midnight where we found divers Portugall frigotts and other vessels of this country some ladeing and some unladeing.

'December 4. The Shāhbunder being come to the customhouse sent his sonne with another principal merchant to the rivers side to welcome me on shore and to accompany me to his father who received mee with all respect and courtesie—ordered one of the best houses in the towne to be prepared for us and had caused 7 or 8 horses to be in readiness to carry us thether. The customhouse is in an open place upon the rivers side and betwixt it and the towne is nigh two flight shott. The towne wel inhabited though ill built, the houses being most of mud supported by such poore tymbers that it is a wonder how they stand; to their room they have *Kita Ventos*[2] (Port. catavento, airshaft: similar contrivances have been described by Lockyer in Account of Trade in India in 1711 as existing in Gombroon). Otherwise the towne is well provided of all necessaries; fish and fruite in abundance and incredibly cheap; henns at four pice each, sheep at a rupee each, rice and butter very cheap and all other victualling. Waxe is scarce to be had and therefore extraordinary deare. The customes and government of the towne are taken and exercised by Āsaph Ckaun's substitutes. There are three or four padrees who have a very meane place to exercise their devotions in.

'December 7. The Shāhbunder sent us for a feast divers goates, henns, meale, flower, rice, butter and sugar' . . . (The company then proceeded) 'to Tatta where Ogga Avezell Bucksee (Aghā Afzal Bakshī) and the chiefest merchants were resident, hiring camells to carry six maunds pucka to Tatta at 1½ rupees per camell' . . . (The company travelled) '5 course by night to a town called Hingōra aequall with that of Bundar Laharee' (and on the 10th December having travelled '20 course' they arrived there towards) 'nine a clock at night', . . . 'being from our passage from the citty gate to our house welcomed even by the poore mechaniques with their accustomed well wishes. Fremlen was troubled with fever every other day.'[3]

The importance of the cloth industry is well brought out in several passages.

[1] *E.F.I.*, 1630-3, p. 207.

[2] These are the wind scoops still in universal use in Lower Sind to catch the south-west wind. They are called 'Mangh' in Sindhi from a fancied resemblance to a goose neck.

[3] *E.F.I.*, 1634-6, pp. 123-5.

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'The nearest adjoyneing citty unto this of Tuttah is Nassurpore being the chiefest place for clotheing in these parts. Report saies near upon 3000 families of weavers inhabite there. The citty itself is as bigg if not greater than this, about 30 course distant from this placce and scituated on the river so that comeinge downe with the current charges of transportacion must be very little. The baftaes there made called joories are in length 17 coveds Tuttah and in breadth ¾ coveds (covado, cubit, was the Portuguese equivalent for the Indian gaz). The cloth is very substantiall, threld even spunne and well woven.'[1]

Sehwan was noted for being the centre of the indigo growing district, but it was also noted as a weaving centre.

'Seahwaun is a cittie seated also on this river and in distance from this place 60 course by land. The chiefest commodity there made and in the adjacent townes is indicoe in forme like to that of Byāna yet nothing so good because in the making they are accustomed to mingle sand with it—About 2000 maunds are yearely made; the wieght there 36 pice per seare though in Tuttha at resale it be weighed at 40 pice per seare. About 1000 households of weavers live there also who make a very good sort of baftaes, shorter then those of Nassurpore 3 Tuttah coveds yet larger 1½ inches . . . Butter and oyle is brought thence hether in great abundance. Ophium is also made there in great quantities. And the greatest part of these commodities is brought hether for sale per via river, which arrive thence commonly in 10 daies.'[2]

Tatta was the chief centre of production and emporium of trade and is thus described:

'Tuttah distant from Bunder Laharee about 28 course by land hath in itself about 3000 families of weavers; yet the greatest part of them make not other than divers sorts of checkered alejaes vendible in Persia and Turkey whether they are in great quantities transported by the merchants of this place to the ports of Congo and Bussara. Others weave diapher clotheing and very few baftaes and those very fine, most part for the citty use, the greate bulke of clotheing coming from the places prementioned. Heere also is a course sort of ginghams which they call seriaes, made for purpose of sailes of double thredd containing in length about 20 coveds Guzzarāt and 19 tussaes Guzzarāt broad—The saltpetre made here is very good but very dear, viz 6 rupees per maund. Cotton yarn also (its quality considered) is 30 or 40 per cent dearer here than in Surat at Ahmedābād and this is due to the fact that the only cotton wool procurable is that brought from Cutch. The merchants of this place that constantly trade to Congo (i.e. Kangun in Persia) and Bussara doe (and that necessarily) provide themselves of indicoe and sugar from Āgra—Their custome is to hire carts from Āgra to Multān—there they imbarque it and with all charges of customes included costs them not above one rupee per maund from thence to Tuttah.'[3]

Fremlen's proposals for the Sind factory were for an establishment of five:

'the chief at Tuttah: one at Nassurpore: one at Seahwaun: one penman and cashier and one packer and keeper of petty expences.'[4]

The complexity of the customs system annoyed and confused the English merchants.

'Heere are also divers petty customes which the merchants in general pay to the Governour of this citty as on all provisions one quarter pice per

[1] *E.F.I.*, 1634-6, pp. 128-9.
[2] ibid., p. 129.
[3] ibid., pp. 130-1.
[4] ibid., p. 132.

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rupee and one seare of the sort invested upon each corwar (kharwar : ass-load) ; on all sorts of cloth brought from other places and sould in this citty the buyer paies ¾ pies per rupy and the seller ¼ pice and many the like, which though we denied to pay and opposing it as much as might bee, yet they to maintayne their customes would not remitt it.'[1]

Sind piecegoods were very popular at this period. In 1636 Fremlen reported to the Company : ' For of all Indian goods none are in such request as those of Synda nor finde more reddie vend as being in regaarde of their substance and coullers most requireable.' Interesting incidents recorded are that the Surgeon of the Company, William Walgrave, was left in Sind to cure the Governor of an infirmity : that there was weekly correspondence by land between Sind and Ahmedābād and that the businesslike arrangements at Lāribunder met with much favour. ' For there the prizes are knowne and sett downe in a ratebooke, not to bee innovated or altered at every covetous or unjust Governor's will.'

In 1639 Henry Bornford made a journey from Āgra to Tatta. It seems to have been largely a commercial reconnaissance. But some of his observations are interesting. He mentions the indigo of Bubak and Sann and calculated that the quantity transported to Tatta did not exceed ' 1000 greate maens '. He mentions the customs charges, 4 rupees to the Governor per maen, 1 rupee to the town, and freight to Tatta ½ rupee. The Sameja between Sehwan and old Hāla are described as a source of danger to traders for their robbing proclivities so that the country is not passable ' without a strong guard '. Moreover the Sameja were at that time (1640) apparently in rebellion against the Moghul Governor to the disturbance of the peace of central Sind. Bornford says that the usual transport of goods down the Indus ' is in flat bottomed boats of a 1000 or 2000 maunds ', and he recommended as the cheapest method of transport that of buying at Lahore a 1000 maund boat and selling it at Tatta at the end of the journey for 250 rupees. Bornford mentions also that the Tatta merchants purchased sugar and sugar candy at Lahore and that narrow joories were made at Darbēlo of lengths similar to those of Nasarpūr.

In 1640 Fremlen noted the adulteration of indigo with sand and earth. The presence of the interlopers (Sir William Courteen's ships) is referred to in a letter dated 5 February 1640, where it is stated that the ' newcome English ' have an intention ' to have five or seven ships sent yearly to employ in trade at Gombroon, Scinda, Mocha, Messliputtun and other ports of commerce and they doubt not but that their King will comply with their desires.'[2]

About this time (1641 onwards) complaints began to be made about the inferior quality of the Sind cloth. Several

[1] *E.F.I.*, 1634-6, pp. 132-3. [2] ibid., 1637-41, p. 237.

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letters deal with this question and give the reason for the deterioration.

'The Sind calicoes were also disappointing in quality and the factors there should be charged to look carefully into the matter and not to trust their brokers. The washers too should be warned not to tatter the cloth or put so much starch into it. Of Sewwan joories 200 pieces may be forwarded every year while those from Nusarpūr will also sell to advantage.'[1] (Letter from Company in London to President and Council at Surat, 29 November 1641.)

'Cannot recommend the Nursapoore joories from Sind: they are thin cloths onlie made fayre to the eye by overmuch starching, sloking and beating.—They are neither good cloth, nor full size. Much prefer the Dorbello sort which comes also from Sind; of these four or five thousand pieces would sell. So would some of them also made in Sevensteere (Sehwan) and the indico of that place would also find vent here if well bought and carefully chosen.'[2] (Letter from the Company to the President and Council at Surat, 27 November 1643.)

'The make of all sorts of cloth in that place doth much degenerate from former times and yearly declines by reason of the ready vend it finds at Bussora which occations many buyers in so much that narrow baftaes of all sorts are lately risen 5 and 6 rupees per corge and yet made worse than ever, the Derbella and Ckandara cloth being now no bet'er than the Nusserpore.'[3]

In 1644 John Spiller spent the hot weather in Upper Sind in an attempt to find how much indigo could be obtained. The letter gives a vivid picture of a poverty-stricken countryside:

'whereof Mr. Spiller hath had this year some experience he having by our order spent the passed rains from May to September in those upper countries of Sehwan or Seuestan and the adjacent places; whither he was sent chiefly to make a full discovery of what indico these parts may produce as also to buy 200 f(ardles) if they had been procurable; but the people are so exceedingly opprest and kept so miserably poor that notwithstanding the soil is fertile and propper and would produce large quantities of good indicoes they have nether the will nor means to manure and sow the ground.—Yet there were no buyers (for the indigo actually bought) than the Tuttah dyers which paid 41½ rupees besides 3 rupees per maund other charges, Spiller bought therefore but a trifling quantity.'[4]

In this year there was an exchange of courtesy between the President of the Sind factory and Prince Dārā Shikōh, 'who hath also expressed how acceptably he esteemed what given him in writing a courteous letter to your President and retributing a jewel of dyamonds and rubies valued at 1000 rupees'.[5]

Kandiāro and Darbēlo were places favoured by the Company's agents in the purchase of cotton goods. The difficulties of trade in Upper Sind apparently as regards financing transactions were, however, greater than in Lower Sind. It is stated that Nasarpūr 'lies very convenient for to supply it uppon all occations; whereas unto Khandierah wee must carry as much as wee intend to invest

[1] *E.F.I.*, 1637-41, p. 312.
[2] ibid., 1642-5, p. 123.
[3] ibid., p. 203.
[4] ibid.
[5] ibid., p. 215.

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with us, the wayes being so obnoxious to dainger : and that too in new rupees, which many times are not heere to be gott, which, allthough so, when come there will not pass untill translated into pice, which last yeare much hindered us.'[1] (21 February 1646.) In 1647 there was much unsettlement in Upper Sind owing to a conflict of authority between Murād Buksh, Sayid Khān and Khān Āzād Khān; for while the customs had been allotted to one of them, local jurisdiction had been given to another. This occasioned complaint in the factors' letters because of the uncertainty over the payment of the transport dues of $2\frac{1}{2}$[2] per cent on the goods in which the Company dealt. ' Yet that unreasonable dutie of Cheheleaheeck (chahil-yak or one fortieth, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent) was alloted the second sonne. Soe here tis hard to judge who is governour (because Kandiāro, Derbellah and Gambutt had been allotted to another son) for Seyed Ckawn beinge by the Kinge (who againe is on his journey for Black (Bālkh)) called unto him, sent for his eldest son to governe Multān in his absence ; who in his place hath left so many governours that hitherto we cannot learne each's authority. These came to receive their rents the same day we came to Derbellah but durst not (go) noe further than Khandearah, the arbaubs and cheife men being all fledd, standing out as rebbells, and soe they saide they would continue untill the governours aforesaid would condiscend to theire demands.'[3]

The events here alluded to appear to be the Emperor's departure on a military expedition against Central Asia, the appointment of Aurangzēb as Governor of Multān, and the grant of authority of various kinds to Aurangzēb's brothers with a multiplicity of tax and rent collectors. The confusion thus resulting caused a rebellion amongst the Zamindārs so that it was impossible to proceed beyond Kandiāro. The working of the Moghul system of administration is also shown in the attempt of the Kōtwāl to charge duty on the cloth sold by the weavers to the English traders, a new demand that caused the factors some anxiety. Other features of the administration that the English regarded with disfavour were the extortion made from well-to-do native traders and the escheat of property on death to the Emperor and the trouble and inconvenience caused by letters of authority to the Company's agents (dastaks) lapsing when a Governor died and having to be renewed by his successor, a process that usually meant delay and the payment of a bribe.

' Bumbaes brother's ill usage ; for its saide the King have fined him 100,000 rupees which is a paying in Tattah ; besides which the Princes and

[1] *E.F.I.*, 1646-50, p. 29.
[2] See Farūkī : *Aurangzēb*, p. 479.
[3] *E.F.I.*, 1646-50, p. 118.

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other great mens fees will carry away at least 50,000 rupees more. This all men exclaime againest, being the worst (they say) of all ill customes that ever came upp yett ; for now if a merchant of fashion or any other that hath meanes dyes his wealth will all be seized on though he hath children and brothers to leave it unto.—The death of the Governor has invahdated the dustack he gave us for freeing us from the irksome duty of water rawdeare ;[1] which now at our coming forth we got reneued, being that some of the officers of the Ghaat began to trouble our boatemen.'[2]

The first passage shows that even at that time big business was in the hands of Hindu traders, some of whom did succeed in acquiring considerable wealth despite the fact that all circumstances were unfavourable to their being allowed to retain it. Bumbae (probably Bambomal in modern parlance) was a Hindu broker or agent with whom the Company had done business in its dealings with the workers in the villages.

The practice of the Company in accepting freights as carriers is shown in the following extract :

'The byah who is next man to the Shāhbunder offered to give three rupees more per load for freight to the King and this was accepted. The goods cannot yet be brought aboard owing to bad weather. Dare not bring the vessel over the bar for fear she wold not be able to pass it again.—Plenty of goods are now being offered for freight and they have already accepted a full lading.'[3]

In 1652 Aurangzēb's time as Governor of Multān came to an end. He had been anxious to improve the landing facilities at the Indus mouth and built a new port as Lāribunder was becoming difficult owing to silting. This new port of Aurangzēb's was called Aurangabunder or Kukrāllo and receives casual mention in a letter of 31 March 1652 :

'The Surat vessel that the Multan Princes men laded for " his new port of Cuckerhallah " was forced to put in here, whereupon the Shāhbunder refused to allowe her to leave promising her master a cargo for Persia instead.'[4]

There was a Moghul mint at Tatta and John Spiller in 1652 used it for the minting of coins required for the Sind trade.

'He (Spiller) leaves here 65,000 abbāsīs on which Mughal Khān has undertaken to levy no more mintage than is paid in Surat or was required by the late Shāhbunder. The money should therefore be taken to Tatta and coined.'[5]

At this period the business of the Company appears to have been flourishing.

'The Company have ordered 6000 pieces of Sind baftas, the greater quantity to be of the Nasarpūr make because that is two yards longer than the Kandiāro cloth. This used to be the case but of the late years the cloth bought at the latter place has been fully 15 yards in length as against 14⅝ at Nasarpūr ; so Spiller has ordered the provision of Kandiāro cloth if possible though last

[1] i.e. rahādārī.
[2] *E.F.I.*, 1646-50, pp. 119-20.
[3] ibid., 1651-4, p. 118.
[4] ibid.
[5] ibid.

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year the factors were not well treated there. The Gambat cloth is about 12½ yards long but two or three inches wider than that of Kandiāro.—A quantity was bought last year for Eastern markets, though he fears that some has been sent home, of which the Company may not approve—Believes that the Sind trade will continue to be prosperous and profitable in spite of the recent intrusion of the Dutch.'[1] From John Spiller at Basra, 17 July 1652 (received overland).

'The Sind factors must be instructed as to an investment for Persia and the purchase of saltpetre and indigo. They are usually supplied with funds from Ahmadābād.'[2] Remembrance left by Merry with President Blackman, 17 January 1652.

The Dutch at this time made another effort to enter the Sind markets and their arrival was greeted with considerable suspicion, which is not surprising considering the fact that the Commonwealth and Holland were then not only bitter trade rivals but engaged in war against each other in Europe.

The bad government of Upper Sind and the corruption of the petty officials receive caustic comment in the records of 1652:

'To write you of the badd government at Bucker, Derbella and those partes, all I cann say wilbe too little and therefore you may imagine it as badd as can be; at least when you come to know that a boat whose dueties to the Prince came to be but ¾ of a rupee should pay 6 rupees officers fees (or rather bribes); which kind of usadge have caused all Multān men to leave the place and alsoe most of the Tahtah men. The usage I found there was that after the broker had gon two months after those officers from one to another about the chellehearh and could gett nohting from them but promises and delayes, yett at the last the Droga of the chelleheark for a bribe of 88 rupees to himselfe and companions; which I wold never have consented to but then he said plainly that if I paid celleheark yet he would have as much for his fees as what you paid him. Soe I thought it was better to save something than nothing at all after soe much trouble and charges; soe gave him his demands but paid no chellaherk or ought elce besides 18 rupees more att Derbella jaggātt to those officers before I could gett thence. Soe you may perceive by the aforementioned what spetiall servants the Prince have in those partes and what pretty doings there is amongst them. As it is now little better here; for at clearing a boat at the gahat there is no small doe besides a great deale of time spent before cann cleare one without paying moree (perhaps a fee for a clearing certificate, muhri). Yett now at least they have given their wrighting we shall pay none; yett every officer wilbe knowne in his place.'[3] From Spiller, 30 September 1656, at Tatta where he was engaged in getting ready for despatch to Surat the cotton goods he had bought amounting to 20,000 pieces.

The extent to which the Balūchī population were outside the effective control of the Moghul officers is shown in a letter of 1656:

'This Bucksee having abused a chiefe man of the Curmuttes or Bulchees he getting free hath raised what force hee could make of his owne men and turned rebell and to his aid hath called anothers Company of Blochees from about Cora Bollah (possibly Ghōrabārī); soe both together make a considerable army. They have not left a towne between Bunder (Lāribandar) and this place unplundered, carrying away cattle, people and all away; and yesterday they robbed a towne on this side of the river; and Yett I see no order

[1] *E.F.I.*, 1651-4, pp. 129-30.
[2] ibid., p. 106.
[3] ibid., 1655-60, p. 81.

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taken to withstand them; soe that if they doe noe more mischief yett it is their owne fault.'[1]

The arbitrary action of the officials is also graphically described by Scrivener in a letter from Nasarpūr dated 5 June 1656. From this letter it appears that even in Moghul days officials were liable at times to be under the thumb of their wives:

'The Tuttah new Governour was arrived before I came thence; whose great state suites not with that citties present poore condition. Besides hee hath brought such an unruley masterless company along with him that the people are already weary of them. But amongst the reste the Governour's wife beares the greatest sway and commands all, the Governour not daring to controule her though shee does abundance of wrong to all trades men etc., in takeing away their goods from them not paying halfe the worth of them. Soe there is a madd kind of government at present in Tattah.'[2]

In the same year the pillaging by the Sameja in Middle Sind was a constant menace to boats passing down the river.

'I have sent for more from Tuttah; which as soone as I heare upon the way shall send what servants and peons I have to encounter it about Saume (Sann) and guard it from the Sumeages (Sumejas) who doe not faile to pilladge such boats as they can muster; but I shall take such care that it may come safe to my hands for besides my owne peons shall write to Sume and Sewanna for a choukee to accompany them.'[3]

In 1659 the troubles and confusion caused by the civil war between Aurangzēb and his brothers for the succession were clearly reflected in the unsettlement in Sind. In that year and the next, Sind was ravaged by famine and plague:

'The "Vine" sailed for Sind and Persia at the end of September 1659. In a letter to the Company which she carried to Gombroon for transmission overland it was stated that the goods to be embarked at Lāribunder would be fewer than usual "being the famine and plague in Scinda is so great that it hath swept away most part of the people and those that are left are few and what they make is bought by the country merchant at any price that causeth them not to care it be good."'[4]

In a letter to the Company, 13 April 1660, it is stated:

'And as wee plead for ourselves soe wee must for our friends of Ahmadāvād and especilly in Scindye. In the former provisions are deare: but in the latter place neaver famine raged worse in any place, the living being hardly able to burye the dead.'[5]

By this time the Company's business was very badly affected by the prevailing unrest, and the head factors at Surat were seriously considering closing down a business in which profits were becoming precarious. The forthcoming termination of the Sind factory is hinted at. Scrivener had been previously warned to improve business, but it appears that the unsettled nature of the country made trade improvement difficult.

1 *E.F.I.*, 1655-60, p. 77.
2 ibid., p. 79.
3 ibid.
4 ibid., pp. 209-10.
5 ibid., pp. 306-7.

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On 20 March 1662 an equally peremptory letter was sent to his successor, William Bell, who was warned to procure a steady supply of saltpetre and calicoes at reasonable prices else the factory would be withdrawn. He was ordered to get in all outstanding debts and to take particular care to keep within his allowance for expenses, as any excess would be charged to himself personally. In a letter dated 16 April 1662 Bell was censured for his extravagance and ordered to leave by the *Vine*, which would arrive in the latter part of October. The *Vine* actually arrived from Basra at Lāri-bunder about October and embarked Bell and the other Sind factors with the saltpetre and calicoes they had provided. She arrived with them at Swally Road on 12 November 1662. Thus ended the first attempt of the East India Company to maintain a trading station in Sind, an experiment that was not to be repeated for another ninety-six years.

## IV. *The English in Sind, 1758-75*

The first English factory in Sind had been maintained during the period of Moghul domination and was disbanded because of the turbulence that accompanied the accession of Aurangzēb to the throne. The second English factory in Sind was established in a period of civil war between Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro and his brothers and was given up because of the commotion consequent on the maladministration of Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro which made utterly impossible any settled trade of the kind the Company desired. For only a short period during Ghulām Shāh's reign can the factory be said to have prospered. But the fault is not to be laid entirely at the door of the Kalhōra who had their own difficulties to contend against, the chief of which was how to shoulder as lightly as possible the Afghān yoke in the shape of the payment of a yearly tribute. Owing to the peculiar nature of the trade in which the Company was engaged, buying saltpetre in Sind and selling woollens to the Pathāns, it was hardly possible to expect anything but obstruction from the Sind reigning house, which sought to pay the tribute partly in woollen goods purchased at low rates from the English merchants and then transferred at a high valuation to the Pathāns in part payment of the tribute. Thus while the Kalhōra wished to buy the woollens to trade them to the Afghāns, the Afghāns naturally preferred to trade direct with the Company through their agents or 'chuppers'. There was thus a continual triangular conflict of interest. The Company preferred dealing with the Pathāns direct through their chuppers, while the Sind Government wished to do nothing to render life in any way easier for the Afghān Government at Kābul which they regarded as a form of unwarranted

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alien oppression. The Kalhōra were bent on keeping the trade inside Sind so as to get control of the woollens themselves and obtain the benefit of the customs and transit dues which were as unreasonable and oppressive as they had been in the Moghul days. On the other hand the Afghāns wished to avoid all trouble with the Sind customs and revenue officers and sought to develop a new route via Karāchi and Mekrān and Kelāt, instead of by the Indus valley, since this had the inestimable advantage to them of avoiding the territory of the Kalhōra and the exactions of a host of minor officials.

It is to this desire on the part of the Afghāns that Karāchi owes its first importance as a port and centre of trade, which was sought to be developed at the expense of Shāhbunder, the port that had displaced the silted up Lāribunder of the first factory's days, and Tatta, whose decline had now definitely set in with the growing difficulties of navigating the Lower Indus. It was hardly likely that with these divergent points of view on the foreign trade the Kalhōra and the Company could agree. The Company was also always being tempted to intervene in matters quite unconnected with trade. Thus Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro desired them to lend ships for an expedition against Cutch and help him to recover his alleged property from a trader in Gujārāt. It says much for the single-minded aim of the Company that these temptations were always resisted and that the Sind factors while continually skating on the thin ice of dangerous political diplomacy yet managed very skilfully to escape disaster. In fact it is impossible not to admire the adroitness with which the Sind factors maintained a complete political neutrality and not to marvel at the patience with which they endured the numerous vexatious obstructions that were always being offered to them in their legitimate business. It is easy to see foreshadowed in the wisdom and discretion of the Company's representatives at Tatta and Shāhbunder in these troubled days of the eighteenth century, the administrative wisdom which stood the Company in such good stead when Clive by assuming the Dīwānī of Bengal changed it from a trading corporation to a political authority exercising sovereign civil rights. In Sind, however, this change never took place. The Company was always very much the timid guest of the Sind Government and very conscious of its weakness as a stranger in a strange land not too ready to welcome it. The headquarters of the Company had long been Bombay. The trading fleet was a splendidly organized and strongly armed force well able to deal with all attackers and more than a match for the pirates which in those days infested the Gujārāt, Kāthiawār and Sind coasts. Business was run on careful and well-thought-out lines,



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accounts were properly maintained, and there were in the Company's transactions all the signs of modern big business. This is a very different picture from that of the earlier Sind factory with its irregular and uncertain voyages, its ill-paid factors largely engaged in private trade, its difficulties of communication, its inadequate protection against its foreign foes and its continued fear of Portuguese and Dutch interference in its activities. From 1758 onwards the Company in Sind had little fear of sea enemies and though it did find internal conditions in Sind as difficult as its predecessor had found them a century before it was in a stronger position to bargain with an unreasonable and capricious native government.

The records of the period 1758-75 are very well represented in the Bombay Record Office. They are as dramatically and graphically written as are the letters of Fremlen, Scrivener and Spiller and like them may be allowed to tell their own story for themselves. Judged by modern standards of comfort and modern standards of public conduct, this period was a rough and inconsiderate epoch that cared little for the woes of the underdog nor allowed much for human miseries and inconvenience. But in this respect the age was typical of the mid-eighteenth century, which though it had evolved a very self-satisfied and satisfying civilization in the favoured and sheltered country of England, as students of Johnson know very well, was not characterized by punctiliousness of etiquette or by softness of manners outside the ranks of the exclusive landed aristocracy who had things very much their own way during their hey-day of predominance. The servants of the Company were plain blunt men accustomed to hard knocks. They thought very little of troubles that to this more sophisticated and genteeler age would seem to interfere very seriously with any enjoyment of life.

The English factory was established in virtue of a parwāna granted on 22 September 1758 by Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro. This parwāna was followed on 11 December 1758 by another order conferring further privileges. The Agent of the Company who carried through the negotiations was Mr Robert Sumption. The contents of these two orders, which appear in the Bombay Government Records, have been described by Postans. He states that the permissions were granted 'with a view to the encouragement of trade between the Indian territories and Sindh'. Added to the general permission were 'certain immunities and exemptions of customs which were in those days considered of great value' and which certainly prove on the part of the Sindhian ruler an earnest desire to cultivate friendly relations with the British in India. The 'various officers and customs of revenue' are directed in these

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documents to charge 'no more than one and a half per cent duty above the market price on all goods purchased by the British agent for export and to levy on importation only one half of that paid by other merchants: no officers, farmers, etc., are to demand more and the English are to be allowed to carry on their trade unmolested.'[1] Additional clauses provided that no duty would be charged on such goods as were returned undisposed of and that all supplies for ships were to be duty free. If Mr Sumption wished to buy or build a house or warehouse at the bunder or at Tattah, the subjects of the Kalhōro prince were to give him all reasonable assistance and the Agent was to have all encouragement for carrying on his trade 'as it will be an advantage to the government', but (a clause that caused much subsequent trouble) 'no other Englishman is to have a house or any encouragement'. It was further provided that 'all unjust duties were to be remitted but those of export were to be paid as usual'. Furthermore, a wish was expressed that Mr Sumption would send someone to choose a suitable place for the erection of a house or factory at Shāhbunder and remission of duties was granted on condition that he took up his abode there. The Company did not like the vagueness of the clause about excluding other English only without exclusion of other Europeans, and not till 1761 was this annoying defect put right. On 22 April 1761 a further parwāna was issued to Mr Erskine when he visited in person the Kalhōro's camp and this was to the effect that all Europeans but the English were excluded from trading with Sind. This second authority granted two other valuable privileges, namely that in the case of shipwreck and loss and damage to goods thereby occasioned the Company was to get the assistance for salvage of the officers of the Sind Government and that wrecked and salvaged goods were to be delivered over to the Resident subject only to payment for salvage.

It will thus be seen that Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro went a long way to accommodate the Company and had the country been really settled and peaceful and had there not been a continual conflict of material interest between the Company, the Sind Government and the Pathān merchants in respect of the import and sale of woollen goods there was no reason why a flourishing trade should not have developed. Unfortunately, however, the woollen trade touched vital political issues and the customs officers of the Sind Government knew only too well how to offer obstruction and intransigeance to the Company's trade in a multitude of details inevitable with so complicated a revenue system as the Kalhōro administration followed. The Sind Prince usually temporized with the Company and supported his

[1] Postans: op. cit., p. 284.

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officers in their obstructive attitude, with the result that despite the words of help continually repeated, the traders themselves found the freedom of trade hampered at every turn. Under Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro these pinpricks and annoyances became so continuous and far-reaching that the Company decided it was no longer worth while maintaining their factory at Tatta, a decision hastened by the lack of order throughout the land caused by the oppression of Sārfarāz Khān which indeed culminated in that tyrant's downfall. The Company records contain an admirable summary of the causes which led to the withdrawal of the factory in 1775. This is an account of trading conditions in Sind written by Mr Callendar and available in the archives of the Bombay Government. Mr Callendar's narrative is so illuminating and so well expressed that there is every justification for quoting it extensively.

'While the Mogul's government flourished Scindy was a province of the Empire and being considered as an Honorary appointment was annually bestowed on some person of rank whose expences civil and military generally exceeded the revenues. Tattah the capital was then a place of great opulence and the residence of a number of rich merchants and shroffs who from their situations and the encouragement always given to commerce by the court of Delhy carried on a very lucrative trade to the heart of the Empire . . .

'Hitherto there had been no call for woollens in this country tho sometimes brought by the Europeans factors who had occasionally resided both under the latter part of the Empire and during the Government of Nādir Shāh. The first demand was for the army of Achmet Shāh and he was long annually supplied by his own officers under the appealation of Chuppers who were sent here for provideing all sorts of necessaries for the army and the cloth was usually cut up into coats etc. in Tattah. There was besides a trade opened to the more northern provinces where small quantities of woollens were carried and hence arose the hopes of the company as it seemed a channel that might be improved. The attention of Achmet Shāh being most employed abroad the Princes of Scindy gradually acquired more independance and as the choppers sent here brought with them the authority of their master they consequently became highly disagreeable to the Prince more especially as everything they purchased and carried back was free of all duties or impositions . . .

'The then Prince Gulām Shāh at least succeeded in almost every attempt. He reduced the tribute to about eleven lacks, the purchases for the choppers were much under his direction and haveing erected forts and collected a little fleet he treated the king towards the end of his reign with the most indolent neglect and exercised every oppression on his own subjects . . .

'There is no trade now carried on from any part of Hindostān, no consumption of woollens in Scindy and the inducement to carry them to the northern provinces must depend on the Patān to secure the merchants from oppressions and preserve order and tranquility in the countries they necessarily pass into . . .

'Its chief political connections are with the Patān and Siccs. With the latter the Prince under sanction of the King keeps on tolerable terms and that tributary to the former, I have already observed that he treats his authority with little respect; of this I cannot give a stronger instance than in the present chopper who has now been in Tattah near four months in a manner confined to his house and excluded from all kind of community with any persons in the place except two or three dellāls who are tutored by the government and whatever goods he has provided have been put upon

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him at an advance of 50 per cent, a great falling off from the choppers in the times of Nādir Shāh and Achmet Shāh . . .

'Scindy tho a small track of country is naturally fertile and was rich and populous when it unfortunately fell under the government of this family about 35 years agoe, but has gradually declined ever since . . .

'In proof of this I will mention three circumstances in point without recurring further back than when the Company established their factory in 1758 at that time there were about thirty reputable houses of Multān merchants in Tattah and some from Surat; at present there are none from Surat and but one Multān house of any credit; at that time there were from three to four hundred freight bales of raw silk imported annually but during the four years that I have been here the import has not exceeded 40 bales on a medium; at that time the current rupee which is an immaginary coin of a fixt value, bore in proportion to the silver rupee at the rate of about 120 current to 100 silver, but at present it bears the proportion of 145 current to 100 silver and such is the scarcity of silver that any sudden demand in Tattah for but twenty thousand rupees would certainly raise it above 150.

'There used to be a very considerable trade carried on between this and Siccārpore from whence a number of merchants came annually bringing with them both money and other goods, such as putchuck, ring shawls etc., and carrying back quantities of the different kinds of imported merchandize which were from thence distributed in to the internal provinces; but such have been the oppressions of this government and vexatious impositions and delays put upon them by the farmers of taxes in the different districts that for the last eight or ten years hardly any have ventured down and the small remains of this trade that has not been entirely taken a different cource now centers at Crotchy where there rrout to and from is pretty clear of the Princes dominions. As an instance of their oppression I will mention the Patān traders who are particularly protected by the court of Candahār and where the duties payable by them to the Prince were settled at 2½ per cent on all purchases; but what from the pernicious practice of farming the right of delallage and a collusion between the government farmers and Delools I am well assured that none of them gett off clear in one day or other for less than 15 per cent.'[1]

These arguments were accepted by the Directors of the Company as so conclusive that they decided to withdraw the factory, a decision taken on 24 October 1775.

'Scindy. Resolutions taken to withdraw the factory from thence. 24th October 1775.

'Reperused the letters lately arrived from the Resident at Scindy which advised of a most extrordinary demand made by the Prince that 50 per cent above the usual sale price should be charged for his emolument on all woollens sold to the King of Candahār's Chupper and that upon the resident rejecting so dishonourable a proposal that Prince had laid a total prohibition on the sale of woollens at our Factory which has now been continued for some months. Upon this we must remark that we have before experienced some Instances of the Princes Arbitrary Disposition and of the little Respect he entertains for the Hon'ble Company, and it appears that by his Tyranny and oppression he has entirely ruined the trade of that Country so that We have no Prospect of continuing a settlement any longer on his Dominions with any degree of credit or advantage; therefore the honble Company have been pleased to leave this point to our Discretion by the 32 paragraph of their commands dated 6th April 1770. It is therefore unanimously AGREED to withdraw their Factory and Effects from Scindy which the Resident must be directed to effect with Proper Caution and Secresy lest the Prince should make any Efforts to detain him.'[2]

[1] *P.D.D.*, 1775, 68A, pp. 777-86.
[2] ibid., p. 742.

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In view of this general explanation the following extracts from the Company's records in the Bombay Record Office will be found readily intelligible.

The confusion in Sind and the civil war between Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro and his brothers are brought out in a letter from Bombay Castle to the Company in London dated 8 April 1758 :

'Your commands of the 4th May came duly to hand and had been immediately put in execution had not the whole Principality of Scindy been in the utmost confusion from the several late revolutions which have happened in a very short time viz. the Patāns in their way to Delhi subdued it and made it tributary to them, as it had been to the Persians ever since Nādir Shāw's conquest of the Mogul Empire. The then reigning prince being very old, died with the fatigue and his eldest son, Mahomed Yārr Cāūn succeeded him, who proved a vile tyrant and was deposed but not killed by one of his brothers called Golām Shāw who began his reign happily and seemed to promise to make a good prince. But there was another younger brother Utthār Cāūn by name who was in the Patāns hands as an hostage. This man by large promises to the Patān King and his ministers obtained their grant for the Government and was just arrived in Scindy when your Honours orders were received, and the country in the utmost confusion at which time there was no government settled.——But we determined to try to execute your commands as soon as it was possible for which reason we desired the President who had traded to that country many years before he came to Bombay to get the best information he could as he has had a house and servants there ever since he has presided here and he is much better acquainted with the trade of that country than anybody at this place. He acquainted us that he had a very clever man there one Mr. Robert Sumption who had seoured his money and effects in all these revolutions and to who he would give orders when the government is settled to make the desired agreement with the government.'[1]

The capacity of Mr Sumption, whom it was proposed to depute as negotiator, is dwelt upon :

'He begs leave to assure honours that he does not know another so capable a man for such an undertaking as he not only talks both the country and Persian languages but has a very good interest in the country.'[2]

The requirements of the factory in the way of houses and the protection of an armed guard are emphasized, the prevalence of piracy on the Sind coast and the fondness of Mīr Muhammad Kalhōro for brass cannon are noted :

'The Honourable Company must have two good strong houses, one at Tattah and one Aurungabunder and a subaltern with 25 or 30 men may be sufficient for preventing being robbed, and securing the boats in going and coming from ships at the bar which is greatly infested by the Gigas robbers ; indeed the whole coast are rogues on both sides to the eastward and westward as to the other manufactures of the country we do not think they will answer as they have their cotton from other countries, which of course must make them dear.—Lead is in so little demand that for some years past that what went there four or five years ago is all returned to Bombay. The old deceased prince was fond of brass cannon ; but this is at an end nor do they want any warlike stores.'[3]

1 *S.P.D.D.*, 1758, No. 4, p. 77. 2 ibid. 3 ibid., pp. 78-9.

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The firmān dated 22 September 1758, granting privileges to the Company and excluding all Englishmen except the Resident from trade in Sind, was addressed to officials in a large number of places, mostly in the lower part of Sind :

'The phirmaund dated 18th Moharum or 22nd September 1758 is addressed to various officers in different parts of Sind as to the privileges to be accorded the Company. The translation of the phirmaund [illegible] "Be it known to all Commanders, officers, Facquirs, Farmers and Inhabitants of Darat, Lāree Bunder, Aurungabunder, Carāchee, Dharājah, Chaotra, Ma[illegible] Nakass, Barbundie, Galabajur, Agar Goozar Rājah Gunt, Tōlubar, Sarkar, Chacha gom, Chācar Hāllow, Nasarpoor, Holicandy, Sarkār Sovistān, Coodabāge, Sarkār Nohorey Abey etc., and places belonging to Sarkār."[1]

A letter dated 18 December 1758 gave instructions to Mr George Bourchier about the opening of the factory. Its principal business was to obtain a monopoly of saltpetre and the President and Council were not satisfied with the wording of the firmān dated 22 September 1758. The latter also informed the Resident of the appointment of Mr Samuel Beaven. 'As we could not spare any Covenanted servant we permitted him to employ Mr Samuel Beaven at the usual allowance of Rs. 30 per month, who was very deserving and a qualified person and who had for some time assisted Mr Sumption in transacting the President's business.' From this it may be inferred that the President, Mr Bourchier, who had been himself in Sind, had engaged there in private trade, as may also be inferred from the account of Mr Sumption, and that Mr Beaven had been a kind of clerk to them. Actually Mr Beaven, who succeeded as Resident when Robert Erskine had to leave Sind in ill-health in 1764, was objected to by Mr John Halsey, who appears to have been a regular Covenanted servant and did not like being passed over in favour of Mr Beaven.

The unsatisfactory arrangement for the supply of Sepoys from Sind to Bombay is noted in a letter dated 12 October 1759 to Mr Beaven. The system seems to have been in the hands of a contractor to whom money was advanced, doubtless to make payment to the sepoys. It is not known what sort of men were the sepoys objected to in Bombay and what their defects were. As Sindhi Muhammadans are notoriously unhappy away from Sind, it was perhaps their fondness for desertion that made them unsuitable in Bombay. The political condition of Sind is described in a letter of 25 January 1759, where it is stated that the disagreement between Ghulām Shāh and his brothers was settled. This must refer to the short-lived arrangement by which Ghulām Shāh, Muhammad Yār Ḳhān and Uttār Khān had the land divided between them, a state of affairs that lasted four months only.

[1] *S.P.D.D.*, 1758, p. 187.

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'In a letter of the 25 of January the Resident reported that the disputes between the Prince and his brothers were accommodated and the government of the country divided among them; that he had waited on the Prince who gave him the strongest assurances of friendship and assistance and very readily acquiesced to the alteration in the phirmaund and wanted him to build one Factory at Goodjee which he had made the Bunder and where he had given him perwānnas to land all goods custom free.'[1]

The Company's arrangements for buildings form the subject of several letters. In one dated 14 March 1759 the Resident reported that

'he had hired a house at Tattah and that the mud building at Shāw bander would soon be habitable and the perwānna for importing goods there custom free would get altered as soon as possible; our established companies of sepoys be compleated so that the present twenty companies be reduced to eight companies of the established number and the supernumerary officers whose pay amounts to sixteen thousand (16,000) rupees per annum be paid off.'[2]

The Resident was dissatisfied with the treatment accorded him by the Kalhōro Prince:

'The very unjustifiable treatment the Resident at Scindy has received from the Prince and his officers in his sending him to Court and his officers forcibly carrying our Vakeel thither, also in their refusing pilots till too late to carry the Tartar over the bar engaged the attention of the Government who approved the whole of the Resident's conduct especially his refusing to go to the Prince or to send the Vackeel and protesting against his officers for compelling him and We think the Resident has been so extremely illused in the above Instances that We concur in opinion with him that unless he obtains a satisfactory answer from the Prince, is sent for in a creditable manner and has all reasonable requests granted it will be improper and in vain to make any further attempts to establish a Factory in his Country on so extremely precarious a footing or till We can bring the Prince to a proper Way of thinking.'[3]

The letters from Sind at the end of 1759 once more depict the confusion and civil commotion prevalent, which proves that the arrangement between the three Kalhōra brothers had a very short life:

'Letter from Scindy dated 10th December 1759 received by petitioner from Mr. Beaven states:

'Prince Gulām Shāh had had a second action with his rival brothers whose army amounted to 10,000 men of different tribes and was totally defeated, many principal officers being killed and 3,000 private men which success of Gulām Shāh was entirely imputed to his bravery as he often rallied his men in person and led them on till the enemy was routed. He was slightly wounded and his brothers fled to northward. That he had ravaged the country and made a considerable booty and was returned to Hālla chand, his future residence, where the young prince with some of his father's wives were gone from Goodjee Fort. That the Marātta agents had finished their treaty and presented the Prince with a sannud from the Government of Scind, with horse, zigar etc., for which public rejoicings were made . . . That Multān's letters mentioned the Pattāns being in numerous bodies in that province and daily expected an action with the Marāttas which

1 *Compilation in Extracts by Mr Warden*, 1754-77, pp. 23-4.
2 ibid., 1754-77, pp. 30-1.
3 ibid., 1756-77, pp. 60-1.

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he hoped would end in favour of the former when Gulām Shāh would undoubtedly acknowledge their former authority and trading privileges there.'[1]

The presence of the Marāthas and the likelihood of fighting between them and the Afghāns are topics dealt with in a letter from Scindy dated 16 December 1759 :

'Came in a dingey letter from Mr. Samuel Beaven dated Tattah 25th October advising that the Patāns had slipped by the Marāttas into Sheā Poer near Scindy whence they threatened a visit. That Uttār Chān had again collected fresh troops among the Dāūd Poots and was determined to risque another battle for that government.'[2]

A most illuminating report from Mr Robert Erskine, the Resident, dated 14 November 1760, throws much light on trading conditions in Sind at this period and covers the main items of the Company's business :

'From my own observation and knowledge and the best information I have otherwise been able to procure I am well satisfied that was Scindy under so good and quiet a government and as plentiful in grain and most other necessaries of life as it ever was till about the year 1757 it must prove an advantageous settlement to the Honble Company as well on account the vend of woolens and purchase of saltpetre.——Woolens were very little known or sought after either in Scindy or the more northern provinces till Nādir Shāw's conquest of India in 1740 and from that time till the years 1751 and 52 the demand was still very trifling when the Pattāns or inhabitants of Candahār making an inroad to Delhi subjected and made tributary the Province of Scindy as well as those of Lahor and Multān which continued under their sovereignty and annually paid tribute till about 1757. During these 5 or 6 years it was that the largest quantity of woolens were ever disposed of in Scindy for the Persian chuppers who came down to receive the tribute finding they could only procure woolens cheaper in Scindy than they had probably been before supplied with either through Persia or from the Caspian Sea by the way of Mesched brought down large commissions from the King of Candahār and his principal officers for woolens and other articles in which great part of the tribute was often invested (The letter goes on to describe the practice of Mr Sumption as regards this business) . . . The vend of woolens for Scindy and even the adjacent provinces of Multān and Lahor has hitherto been very trifling and I believe never exceed from 5 to 10,000 rupees in one year, of which the greatest part was purchased by the Multān Merchants agents—(He then proposes a method of carrying on the woollen trade) . . . Bumba Rūpchand who has been long employed by Mr. Sumption as his vakeel or broker and was continued as such by Mr. George Bouchier and myself I have found a very useful, capable and honest man and he only receives one per cent vakeelage on goods bought and sold. He has a good deal of influence and weight with the Multānee's agents and will contract to take off about 100 bales of woolens annually, the colours and sortments to be indented for by him. (The arrangement was that one half of the price was to be paid within six months after the arrival of the goods at any of the Company's factories and the other half within the year)——In regard to other staples as iron, lead, and steel, considerable quantities of which were formerly taken by the present prince's father and eldest brother, who were fond of making arms of different kinds and keeping by them a large store of these articles as well as keeping their ships and vessels in repair, any certain vend for them is now very precarious.—As to saltpetre—the largest quantity supposed procurable in the whole province of Scindy in a year, provided the country is quiet under an easy government and the Honble Company's exclusive right to this article fully enforced, which it has never

[1] *P.D.D.*, 33 of 1759, p. 742. [2] ibid., p. 784.

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yet been, is from 5 to 10,000 pucca maunds crude, which would produce according to its goodness 2 to 4 or 5,000 pucca maunds refined salt petre.—The only people who have hitherto traded in this article and gone up country to make it are Moormin much like the Bōrahs here and about Surat; but to contract with or advance the Hon. Company's money to these people for this article seems to me improdent few or none of them being people of credit or substance nor will any other substantial merchant be security for them. Some of them bring down 1,500, some 1,000, 800 or 500 pucca maunds of crude salt petre according to their circumstances, which is generally much adulterated—and it is feared they will still continue to adulterate the crude salt petre notwithstanding all the care that could be taken.—(He states that to deal with the quantity at least 20 or 25 large iron furnaces or coppers would be wanted and from 25 to 40 part refiners part labourers, 4 or 5 writers and 8 or 10 sepoys in constant pay at least for 8 months in the year.)—This with the expence of firewood and customs, etc., charges bringing down to Shāh Bunder is the whole cost of the crude saltpetre, it being extracted from the earth on which towns or villages formerly stood or where any number of men and cattle have been encamped for any considerable time (and after plentiful rain, a larger quantity is always procurable than after a dry season)—(He then refers to the risk of the trade and the difficulties of supervision)—the places where the saltpetre is made being 40, 60 and even some of them 100 miles from Tattah and at a great distance from each other.—So long as Gulām Shāh remains in possession of Scindy and has such counsellors about him as at present I have little hopes of a currency being given to the Honble Company's business or that weight and credit maintained which they have at all other factories.' From Public Department Diary 35, 1760, pp. 885-94.

Letters of 1760 point out the need for an armed naval force for the protection of the Company's trade, the poor accommodation at Shāhbunder and breach of the Company's saltpetre monopoly. The last was an important matter. The Company's chief interest in Sind was to obtain saltpetre as sole buyers and sole exporters: all native merchants were supposed to deal through the Company and all transport of the commodity was to be carried on in Company's ships. The Sind Government was, however, never very averse from allowing saltpetre 'interlopers' to do business if it profited the Government to allow this.

'An agent of the Imaum of Muscāt who has now got two large vessels lying at Carrāchee about 15 or 20 leagues to the westwards is purchasing as I hear, the bad unrefined sort (of saltpetre)—and as Gulām Shāh and the Imaums are on very good terms I doubt it will be very difficult to prevent it . . .'

'Notwithstanding your perwānna that the Honble English Company should alone purchase and export saltpetre from your country, the Porebunder and other merchants at Shāhbunder publickly purchase and export it without the least impediment from your officers and even more so since the granting of that perwānna than before.'[1]

Repairs to the Tatta house receive notice in a letter of 1760, in which complaint is made of the paucity of skilled workmen available in Sind.

'I shall not think of building any other Factory or putting the Honble Company to any extraordinary expence till your Hon's further orders on that head but hope you will permit of my making this House a little more

[1] *S.I.L.B.*, No. 14 of 1760, p. 262.

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comfortable and convenient so as to answer all purposes for a year or two—For this purpose the paving the floor with bricks which can be done here is very necessary as also plank and oyster shells sufficient for 10 or 12 windows with a couple of carpenters to make them which I hope your Honour etc. will please to spare from Bombay, the materials not being procurable here and the workmen very ignorant.'[1]

The poor financial status of the Pathān merchants who came to buy woollens is commented upon :

'The Patān Merchants are people of small substance or credit and besides their jealousy of the Prince and uncertainty when their own King's authority may be firmly settled here prevents them from making purchases here at present.'[2]

Sind politics in 1760 were involved, and the Resident was doubtful of the propriety of calling on the Sind Prince till he was more firmly established on his throne—an attitude which led to some unpleasantness. At this time Ghulām Shāh had quarrelled with Cutch and proposed to lead an expedition against the country. He was also at loggerheads with the Jām (probably a petty Sammo chief of Lower Sind—or the Jām of Kukrāllo) who had some claim apparently to port dues at the port :

'Since my last he has quarrelled with the Cutch Rājah and is now carrying things to the last extremity against the Jhām who will probably not sit quiet much longer and see himself dispossessed of everything.'

'As the late Honble Resident directed me to make the Jhām a present on his own account for his civility and kindness to the deceased Mr. Bourchier I was under a necessity of making some small present to his Duāns and Officers of perpets amounting to about 35 rupees . . . When ships arrive at this bar they always pay anchorage 25 rupees to the Jhām though this is the same for one as for many.'[3]

The need felt by the Company's officers to keep on good terms with the Sind officials led to the giving of presents and inducements to the farmers of the customs, the customs officers and the clerks employed. Without these illegal gratifications or (to put it more politely) regular tips the Company's business would have been hampered more than it was already.

'I have also been under a necessity of presenting the Farmer of the Customs Officers and Writers with about 1½ piece of scarlet perpets, ½ piece of popinjae perpets etc., amounting in all to about 60 rupees, which is I find a custom long since introduced by Mr. Sumption of making a great number of small presents on the import of a considerable quantity of goods to all the officers of the customs both at Tatta and Aurangabander for speedily dispatching his business.'[4]

There were further attempts made to disregard the Company's saltpetre monopoly when an Agent of the Imām of Muscāt brought two large vessels 'lying at Karachi about 15 or 20 leagues to the westward and purchasing as I hear (says the Resident) and as Gulām Shāh and the Imāms are on very good terms I doubt it will be very

[1] *S.I.L.B.*, No. 14 of 1760, p. 91.
[2] ibid.
[3] ibid., pp. 91-2.
[4] ibid., p. 92.

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difficult to prevent it '. The same year there is mention of a minor item of the Company's trade—the export of cattle to Bombay.

'Enclosed is an account of the cost and charges on 132 head of cattle now shipped on board the Success and Dispatch amounting to Nādir Shāh rupees 887 rupees 1 quarter 75 reas which are all I have been able to procure since the Swallow's departure.' Letter from Robert Erskine at Shāhbunder 18 March 1760.[1]

The trouble due to Mr Erskine's failure to call on the Prince and pay, as Ghulām Shāh expected, the respect due to him, was now boiling to a head. Ghulām Shāh at this time was endeavouring to use the Company's power to recover for him property of his he alleged to be with one Alī Nawāz Khān at Surat. Mr Erskine was rightly disinclined to interfere in a private matter of this kind which would not only have put the Company in a false position with the Sind Government but would have conflicted with the Company's declared intention to confine themselves strictly to their trading business. But this was not an argument that made much appeal to Ghulām Shāh, who having granted the Company privileges in Sind wished for a *quid pro quo* outside the ordinary agreement. Ghulām Shāh used his powers to obstruct the Company's business and the Company was called upon to support the protests of the Resident and address a letter of remonstrance to Ghulām Shāh.

In subsequent letters of the same year the Resident complained of ill treatment by the Prince in forcing him to wait on him and endeavouring to use him to recover some property of his which he alleged was with 'Alī Novās Cāūn' at Surat (a matter in which the Company would not interfere causing still further tension to the Sind factors). The property the Prince wanted brought to him is described in a letter of the Princes as the "sum of 20,000 rupees ready money, seven clocks or watches besides Georgian slaves and Hopshee slave girls and several piece goods and other parcells etc". In an arzee to the Prince on this matter Mr Erskine complained:

'My boats in which I was coming to Tatta myself when sick are stopt at Shāhgur, sometimes half an hour, for leave to pass altho they have the English colours and a small boat of my own in which some necessaires and medicines were coming to me from Shāhbunder was stopt and not suffered to come up at all so that I am obliged to be at the expence of camels to bring such things as I want overland. As I was going up to our old factory at Islāmgur/ Aurangabunder/ in the Honble Company's Gallivat I was publicly stopt at Shāhgur and threatened to be fired on if I proceeded.'[2]

The condition of the house at Shāhbunder and the ill-health of the Company's servants in their unhealthy surroundings at the port are mentioned in letters of this time:

'That on his arrival he found the officer, serjeant, and some more of

[1] *S.I.L.B.*, No. 14 of 1760, p. 94. [2] ibid., p. 281.

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the detachment much out of order and believed if they remained there till the end of the season, few of them would survive, the house being situated in a low, damp soil, surrounded by two branches of the river which when dry seemed crusted with salt and being chiefly composed of mud together with the bad workmanship it was but just habitable and as the roof was only rafters and matts covered with mud the warehouses were very improper to lodge valuable goods in, especially woolens which would infallible receive damp. That the late Resident had been obliged to run up a temporary building which would have served as outhouses to a new factory but on account of its unhealthy situation, the revolution of affairs etc., . . . it would certainly prove a graveyard to such as might be destined to reside there.'

'The house at Shāhbunder is in pretty good condition except two of the rooms which must be new roofed, the beams being rotten and some of them broke. The warehouses are quite dry and free from damp and a little expence will repair the damage done to the saltpetre houses.'[1]

The Resident found it very troublesome to make the tiring journey between the anchorage and Shāhbunder without proper transport and asked to be allowed to keep a horse and a pair of oxen to improve his mobility :

'I must now beg that your Honour etc., will please to allow me the expences of keeping a horse and pair of oxen which will amount to about 30 rupees per month and are very necessary as the gāāt or place where boats lay is 4 or 5 miles from hence; it will bc mueh more expeditious in going and coming to and from Shāhbunder on emergent occasions than flat bottomed boats which are both tedious and expensive.'[2]

Political affairs were still most unsettled. The Afghān and Marātha armies were threatening each other in the Punjāb and Uttār Khān was preparing to attack Ghulām Shāh once more in an attempt to regain the throne of Sind.

'The Pattān and Marātta armies continue near each other but we have not yet heard of any decisive action or accommodation though it is probable the Pattāns will be obliged to retire. Various reports prevail about Uthār Cāūn's coming against Gulām Shāh again but none of them are to be depended on, and till some of these brothers is sole possessor of Scindy and the others cut off there is little likelihood of a settled government or trade flourishing again and Gulām Shāh has certainly some design upon Cutch but from his bad government and disgusting severall of his principal officers it looks as if his reign would be short.'[3]

The Company did its business through Hindu agents or brokers, several of whom are mentioned in the records. The following passage shows that three kinds of rupees were in circulation in Sind, that there was trade in patchuck, an article that was required for the China market, and that there was an exchange of woollens for patchuck :

'Scindy October, Friday 22nd 1762.

'Received advice from Bamba at Tattah that Nevildāss being about to contract with the owner of a dingey for the freight of his putchuck from Carrāchee to Bombay he had offered him 67 curr. rs. which at the present wattan is about 52½ N. Rs.[4] per pure maund and Nevildāss had accepted it. That it was to be weighed off and delivered at Tattah Gaat and payable in

[1] *S.I.L.B.*, No. 14 of 1760, p. 281.
[2] ibid.
[3] ibid., p. 383.
[4] i.e. Nādir Shāh rupees.

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one month's time from the 20th instant, but that Nevildāss in consequence of this contract had agreed on his part to take off 300 pieces Scarlet Perpets at 34 Ticca rupees a piece within one month of their arrival at the Factory at Tattah.'

The existence of pirates on the Sind coast caused continual anxiety to shippers, but the Company's ships were so well armed and manned that the average small piratical dhow was no match for them.

'The Swallow Gallivat, luggage boat and small dingey returned with a prize dingey between forty and fifty candies burthen and 30 prisoners, 6 of whom are wounded, as is also one of the Bombay sepoys, but the last very slightly. Mr. Maughan reports that on the 27th at night it having got down to the mouth of the river he observed two small dingeys laying to the N. ward of the bar which he took to be Coolies or Sanganians; that with the night's ebb he stood over the barr and endeavouring to get as near them as possible in the dark keeping to the southward of them to prevent their standing that way as they usually do when chased, that about break of day yesterday he found himself about 2 miles distant from one of them in 6 fathoms of water and being quite calm he turned his people to the oars and got up with her about 10 in the forenoon when he began to fire at her; that she returned his fire with a small swivel gun 3 or 4 times and sepoys continued flourishing their swords and firing their matchlocks by which one of the Bombay sepoys was slightly wounded in the hand but the luggage boat coming up shortly after and the dingeys hallyards being shot away from her people all except the wounded leapt overboard and begged to be taken up when he took possession of her about a quarter past eleven and brought her up; that the other dingey was smaller and was further out when he came in sight and had immediately taken to her oars and made off and that he supposed the prize would have done likewise but she had no oars on board.

'29th December 1762. The Nacōdah and pilot of the prize (the former of whom is wounded in both the arms) being examined inform us that they belong to Sciad Cāūn Tahn of Novabunder a small place between Diū and Jafferābād who has many piratical vessels abroad; that they had left that place in company with the dingey that escaped about 20 days ago and were proceeding towards Muscāt with the same intentions but meeting with a hard gale of wind in which the other dingey sprung her mast they had fallen in with the coast only the day before they were taken—that they freely confessed themselves robbers but begged for mercy that they might either be sent to Bombay or Porebunder and not be delivered up to the Seroys[1] who they feared would use them cruelly or put them all to death.'

29th December 1762.

There was some conflict of opinion with the Kalhōro prince about the handing over of the pirate prisoners to him. The Resident, true to the policy of the Company to interfere as little as possible in political matters, preferred to allow the prisoners to return to their homes for fear of reprisals if they were punished unduly or put to death:

'Maboob the Killedār of Shāh Gur sending to demand the prisoners in consequence of the Prince's letter Mr. Erskine acquainted him that they were not Okays[2] as the Prince supposed but Cooleys who inhabited near Diū; that it was certain they justly deserved death but as it was not usual with us to put people to death after they had begged their lives and as these cooleys had many other small vessels abroad the executing their companions might

[1] i.e. Sirāīs.

[2] Perhaps from 'Ōkha'.

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exasperate them so as to revenge their deaths by murdereing the crews of any dingeys or other vessels not only belonging to the English but also to the Prince's subjects that might fall into their hands which hitherto they had not practised. For these reasons Mr. Erskine hoped that the Prince would not insist on their being delivered up but permitted to return to their own country.

In a letter dated 9 January 1762 Mr Samuel Beaven 'was appointed Assistant Resident at Scindy with a sallary of two hundred pounds per annum in lieu of all allowances whatsoever'. The same letter also records the fact that, the Cutch Rāja having requested by letter to the Hon. President that a surgeon might be sent to him, 'Mr. John Weir proceeds on this ship accordingly and in order to prevent the Prince having any jealousy you are to represent the affair in a suitable manner to him and take proper measures for conveying Mr. Weir to the Rājah; he is furnished with a proper sort of medicines, such parts of which as he does not use he will send to you.'

The incident required the greatest care and diplomacy and gave the Resident much trouble. The Kalhōro Prince was not willing to do anything to help the Rāja of Cutch and did not see why the doctor should be brought to a Sind port in order to cure his enemy. Instead he said that he was ill and needed the doctor himself and for fear of complications the doctor was sent first to the Sind court, where he was kept for a long time and most unwillingly allowed to depart in the end.

The inability of Sind to provide suitable artisans for working on the Company's buildings and warehouses is shown by the following:

'30th January 1762. We also return the Bombay carpenters sent to this settlement in April 1760. They have their advance of 4 rupees per month to the 8th instant and provisions to the 31st. As a carpenter and smith are absolutely necessary about the Factory for particular services we shall entertain two country ones on the most reasonable terms possible.'

In a letter dated 28 January 1763 the Resident mentions difficulties in the woollen cloth trade with Afghānistān because of imports of woollens from Russia.

The embarrassment caused by the sending of Mr Weir, the Surgeon, is mentioned in a letter dated 10 February 1763. Mr Weir, like a true servant of the Company, desired payment for his services in trading privileges and concessions, a request which in its turn must have embarrassed Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro.

About this time the Company began to be hampered by the delays and difficulties caused it by Gulābrai, the Hindu Āmil Custom Master at Tatta, who appears to have been extremely expert in devising ways of hindering business. It is not clear whether this was due to his own initiative or whether he was acting under the orders of Ghulām Shāh.

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'Gulābroy the Custom Master at Tattah having of late frequently impeded our business there by delaying to give the usual dispatch to boats with putchuck, crude salt petre etc., from the Gāāt and put off settling the Customs Accounts since his administration under pretence of undue customs and demands on the crude salt petre and the workmen employed in extracting the same seemingly with a view to create some troublesome disputes hereafter and having now detained a boat with bricks and chunam coming from thence for the use of the house at Aurangabander we resolved that Mr. Beaven should proceed thither with the Vakeel to endeavour to settle these points with him in an amicable manner and give that currency to the Salt Petre etc., business which our perwāns entitle us to.'

On 12 November 1763 the Swallow Gallivat was wrecked on the Jooa Bar.

'On 12th November 1763 it was reported that the Swallow Gallivat stranded on Jooa Barr and tho all the assistance that could there be procured of fishing dingeys and other boats which Sinah the Jemmedār of Shāhbunder carried with him from thence was afforded her she could not be got afloat again but her masts, yards, sails, rigging, guns and arms have all been saved and brought up to the factory ; only her ammunition and provisions and most of her shot were lost with the hull which there is now hardly any hopes of saving.'

The Kalhōro seems to have acted up to his agreement with the Company over the wreck, he having consented to waive the rulers' right to wreckage. The Company's servants were willingly helped in retrieving what could be retrieved :

'Both the Prince's officers and the Rānah's people near whom she was lost very readily assisted us as much as they could both to get her off and when that was found impracticable to save her masts, rigging, etc.'

The trade in saltpetre began to extend greatly at this period and the Resident's letters make much mention of saltpetre. New saltpetre houses and warehouses were constructed in 1763. In a letter dated 16 December 1764 written from Bombay, it is stated :

'We have also put on board this ship six copper boilers and sundry stores and stationery amounting altogether to Rs. 38,526-2-88 which being landed you will put on board such saltpetre as you may have in readiness which the owners have also consented to bring freight free.'

In 1764 saltpetre in considerable quantity was dispatched to Bombay.

'We now return the Admiral Pocock with 1254 bags of saltpetre and 9 unserviceable copper boilers amounting as per invoice and bill of lading enclosed to Rs. 15,884-0-52 also sundry guns, stores etc., belonging to the wreck'd Gallivat Swallow as per list enclosed.'

The bad health of the Company's servants receives frequent mention. On 3 December 1763 it was reported that Mr John Weir, the Surgeon sent out to cure the Rāja of Cutch but subsequently retained in Sind at the request of the Kalhōro, died at Aurangabunder. On 30 January 1764 a letter states

'Mr. Erskine having been for near a month past very much indisposed and believing a change of air may promote his recovery takes his passage on

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the ship.—Mr. Moet our Surgeon has been for a long time past very much afflicted with fevers and hath likewise the return of a violent obstruction he was formerly troubled with which gives room to apprehend he will never be able to get rid of in this unwholesome climate and as these complaints render him almost incapable of his duty begs your Honour etc., would permit of his returning from hence at least for a time.'

The practice of the Company to give presents to its servants on Īd (probably Ramzān Īd) is mentioned in a letter dated 19 February 1764:

'I gave the sepoys, hammāls etc., factory servants their usual enāms, being particularly directed to it by Mr. Erskine before he left this place.'

A letter dated 24 February 1764 notices the presence of more pirates who, however, departed without doing any damage.

On 28 March 1764 the Resident, Mr Robert Erskine, was commanded to attend the Prince Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro in his camp in durbār at Shāhpūr. The Company records give a most vivid account of this colourful episode and of the unfortunate results of one of Ghulām Shāh's elephants breaking loose and doing damage to property.

'This morning before sunrise the Prince sending notice the Durbār was seated and that he expected me. I waited on him and after usual compliments sat a few minutes silent when he wished me to withdraw and receive his sirpah etc. consisting of kimcob vest, shawl and turband, a knife and sword mounted with gold, whose scabbard and sheat were ornamented with the same metal a ziga or cluster of emeralds and rubys and a Persian horse with silver plated bridle and furniture. These being delivered me I returned to the durbār and presented the Prince with his customary gold rupee and other presents in the Honble Company's name of broad cloth velvet, silk, looking glasses etc. (as per account particulars) after which sitting a short time I rose up and made my compliments and retired to our tents by the river's side. In the evening sent the vakeel to desire our musters to be examined having them ready for that purpose. He returned that night with the Prince's direction they be sent tomorrow early for his people to see, when shall receive his order respecting the intended purchase. March 29th. Sent the musters early this morning and received from the Prince his contract for the following list of woollens viz., Crimson draps 1200 yards 10 r. 2 qrs., thick worcesters 1500 yards at 4 rupees, Persia fine wine 450 yards at 4 r. 3 qrs. Black superfine 780 yards at 6 rupees in all amounting 3930 yards or Rs. 25,417-2.[1]

'April 2nd 1764. At noon an elephant belonging to the Prince who had often discovered symptoms of madness returning from the river became suddenly furious and quite ungovernable in which mood he ran fiercely amongst our tents, plucking up the poles and tossing them (with pieces of the tent he had rent) in the air, nor ceased his mischievous progress till our whole encampment was levelled to the ground; when pursuing his march to a neighbouring morass he plunged himself into the mud from whence with much difficulty and the labour of near 500 men he was to my very great regret dragged out and sav'd. I very fortunately stepped into my boat (ón some little business) a few minutes before or should otherwise in all probability have shar'd the general destruction of our tents and furniture; as the attack was too suddain to avoid, being begun at my tent door, which blocked up all means of escape and must in a few seconds of time have tumbled me under

[1] There was considerable delay in obtaining the money as the Prince said he had to collect it from revenues.



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the elephant's feet. Our tables, chairs, etc., have suffered considerably in this affair but hope may be repaired on my return to Tattah.'

That Hōli (a Hindu festival) was celebrated with gusto in Tatta is proved effectively from the Company's records.

'13th March 1764. This being the Hooly Festival of the Gentoos occasions a delay of five or six days, no business of any kind being attended to during this time of riot, madness and confusion.'

Owing to the absence of a doctor and the continued ill-health of the Company's establishment it was necessary to make use of local physicians.

'11th April 1764. As no doctor of any reputation can be had at Shāhbunder and our people continue sickly I thought it necessary to get the ablest I could procure here and accordingly have this day engag'd with Hodgee Mahmūd at the rate of 15 rupees per month allowance his expence of country medicine to attend to the Gallivats crew and Bombay sepoys and visit our different factories as the state of the sick may at any time require.'

The amenities of the Company's house at Tatta were improved by adding a small room to the upper storey to give better ventilation.

'9th May 1764. Having severely experienced for some years past the dangerous situation we are in at Tattah during the hot months for want of air and being convinced a small bungalo on the upper terrace of our house will in great measure relieve us I have therefore directed a slight building (to the amount of about 130 rupees) be immediately raised.'

The shortage of suitable boilers for the refinement of saltpetre occasioned the Resident great trouble in 1764. It was impossible to get Sindhi craftsmen capable of making the kind of article needed, and shift was made with the existing boilers which had fallen into disrepair.

'The shortage of boilers having caused difficulties in the refining of saltpetre (the Resident writes), now reduced us to great streights and almost brought our salt petre refiners to an entire stand having only a single serviceable boiler left so that I'm under an absolute necessity of breaking up our damag'd coppers and new forming them here which the smiths undertake to be able to do and hope may succeed in, otherwise the whole season will be lost —should the experiment the workmen are now making on a few of the damaged boilers perfectly answere their engagement I shall treat the remainder in like manner and by forming the whole number afresh be enabled at the end of March to furnish tonnage of 3000 bags or 6000 pucca maunds of refined salt petre aggreable to our agreement made the beginning of last month with Prītamdāss Roopchand our former contractor. . . . Our new salt petre works are now compleated excepting only the doors, frames etc., which we wait for . . . from Bombay.'

At this period the Company was very satisfied with the friendliness of Ghulām Shāh, who seems to have been always more genial after the Resident had paid him what he considered was the respect due to his princely dignity.

The letter mentions 'the very friendly disposition of the Scindy government to our interests; the honble Company's business hath the freest currency and no kind of impediment been offered to their affairs or the most distant

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of our factories since my interview with the Prince at Shāhpoer who has now paid 26,344 rs. 3 qrs. 50 reas and received 4176 yards of the Honble Company's broadcloth in which he has somewhat exceeded his contract made with me and further assures his encouraging the Pattāns and other northern dealers to come freely to us without interruption.'

The letters of the year 1764 emphasize the bad health and illness of the Company's establishment at Tatta and Shāhbunder and notice that war had broken out between Sind and Cutch.

'26th July 1764.

'Our distress in point of health is truly affecting and has laid me under a necessity I could no ways avoid of engaging a country doctor continually to reside at Shāhbunder for the sepoy and lascar service and another also at this place (a bramin one Tarria, who formerly attended Mr. Erskine in Tattah) for the care of Mr. Parry and me. I have also taken the liberty of running up a small bungalow on the upper terrace of this factory to command a free circulation of air which before was secluded from by lofty houses in its neighbourhood which thereby exposing us to the most sultry stifling heat rendered our situation extremely unwholesome.

'28th July 1764. By letters from Vesta Bunder on the frontiers of Cutch we are informed the Rājah of Cutch has commenced hostilities with Scindy by attacking and seizing a large convoy of rice dingeys of considerable value at the mouth of a branch of this river in doing which some of the Prince's people were kill'd and wounded.'

The Company gave up business in 1775 for the reasons clearly given in Mr Callendar's account, already quoted. A few final letters from the Bombay Government archives show the circumstances which led to the withdrawal of the factory. The prime cause was Sārfarāz Khān's charge of 50 per cent duty on woollens sold to the Pathān king, and when the Company protested against this breach of their agreement, i.e. Sārfarāz Khān's order prohibiting the sale of woollens at the factory, the success of the protest, effectual in the sense that the prohibition was removed, did not satisfy the President and Council of Directors that trading conditions would be such as to justify taking further commercial risk in a land subject to this kind of capricious government. The resolution to withdraw the factory has been quoted above (see page 53). Actually the trade of the Company and the sale of woollens and their direct business with the Pathān kings did not readily accord with the definite policy of the Kalhōra to make the payment of tribute to Kandahār or Kābul as difficult as possible. There was considerable force in what Sārfarāz Khān did and from his own point of view the policy was certainly not mistaken. We can hardly expect, however, that a trading Company would take the same view and the factory was closed in circumstances which seemed to imply bad will on both sides. It was actually a rather hopeless enterprise in which the Company was engaged. Sind had no use for the woollen goods, and the Afghāns had. But the success of direct trade with Afghānistān made it more difficult for the Kalhōra to pay their tribute. While

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therefore they were prepared to tolerate the Company up to a certain point, especially in so far as it benefited business in Sind itself, they were not prepared to tolerate it beyond a point where the advantage passed from Sind to the Afghāns. As the Afghān power declined in force and virility in the latter part of the eighteenth century, it would have been strange if the later Kalhōra had not endeavoured to take full advantage of the growing weakness. Thus the second English factory in Sind was withdrawn because it was impossible to reconcile the interests of the Company with those of the Kalhōro ruling dynasty. There is no doubt that with a broader-minded man than Sārfarāz Khān on the throne, the crisis might not have come so rapidly and so crushingly as it did. But any far-sighted observer could have foretold at least ten years before the trading venture in Sind came to an end that that end was inevitable and that it was only a question of time and opportunity for the Sind Government to force its will on the English traders.

## V. *Some notable travellers in Sind in the seventeenth century— Withington, Manrique, Manucci and Hamilton*

### (1) *Nicholas Withington* (1613-14)

Nicholas Withington was not the first Englishman to visit Sind but he was the first one to leave a record of what he saw there.[1] His experience in Sind was a very unfortunate one, and must have been discouraging to others. He had come out as an attendant on Captain Best[2] and for a time served in the employment of the East India Company first at Surat and later at Āgra. In October 1613 he was in Ahmedābād helping to buy indigo and he visited Cambay and Sarkhēj on business. In December 1613 Withington was dispatched overland from Ahmedābād to Tatta to get into touch with an English ship with Sir Robert Sherley on board, which had just arrived at Lāribunder. So Withington set out on the route followed shortly before by Anthony Starkey, the steward of the *Dragon* who had, with an Indian attendant, succeeded in reaching Tatta overland, but died shortly after arrival, leaving no record of his journey. Withington followed a route from Ahmedābād through Rādhanpūr and along the edge of the Rann of Cutch to Nagar Pārkar and in the unsettled countryside of what is now the southern part of the Thar Pārkar, Hyderābād and Karāchi districts he met with a series of misfortunes which would have daunted any traveller. With some Indian merchants he was

[1] See Foster : *Early Travels in India*, pp. 188-233.

[2] Capt. Best voyaged to the East Indies in 1612-14 (and has kept a journal) on board the *Dragon* on which he was Chief Commander; vide Hakluyt Society publication, Second Series, No. LXXV, entitled *The Voyage of Thomas Best* (available in the Bombay Secretariat Library).

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set upon by a local chief, who robbed them of their possessions and murdered the Indian merchants. Withington himself was spared, but as it was too dangerous to allow him to proceed he was kept confined and under guard in part of the hilly country near the desert and then sent back to Nagar Pārkar. On the way there he was again robbed by his guides and left nothing but his breeches and a sorry horse or two and told to find his way back to Ahmedābād. Had it not been for the very kindly assistance of a Hindu merchant whom he had known in Ahmedābād and happened by chance to meet in Nagar Pārkar, when he reached there in dire distress without food, clothes or money, he would certainly have died. His narrative is eloquent of the state of disorder prevailing in that part of Sind in the early days of the seventeenth century, and shows how weak was Moghul control over areas outside easy distance of the larger towns and villages.

It is impossible to identify the various stages of Withington's route through Lower Sind but he reached the Indus and had got to within a short distance of Tatta (probably near Mīrpūr Bathōro) when disaster befell him and his companions. 'And the 28th day ', he says, 'we came to Nagar Pārkar, a poor town, yet with good store of provisions for travellers. In the desert that we had passed we saw great abundance of wild asses, red deer, foxes and other wild beasts. This town, where we stayed a day to refresh ourselves and then departed, paying a toll for our camels' lading, payeth a yearly tribute to the Mogul, all the rest between that and Jūno (perhaps Jūma on the Indus, eight miles below Tatta) pay none, neither acknowledge any king but themselves, robbing and sparing whom they list. When an army of the Moguls cometh against them, they fire their houses and fly into the mountains, their houses being made of straw and mortar in the fashion of beehives, which are soon burnt and soon up again. They have a custom to guard passengers (when they have taken from them what they please under colour of custom) till they be forth of their territories, taking it a foul disgrace to have any other but themselves to rob any man within their command.' Withington found the water on the way bad and was forced to mix it with buttermilk, but he fell sick on account of the badness of the water. By this time Withington's company consisted of himself, two merchants with five servants, and four servants of his own, ten camels and five camelmen. The company arranged with the Rāja's or governor's kindred for a safe conduct for twenty 'lārīs' (twenty shillings). The journey, however, was fraught with danger and the cavalcade was nearly robbed more than once shortly after it started. On one occasion the company defended itself by setting

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the camels round in a ring and shooting with bows and arrows at the robbers, while Withington himself discharged his pistols. They reached a place he calls Saranne about 30 miles from Tatta without serious mishap and called on the 'Governor' there, whom he calls 'Rāgee Bowma'. This Rāja entertained the party kindly and warned them of the dangers between there and Tatta. 'He was especially kind to me, seeing me a white man and of a far country (as my interpreter told me) and asked me many questions of the state of my country, taking much delight to hear thereof.' The Rāja even made merry with Withington over the wine cup, 'making me sup there and giving me much wine, drinking both together in one cup till he was almost "stawed."' In the same town of Saranne Withington met a bania who had arrived from Tatta. This bania gave him the interesting news that Sir Robert Sherley with his wife and three or four English women were in Tatta and the bania had gone in the same ship as Sir Robert from Lāribunder to Tatta.[1] Sir Robert Sherley, according to this informant, had been badly treated in Tatta both by the Governor of the town and the Portuguese, who had set fire to his house, while the Governor had taken from him 'jewels and whatelsesoever pleased him, proposing to send him up to the Mogul'.[2] The bania strongly advised an escort to protect the company on their way to Tatta, and following this advice Withington paid the Governor of Saranne 40 lārīs as a present for an escort of 50 horsemen to the gates of Tatta.

The Rāja, however, took the safe conduct money and acted with the utmost treachery. The company travelled about ten miles by night and then rested. The Rāja told them that by nine o'clock next morning he would deliver them within the gates of Tatta, 'which made us all very merry'. 'At two of the clock in the morning he bade us lade our camels and then led us along by the riverside about a mile and a half saying the river was too deep for the camels to pass, and then led us a clean contrary way, as we perceived, which made us greatly fear his intent.' The fears were well founded. Their treacherous guide brought them into a thicket and bade them unlade the animals to see with what they were laden. The company were then bound and their weapons taken from them. 'The Rāja proceeded to open the fardels and found great store of cloth, silver tissue and other commodities which cost the merchants, my companions in Ahmedābād, twenty thousand rupees. The Rāja

[1] Sir Robert Sherley had arrived in the expedition commanded by Christopher Newport on his return from his mission to various European courts as ambassador of the Persian Shāh. From Tatta he went to Ajmer to complain to Jahāngīr, thence to Āgra and then overland to Persia in September 1614.

[2] See note on p. 212 of *Early Travels in India* by W. Foster.

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seeing this booty so rich concluded to kill the merchants and all their servants, and his company would have him kill me and my men also, alledging as good save all as some.' To this the Rāja, however, did not consent, 'telling them I was of a very far country and would do them no hurt, wanting language'. He said, however, he would not allow Withington to proceed to Tatta to give information of the robbery but would send him back again to Ahmedābād, 'so caused my four men presently to be unbound, making me sit close by himself, and suddenly caused his men to bring the two merchants and their five men, tying their camels' ropes about their necks and with a short truncheon twisted the ropes till they were strangled and then stripped them naked and made a great hole in the earth and threw them inside together; which done, he took from me my horse and gave me two of my dead companions' horses. He took from me likewise eighty rupees of the Company's monies and so sent me and my men with four of his horsemen to a brother of his which dwelt some twenty courses off the place up to the mountains'.

On his way back to Ahmedābād, after being treated with a strange mixture of condescension and courtesy by the Rāja's men and relatives, he was again robbed by his guard and reduced to the utmost distress. 'This night these six rogues seeing I had very good apparel of the country fashion and a quilt of escite (chintz) with many other things of worth, determined with themselves to strip me of all, which they did, leaving neither me nor my men anything, save only our breeches, which done, they left us with our horses which were not worth the taking.' The villagers in the fields, apparently Jats or camelmen, however, proved to be good Samaritans and gave what help they could. 'Yet comforting myself and men the best I could, the first of March 1614, I went on without a guide not knowing one foot of the way but only by guess and travelled all day long and towards night came to two or three houses of poor camelmen that kept camels in the mountains.' 'The poor people made much of us, giving us such victuals as they had, and one of them promised to lead us into the way that goes to Pārkar, from thence some two days' journey. . . . My horse tiring, I was fain to go on foot and being a bad footman travelled very softly: and every night we came to a little village and begged for our victuals finding all the inhabitants charitable people. So the sixth day at night we came to Pārkar miserably weary and hungry.' There Withington encountered the first piece of good luck in his luckless journey, for he met a bania from Ahmedābād whom he knew. This bania 'wondered to see me in that case and after many kindly salutations offered me what money I would have, not suffering me to sell my horse. . . . He furnished me and my men

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with clothes and victuals sufficient to serve us in the desert and gave me nine mamoudes in my purse, paying all my expenses whilst I stayed there, which was four days, and then, having good company which went to Rādhanpūr, I went along with them. The honest bania recommended me unto (them and brought me one course on my way and then returned to Pārkar, where he had business for ten days, as he said.' This very human narrative shows how insufficient was the Moghul's authority to preserve safety on the highways of commerce, and displays the lawlessness which prevailed outside the main towns. More pleasing are the kindness and charity of the common people to a luckless foreigner, and the wonderful generosity of the Hindu merchant who found his English friend in sore distress.

(2) *Frey Sebastian Manrique* (1641)[1]

Frey Sebastian Manrique was a very different kind of traveller. He was a Portuguese from Oporto, who took orders in Goa in 1604. He was attached to the Bengal Augustinian Mission of Hūgli by the Father Provincial for India, Father Luiz Coutiño, about 1629, and was sent to Arakān. During 1640-1 he was in India engaged in missionary work and it was work of this kind that brought him to Sind in 1641. As a missionary he attained distinction, as he was appointed at a later period of his life Difinidor and Procurador General for the Portuguese estates in the Curia at Rome and was given the title of Maestro. He met with a tragic end at an advanced age. He was murdered by his own Portuguese servant in London in 1669. This man robbed him and hid the body in a box which he threw into the Thames. It is believed that Manrique's visit to London may have been connected with the English King's (Charles II's) leanings towards the Church of Rome. In any case Manrique is first and foremost a missionary of Roman Catholic Christianity and he is generally unsympathetic, in particular, towards Islām while regarding the practices of Hinduism as the delusions of a poor misguided portion of humanity. He is, however, an acute and accurate observer but is no stylist and he does not hesitate to borrow without acknowledgement from the works of other observers.

The Augustinians had a settlement at Dēbal or Lāribunder in Sind. It was the seat of a Vicar and it was the affairs of this Vicarate that drew Father Manrique to Sind in the beginning of Shāh Jahān's reign. As he says himself: 'encouraged by the breezes of his friendship I took advantage of the occasion and so obtained an ample formān over the Imperial seal, granting permission for the

[1] See *Travels of Sebastian Manrique*, 1629-43. The Hakluyt Society. Two volumes. Vol. II, pp. 211-43.

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reconstruction in the Principality of Sinde of our churches and Residencies which the Emperor Corrombo (i.e. Khurram, the name Shāh Jahān had borne as Prince) had himself a few years earlier ordered to be razed to the ground and destroyed. . . . I found that I had to visit Sinde not so much in order to carry the formān into effect as it would have sufficed to make this over to the Brethren there, as because Prince Āssufa Khān (Āsaf Khān) had intimated his wish that I should personally undertake certain negotiations and business which he had to carry out with the Viceroy of India in connection with the Portuguese who lived in the factory there. . . . The Prince valued my offer highly and praised my decision. He told me what he wanted carried out and gave me full written instructions, also making over to me special formāns and passports so that I should have free passage through all the choquidāres or customs posts as I had to travel through the states of several princes who, though tributary and vassal to the Great Mogul, yet exercised full jurisdiction as well over the customs as over the punishment of transgressors of the law.'[1] Manrique spent only a short time in Sind—a few months in all. He voyaged down the Indus from Lahore to Tatta, where he remained for a month and then left by the land route via Jaisalmīr to avoid the delay consequent on going upstream on his return journey. He thus gives a picture of Sind which differs in character altogether from the account of Nicholas Withington twenty-seven years earlier.

The voyage down the river to Bakhar is thus described. 'We sailed peacefully in this way keeping careful watch at night, finding as we advanced on our road an abundance of good cheap provisions in every place we anchored at. In some places where the stream was shallow we met many fishermen who furnished us with most excellent shad very cheaply. . . . They dispense with the encumbrance of nets and assistants for they go out fishing on large earthen vessels with the circumference of ten to twelve palms in breadth, flattened at the rim and open at the top in a big circular aperture just of a size to receive the front of a man's stomach which being pressed into it checks the ingress of the water. It thus serves as a safe receptacle for the fish as well as a steady base and support for the fisherman, who lies upon it directing his earthen ship with his legs, his hands being busy with the spear piercing the scaly swimming fishes. . . . This abundance of fish was most welcome to us Christians travelling there, since it was Lent '[2] (February to March 1641). On the ninth day Manrique arrived at Bakhar which is noted as being a town where there is considerable traffic on account of the camel-trains that leave every year for Persia, Khorasān and

[1] op. cit., pp. 211-12.

[2] op. cit., pp. 231-2.

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other distant places. The town struck Manrique as having a fresh and cheerful aspect from being surrounded by gardens and groves of trees.[1] The market was well stocked with provisions owing to the high fertility and productivity of the district. There was little trouble at the custom house and the voyage proceeded without event, except for the passing of villages and cultivated banks by the river's side, till the boat reached a narrow part of the Indus in uncultivated country in the territory of Sehwan. This was a spot notorious for pirates, as we know from Withington and from the East India Company letters of the seventeenth century factory. The river had widened and 'here on doubling a promontory covered by a grove of tall thickly leaved trees two vessels suddenly made for us and rained a mass of arrows, stones and five hundred javelins upon us. Indeed, they pressed us in such a way that had it not been for the grenades and fire-bombs we should have found ourselves in very great danger for the Indūstanē soldiers were so inexpert with their arquabuses that they had no effect and the pirates approached us on both sides. But before they could grapple with us they received some of our sulphurous bombs and were so terrified that many hurled themselves into the sea half burnt, while the rest made off at once from a danger they had never seen before or even thought of, especially as the name Franguis was ringing in their ears.'[2] The armed guard of Manrique's boat, however, did not escape casualties, two or three of the mercenary soldiers being injured and one so badly by an arrow that he died within a couple of hours 'to my great grief in that he died a pagan without asking to become a Christian, although I had urged him to it '.[3] The voyage was in fact interrupted by the death ceremonies of the dead man whose body was cremated with Hindu rites on the bank of the river. Manrique describes these ceremonies with a certain amount of supercilious contempt, 'their useless diabolical rites prompted by motives foolish in themselves but most saddening to me when I thought of the blind thraldom in which the common enemy of the human race held those barbarians'.[4]

[1] The description is truer of Rōhrī than of Bakhar which is now an island, but it is possible, as Raverty surmises (pp. 495-6, *Mihrān-i-Sind*), (though I do not myself consider it likely) that Bakhar may then have been not alone the island in the river but an isthmus connecting it with the western or Sukkur bank as well, so that what Manrique calls Bakhar may really have been 'Old Sukkur'. The gardens and palm groves are, however, mostly on the Rōhrī side nowadays and probably most of them always have been.

[2] op. cit., pp. 233-4.

[3] op. cit., p. 234.

[4] op. cit., p. 235. Manrique had taken the precaution before leaving Lahore to engage more sepāhīs or mercenary soldiers, whose equipment did not satisfy Manrique, who insisted on their having their priming powder refined and their 'bandōcos' repaired, himself taking two muskets and a pistol. He also had some grenades and stink bombs, such as were used by the Portuguese in naval engagements, and gave a demonstration of them in a garden at Lahore where they created a great sensation.

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The attack of the pirates having been beaten off and the dead man cremated, the ship proceeded on its way for two days more through uninhabited country to Sehwan, where the custom house was passed without trouble. Below Sehwan the country was once more cultivated and inhabited and Tatta was reached on the fourth day : Tatta was the metropolis of Sind and beset with officialdom, as Manrique was soon to discover. The first trouble was that the ship arrived too late for the officials at the custom house so that the passengers had to stay on board till next day, when they were allowed to disembark with beds and ' other necessary utensils ' not liable to duty. The second trouble was that the merchants who had travelled down from Lahore with Manrique wished him to use the Imperial firmān for exemption of customs in favour of their own goods brought to Tatta for trade. Manrique was tempted to use his privilege to save customs duty in order to employ it for the benefit of the order (' my order would have secured two thousand rupees, a most welcome addition for defraying the expenses of that Mission, especially on this occasion when I had a firmān sanctioning my proceeding to rebuild and restore the church').[1] But on consideration he rejected as unworthy of a Christian priest the idea of using his personal pass to enable the merchants to be exempted on the strength of it, he rightly concluding, ' But this would have redounded greatly to our religion's discredit, as she does not under the cloak of preserving or increasing her missions undertake to trade between different countries through ships laden with merchandise of various kinds.'[2] Manrique, however, was in the end able to serve his merchant friends well. He went to see the Governor of Tatta and showed him the imperial order he carried. 'On my presenting him with this, as soon as he recognized it, he placed it most submissively three times on his head, kissing it a similar number of times. After reading it, he sent for the customs officials and before me told them to pass the merchandise through at once, charging only low rates of duty as the ship had also come in the service of Āssofo Khān. On this order they at once passed the goods and so greatly to the factors' satisfaction that they would not cease thanking me.'[3]

This account is interesting as showing the working of the customs system, and the importance attached by the Governor to a letter from the imperial court, which the Governor was able to recognize at once from the writing and seal. Discipline seems to have been better in 1641 than it was in Nicholas Withington's time. Manrique proceeded to Lāribunder to see the condition of

[1] op. cit., pp. 236-7.
[2] op. cit., p. 237.
[3] op. cit., p. 237.

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the ruined church. He met the Superior of the Mission there, Father Jorge de la Natividad, and talked over with him the rebuilding of the church. The two of them then returned to Tatta which Manrique says was a two days' journey from the Bandel, and arranged with the Governor for the carrying out of the work. Manrique wanted to see the work of rebuilding started and then made preparations to return by boat upstream to Lahore. He accepted, however, the advice of travellers that the journey by boat upstream was tedious and laborious and decided to make the journey by land via Jaisalmīr. Rain, however, made the country impossible for camels and Manrique had to wait in Tatta till conditions improved. He spent about a month waiting and used the time in observing the chief features of interest about Tatta, his judgement being largely coloured by his religious prejudices. He noted the richness of the city, the abundance of foodstuffs and the productivity of the surrounding country and also ' the vast quantities of cotton collected there from which on over two thousand looms rich cloths of various kinds are woven and exported to many parts of Asia as well as to Portugal'.[1] There was also a species of silk from which excellent taffetas and ' tafecirias ' are made. The importance of the export trade in hides is noted, the abundance of buffaloes and manufacture of ' the lovely leather which the Portuguese style " Sinde leather ", ornamented with back stitch work in different coloured silks, in fine designs, lined and furnished off with fringes of silk at the ends'.[2] Manrique says that these leathers are used as table covers and as hangings in reception rooms and as bed covers, as they are very soft and cool in the hot weather. They were used also for house trappings. The city manufactured also ' such back stitched quilts and the excellent mattresses called Sind Mattresses ' which appear to have been a kind of ' razai '. Manrique states that the city had a large 'Firangi' population and that its port was filled with ships laden with every kind of merchandise.

Manrique, however, was interested as a missionary more in the manners and conduct of the inhabitants than in their economic activities. He can find very little good to say of the manners and morals. The city was in his opinion a sink of iniquity in which unnatural vice flourished openly and catamites dressed as women paraded the streets. He describes also with intense disfavour a ' certain order of hypocritical women devotees, or to put it more plainly, prostitutes ', who, while professing to despise the world, engaged in the most shameful form of sexual immorality in the very streets. ' But what is worse is that these women who act in this

[1] op. cit., pp. 238-9.

[2] op. cit., p. 239.

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disgraceful way in less frequented streets are held to be the greatest renunciators of the world and its ways."[1]

(3) *Niccolao Manucci* (1659)

Niccolao Manucci, the Venetian adventurer whom Irvine has called ' A Pepys of Moghul India ', was a very young man when he came to Sind and took part in the siege of Bakhar. He had shortly before, on the death of his English master Lord Bellomont, entered the service[2] of Dārā Shikōh as an artilleryman and in this capacity he served with the forces of Dārā in the civil war between Dārā and Aurangzēb. At this time Manucci cannot have been more than nineteen or twenty years of age. He is a vivid story-teller and probably something of a romancer as well. There does not, however, seem to be anything very incredible or much overdrawn in his account of his experiences in Sind in 1659, although the memoirs of the siege of Bakhar must have been written long after the event was over. The facts of the civil war in Sind can be read clearly in Sarkar's *History of Aurangzēb*.[3] Manucci knew only the siege of Bakhar. Dārā with an ever diminishing band of followers was pursued from Lahore down into Sind by Aurangzēb's army, led in two divisions by Shaikh Misr and Sāf Shikān, the former marching along the right bank while the latter took the left bank to Bakhar. Shaikh Misr was the first to reach Bakhar, covering ' one hundred and sixty miles in three days, suffering great hardship from the jungles, briars, and difficult ground crossed on the way. Many transport cattle perished, the camp followers were exhausted and on this third day of the march the troops had to be on scanty rations.'[4] The imperial army on reaching Sukkur learned that Dārā had already fled farther south down the Indus and had left on the island fortress of Bakhar much property, many ' ladies of his harem, some treasure, all his heavy gold and silver plate and some of his big guns '. The defence of the fortress was in charge of Dārā's eunuch Basant, or Khwāja Basant, also called Primavera by Manucci, and Sayid Abdur Razāk. The defenders consisted of musketeers, bowmen, barquandāzes and many European gunners under Manucci. This was about October 1659 and much of the country in the vicinity of the Indus must have been under water as a result of that year's inundation of the river. The fortress of Bakhar was invested by the imperial army while divisions of it pursued Dārā out of Sind into Gujārāt, after nearly cutting him off

[1] op. cit., p. 240.
[2] For the character of this service see Manucci, Vol. I.
[3] Vol. I, pp. 114-25, for Aurangzēb's Governorship of Multān, and pp. 119-28 for the pursuit of Dārā Shikōh through Sind.
[4] Sarkar : *History of Aurangzēb*, pp. 119-20.

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in a river fight near Sehwan. Dārā was forced out of Gujārāt to return once more, this time up the river, and was captured on the borders of Sind, when he was delivered over to the imperial army by a Mālik[1] Jīwan, fief holder of Dādar near the entrance to the Bolān Pass. Mālik Jīwan did not take the risk of sheltering him. Dārā was then brought back a captive to Bakhar and to the great disappointment of the defenders gave an order for the evacuation of the fortress. They had performed a very creditable feat of arms in holding it so long, as Manucci's narrative clearly shows. Manucci tells us of the flight down the river from Multān to Bakhar and the siege of the fortress. Manucci says that Dārā's train consisted of five hundred and seven boats and that they were 'loaded with supplies of food requisite for a beleagured citadel', and eight cannons carrying shot of from 60 to 120 pounds besides light artillery, ammunition and other paraphernalia of war. Each boat, says Manucci, carried more or less a hundred tons of cargo. Manucci went with a land force that struggled through the unkindly terrain of the river, suffering somewhat from failure of supplies and several times from want of water. 'We passed through several rough woods and arrived opposite the fortress of Bakhar in the middle of the treacherous river of Sind.'[2] There he found the eunuch Primavera distributing the big guns and ammunition for the fortress. By Dārā's orders the fortress was garrisoned with two thousand selected men, the best he could get, Pathāns, Sayids, Moghuls and Rājpūts, and twenty-two Europeans of different nationalities, and servants. Manucci begged Dārā to be allowed to accompany him, but Dārā directed him to remain in the fortress while he himself fled farther south. Manucci says, 'I was overcome with tears and sighs at this parting, and seeing the downcast state in which I was quitting his presence he called me back. He then made me captain of the Europeans and ordered them to give me five thousand rupees to divide among my men and doubled my pay. It had been one hundred and fifty and he made it three hundred rupees. He gave me his word that if God made him King he would create me a noble of his court and reward my men in whose loyalty he had much confidence. He added the present of a serpao (serāpa) and directed that I should receive a boat-load of Persian and Kābul wine.'[3] Dārā fled down the river collecting as many boats as he could to hinder pursuit of him by his enemies, and Bakhar was invested. 'We were shut up along with the loyal and valiant eunuch Primavera. No one could get out : no one could enter. This fortress is in the middle of the mighty river Sindi (Indus), founded upon the live rock,

1 *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 418.
2 *Storia do Mogor*, I, p. 318.
3 ibid., p. 319.

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stones from which could be used as flints for muskets. . . . In the middle was a cavalier (tower) overlooking both banks of the river.'[1] In the fort besides gold and silver, precious stones and a good deal of baggage, Dārā had left some ladies, among them the wife of Sulaimān Shikōh and his young sons, 'much cherished as being his grandsons'. Dārā intended to keep Bakhar as a rallying point for later eventualities. The incidents of the siege are vividly narrated. The imperial troops turned on the fort two of the large cannons Dārā had left behind in the foundry at Lahore and these guns did considerable execution amongst the garrison because of the shortness of the range, a 'pistol shot on the west' and 'two musket shots on the east'. The garrison, however, replied vigorously with their guns, dismounted the enemy artillery, made sallies, swarmed into the enemy trenches, bombarded the towns of Sukkur and Rōhrī and captured four field pieces and some baggage of the enemy.[2] By this stout resistance the imperial army was nonplussed and resorted to stratagems to break the morale of the European gunners. 'To this end they shot arrows to which letters were attached. These invited us to abandon the service of Dārā and evacuate the place. One of these arrows hit me on the shoulder while I was sitting in my bastion at eight o'clock at night. Withdrawing the arrow I went with it at once, wounded as I was, to the eunuch. He gave me a robe (sarāpa) and some bottles of rose water in recognition of my fidelity.'[3]

The investing army had now been reinforced by the arrival of Khalīlullāh Khān from Lahore, and fresh efforts were made to get the garrison to surrender. Primavera was, however, made of sterner stuff. 'He sent for me', says Manucci, 'and ordered me to load with horns and old shoes the cannon nearest the garden where Khalīlullāh Khān was encamped. It was charged thus up to the very muzzle.' The eunuch then determined to answer Khalīlullāh Khān's overtures thus: 'I hold few words with you, for I am greatly annoyed at you, having been all your life a pimp and used to beatings from women. Herewith what you deserve. I offer you a present proportioned to your merits.'[4] The letter was ordered to be handed to Khalīlullāh Khān and when it was being delivered to him 'he ordered us to fire off the cannon and we covered Khalīlullāh Khān's tent with the charge it contained'. This insult provoked further hostility and a fierce artillery bombardment of the fortress from the shore so that the shot fell all over the fortress and a pole that carried a small flag was pierced by three balls. The garrison, however, could not be subdued and Khalīlullāh

[1] *Storia do Mogor*, I, p. 326.
[2] ibid., p. 327.
[3] ibid., p. 350.
[4] ibid., p. 352.

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Khān returned in disgust to Lahore. Forty days after his departure, however, troops were seen crossing the river from west to east and when the garrison began to fire at them a horseman appeared on the river boat with a white flag. The eunuch ordered him to be fetched across and when he came he was found to be carrying a message to say that Dārā was a prisoner in the hands of Aurangzēb's army. Even so the fort refused to surrender until Dārā himself ordered its evacuation. This Dārā did to save the garrison from famine and destruction and when Dārā's letter came to say: 'Unfortunate in the one for whom you fought I now request and require you to deliver up the place',[1] a touching scene resulted. 'When the eunuch Primavera saw the letter he recognized the writing and began to weep bitterly. He wrote to Bahādur Khān (the enemy commander) that we demanded to come out with our baggage and if he did not consent we would fling the cannon and treasure into the river and fight to the death with all desperation. Bahādur Khān sent back an assurance that we could leave with our baggage but must make over the treasure, the princes and all the material appertaining to the fortress.' The end was in sight. 'After three days we issued from the fort in which we had endured so much. For two days before the evacuation I bought two calves for six hundred rupees and paid one rupee for every ounce of butter. Without exaggerating I bought one chicken for thirteen rupees.'[2] The safe conduct given to the gallant defenders did not avail the sturdy Primavera much, as he was killed shortly afterwards in Lahore, but he could hardly have expected gentler treatment there from Khalīlullāh Khān, whose tent he had showered with shoes from a cannon at Bakhar. Dārā himself suffered the fate of one who was worsted by Aurangzēb in the fight for the throne of Shāh Jahān. The history books explain the circumstances of his judicial murder. Manucci tells us nothing of the social conditions in Sind as he was fully occupied with wars alone. But his narrative does depict vividly the nature of the Moghul fighting on the banks of the Indus.

(4) *Alexander Hamilton* (1699) [3]

Captain Alexander Hamilton was a Scot and a sort of merchant adventurer and traveller, a sea captain who, as he says himself, spent the years 1688-1723 in 'trading and travelling by sea and land to most of the countries and islands of commerce and navigation between the Cape of Good Hope and the Island of Japan'. For a seaman of those days he appears to have been uncommonly well educated. His *New Account of the East Indies*, published in

[1] *Storia do Mogor*, I, pp. 353-4. [2] ibid., p. 354.
[3] The quotations from Hamilton are from Hamilton's *New Account of the East Indies* given in Pinkerton's *Travels*, Vol. VIII, pp. 304-9.

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Edinburgh in 1727 and dedicated to the Duke of Hamilton, is very well written and marked by a keen and intelligent observation of the numerous diverse sights he viewed in the course of his roving profession. He came to Lāribunder in 1699 with a cargo and proceeded to Tatta where he stayed a short time. He is the only European traveller whose narrative is actually contemporary with the life of Shāh Abdul Latīf. When Captain Hamilton visited Lāribunder in 1699 Shāh Abdul Latīf was a boy of about eight or nine years of age and the Kalhōra were beginning to assert themselves in Upper Sind. Hamilton's account of Lower Sind is confined to the neighbourhood of the port and the capital and shows how travelling in Sind was still an undertaking not to be lightly faced. There was very little security or safety and the countryside was infested by bands of robbers ready to attack the caravans that conveyed merchandise. While it is the fashion to decry the inefficiency of the Moghul Empire for its inability to secure the safety of wayfarers, it must not be forgotten that in England, France and Germany of the same period travel was still an adventure and that every traveller armed himself to resist the attacks of highwaymen. In fact the highwayman in England flourished until well into the wheeled vehicle era of the stage coach, which came into existence only when roads began to be good enough to stand up to wheeled traffic and people were prepared to travel regularly on business and pleasure many miles from the villages in which they lived and spent most of their lives.[1] Certainly at the end of the seventeenth century in England no man took a long road journey without expecting and often meeting with trouble. The first thing he did was to arm himself with a couple of heavy pistols with which to hold his own against the evil designs of miscreants who hoped to rob him of his portable property.

Hamilton found Lāribunder to be five or six leagues from the sea on a branch of the Indus and capable of accommodating ships of 200 tons. The place itself did not impress him. 'It is but a village of 100 houses built of crooked sticks and mud; but it has a large stone fort with four or five great guns mounted upon it to protect the merchandise brought thither from the robberies of the Balūchīs and Mekrāns (Mekrānīs) that lie near them to the westward, and the Jāms to the eastward who being borderers are much given to thieving and they rob all whom they are able to master.' The allusion to the Jāms shows that there had been little improvement in their behaviour since the time of

[1] For the condition of England in the eighteenth century see *Johnson's England* generally. For conditions in the end of the seventeenth century in England, see *The Age of Charles II*, by Bryant, *passim*.



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Withington over eighty years earlier, and that the later Moghul empire in Sind was no better than the early one in preserving law and order. Hamilton found that the robbers had protection in the swampy nature of the land on the Indus delta and the rapid tides of the river, which made pursuit of marauders difficult. It was the practice to protect the camel caravans (kāfilas) with a guard of one hundred to two hundred horses ; but these guards were still in 1699 as unreliable as the guards paid by Withington in 1613 for safe conduct. Hamilton writes, 'But often these protectors suffer the cāfillas to be robbed, pretending the robbers are too numerous to be restrained by their small force and afterwards come in shares with the robbers.' In 1699 Hamilton mentions the robbing of a kāfila by four or five thousand 'villains' who cut off the guard of 250 horse and 500 of the merchants and carriers. It will thus be evident that both the caravans and the robberies were on a very magnificent scale.

Tatta is described as 'the emporium of the province, a very large and rich city. It is about three miles long and one and a half broad and is 40 miles distance from Lāribunder and has a large citadel on its west end capable to lodge 5000 men and horse and has barracks and stables convenient for them with a palace built in it for the nabob.'[1] (Nawāb—Governor.) All merchandise between Lāribunder and Tatta was conveyed by pack animals ; there were no carts engaged on this business, the nature of the country with its covering of bushes and scrub combined with its marshy character making road and wheeled traffic very difficult. The French traveller Thévenot (1667), who never visited Sind but is generally accounted an accurate and reliable observer, says that 'the finest palanquins that are in all Indostān are made at Tatta and there is nothing neater than the chariots with two wheels which are made for travelling.'[2] He speaks also of wagons, for carrying goods, with solid wheels but no spokes and drawn by eight or ten oxen. A merchant conveying anything of consequence ought to have 'four soldiers or four peons' by the sides of the wagon. Thévenot says that caravans commonly consisted of above two hundred wagons. The conflict of evidence is interesting but Hamilton as the eye witness is entitled to greater credence. The vehicles described by Thévenot are, however, plainly the country bullock carts still prevalent in parts of Sind with solid wheels which creak abominably, and the use of trailer bullocks in sandy parts is still practised. It is, however, possible that Thévenot has ascribed to Tatta and Diūl (Lāribunder) the conditions prevailing in northern Gujārāt, where

[1] For Manucci's account see *Storia do Mogor*, II, pp. 186, 414, 427.
[2] Thévenot, III, p. 53.

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carts largely replace camels and long trains of bullock carts are still a common feature of transport today.

Hamilton came to Lāribunder with a cargo from Malabār which he says was worth over ten thousand pounds. The insecurity of the country between the port and the capital, however, was such that no Indian merchants would deal with him till the goods were brought to Tatta, though they were agreeable to pay the rates that Hamilton was asking. Hamilton was, therefore, forced to go on to kāfila and take his goods to Tatta himself. The kāfila he travelled in was a large one ' of 1500 beasts and as many more men and women, besides 200 horse for our guard '. The presence of this big private force did not, however, ensure safety as servants brought news after the caravan had gone sixteen miles that the Balūchīs and Mekrānīs were out in large numbers. When the robbers threatened Hamilton called in the services of two of his expert seamen shots. ' I had two of my seamen that shot as well with a fuzee as any ever I saw; for I have seen them at sea for diversion knock down a single sea fowl with a single bullet as they were flying near the ship. I ordered one to knock down the herald, which he instantly did by a bullet through his head. Another came presently after with the same threatenings and met with the same treatment.' This drastic measure was, however, successful, and the caravan passed safely to a sort of half-way house, or serai, a ' mud wall fort called Dungham, a very proper English name for such a fortification '. The word seems to disguise some such name as Dhingan or Dangan (jō gōth), but is now unidentifiable. Captain Hamilton's remark hints at the insanitary condition in which these resting places must have been maintained. Indeed it was camping grounds and old inhabited sites which were the chief source of supply of saltpetre in those days, the mineral being removed by the refinement of the manure-laden soil. This place was the regular stage to Tatta and the seventeenth century equivalent of the traveller's halt. It was built midway between Tatta and Lāribunder to secure the kāfila from being set upon at night, ' who all lodge within it, men and beasts promiscuously, which makes it so nasty that the English appellation is rightly bestowed upon it. There are about twenty little cottages built close to it and the residents breed fowls, goats and sheep to sell to passengers and these are all the houses to be seen between Tatta and Lāribunder.'

Manucci describes the serais in the more settled parts of the Moghul Empire.[1] ' They are like fortified places with their bastions and strong gates; most of them are built of stone or of brick. In

[1] Irvine: *A Pepys of Moghul India*, p. 34. Abridged from Manucci: *Storia do Mogor*.

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every one is an official whose duty it is to close the gates at the going down of the sun. After he has shut the gates he calls out that everyone must look after his belongings, picket his horses by the fore and hind legs; above all that he must look out for dogs, for the dogs of Hindustān are very cunning and great thieves. At six o'clock in the morning before opening the gates the watchman gives three warnings to the travellers crying in a loud voice that everyone must look after his own things. After these warnings, if anyone suspects that any of his property is missing the doors are not opened till the lost thing is found. . . . These serais are only intended for travellers (soldiers do not go into them). Each one of them might hold more or less from 800 to 1000 persons with their horses, camels, carriages and some of them are even larger.' The serai at 'Dungham' was clearly something of this kind and placed on the main trade route. Hamilton says nothing, however, about a watchman or measures to prevent the travellers from stealing each other's property.

In Tatta Hamilton was impressed by the splendour of his lodging, 'a large convenient house of fifteen rooms with good warehouses. The stairs from the street were entire porphyry of ten feet long, of a bright yellow colour and as smooth as glass. They were about ten in number and led up to a square of fifteen yards long and about ten broad.' The Governor of Tatta at that time was encamped about six miles from the town in command of an army of eight or ten thousand men intending to punish the robbers of the caravans. He showed great civility to Hamilton, sending him a present of 'an ox, five sheep, as many goats, twenty fowls and fifty pigeons with sweetmeats and fruits in abundance. He desired me to let him know when we designed to drink a dish of coffee with him and he would send horses to bring us to the camp.'

Hamilton accepted this invitation and took as a present to the Governor 'a looking glass of about five pounds in value, a gun, a pair of pistols well gilded, a sabre blade and dagger blade gilded and a glass knife for his tobacco and an embroidered standish (stand dish) for it to stand on.' The Governor was most polite and granted Hamilton freedom of customs duty and other charges on his goods and also gave him the right, if he did not receive proper payment, to imprison the debtors instead of having to send them to the Kāzī's court. He also said that if the purchasers did not pay he would sell their wives, children or nearest relations to make good the debt. 'This privilege', says Hamilton, 'did me singular service when the time of payment came.'

Hamilton was much impressed with the boats that sailed on the Indus. 'Their vessels are called Kisties of several sizes. The

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largest can lade about 200 tons. They are flat bottomed and on each side cabins are built from stem to stem that overhang about two feet, and in each cabin is a kitchen and a place of exoneration which falls directly in the water ' (a characteristic still of the Indus river boats). ' These cabins are hired out to passengers and the hold, being made into separate apartments, are let out to freighters so that every one has a lock on his cabin and apartment in the hold and has his goods always ready to dispose on at what places he finds his market, and indeed in all my travels I never saw better conveniences of travelling by water.'

Hamilton's account of the trade of the town, the fertility of the fields and the cheapness of food and abundance of supplies will be dealt with more appropriately in another portion of this book. He mentions the Portuguese church, then deserted—doubtless the building about which Father Manrique had been so anxious half a century earlier. ' The Portuguese had formerly a church at the east end of the city. The house is still entire and in the vestry are some old pictures of saints and some holy vestments which they proffered to sell, but I was no merchant for such bargains.'

The picture thus vividly portrayed brings clearly before our eyes the Moghul Empire in Sind at the end of the seventeenth century. We can envisage the lawlessness in the countryside, the absolute autocracy of the Governor with his power over customs and administration of justice, the thriving river trade and the elegances of life in the town itself. Tatta was by far the wealthiest town in Sind in these days and the country round it was the centre of a thriving agriculture. Hamilton knew nothing of conditions in middle and upper Sind, but he proves that near the centre of government the Moghul administration was, within its limits, not lacking in practical efficiency. It did not have to worry about equal justice between man and man, or concern itself with the sorrows of the poor. That kind of conscience is reserved for governments of a later day when education is more widespread, when there is more general wealth and a wider margin exists for providing the conveniences, luxuries and elegances of life.

## VI. *Trading conditions in Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*

### (a) *The conveniences of trade*

The Moghul Empire was an autocracy directed to supplying the needs of the Imperial Court and the military force by which it was enabled to maintain its conquest over a vast area ruled by almost independent local chiefs. The demands of the Imperial Court on the economic resources of the country were immense. The

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Moghul dominions were always somewhere being harried by war and oppressed by the demands of military forces. Public order was but inadequately enforced. In these circumstances trade and industry were not likely to flourish well. Communications were poor. The villages were isolated. Capital was not easily available. The small craftsman working independently for himself was the chief source of production. An elaborate system of taxation impinged on every part of the business of manufacture, distribution and sale, with profession taxes, transit dues, customs and imposts on retail sales. The larger towns, about which we hear in the records of travellers, were the seats of the wealthy and the emporia of such merchandise as could be easily transported and sold. The glowing accounts of such cities as Ahmedābād, Lahore, Āgra, Delhi, Tatta and Surat did not apply to the villages where the bulk of the population lived on a bare subsistence level. The statement of Bernier, however, is exaggerated : ' Even a considerable proportion of the good land remains untilled for want of labourers, many of whom perish in consequence of the bad treatment they experience from the governors. The poor people when incapable of discharging the demands of their rapacious lords are not only deprived of the means of subsistence but are bereft of their children who are carried away as slaves.' Bernier is clearly here generalizing unwisely from some act of tyranny by which his feelings had been revolted. A truer picture is given by Mr Findlay Shirras when he writes:[1] ' Agriculture was always the main industry of the country and this was supplemented by cottage industries which had attained great perfection in certain parts of the country, notably in the muslins of Dacca and the brocades of Ahmedābād. . . . In pre-British India communications were so bad that, except for the Ganges and the Indus, or the roads from Āgra to Lahore and to the west coast, there were no channels of communication and hence it was impossible for India to be a commercial country. Had there been easy communications there would have been large markets for the production of cottage industries. Production must, therefore, have been limited in these land-locked areas.'

When the age of the English and other foreign traders arrived markets began to develop and trade routes were improved. The efforts of the foreign traders did actually stimulate the production of cottage industries of India, as a result of which much wealth was poured into the country. The cotton[2] industry

[1] G. Findlay Shirras : *Poverty and Kindred Problems in India*, p. 33.

[2] ' Europe produced linen for domestic use and tapestry for decoration : earlier our chintzes could not compete with these goods on their merits and could secure a market only by offering an advantage in point of price and this offer was not possible until they were brought all the way to Europe by sea. . . . The possibilities of the situation were realized mainly through the activities of the English Company.' Moreland : *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 123.

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was the first to profit thereby. The emphasis of many Indian writers is on painting a very black picture of this phenomenon. The picture is not only black. It is also untrue to facts, as judicious and fair-minded writers like Sarkar have made perfectly clear. The foreign traders sought to gain profit for themselves and their countries, but their operations were in no sense a drain on the wealth of India because they drew their main profits from the sale in Europe of Indian cotton goods which, but for them, would never have been produced in such bulk. As Indian cotton goods were then a comparative novelty in Western Europe, the foreign trader made large profits on the sales in the home markets, but he paid reasonably adequate prices to the weavers in India. Furthermore, the foreign traders were also competing amongst themselves for the sea carrying trade and freight charges were cut to ensure their obtaining the goods to carry. Had these ships not been available the goods would certainly not have been transported in the quantities in which they were. These trading operations were paid for in gold and silver which India began to absorb in enormous quantities in return for the labour and skill of Indian artisans and merchants. Thus in no sense did the foreign trade of the English and Dutch (the Portuguese had ceased to count as effective competitors) mean any drain on the wealth of India or the impoverishment of her people, as so many Indian economic writers continue to assert without any evidence whatever. The cardinal fact is that India had the practical monopoly of the supply of cotton goods for nearly a hundred years. The products of Indian looms were eagerly sought for in the markets of the West till well on into the eighteenth century. After that period the situation changed radically. The cotton industry of Europe had by that time found its feet and had begun to supplant Indian manufacture. This happened before the time of the industrial revolution in Britain with its power-looms, its factories, its vast increase of skill in the technique of production and its multiplicity and improvement of patterns. India could in no circumstances have expected to maintain after 1760 the position of privilege it occupied from 1600 to 1750. I think that Farūkī[1] is undoubtedly correct in his view that the works of Moreland paint too gloomy a picture of the social conditions of India during the reign of the great Moghuls from Akbar to Aurangzēb, as his views are coloured by the belief that the Indian population was utterly downtrodden, harried and tyrannized over by the autocracy of the government, which left them nothing but a bare pittance. Moreland tends to underestimate the fact that India has always been a poor country, that the common man has been content with a lesser

[1] *Aurangzēb and His Times*, p. 502.

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material standard of comfort than the European and that the vast majority of the population has never been accustomed to high standards of living. In fact there has always been a distinct school of thought in India (and this school of thought is alive today, led by no less influential a person than Mr Gāndhī himself) which believes that the strength of Indian civilization lies in its power to dispense with needless luxuries or elaborate comforts. The Hindu has usually been characterized by a very frugal expenditure on creature comforts. This point was put very well by Ovington[1] when he said, 'Sumptuousness and state suit not very well with the life and conditions of a Bannian. . . . This keeps our brokers at Surat who are bannians from all costly disbursements though they are reckoned by some to be worth 15, by others 30 lakhs of roupies.' Indeed the poetry of the modern Hindu poet Tagore preaches the same lesson of frugal simplicity in beautiful and dignified language. It is impossible, as Vincent Smith has shown, to make very much of the amazing jumble of statistical material in the Āīn-i-Akbarī. I have studied the statistics for Sind given in the Āīn[2] and can find very little of value in them. They offer no reliable guide to the social condition of the time, and they are maddeningly vague just where the historian desires them to be precise. As Vincent Smith[3] says, 'All subjects are considered solely with reference to the sovereign and the court and little or no attempt is made to compare the conditions under Akbar with those existing under his predecessors.'

It will be evident then that Sind with its internal waterway system of the Indus, its easy connexion with Lahore and Multān, two very flourishing towns at this period of India's history, its thriving cotton industry, and its vast emporium at Tatta with its busy port at Lāribunder,[4] was soon envisaged as a profitable centre of trade with Europe.

Let us now examine trading conditions in Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Indus was the chief means of communication between Lahore[5] and Tatta[6] and almost all the

1 Ovington : *A Voyage to Surat*, p. 188.

2 For reference to Sind in the Āīn, see especially III, pp. 336-9.

3 Vincent Smith : *Akbar the Great Moghul*, p. 386.

4 Lāribunder was the Dēbal of earlier days. The Khalāsat-ut-Tawārīkh says, 'Dēbal is a great place for pearls and other valuable commodities and it has salt and iron mines which pay a considerable revenue to the government. About 4,000 vessels and boats belong to the port of Dēbal.' Quoted in Raverty : *The Mihrān of Sind*, op. cit., p. 469.

5 For a description of Lahore see Montserrate, pp. 159-60.

6 For Tatta see Hamilton.

In the Āīn-i-Akbarī, II, p. 338, it is stated that no less than 40,000 boats of all kinds could be found in the sarkār of Tatta (probably a gross exaggeration).

For route between Ahmedābād and Tatta see De Laet, pp. 67-8.

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important cotton manufacturing places were on the river or within easy reach of it—Bakhar, Rōhrī, Darbēlo, Gambat, Kandiāro, Sehwan, Sann, Nasarpūr and Tatta. There was an excellent system of river transport which aroused the enthusiastic praise of Hamilton in 1699. Apart from the river, there were trade routes by land between Tatta and Ahmedābād[1]—the route followed by Withington in 1613—and from Tatta to Pālī and Jaisalmīr. There was a trade route from Bakhar to Afghānistān and Persia frequented by large kāfilas of laden camels that had regular seasons for travel which avoided the worst of the hot weather and inundation in Upper Sind and the intense winter cold of the highlands of Balūchistān and Persia. These kāfilas consisted of hundreds of camels accompanied by an army of traders and guards. In Sind itself transport was all by pack animals, mostly camels, which are well suited to the terrain. Wheeled traffic was practically unknown and it is doubtful if bullock carts were used much except in the environs of the various emporia.[2] The oriental system of markets and fairs on saints' days at saints' tombs was well established and the *Gazetteer*[3] of Sind gives a long list of places where such fairs were held on regular days every year. In fact in this respect Sind's commerce was on the old medieval system which had prevailed in England itself up to the time of the rise of the trading towns and the growth of the merchant gilds.

At Lāribunder on the Indus Sind possessed a port which accommodated vessels up to 200 and 300 tons burden—big ships for those days—and the trade arrangements were sufficiently good to earn the praise of the English merchants of the East India Company in 1636. By the middle of the seventeenth century Lāribunder was falling in importance because of the siltation of the river, a matter which aroused the interest of Aurangzēb when he was Governor of Multān in 1648-52.[4] By his efforts a new port was constructed nearby and called Aurangabunder. Though it was never wholly successful it served its day and turn and later developed into an inferior sub-port of Shāhbunder, which became important in the eighteenth century. From Lāribunder, Aurangabunder, Vasta (probably Wastī) bunder and Shāhbunder a coastal trade flourished chiefly with the Persian Gulf

[1] For a description of Ahmedābād see Mandelslo.

[2] Del Hoste, 1832. Carts are used about Khairpūr ; they are generally speaking badly constructed and principally used in bringing wood from the jungle. I saw two or three good carts but they belonged to the Amīrs. p. 42.

[3] See *Gazetteer of Sind* by Hughes.

[4] See Tavernier and *Storia do Mogor*, I, p. 12.
See also Thévenot and Bombay Diaries on the same point : Thévenot quoted in Raverty, p. 349.
See Sarkar : *History of Aurangzēb*, Vol. I, pp. 114-25.

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ports of Basra, Gombroon (Bunder Abbās), Muscāt, Congo (Kangūn) and Bahrein, and with the Gujārāt ports of Cambay and Surat. The trade was in the hands of Muhammadans. The English and Dutch made strenuous efforts to share the business with them—a task in which they were fairly successful, thanks to the better quality of their ships, the reliable nature of their crews, and also to their greater security when attacked by the Gulf and Kāthiawārī pirates who flourished wherever there was a chance of loot. Ships sailed for more distant ports as well, especially Goa and the Malabār coastal ports. In its day the Indus delta must have presented a sight of busy commerce such as it does not show now.

The distance of Tatta from the port was always regarded as troublesome because the forty miles between the towns were over bad and barren country (as described by Hamilton) and kāfilas were liable to be set upon and attacked by robbers, either Balūchīs or the men of the Lower Sind Jāms (probably Sindhis of the Sammo tribe or Mindhros, Jats and Mōhānos living in the deltaic region). The Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī gives an interesting illustration of the port methods prevailing at Lāribunder when a ship was sighted at the bar. 'Whenever a ship enters the creek between Lāribunder and the ocean it intimates its approach by firing a gun which is responded to by the Guard house in order by that signal to inform the people at the port of the arrival of a strange vessel. These again instantly send word of its arrival to the merchants of Tatta and then embarking on boats repair to the place where the guard is posted. Ere they reach it those on the look-out have already enquired into the nature of the ship. Every vessel and every trader must undergo this questioning. All concerned in the business now go to their boats (ghrābs), to the mouth of the creek. If a ship belong to the port it is allowed to move up and anchor under Lāribunder; if it belong to some other port it can go no farther; its cargo is transferred to boats and forwarded to the city'.[1]

The distance between Lāribunder and Tatta was a constant cause of trouble in other ways. Tavernier records an interesting incident connected with a trip an English Captain was making between the port and the metropolis. 'The King has conceded to the English captains that they shall not be searched when they leave their vessels to come on shore. But one day an English captain going to Tatta, one of the largest towns in India, a little above Sindi, which is at the mouth of the river Indus, when about to pass was arrested by the customs guard from whom he could not defend himself and who searched him in spite of anything he could say. They found gold on him, he having already conveyed some in sundry journeys between the vessel and the town. He was let off

[1] Elliot: I, p. 277.

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on payment of the ordinary duty.'[1] Evidently the customs guard must have thought that the Captain was making a habit of dealing in gold exchange, which he had no right to do. The usual practice was to deprive carriers of gold of their coin and pay its alleged equivalent value in local coins, in which it may be presumed the exchange was always against the importer. Apparently the Captain on this occasion was found out, as the freedom from search could hardly have been expected to cover import of gold for private profit in Tatta.

From these and other contemporary records it may be gathered that trade in Sind was on a very well-organized basis, both in respect of land and water journeys[2]; the business was soundly established and the government supervision very thorough. The difficulties which traders had to face were those common to the India of that day, vexatious imposts and delays, dangers from pirates and robbers, and poverty of road communication. The actual handling of goods was done by brokers, agents and dalāls, who were mostly Hindus and who probably managed to amass considerable wealth, though it was fatal to display any kind of opulence lest the capricious covetousness of the local officials should devise some method of confiscating it or levying a disproportionate penalty upon it. This in itself would afford sufficient reason for the 'bannians' not displaying any of the 'sumptuousness and state' which, as Ovington noted, they lacked.

### (*b*) *The industries and commerce of Sind*

Postans has given an account of the chief articles of Sind's trade about the time of the British annexation. By that time trade had been reorientated. Karāchi, Hyderābād and Shikārpūr had all become important towns and Sukkur was beginning to show signs of progress. In the main, however, Postans' lists are accurate enough for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries if the cardinal fact of the decline in the importance of the cotton industry, explained in the previous section, is borne in mind. Sind had then for nearly a hundred years ceased to be a source of supply of cottons for the European market. Tatta had declined and with Tatta had gone the fine chintzes and calicoes. But the cotton weaving still continued to satisfy the demand of a much smaller and more local

[1] Tavernier, I, p. 10.

[2] For number of boats on the Indus in the days of the Tālpūrs see Pottinger. 'In our voyage from Hyderābād to Rāja ka Dēra we counted three hundred and forty-one boats in nineteen days and on our return we saw in four days a greater number in proportion to the time. I was assured by a Hindu merchant that five hundred boats could be assembled for hire at Bakhar in a week.' *Memoir of Sinde*, p. 247.

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market. In fact Sind was now importing English chintzes and calicoes instead of exporting her own.[1] The articles of import were English piecegoods, velvets, woollens, sugar, spices and metals—mostly from Bombay ; cotton, coarse cloths and silk fabrics from Mārwār and Gujārāt ; silk manufactured goods from Bahāwalpūr and Multān ; dyes, drugs, dried fruits, horses from the North-West. The exports from Sind of its own production were rice, ghi, opium, indigo, dried fish and leather. With Khorasān there was a sort of special trade, financed by the Shikārpūrī Hindus. Sind exported indigo, coarse cotton cloths, silk manufactured goods, salt and saltpetre and received Khorasān goods in exchange. The internal trade between Upper and Lower Sind took the form of Upper Sind supplying Lower Sind with dry grains (i.e. other than rice), ghi, cotton and indigo and receiving in return rice, fish, manufactured leather and arms. This was the condition of trade after half a century of Tālpūr rule during which the chief object had been to shut Sind off from the outside world. The trade of Sind with Mārwār, Jaisalmīr, Bahāwalpūr, Punjāb, Gujārāt was of minor importance. During the days of the Moghul and Kalhōro rule, in the main, items of trade were the same except that the great business of Shikārpūr with Khorasān had not developed and that arms, the products of Hyderābād, did not figure in the lists of the articles of commerce.

During Moghul and Kalhōro times the chief industries were the manufacture of cotton goods, saltpetre and indigo, leather and fish. These apart, Moreland's description of trade and commerce in Moghul days[2] is true of Sind. Flour milling as an industry did not exist. Everyone ground his own flour in his own jandrī (grinding mill) such as any traveller in Sind can see at work today. Oil pressing was another village industry, widely diffused, the camels and bullocks turning the ghāns (oil presses), crushing the jāmbho and rape seed just as they do today. The potter's craft was equally primitive and can still be seen in Sind exactly as it was in Moghul and Kalhōro days. The making of glazed tiles was, however, highly skilful and the products were used to ornament tombs and mosques. Building was unimportant as most of the houses and habitations were made of mud, sticks, grass or branches of trees. Only in the largest towns like Tatta and for the tombs of holy men was the use of brick and stone much indulged in. The climate was so dry that mud houses lasted for a generation, and the poorer classes, just as they do today, lived in shacks and huts built of the cheapest material available. Sind is deficient in building stone. It is, therefore, useless looking in it for masterpieces of the mason's art. Apart from

1 Postans : *Personal Observations on Sindh*, pp. 264-5.
2 Moreland : *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, chapter V.

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cotton spinning and weaving, the finishing of leather goods, the production of saltpetre and indigo, and the drying of fish, Sind deserves little special notice industrially. These industries, however, are sufficiently important to merit special notice because they attracted the attention of the English traders and travellers to the country.

(1) *The cotton industry in Sind*

The references to this in the East India Company records are voluminous and many of them have already been quoted. Joseph Salbank, who travelled through Persia and Turkey in 1609, says: 'Rōree[1] is a town of husbandmen and painful people who deal also in merchandise, as cotton cloth, indico and other commodities and are a peaceable people to deal with all.' He adds, 'on the river pass barkes of fortie and fifty tounes by means of which there is traffique into divers parts of India'. Of Sukkur (which he took mistakenly for Bakhar) he notes that it 'consisteth most of weavers and diers which serve the country round about'.[2] Moreland[3] says that the production of cotton goods for export was in the main drawn from four tracts—the Indus plain with its outlet at the port of Lāribunder, the country round the Gulf of Cambay and as far south as Dābul (Dābhol), the Coromandel coast and Bengal. There were large communities of weavers at Lahore, Multān, Sukkur, Tatta and other towns on the rivers of the Indus system, and much of this produce was exported by sea, some going towards Arabia and the rest being taken at this period by the Portuguese. Tatta and Nasarpūr were the main centres of the industry in Sind. Tatta was, throughout the seventeenth century, particularly remarkable for the excellence of its products. Manucci[4] says: 'Tattah abounds in very fine white cloth, also in coarse cloth, and printed cloth of two kinds and has much leather which is exported to Arabia and Persia.' Withington[5] notes: 'Concerning Sinde no city is by general report of greater trade in the Indies than Tatta, the chief port of Lowri bunder three days journey from it, a fair road (roadstead) without the river's mouth clear of worms. . . . There are other commodities, bāftas, stuffs, lawns (fine cotton goods and muslins), indico, coarse not so good as Bayāna.' Thévenot[6] writes: 'It is a country of great traffic and especially the town of Tatta where the Indian merchants buy a great many curiosities made by the inhabitants who are wonderfully ingenious in all kinds of arts. The Indus makes a great many little islands towards

[1] Quoted in Raverty: *The Mihrān of Sind*, p. 494.
[2] ibid., p. 495.
[3] Moreland: *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 182.
[4] Manucci: *Storia do Mogor*, II, p. 427.
[5] Withington: *Early Travels in India*, pp. 217-18.
[6] Thévenot: pp. 175-6.

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Tatta, and these islands being fruitful and pleasant make it one of the most commodious towns of the Indies, though it be exceeding hot there.' Hamilton gives a still more detailed account. After recounting the productions of this and the inland country as saltpetre, sal ammoniac, borax, opoponax, assafoetida, goat bezoar, lapis tutiae and lapis lazuli and raw silk, he continues: 'They manufacture in wrought silks, which they call jemāwaars, in cotton and silk called cuttanees, and in silk mixed with Carmania wool, in calicoes, coarse and fine, sheer and close wrought. Their cloth called Jūrries is very fine and soft and lasts beyond all other cotton that I have used. They make chints very fine and cheap and coverlets for beds very beautiful.' Hamilton also states that three years before his arrival (i.e. in 1696) plague caused by the absence of rain carried off 80,000 people (from Tatta and the neighbourhood) who manufactured cotton and silk[1] and above one half of the city was deserted and left empty.

Tatta was still an important place in the days of the second English factory (1758-75), but it was already beginning to decline because trade was taking other channels with the rise of Karāchi, Hyderābād and Shikārpūr, the silting up of the river mouth at Shāhbunder, and the decline in demand for Tatta and Sind goods caused by Britain's being able then not only to supply herself but to export cotton goods abroad. These causes, and not the incompetence of the Kalhōra and Tālpūrs as rulers, so naively assumed by persons of Postans' or Burton's ways of thinking, were responsible for the decay of the once great metropolis.[2] This decay was so complete as to make a European traveller in 1842 remark: 'The streets are narrow, irregular and very dirty. The houses which are built of clay, wood and brick, resemble square towers with flat roofs, on which the inhabitants are accustomed to sleep in the open air during the warm nights. Cakes of dung used for firing are piled against the walls. There are only a few mosques in the place which are built of stone and painted white, but they have the same dirty and ruinous appearance as the town; and there are no traces of the extensive trade which formerly was carried on. . . . Poverty and dirt everywhere prevail.'[3] By this time Karāchi was an important port. Hyderābād had a population of 35,000 and Shikārpūr was the centre of an indigenous banking

[1] He mentions also the lacquering of wood (still carried on), inlaying of cabinets, and the putting up of butter in large jars called 'dūppas' made of the hides of cattle with a neck and mouth on one side, of all sizes to hold quantities of butter from 5 to 320 pounds, so that the butter kept the whole year round without salt.
Pinkerton: VII, pp. 304-9.

[2] This view is expressed also by Burnes.

[3] Captain Leopold von Orlich: *Travels in India*, pp. 103-4.

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organization that financed much trade in Sind, Balūchistān, Afghānistān and Central Asia. But Sind cotton goods had long ceased to interest foreign traders.

(2) *Saltpetre*

Saltpetre occupied in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a vastly more important place in foreign trade than it does to-day. As we have seen already, the second English factory in Sind was established largely to obtain regular supplies of saltpetre, and the production of the country was estimated up to 10,000 maunds (crude) annually. Saltpetre was a commodity strictly watched by the Moghul administration. The English Company, however, sought and obtained monopoly rights as far as supply to England was concerned. It was also anxious to obtain from the Indian rulers parwānas which would enable the Company effectively to cut out all rivals. Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro did grant such a parwāna to the second factory, but he was always ready to allow native interlopers from the Persian Gulf to trade in saltpetre. This attitude led to protests by the Sind factors. In the seventeenth century saltpetre did not occupy so prominent a position in the factory's list of goods, but, with indigo, it constituted one of the items of business which they desired to develop. The demand for saltpetre became important during the sixteenth century and arose from the military need for gunpowder. Moreland says: 'The substance is a by-product of human and animal life under conditions which are now regarded as insanitary but which widely prevailed during the seventeenth century, and indeed to a much later date, and the necessary supplies were obtained by methods similar to those still practised in India, the product being washed out of the contaminated[1] soil.' India became prominent as a large possible source of saltpetre about 1620, when England was becoming perturbed because of the shortage of local supplies at home. Shafāat Ahmad Khān remarks that 'the importance of saltpetre in the seventeenth century can hardly be exaggerated. At that time powder-making depended on the obtaining of earth from the floor of buildings that had been used for stables. The Civil War in England increased the demand for gunpowder and consequently saltpetre. . . . The utility of the article combined with its scarcity made its importation a matter of national importance and the Company became the sole provider of it to the Crown.' (*East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century*, p 13.) In this respect it is interesting to note that Aurangzēb in 1646, when Viceroy of Gujārāt, had forbidden the export of saltpetre lest gunpowder

[1] Moreland: *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 118.

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made from it should be used against a Muslim power,[1] but the policy in this respect was altered with the transfer of Aurangzēb to another administrative charge. He does not seem to have followed this policy when he became Governor of Multān and as such had authority over the territory of Tatta then supplying saltpetre to the East India Company at Lāribunder. The trade, however, did not become of first-rate moment till after 1650 when Bihār was developed as the chief source of supply. Till 1650 saltpetre could not compete with more highly priced goods like cotton, colours and indigo and was shipped largely loose among the baled goods as 'kintlage'; but after 1650 it became valuable on its own account.

The Sind factory in the eighteenth century was very anxious to obtain from Sind all the saltpetre it could get. The supply from Sind was never more than a useful auxiliary of the main supply obtained from Bengal and Bihār. We have already seen that there was difficulty about coppers for refining the crude saltpetre and that artificers could not be procured in Sind to make coppers as satisfactory as the imported ones. The difficulty about repairing was common all over India owing to the technical deficiencies of the Indian coppersmiths for such work. Moreland says: 'Apart from official interference the only difficulty affecting the trade seems to have been the supply of suitable vessels for the refineries. The commodity was in any case bulky and needed refining in order to remove the impurities, but the Indian methods of evaporation, in which earthen vessels were used, were found to be unsatisfactory and appliances made of copper could not be obtained locally.'[2] Sind was used to supplement other sources of supply like the Coromandel coast, Gujārāt and Āgra, and then later Orissa and Hūgli. The business flourished to a moderate extent, as we know from the factory letters, for it was necessary to increase the number of coppers and enlarge the saltpetre warehouse at Shāhbunder. The resources of Sind were, however, running low towards the end of the second factory's days, as we learn from Crowe.[3] Writing in 1799 he states: 'There are many salt petre grounds in the different parts of the country but mostly in the delta particularly about Shāhbunder and Aurangabunder. Those in the vicinity of Tatta were exhausted and the nearest are at Sācra Purgunnah (Mīrpūr Sākro), about thirty miles distant. The Honourable Company had extensive works under their former establishment at Shāh Bunder for purifying and crystallizing this article which is now imported in Bombay at a much cheaper rate from Bengal.' In the seventeenth century saltpetre was important as a main ingredient for the manufacture of gunpowder, but in the

1 Moreland: *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 122.
2 Moreland: ibid.
3 Crowe: op. cit.

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eighteenth century its usefulness had extended to other and more peaceful operations, such as glass making, the sizing of cloth and the making of dyes. It is to be assumed that much of the considerable profit the Company made in the eighteenth century in virtue of their monopolistic control of this article was due to the demand for it by the growing cotton manufacturing industry of Britain and to the rise of the modern manufacture of glass and artistic earthenware in the 'Potteries'.

(3) *Indigo*

Indigo receives considerable mention in the days of the first Sind factory but was of no importance in the days of the second.[1] The first English factors spent time and trouble and much money in locating sources of indigo supply in Sind. Some of the factors stayed in the indigo producing areas to encourage the growing of the crop. But Sind was never very important as a source of supply, despite all the efforts made.[2] Indigo growing was concentrated mostly in Middle Sind—the territory of Sehwan, Bubak and Sann, and Sehwan itself were the chief areas of production. The quality was, however, inferior and the factors were always complaining of the indigo's being adulterated with sand and other ingredients to increase the weight. Sind was never able to compete with Gujārāt, where Sarkhēj was the great centre of production, or Bayāna, fifty miles from Āgra. The Indian indigo, says Bāl Krishna, 'began to lose its ground in the English market about 1650. Nine years later we find that such abundant quantities had been imported from the Barbadoes and the West Indies that indigo was not required from India unless the Lahore[3] variety could be bought at 18d., and the Ahmedābād one at 9d. per pound, but the former was invoiced at 12½d. per pound at Surat in 1660. . . . Fortunately the demand for indigo was specially increasing in the dyeing and manufacturing industries of England and therefore large quantities continued to be imported from India up to the end of that century.'[4]

[1] On account of the West Indies having appeared as a supplier of indigo to the detriment of the Indian trade.

[2] There are references to this in the Company's letters, *passim*.

[3] i.e. produced at Bayāna but exported through Lahore. See Moreland: *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 109. 'Lahōrī commanded the higher price in Europe but it cost more to put on the market and the variation in Indian prices was the principal factor in determining the quantity of each brand to be exported in any particular year.' op. cit., p. 110.

[4] *Commercial Relations between India and England* (1601-1757), p. 155. The indigo produced at Bayāna was more popular because it was adapted to overland transport, and was purer than the Sarkhēj variety which was in the form of cakes, called 'feat' and adulterated with a mixture of sand, which made three pounds of Sarkhēj equal to two pounds of Lahōrī. Sind dealers obviously copied the trading methods of the Gujārāt producers and mixed their indigo with sand.



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(4) *Leather and leather-work*

Many contemporary writers have remarked on the excellence of Sind leather and the importance of it as an article of trade. Sind has always been a land with large numbers of buffaloes and oxen and the export of cattle from Sind was a matter to which the English factors in the eighteenth century were told to pay attention. Several of the Company's invoices of this period mention the transport of cattle to Bombay. Thus Sind had always, as it still has, a plentiful supply of hides and much raw material for the leather industry. Sind saddlery and ornamental leather-work for camels' upholstery and for coverlets were famous. The business was, however, mostly in the hands of the native traders and the East India Company were not greatly interested in it. Hamilton mentions the leather butter jars capable of holding butter up to 320 pounds and keeping it fresh for a year. Withington speaks of the Sind shields and bucklers which were of superior quality. 'Their buckler is made very great in the fashion of a beehive, wherein when occasion serves they will give their camels drink or their horses provender.' Linschoten says: 'The people of Sind make excellent and fair leather and cunningly wrought with silk of all colours, both flowers and personages; this leather in India is much esteemed to lay upon beds and tables instead of carpets.'[1] Manucci also remarks that Sind 'has much leather which is exported to Arabia and Persia'. The Sind tanners were distinguished by their special skill, a skill that is not yet dead, and even so late as 1842 a European traveller noted approvingly the technique of the Sind village tanners. 'As soon as the hide is properly tanned and oiled it is dried in the shade. The leather of Sinde is some of the best in India and not inferior in softness and durability to that of Europe.'[2] Sarkar[3] has also remarked that, with the Punjāb, Sind was the home of the leather industry. The camel and horse trappings were finely made and artistically decorated as described by Linschoten, and no one familiar with modern Sind needs to be told that the finely wrought camel coverings and horse adornments seen on the mounts of any well-to-do zemindār today are in the direct line of the industry which performed so useful a service for the country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, in face of all the evidence it is impossible to accept as a true account of the situation the observations of Moreland. These are based on the view that the export of hides on an extensive scale is a modern phenomenon, that few of the foreign observers say anything about the common people wearing

1 Linschoten: *Voyage to East Indies*, I, p. 56.
2 Von Orlich: *Travels in India*, p. 101.
3 Sarkar: *Moghul Administration*. (Second Series), pp. 71-81.

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shoes, and that the saddlery of Moghul times was composed to a great extent of ropes and cloth and did not use leather in the European fashion. Most foreign observers write of the typically Hindu parts of India, where the bovine animals are held in superstitious veneration, trade in hides is regarded as something dishonourable, the tanner is a despised and down-trodden creature, and a beating with shoes is held to be an outrageous insult. In a hot country people go normally without shoes or sandals, except where the road is too rough for the feet, when they put on the shoes they have been carrying in their hands. Manucci tells how at the siege of Bakhar a cannon was loaded with old shoes so that Khalīlullāh Khān's tent could be peppered with them to make a laughing stock of him. In Sind, a Muslim land, this prejudice against leather is not felt by three-quarters of the population[1] and we have no reason to think that in Moghul days the habits of the people differed in this respect materially from what any traveller can see for himself in Sind today. The Balūchī warriors, according to Burton, wore ' dastāna ', a short gauntlet, the more necessary because the sword hilt offered no defence to the fingers, and the shields were of different sizes and shapes according to the taste of their owners and were generally made of leather or rhinoceros hide.[2] In fact the truth is rather that leather was employed for a variety of purposes which today are accounted better served by metal. This is natural because metal does not exist in Sind, whereas the materials for the production of leather were everywhere abundant, and the preparation of leather was a widespread and prosperous cottage industry in this part of India. Had it not been so, Manrique could never have observed, ' This region abounded in cattle, especially buffaloes which were so numerous that many ships were dispatched to various ports laden with their hides. From these they manufacture the lovely leather which the Portuguese style " Sind leather ", ornamented with back-stitched work in different coloured silks, in fine designs and finished off with fringes of silk at the ends. These leathers are used to cover tables and as hangings in reception rooms, as well as for beds, as they are very soft and cool in summer.'[3]

### (5) *Fish and fish products*

Sind has always been noted for the excellence of its fresh and salt water fish. Fish has always been esteemed as an article of food except by those classes of Hindus which are vegetarian.

[1] The practice of removing leather from the feet on entering a mosque cannot be cited as an instance.

[2] *History of Sindh*, pp. 240-1.

[3] Manrique : op. cit., p. 239.

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Almost every traveller in Sind has made reference to the abundance and the cheapness of fish in the markets. Manrique describes the skilful way in which pallo (Clupea ilisha) was caught in the Indus by fishermen balanced on earthenware pots, an industry carried on to this day in exactly the same way. Hamilton says that he got in Tatta the finest carp he ever saw or tasted. 'Some of them weigh above twenty pounds weight and we have them alive in Tatta market.'[1] As early as the time of Ibn Haukal, the Arabic traveller, it was noted that the races of people who live near the river 'dwell in houses formed of reeds and eat fish and aquatic birds'.[2] The Āīn-i-Akbarī says that the staple food in Lower Sind 'consists of rice and fish. The latter is smoked and loaded in boats and exported to the ports and other cities affording a considerable profit. Fish oil is also extracted and used in boat building. There is a kind of fish called palwah (pallo) which comes up into the Indus from the sea, unrivalled for its fine and exquisite flavour.'[3] The centre of the sea-fishing industry was Karāchi, and the coastal area. But the fresh-water fisheries were also valuable.[4] There was a business in dried fish for export and there is also mention of an industry, existing before the British occupation, namely the preparation of isinglass which had its area of consumption in the far East. The shipping of all these commodities, which did not interest the English and other foreign traders, was in the hands of Muhammadans, Persians, Arabs, Zanzibārīs and Memons of Cutch and Kāthiawār, who owned country craft. They were in fact the ancestors of the men who still conduct much of the coastal trade of Western India today by means of the dhows or 'padāos' whose great lateen sails make a picturesque scene in every small coastal port of Western India from Sind as far south as Malabār. The Lower Sind littoral was, with Gujārāt, Kanara and Malabār, one of the great areas which supplied this indigenous seafaring population. In the days of the second factory doubtless many of them indulged in piracy. Fish, in varied forms suitable for transport, was one of the articles of commerce handled by these men of business. The modern sea fisheries of Karāchi and the Sind coast[5] flourish on much the same lines as the fisheries

1 Hamilton : op. cit.

2 Elliot : I, p. 40.

3 Elliot : II, pp. 336-9.

4 Lieutenant Del Hoste says : 'Fisheries are established at different places, and the rivers and water courses portioned off to the Mohānas or fishermen. At each of these places there is a Mehta to collect the duties which consist of one-third of what is daily caught.' Secret Department, Sinde Mission Memoirs by Lieutenant Del Hoste. Bombay Government Records, 1832, p. 39.

5 See *The Marine Fisheries of the Bombay Presidency*, by the present writer.

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which supplied the articles of fish food exported in the days of the Moghuls and the Kalhōra.

It will thus be seen that the popular modern idea of Sind as a desert is as fallacious as the view that seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind was a purely agricultural country wholly dependent on the fertilizing waters of the Indus for its existence. Actually, Sind supported half a dozen thriving industries, the importance of which the general histories of India do not mention. A large part of the population was also dependent upon camels for a livelihood and the vast herds of buffaloes made possible a brisk local trade in butter and ghi, which is mentioned by writers like Withington, Manucci and Hamilton. The camels supplied camel hair which was one of the raw materials used in rug- and mat-making, and camel keeping on the Delta was a well-organized business. This we know from the words of Crowe, who says: 'Camels are bred in every part of Sind and the greatest number in the salt marshes near the sea where there is an abundance of furze and scrub affording them rich food. Fresh water is brought down to them every week by the keepers who go two or three days sail up the river for the purpose.'

## VII. *Trading methods and progress of the East India Company in Sind*

It is utterly fallacious to assert that the profits made by the East India Company in its commercial dealings with India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were to the disadvantage of the Indian producers. To suggest such a conclusion is to depreciate too much the intelligence of the Moghuls or the Kalhōra. The government of the day was very much alive to its own interest and permitted only what it considered advantageous to itself. Certainly no part of the policy was to impoverish the people of the land in order to enrich foreign traders. These foreign traders never had things as they wanted them to be, as the history of the two factories in Sind proves conclusively. A judicious and impartial Indian historian has in fact definitely asserted, and substantiated the assertion by quotation from contemporary evidence, that throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Indian industries were kept alive and developed by three chief agencies, the Emperor of Delhi, the nobility of the time, and the export traders. It is no object of this book to enlarge on this theme. Careful students of the Moghul régime are fully aware of the facts and know how the wealth of the Delhi Court and of the feudal aristocracy which ruled the land was one of the main incentives to Indian industrial activity. 'The foreign traders were, however',

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says Sarkar, ' the chief cause of the expansion of our manufactures, especially of articles of ordinary use as distinct from superfine articles of luxury and rare art products, though a certain quantity of the latter class of goods was also shipped abroad.'[1]

The Sind factories did not differ in organization and methods from the Company's factories elsewhere. The system prevailing at Surat, which was the headquarters of the first Sind factory, has been described by Rawlinson,[2] quoting the original authorities. Conditions at Tatta and Lāribunder were necessarily more primitive, as we have complaints about the unsuitability of the house in Tatta, the unhealthiness of the surroundings of Shāhbunder, and the lack of amenities at Lāribunder and Shāhbunder, where the damp climate affected badly the woollen goods stored in the warehouses. The servants of the Company comprised merchants, factors and writers. After five years' service as a writer a man was promoted to become a factor, after three years as a factor he became a junior merchant and after three years as a junior merchant he was promoted to be a senior merchant. It seems that in Sind most of the officers who held charge were junior men ; even the Resident at ' Scindy ' can hardly have been a person very high in the Company's service, despite the numerous difficult tasks of diplomacy with which he was being continually presented. The Sind factory had always a surgeon attached to it, though many of the surgeons seemed unable to keep themselves well and more than one of them died in service in Sind. There appears never to have been a Chaplain. So the Sind factories have no shrewd commentator of the stamp of Terry or Ovington to give graphic details of the everyday life. The Resident himself was a person of some dignity which he always endeavoured to uphold. In fact his refusal in the time of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro to call upon the Prince except in a manner which he considered consonant with his position led to some minor misunderstandings. It must, however, be said that the Resident was always received politely by the Sind ruler when he did call and he was treated with much personal respect. To what extent the Residents spoke the language of Sind is not known but certainly many of the Company's servants did know both Persian and Sindhi ; possibly Robert Bourchier did, and certainly Robert Sumption. It must not be forgotten that even in the interregnum between the two factories there appear to have always been Englishmen engaged in trade in Sind, though probably they were doing business mostly on their own account. There was, however, during the prosperous period

[1] See *Moghul Administration* (Second Series) by Jādunath Sarkar, pp. 71-81.

[2] See *British Beginnings in Western India* by H. L. Rawlinson.

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of the later Stuarts and afterwards, a great demand for Sind cloth[1] from Europe and much business was done. Presumably this was achieved from the Ahmedābād factory working through travelling English agents and native brokers and the goods must often have been shipped by native craft.

In the days of the earlier factory the salaries of the factors were low, £50 per annum, but this was supplemented by much private business. It seems that Spiller and Scrivener in the seventeenth century must have employed much of their business acumen on their own account. In the eighteenth century salaries had risen and Beaven as Resident was paid £200 per annum. But even then private business had not been debarred. It seems clear from the records that Robert Sumption, who in the decade previous to the establishment of the second factory had gained much personal acquaintance with Sind trading conditions, must have been there for years doing business on his own account. The low salaries were in fact supplemented in numerous ways as Ovington makes clear.[2] 'We must remember', he says, 'that the banyans, once a year which is their great festival season called the Diwālly time, have a custom, much like that of our New Year gifts, of presenting the President and Council, the Minister, Surgeon and all the factors and writers with something valuable either in jewels or plate, atlasses or other silks according to the respect which they owe to every man's station whereby the young factors, besides their salaries, diet and lodgings, are supplied likewise with clothes sufficient for service a great part of the year, which things prevent their necessity of any great annual expense and happily contribute towards giving them a life of delight and ease.' Furthermore, the profits of private trade were considerable. As Ovington says,[3] in 'the advantageous liberty of traffick to all parts from China to Surat they commonly make cent per cent. They can sometimes make fifty per cent from thence, if they only carry out silver and bring home gold and those among them that are persons of credit and esteem but of small fortunes may borrow from the banians money for China at 25 per cent and that only paid upon the safe arrival of the ship, which if it miscarries on the voyage are exempt from all damage.'

It will thus be manifest that in the days when the East India Company was purely a commercial and trading company, the official business was much supplemented by the private transactions of the factors and that these private transactions were carried out in a sort of co-operation with the Indian moneyed traders who shared in the profits. The fact, too, that these Indian traders were ready

[1] See *The Trade of the East India Company* by F. P. Robinson, *passim*.
[2] Ovington, pp. 401-2.
[3] ibid., p. 391.

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to offer yearly at Diwāli large and valuable presents to the Company's servants proves that the co-operation was profitable, since it would be unreasonable to believe that the banias gave away wealth on this scale without any hope of advantage to themselves. In Sind there were many considerable Hindu traders on whom the Company's agents relied and the names of them are mentioned casually in the East India Company records, for example Bumbamal, who was required to make a large payment to the Moghul officers out of his wealth, and Navaldās, who is quoted as an instance of a reliable man of business capable of financing commerce between Sind, Multān and Lahore. In fact he must have been one of the merchants called Multānīs, who have given their name to an efficient banking business, men whose names are still current in the indigenous banking and commercial transactions of this portion of Asia.

The ordinary method of business was for the Company to employ Hindu brokers or gumāshtas, who arranged direct with the producers of the goods, paid them advances made by the Company, and provided the goods under the supervision of the factors. The factors made trips to all the chief centres of production like Nasarpūr, Sehwan, Kandiāro, Darbēlo, Rōhrī or Bakhar and often spent a considerable part of the year in outlying places. The amount of bullion which was thus imported into Sind for financing these transactions was considerable. The records show many instances. The goods thus procured were of great variety though cotton pieces were the chief item. Robinson[1] describes the exports of the East India Company as including cincabs, vermilion, copper, mother of pearl, tortoise-shell, quicksilver, stick lack, safflowers, indigo, green gingers, sugar candy, cassia lignum, aloes, anacardium, bergamium, churranja oil (preparation of Indian hemp), sago, galingale, curries, tineal (crude borax from Tibet), nux vomica, long pepper, cotton yarn, tea, cake lack, elephants' teeth, shellack and gunnies ; and the warehouses of the Company showed a still greater variety of goods like blue longcloth, damasks, satins, Persian taffetas, velvet, diapers, chintzes, gold gauze and shawls. Sind did not, of course, supply all these, but many of these articles were traded in from time to time in Sind when opportunity offered, as some of the invoices show.

The mechanics of the trade have been described by Sarkar.[2] 'They followed the commercial medieval system of giving "dādan" or advances to individual workmen and looking after them in their cottages and seeing delivery of the goods at the proper time by means of an army of agents. They also bought extensively at big marts through their Indian brokers, usually under the supervision of

1 Robinson : op. cit., *passim*.
2 Sarkar : *Moghul Administration*, pp. 71-81.

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European factors. The suppliers at these marts were not big capitalist manufacturers but a large number of individual producers and a few wandering middlemen who had made their purchases in the villages of the producers and brought them to the market for sale. . . . In the case of the major portion of our exports, the European Company's agents (gumāshtas and peons) regularly visited the workmen in their cottages to see that the dādan was being applied to the right use.' The subedār or faujdār had often to be bribed to bring pressure on the workmen to work honestly.

The profits of the Company were admittedly large as long as the Western demand for India-made goods prevailed. The Company's encouragement of the cotton trade of India did not, however, pass without challenge from the English weavers, whose business at home began to suffer, especially after 1672 when the Company brought out to India English weavers in order to improve the technique of Indian production. This led to protests from the weavers of Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, Canterbury, Norwich, Bristol and other centres of English production. The two Indian articles that competed with the English manufactures were silk, raw and wrought, and calicoes. The churchwardens of Bethnal Green petitioned the House of Commons about this time (1695-7). They alleged, ' The poor of our hamlet are grown extreme numerous amongst us, in regard many weavers and others employed in and about the silk and woollen manufactures have entered His Majesty's Service. The weaving trade and several other trades developing thereon are extinguished among us, which formerly used to be the chief maintenance and support of the necessities of our poor, the importing of wrought silks, Bengals, and printed and stained calicoes from India and Persia being the chief occasion thereof.' ' We have ', said one writer of the time, ' created already and are now inciting the Indians and Chineses that are a numerous and laborious people and can and do live without fire and clothing and with a trivial expense for food.'[1] Sind goods had become very popular in London by this time and the East India Company records show a list of goods to be provided at ' Sind ' for the year 1696. This demand continued to grow and in a protest of the time we learn, ' The quantities of chintz required in 1699 reached still higher figures. The list of goods to be provided at Surat and Bombay (the headquarters of the Company in India since 1687) included the following : cotton yarn, 400,250 bales ; quilts, 25,000 ; chintz of all kinds, 46,000. Scind goods of all sorts that could be had were to be sent. Bombay and Surat seem to have been the principal sources from which the Company secured the supply of goods.'

[1] Shaf'āat Ahmad Khān : op. cit., p. 154.

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Along with this great expansion of the trade the export of bullion naturally increased despite the great opposition of the mercantilist school of thought. The average amount annually exported during the years 1697-1702 was not less than £800,000, but 'during the years 1697-9 there were exported 4,177,859·13 ounces of silver and 4,027·3 ounces of gold'.[1] It is not relevant to the purpose of this book to trace the subsequent fate of the weavers of England. The East India Company, as a result of an arrangement with the various conflicting interests who wished to share its profits, emerged in 1708 stronger than ever and established on a broader basis of capital. As a result there set in an era of unparalleled prosperity which lasted till the end of the first half of the eighteenth century. The statistics prove the course of this progress, despite the wars of the European nations with each other. While in 1658-67 only 99 ships with a tonnage of 31,040 tons were sent out to the East Indies trade, by 1718-27 the number of ships had risen to 150 and the tonnage to 62,040, and in 1748-57 to 180 with a tonnage of 87,200. During all this time Sind had no factory, but it would be wrong to assume that Sind supplied no goods, since Bombay and Surat and Ahmedābād continued to flourish and the Indus river traffic did not, as far as we know, seriously diminish. All the same, Sind did not continue to hold its own with Bengal and Gujārāt, and, with the gradual growth of an indigenous cotton industry in England, Indian goods began to fall off in demand[2] while saltpetre became more important in the trade statistics of this part of India. The strange muddled foreign politics of the time require comment. Bāl Krishna says: 'In those days when no international law was recognized to bind the European and Asiatic nations whenever the European peoples were free to fight amongst themselves and surprise and capture each other's ships and even dominions beyond the Hebrides, trade was nothing but armed commerce, guarded and preserved by means of armed vessels and armed men. . . . By various progressive measures the Company brought them to such a state of perfection as to make them surpass the shipping employed in almost any service whatever, the navy of Great Britain perhaps not excepted.'[3] From the East India Company records in the

[1] Sha'āaft Ahmad Khān: op. cit., p. 273.

[2] By the middle of the eighteenth century, before any machinery had been invented to revolutionize the manufacture of piecegoods, not only was the home demand fully satisfied by the English manufacturers but large quantities were being exported to the continental and American markets. Since 1710 almost the whole oriental trade in manufactured goods had been meant for the supply of foreign markets. These were being captured by England and thus the demand for Indian cloth had been yearly curtailed.

[3] Bāl Krishna: *Commercial Relations between India and England* (1601-1757), p. 252.

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Bombay Record Office we know something of the shipping strength which supported the second factory in Sind. It was no wonder that Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro was anxious to obtain the help of British ships for his projected war with Cutch. Doubtless it was to gain the favour of the Company for some such undertaking that he relinquished in favour of the Company the old imperial prerogative of the government to all wrecks and wreckage and salvaged goods. In his appreciation of the strength of the Company at sea he was ahead of the Moghuls who never, till the end, and when it was too late, realized the importance of sea power in India. By 1775, when Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro, for reasons already made plain, forced the withdrawal of the English factory from Tatta, the Company had bigger interests at stake in India than a share of the declining trade of Sind. It found what it wanted more easily obtainable in other parts of India, with results that are known to everyone familiar with the later eighteenth century in Indian history. By 1770 India's commanding lead in cotton piecegoods had disappeared for ever, entirely because of the force of economic circumstances outside the control of anyone. Sind suffered with the rest of cotton manufacturing India and, with the loss of the English trade, there arose the circumstances which the later Kalhōra exploited to turn Sind into a self-contained Muslim state closed for nearly three-quarters of a century to Englishmen. Tatta's day of glory was over and Sind relapsed into a condition of lethargy which it maintained till, after 1843, it was again drawn into the maelstrom of world politics, and communication with the outside world began in earnest once more. The decline of Sind's trade from 1775 onwards was not due to the incapacity of the Kalhōra or the narrow parochialism of the Tālpūrs. Nothing the Kalhōra or Tālpūrs could have done would have stopped effectively a decline due to circumstances beyond their control. This point has been very clearly made by one of the most sagacious observers of Tālpūr rule, Dr James Burnes.[1] But it has been stated equally emphatically by Assistant-Surgeon Heddle in 1836 with whose wise words we may close suitably this chapter on the trading wealth of Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. 'Are the Ameers to blame if the manufactures of their country have been ruined when we find that in this article of nitre for instance, the supplies, which once employed the industry of their subjects, are now derived by the former consumers from another quarter? The manufactures of cloth (loongees) which formerly were so prosperous at Tatta have fallen, not through the barbarous policy of the Ameers but by the changes in the state of society in India and in those countries whose princes and nobles were the

[1] Burnes: *A Visit to the Court of Scinde in 1828*, pp. 66-7.

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principal purchasers of such luxuries. . . . The deterioration of the Indus by which its navigation has been so much obstructed has been caused by no fault of theirs. . . . The people of Sind have also been much decried ; but the charge has been too indiscriminately brought forward against the whole population. The large masses of the indigenous population are particularly industrious whether in the occupation of agriculture or the manufactures. The merchants of Sind are active and intelligent, well protected though heavily taxed by the Government. . . . The people are orderly and obedient and the laws are respected.'[1]

[1] Bombay Government Records, No. XVII, New Series, p. 425. Pt. II. Memoir on the River Indus by Assistant-Surgeon Heddle, May 1836.

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# Chapter III

## The Simple Annals of the Poor

### I. *The standard of life*

'In the East the people does not change', says Lane-Poole, 'and there far more than many more progressive races the simple annals of the poor, however moving and pathetic, are indescribably trite and monotonous compared with the lives of those more fortunate to whom much has been given in opportunity, wealth, power and knowledge.'[1] These words are only partially true, and to some extent are definitely misleading. Not only are the lives of the poor anywhere not lacking in opportunity, but, were they indescribably trite and monotonous, the novels of writers like Gissing and Arnold Bennett could never have won popular appeal. The fact is that the modern mind is more interested in the fate and doings of the ordinary man than in the lives of princes and nobles. The study of economics has altered the mental outlook of all who think about serious things. It is absurd to say of Sind that the common man lacked opportunity when weavers conquered the country of Bahāwalpūr, and the offspring of mendicants and shepherds from the Balūchistān hills sat successively upon the throne of Sind. In fact all oriental history is a story of exploits by persons who generally made their way for themselves and hacked out a career of their own. These persons were mostly sprung from the multitude living on the bare subsistence level.

Vincent Smith quotes Sir Harcourt Butler to the effect that 'Famine lies broad written across the pages of Indian history.' This, too, is a half truth grossly misleading as a generalization if it means anything more than that severe famine used to follow failure of the rains. Of Sind it is particularly untrue. Sind is one of those lucky lands that are not seriously troubled if the monsoon rains fail, because Sind is the creation, the slow geographical accretion, of a river that provides life-giving water with unfailing regularity, though the bounty may not be equally copious every year. The calamities that have fallen on Sind are those of unchecked inundation, of drifting sand that covers fertile land, of changing river channels and of the capricious vagaries of a wandering flood that washes villages away in a night. In the Moghul and Kalhōro days Sind did not support one quarter of the population it now supports.

[1] *Medieval India under Muhammadan Rule*, Preface, p. v.



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The cultivated land was much more confined to the immediate vicinity of the river than it is today, when enormous canals carry in every direction the silt bearing waters of the Indus scores of miles from the river. Thus Sind has always been able within its limits to support in modest comfort a tolerably well-fed population. It is fallacious to assume that since history began this phenomenon has altered very much in character. Ibn Haukal wrote long ago of Mansūra, an old capital of the early Arab government, 'It is like an island and the inhabitants are Musulmāns. The climate is hot and the date grows here. . . .. The place also yields a fruit called ambaj (mango) resembling the peach in appearance and flavour. It is plentiful and cheap. Prices are low and there is an abundance of food.'[1] Al Idrisī, another Arab traveller, says much the same thing: 'That of which we are speaking is great, populous, rich and commercial. The buildings are constructed of bricks, tiles and plaster. It is a place of recreation and pleasure. Trade flourishes. The bazaars are filled with people and well stocked with goods. . . . Fish is plentiful, meat is cheap and native fruits abound.'[2] If we come down to the later days of the Moghul period, the prosperity of Sind impressed itself equally strongly upon observers. The Āīn-i-Akbarī says, 'In the winter there is no need of poshtīns (fur lined coats) and the summer heats are moderate except in Sewistān. Fruits are of various kinds and mangoes are especially fine. In the desert tracts a small kind of melon grows wild. Flowers are plentiful and camels are numerous and of good breed. The means of locomotion is by boats of which there are many kinds large and small to the number of 40,000. . . . Fishing likewise is much pursued. . . . Shālī rice is abundant and of good quality. . . . Milk curds of excellent quality are made and keep for months.' The writer of the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī is ecstatic in his praise of Tatta in its prime. 'In truth', he says, 'at such a fortunate moment was the foundation of this place laid that trouble and affliction have never visited its inhabitants. Contented with what they possess they carry on their affairs in luxury and ease. The cheapness and happiness which reigns among these people has never yet been or ever will be found elsewhere.' These accounts prove that the inhabited Sind of former generations was not a hard and barren land yielding but grudgingly her gifts to those who tilled the soil and sought a livelihood. The land was considered a sort of Arabia Felix with a quiet, industrious and intelligent people living in isolation from the rest of the Indian continent.

These descriptions cannot all be untrue. But how can this delightful picture of bounty, luxury and ease be reconciled with

[1] Elliot: I, pp. 24-5. [2] ibid, p. 78.

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the sad accounts of a poverty-stricken land given in the nineteenth century by foreign travellers? The explanation is simple. The standards by which comfort and elegance were judged were very different in 1840 from what they had been in 1640 and 1740. Most of the European commentators were too ignorant of the spirit of the East to distinguish the vital difference between its mode of civilization and that of a Western world pulsating with the reforming ideals stimulated by the prickings of a conscience unnerved by the unfortunate results of an uncontrolled Industrial Revolution. It was futile to expect a man of Burton's temperament to be anything but critical and supercilious of what he saw in Sind. He despised Sind for what he considered its lax Muhammadanism. He reviled the harshness of a Moghul type of Government which had succeeded in persisting into the middle of the nineteenth century. Pottinger, Del Hoste, Postans were all of the same school of thought. They were eager Western reformers anxious to change anything they considered bad by the standards of an England charged with a civilizing mission. It is not fair to gauge an Oriental land by such ethical measuring rods. Only a few sagacious fair-minded observers like Heddle and Burnes offered a slightly protesting voice against the chorus of disapproval. A language is usually a key to a people. The Sindhi language is a beautiful instrument of precision admirably adapted to the civilization for which it was intended—a peace-loving agricultural and pastoral culture elaborated by an industrious and non-martial people. But it is naturally deficient in words suited to the kind of civilization for which Burton stood. Sir Charles Napier was a clever man and a more than usually alert administrator. But one of the first proclamations he issued proves that a fierce kind of missionary and reforming zeal possessed him. 'Indians, Balooches, Afghāns, Hindoes,' he thundered, 'I have caused two men to die because they murdered two Afghāns. Every man who commits a murder shall be put to death. I have no command in Afghānistān but when Afghān or other strangers come under the protection of the British, vengeance be upon those who injure them. Men shall find safety and protection in Scinde. The merchants and the travellers shall pass along the road with safety; death be to the robber and the murderers! Such is the law of God who rules alike over the Mahometan, the Hindoo and the Christian. His will be done!'[1] Gone are the casual autocracy of the Kalhōro, and the capricious laissez-faire of the Tālpūr rule. In their place has arisen a strange new standard of absolute right and even-handed justice enforced by strangers in a strange land. Arabia Felix was verily to be absorbed in this new Roman empire of Victorian pattern till every cultivator

[1] Proclamation by Sir Charles Napier, 21 October 1843.

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and shopkeeper should shout with joy 'Civis Romanus Sum' and learn new ideas of justice and equality before the law.

## II. *The common man*

What sort of life did the common folk live in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind to call forth the disparagement of these reformers? A few salient points only can be emphasized. Since this book does not profess to deal exhaustively with social life in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries in Sind I propose to describe briefly merely some selected aspects of the economic conditions in which the people lived. In forming any final views on these matters we must remember that the comparison can be only with standards applicable to the common people in the days of the Stuarts in the seventeenth century and in Johnson's age in eighteenth century Britain. Speaking of the condition of rural England the authors of *Johnson's England* say, 'Before the Industrial Revolution the mass of the people of all classes, though they worked for longer hours than now (eleven to thirteen hours normal) and for less pay, had the great advantage of living in the country instead of in the city and even the dwellers in the moderate sized cities of that time were not far removed from rural influence and tradition. . . . In the fortunate eighteenth century many villages were centres of industry as well as agriculture. The typical Englishman was a villager, but a villager accustomed to meet men of various crafts and occupations and classes, by no means therefore a rustic boor ignorant of all save the plough handle.'[1] With certain differences this picture is true enough of seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind. The society was an agricultural and pastoral one with cottage industry well-diffused and with town-life, as we understand it today, concentrated in Tatta only. None of the large villages where industry flourished were big enough to be divorced from the thought and feeling of the rural countryside.

It is impossible to exaggerate the important place irrigation in Sind has always played in the social and economic scheme. Without this artificial aid of man the country could not have supported even the small population of Moghul and Kalhōro days. Whatever may have been the condition of irrigation in Hindustān generally under the Delhi Empire—and most writers say that irrigation was neglected—the critical observations of Indian travellers are not true of Sind, where rainfall is scanty and never regular or sufficiently timeous to permit of untroubled cultivation on rain water alone. There is quite satisfactory evidence to show that in Moghul and Kalhōro times irrigation in Sind was intelligently conducted and that the disorder which harassed the land from time to

[1] The Age of Johnson by G. M. Trevelyan in *Johnson's England*, p. 11.

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time did not greatly interrupt the business of distributing water over the land by artificial channels. Thus the statement of Bernier, 'The ground is seldom tilled except under compulsion and no person is willing or able to repair the ditches and canals,' is untrue of Sind, which could not have supported its population unless the 'ditches and canals' had been kept in order. The Moghuls especially, when they had Persian advisers familiar with the usefulness of irrigation in their own arid land, were not unconscious of the need for improving irrigation in Hindustān. But public money in those days was used for the erection of costly tombs, mausoleums and palaces. It was not spent on what we now call public works of utility. There is, however, an exception to this generalization in the seventeenth century canal enterprise in the Punjāb and improvements carried out on the old Delhi Jumna canal. There is mention of a Canal Act by Akbar in 1568 for the digging and deepening of a canal to be called the Shaikh Naī to bring the waters of the nalas and streams at the foot of the hills at Khaizābād into the Sōn and Jumna rivers. The sanad relating to this work announces grandiloquently, 'My government is a tree, the roots of which are firm in the earth, and being watered by God's grace, its branches reach to heaven. In acknowledgement of God's mercy in establishing the great empire, my desire purer than water is to supply the wants of the poor, and the water of life in my heart is larger than the sea with the wish to dispense benefits and to leave permanent marks of the greatness of my Empire by digging canals and founding cities, by which too, the revenues of the Empire will be increased.'[1] The promise, however, was but poorly fulfilled. Sind certainly received no benefit in this respect from the Moghuls. The Sind canals, Persian wheels and wells were constructed by the natives of the land without any assistance from the Empire of Delhi, which showed no interest in them at any time.

## III. *The standard of comfort*

### (*a*) *Places of residence—dwellings*

The common people lived in habitations of the poorest description, the grass hut by the river or in the fields, the dwelling of twigs covered with a conical roof like a beehive as described by Withington, or unsightly erections of mud. There were mud houses inhabited by the merchants, traders and the better-off artisans in the larger villages and in Tatta were a few superior buildings such as the house to which Hamilton was brought in 1699. Only Tatta could then offer comparison with towns like Lahore and Āgra. It is doubtful if

[1] *J.R.A.S.* Bengal, XV, 1846, pp. 213-23.
This work, however, is noticed by neither Ferishta nor the Āīn-i-Akbarī; but there seems no reason to disbelieve the authenticity of the evidence.



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Tatta even in its best days could ever have lived up to Monserrate's description of the large towns of Upper India. 'None the less the rich adorn the roofs and arched ceilings of their houses with carvings and paintings, plant ornamented gardens in their courtyards, make tanks and fishponds which are lined with tiles of various colours, construct artificial springs and fountains which fling showers of water far into the air and lay down promenades paved with brick-work or marble.'[1] Monserrate is here plainly describing the places of the ruling aristocracy. Lahore in the beginning of the seventeenth century seems to have been built largely of brick.[2] Of the common people he says merely, 'The common people live in lowly huts and tiny cottages and hence if a traveller has seen one of these cities he has seen them all.' In actual practice the agricultural and pastoral population of Sind had to live in huts, in temporary residences, such as they could afford to erect or as suited their occupation, which dictated in the one case that the huts be capable of speedy erection in the fields and removable when the floods inundated the land, or in the other that they be pitched like tents near the pasture grounds which shifted from year to year with the set of the river or the line of the floods. Moreover such residences in a land liable to be overrun at any time by riotous soldiery could be burnt with small trouble and so by such devastation help to dissuade the soldiers from turning that way. We have no accounts of Kalhōro days. The evidence mostly dates from the time of the Tālpūrs. As the statements of these nineteenth century travellers do not differ much in general effect from the evidence of Moghul days and accord very much with present-day conditions in agricultural and pastoral areas in Sind, there is no reason to disbelieve them.

The Tālpūrs, like true Balūchīs, set little store upon magnificent buildings. Despite their wealth they were content to live in places which modern opinion would consider ill-fitted to their dignity. Pottinger says of them, 'The houses of the Ameers (in Hyderābād, their capital) inside are extremely mean in construction and appearance and there is not a single room in the palace which exceeds 30 feet in length. The doors and windows are generally framed of common deal plank and without being even painted and their furniture is very shabby. The bazaar of Hyderābād is very mean and though there is abundance of supplies, as far as the produce of

[1] Reference Monserrate *Commentary*, p. 219.

[2] Burnes says, 'The villages of Sind on this side of the Indus are much inferior in appearance to those of Cutch and are entirely destitute of stone buildings and tiled roofs which give an air of neatness and comfort to those of the latter country. They are for the most part collections of low huts comprised entirely of clay and thatch while even the mosques with which they abound are generally of the same frail materials.' p. 26.

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the country goes, there are no European articles with the exception of a few white clothes and coloured chintzes. There are several other ancient buildings of brick in Tatta and amongst them what was formerly the Company's factory, an unsightly edifice in the native style. The present houses of Tattah are generally of mud but advantage has been taken of the quantities of bricks remaining, which are strewed about in every direction, to build the foundations and four or five feet next to the ground of some of them of that material.'[1] It seems likely that the Balūch influence was partly at least responsible for the decline in the standard of building and it is probable that during Kalhōro days Tatta and the larger centres of population contained many pretentious buildings of brick which have long since disintegrated in the saline soil and dust-laden atmosphere of the lower Indus valley. Von Orlich, writing in 1842 of Lower Sind conditions, says, 'All the houses here are built of clay; they are scarcely twenty feet high, have flat roofs, from which a kind of ventilator sometimes rises and air holes supply the place of windows. Long continued rain would destroy these huts and sweep away entire villages.'[2] All who are acquainted with Lower Sind today will recognize the truthfulness of this picture. The early Arab writer Al Idrisī had noted previously that 'in Dēbal (Lahari Bunder) the houses were built of clay and wood'.[3] Pottinger, speaking of Tatta, remarks that, 'The houses here are built on a plan that I have never met with in any other country, as the walls are made hollow by small pieces of stick being nailed across each other from the outer edges of a small frame of wood; these bits of stick are usually from eight to sixteen inches long and placed diagonally so that they form a very strong frame on both sides which is plastered over with mud or mortar and has all the appearance of a solid wall. Some of the buildings erected on this principle are three or four storeys high with flat heavy roofs, which is a proof that they are very strong.'[4] This will give some idea of what the best buildings in Sind must have been like towards the end of the Kalhōro rule.

The decaying ports of the Indus delta, Vikkur and Ghōrabārī,

[1] *Memoir on Sinde*, 1832, p. 187.

[2] Masson noted in 1826 that in Shikārpūr: 'The houses of the principal Hindus are distinguished by their loftiness and extent,' but the town itself he found 'suffering from the usual inconvenience of narrow and confined streets; nor is too much attention paid to cleanliness . . . The bazaar is extensive and well supplied . . . The town is surrounded by numerous gardens, flourishing mangoes, mulberries, bananas, melons and other fruits . . . The neighbouring lands produce wheat, jowār, cotton and an oleaceous plant. The grass is very plentiful and luxuriant, particularly towards Larkāna; hence milk and its preparations are good and abundant.' *Journals*, pp. 144-5.

[3] Elliot: I, p. 77.

[4] *Travels in Beloochistān and Sinde*, p. 353.

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were much less pretentious. Carless says of them in 1836 that the houses numbered about 200, 'constructed of reeds and grass plastered with mud'.[1] In his account of the Chāndookah (the present Lārkāna area) Lieutenant James noted that the villages were of good size and nearly all possessed a bazaar. 'The houses are of mud with flat roofs and those of the poorer classes are of tamarind wood covered with mats and boughs or, where procurable, grass. Many villages are comprised almost entirely of dwellings of the latter description, little, if any, distinction being observable between the sheds of the cattle and its owners. In low land the villages are raised and sometimes have also a ditch all round them as a guard against the waters of the inundation. Those which are the residences of chiefs, or large zemindārs and Government officials have mud fronts with a tower at each corner and in almost all the villages is to be seen the watch tower which served as a place of defence for the inhabitants if suddenly attacked by predatory bands.'[2] He adds that similar towers were erected in the fields to protect the crops against mountain robbers, and that all the villages were dirty in the extreme and had few appearances of comfort. . . . The Sindhi village must in fact have reminded one strongly of the villages of early medieval Europe. The village clustered round the mosque, the bazaar and the head man's house, and encircling these were the lāndhīs (or sheds) of the Sindhis, usually in enclosures of thorns containing the dwelling, the sheds for cattle and platforms raised on wooden poles on which people slept in the hot weather. Near by were thorn pens for goats and sheep. This description is still true in most particulars of the small agricultural villages scattered throughout the length and breadth of rural Sind today. Lieutenant James states that Chāndookah contained no fewer than three hundred and ninety-two of such villages. The population in most of them would not have exceeded five hundred and most of them were inhabited by the family and relatives, in varying remote degrees, of the head man of the place, a sort of petty feudal lord who lived more or less in the same style as the meanest husbandman of the pastoral tribes. Pottinger says that they live in 'wāndhs', 'which are a collection of hovels, built of straw and wattles and some plastered over with mud. From Karāchi Bunder to Sehwan on the western bank of the river all the dwellings except those in the immediate vicinity of the Indus are of this construction. The population of these wāndhs seldom exceed 600 or 700 but there is one called Kahorānī forty miles south west of Hyderābād which is stated to contain 4,000 souls.'[3] The bazaar with its poor mud

1 Bombay Government Records, op. cit., p. 469.
2 ibid., p. 392.
3 *Memoir on Sinde*, p. 249.

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buildings was usually inhabited by the petty Hindu traders while the Musulman cultivators dwelt in their brushwood lāndhīs round about it under the protection of the feudal chief or headman. The whole system is intensely reminiscent of the early Middle Ages in Britain, and the village had to take its own measures to resist the robbers who continually threatened to descend upon it and carry off as many of the cattle and as much of the stored grain as they were able to remove with impunity.

*(b) Population and food*

Vincent Smith has remarked on the low prices which prevailed in the Moghul Empire of Akbar's day in any year when crops did not fail. 'It is clear', he says, 'that a man could feed himself adequately at a cost of from a penny to twopence a day'.[1] What evidence there is for Sind for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seems to bear out the truth of this conclusion. Provisions were usually abundant and prices ruled low. But this may be merely a sign that the country was under-populated for its productive capacity. It is difficult to decide whether the decline in the industrial activity of Sind that set in with the decay of Tatta and the deterioration of the cotton weaving industry really coincided with a fall in the population. Most writers have assumed that the tyranny of the Tālpūrs had by the time of the British annexation reduced the population below what it had been a century earlier. There is, however, no reliable evidence to prove any such conclusion. Lieutenant Del Hoste calculated in 1832 that the population was 850,000, of which about one-fourth were Hindus.[2] Burnes[3] in 1828 estimated the population at about one million, of which 25,000 were in Shikārpūr, 20,000 in Hyderābād, 18,000 in Tatta, 15,000 in Khairpūr and Karāchi, and 10,000 in Sehwan and Mīrpūr. Pottinger states that by this time Tatta had much diminished in size. 'Even so recently', he states, 'as the period of Nādir Shāh visiting Tatta on his return from Delhi it is said that there were forty thousand weavers of calico and loongis in that city and artisans of every other class and description to the number of twenty thousand more, exclusive of brokers, money changers, shopkeepers and sellers of grain who were estimated at sixty thousand, whereas the aggregate population of it at the present day is believed to be overrated at twenty thousand souls and the revenues derived from it are not equal to one lakh of rupees per annum.'[4]

But Pottinger is rightly distrustful of the accuracy of these figures for the Kalhōro days. It is none the less true, however, that Hamilton in 1699 had noted that 80,000 weavers had died of plague, caused by the failure of rains shortly before his

[1] *Akbar the Great Moghul*, p. 393. [2] op. cit., p. 27. [3] op. cit., p. 115.
[4] *Travels in Beloochistān and Sinde*, p. 344.

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arrival in the city. The population of Karāchi in 1813 by actual enumeration, according to Pottinger, was about 13,000, which was more than one-half greater than it had been in 1809, and of these the majority were Hindus 'who prosecute a most extensive commerce in despite of the heavy customs and duties that are levied by one of their own tribe who farms the revenues of Karāchi'.[1] From this conflicting evidence it is very difficult to reach any very satisfactory conclusion. But one fact is certain, namely that between 1740 and 1800 there was a great shifting of the population of Sind, the chief concentration altering from Tatta to Shikārpūr, Hyderābād and Karāchi. Sukkur was much slower in starting its career of progress. Von Orlich in 1842 found that it contained no more than 6,000 people as against 8,000 in Rōhrī. The Commissioner in Sind in 1847 put the total population of Sind at 1,274,732 which 'taking the area at 48,000 square miles, would give nearly 27 to the square mile. With reference, however, to the prevalent opinion as to the deficiency of population and the large portion of the surface occupied by desert and morass I should be inclined to think even this moderate proportion a high estimate.'[2] It would thus appear to be a safe conclusion that during Moghul and Kalhōro days the population cannot have exceeded one million altogether, or less than a quarter of what it is at the present day. The difference today is accounted for by the vast extension of irrigation since the date of the British annexation. It seems likely that all through Moghul and Kalhōro days the population remained fairly constant for the simple reason that irrigation was static. It continued to be dependent on the bounty of the river, helped by the rule of thumb methods of water distribution, under a system that was not financed, as modern irrigation works are, by the full resources of a settled and highly organized system of administration with other ideals of service than collection of revenue and waging aggressive wars.

There was a considerable difference between Upper and Lower Sind in respect of crops and cultivation. The Commissioner in 1847 said that the produce was 'similar to that of India, bājrī and jowārī being the principal early crops and wheat and barley the principal late crops, the former more prevalent in the Upper, the latter in the Lower portion. Rice is grown partially to the northward but more extensively in the low southern parts towards the sea in favourable localities. Cotton, indigo, sugar cane and tobacco are raised but not to a great extent'.[3] The Chāndookah and the Lār were the two

1 *Travels in Beloochistān and Sinde*, p. 344.
2 Bombay Government Records, Revenue Arrangement Sind, Vol. 20.
3 ibid. Vol. 203. Masūdī remarks of the neighbourhood of Mansūra: 'The whole country is well-cultivated and covered with trees and fields.' Elliot: I, p. 455.

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great rice producing areas just as they are today. The cultivators were considered in 1847 as being ordinarily in better circumstances than in most parts of India except perhaps the more fertile portions of Gujārāt and the Southern Marātha country. The older Arabic writers, the Āīn-i-Akbarī and the native historians all bear out the truth of this generalization. Ibn Haukal states that there was abundance of food. Al Idrisī says the environs of Mansūrat were fertile, fish was plentiful, meat cheap, and foreign and native fruits abounded.[1] The Tārīkh-i-Masūmī mentions the fertility of the Sibī-Sehwan area where cotton plants grow as large as trees so that men could pick the cotton mounted. The Āīn-i-Akbarī describes the Shālī rice as abundant and of good quality and says that the staple food in Lower Sind was rice and fish, and that fruits of various kinds and mangoes were especially fine. The fertility of the environs of Tatta elicited praise from Hamilton in 1699. 'The king's gardens', he says, 'were in pretty good condition in Anno 1699 and were well stored with fruits and flowers, particularly the most delicious pomegranates which I ever tasted. . . . The country abounds richly in wheat, rice and legumen and provender for horses and cattle and they never know the misery of famine, for the Indus overflows all the low grounds in the months of April, May and June and when the floods go off they leave a fat slime on the face of the ground which they till easily before it dries and, being sown and harrowed, never fails of bringing forth a plentiful crop. . . . They have a fruit that grows in the fields and gardens called Salob about the size of a peach but without a stone. They dry it hard before they use it and being beaten to powder, they dress it as tea and coffee are and take with powdered sugar candy. . . . The wood ligna dulcis grows only in this country. It is rather a weed than a wood and nothing of it is useful but the root called putchack or radix dulcis. I never heard of it used in physick but as a good ingredient in the composition of perfumes. There are great quantities exported from Surat and from there to China where it generally bears a good price.'[2]

Del Hoste considered the vegetables inferior. 'There are few vegetables in Sinde,' he says, 'a small sort of gram, mustard, a species of gourd called turēlī and a few cucumbers were all I observed. Of fruit trees we have the mango, bhēr, jāmbo, mulberry, fig, vines, date and apple. The latter abounds near Tatta where apples were selling in May at 400 for the rupee.'[3] Pottinger, however, mentions carrots, turnips, peas, cucumbers, sweet potatoes among the

[1] It is clear that at that period there was rich cultivation extending from Sibī as far as the boundaries of Lārkāna and Sehwan. The later desiccation of the Sibī area seems to have been caused by alteration of the river channels affecting the western bank area in Upper Sind.

[2] Hamilton : op. cit.

[3] Del Hoste : op. cit., pp. 34-5.

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vegetables, and apples, melons, mulberries, figs, grapes, peaches, plantains, mangoes and dates amongst the fruits. Rōhrī was considered the garden of Sind ' and the gardens do actually extend without intermission '. The lowness of prices excites his remark. ' In Sind a milch cow costs 12 rupees, the best camels 25 or 30 each, a cow for slaughter 6 rupees, the best sheep one and a half rupees, goats from 1 to 4 rupees and the finest fowls are ten for one rupee.'[1] The pastoral tribes lived largely on milk, curds, cheese and millet bread, and the river fishermen consumed fish and aquatic birds, a fact mentioned by Ibn Haukal. The excellence of some of the crops aroused the interest of travellers. Thus Von Orlich while travelling in Upper Sind north of Rōhrī speaks of ' fields of holcus sorghum (jowārī) which were so flourishing that some stems were fifteen and sixteen feet high. The sticks were almost as thick as sugar cane ; the sap has a juicy sweet taste; it is eaten by the inhabitants and is a nourishing and wholesome food for horses and cattle '.[2] Present-day travellers in Sind who have seen the jowārī standing high enough to hide a man on horseback will recognize the accuracy of this picture,

Thus, except for the greater area under cultivation today, we have no reason to think that the Sind of Moghul or Kalhōro days differed very much in the essentials of its crop production. In these days cultivation hugged the river and the large natural channels much more closely than it does today. But all the evidence proves that the land was well able to support its population in comfort and abundance and that famines such as devastated less fortunate parts of India had ordinarily no terrors for the Sindhi peasant, who, whatever his poverty in matters of money might be, had no difficulty in supplying himself with the immediate needs of life. It was on this agricultural economy that the life of the common man depended. No one who has studied the vast rural vocabulary of the Sindhi language will fail to recognize the extent to which the cultivation of the soil and the rearing of camels, cattle and sheep have coloured and enriched the culture of the people. All the industries which flourished in Moghul days had their solid foundation on this sure and steady agricultural production renewed year after year by the spreading waters of the Indus in flood. In such a state of culture, money wealth played a comparatively unimportant part, and the remark of Manucci is very much to the point. ' It is quite true that if the common people here[3] have four rupees, they are quite high and mighty and decline service. It is only when they have nothing to eat that they take service.'

1 Pottinger : *Memoir on Sinde*, p. 173.
2 op. cit., p. 131.
3 i.e. India. *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 388.

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### (c) *Wages, prices, social condition*

There is very little extant evidence of the rates of wages paid in Moghul and Kalhōro days in Sind. But there is no reason to believe that the statistics of the Āīn, corroborated by contemporary evidence available in respect of other parts of the Delhi Empire in the seventeenth century, are untrue as far as Sind is concerned. In Sind as elsewhere ' Poor people then as now in India thought in terms of copper coins and the revenue accounts were made up in " dāms " at the rate of 40 to the rupee."[1] Ordinary labourers of that age according to Farūkī[2] were paid 2 or 3 dāms per day, that is, one-twentieth of a rupee. Skilled workmen received Rs. 3 or $3\frac{1}{3}$ per month, household servants Rs. 2 per month. One and a half dāms were sufficient to provide a man with daily sustenance. In the eighth year of his reign Aurangzēb had issued orders against forced labour (bēgārī). But it is quite certain these orders were not enforced in Sind where forced labour had always been in practice and where it continued long subsequent to Aurangzēb's time. Indeed several of the biggest canals were dug by labour conscripted in this way. One of the best canals in Upper Sind is actually still called the ' Bēgārī '.

The stability of wage rates in silver during the seventeenth century in India was very remarkable. Methold, who left Masulipatam[3] in 1622, put the rate for factory servants at approximately two rupees per month. In 1658 William Smyth quotes almost identical rates, 4 or 5 shillings, as the wages of factory servants in the same neighbourhood. Akbar had allowed ordinary labourers 2 and 3 dāms per diem ; the Dutch in 1637 usually paid 2 dāms (4 pice) to ordinary labourers and 7 pice to superior men. Carpenters were paid 12 and 13 pice by the Dutch while Akbar[4] had allowed 6 and 7 dāms for skilled men. In Surat in 1636 a messenger detained there was paid an allowance of 3 pice daily, probably the minimum subsistence allowance, as the man was described as a ' lean lazy knave '.[5] The lowest grade of slave at Akbar's court was paid an allowance of one dām daily.[6] The evidence from such different places as the East and West coasts of India and Akbar's court confirms the general steadiness and uniformity of wages during a great part of the seventeenth century.

[1] Moreland believes that from 1627 onward the rupee was worth 30 dām or 60 pice as against 40 dām under Akbar. *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, Appendix D.

[2] *Aurangzēb*, p. 492.

[3] Moreland : op. cit., p. 178.

[4] ibid., p. 194.

[5] *English Factories*, V, p. 294.

[6] Moreland: op. cit., p. 195.

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The facts in the eighteenth[1] century are not so easily documented ; but some information can be gleaned from the accounts of the East India Company. From these it does not appear that wages to the Company's menial servants had greatly improved. For the year 1781-82 in the Surat Pargana 110 persons, consisting of 1 amildār, 1 mēhta, 6 jemadārs, 100 sepoys, 1 trumpeter and 1 masālchī were paid Rs. 473 per month and at Navsārī an establishment of 16 persons was paid Rs. 93 per month, these payments including charges for paper, ink and lamp oil as well as wages.[2] Burton says of the Sind soldiery that the smallest sum paid to footmen under native rule was about three and a half rupees per mensem, but some of the horsemen got the respectable salary of one rupee a day. The soldiery, however, were not given much in the way of diet.[3] Burnes in 1828 encountered some Sindhi soldiers on guard and customs duty between Cutch and Sind and says, ' A few Sindhi soldiers, not above eight or ten, whose only place of residence is an open wooden shed and whose chief food is camel milk, are stationed at Lah (near the Runn) to collect a tax on the merchandise that passes and they are its only inhabitants.'[4, 5] Prices continued low all through the eighteenth century. The Land Paymaster's price list for Surat[6] in 1780 shows that beef was obtainable at 3 rupees per Surat maund and that a Surat maund of bread cost 2 rupees 2 quarters. The value of the rupee in terms of food fell in the ratio of from 7 to 1 between the close of Akbar's reign and the twentieth century. It seems to have remained for about eighty years in the seventeenth century at about seven times its present value and then to have fallen a little in the eighteenth century. The wages of Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per month, which may be taken as more or less current for those days, thus correspond fairly closely in actual purchasing power with present-day standards. The labourers, artisans and peasants were therefore relatively little worse off in Moghul and Kalhōro times than they are today. In fact their general condition was much the same : they lived just as little above the subsistence level. They did not make any money and could not save for reasons which are still true of Indian society, reasons

[1] In 1793 the pay roll of Mahādjī Sindhia's General, Col. de Boigne's troops shows that the monthly wages of bheestis was Rs. 4 per month, khalāsīs Rs. 4 to 4-8-0, blacksmiths Rs. 6, carpenters Rs. 5, bullock drivers Rs. 4, syce and grass cutters to each two horses Rs. 4 per month. *Mahādjī Sindhia and North India*, pp. 392-4, Poona Residency Correspondence, 1936.

[2] *Surat Diary*, 1781.

[3] Burton : *History of Sindh*, p. 242.

[4] Burnes: op. cit., p. 23.

[5] He says elsewhere : ' In the field the Sindhi soldier has no discipline and as his pay is generally contemptible and frequently uncertain he conceives himself fully privileged to supply his wants at the expense of the villages on his march.'

[6] *Surat Diaries*, p. 431.

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inseparable from the climatic conditions of the country, the risk of uncertain yield of crops, lack of industrial development, overpopulation in comparison with the resources available, and social customs which require heavy expenditure for special occasions, despite the fact that the purse is nearly empty. The margin between earnings and subsistence was probably more precarious than it is today when famines and other calamities of major importance are provided against generously by subventions from state funds. The real burden on the peasant was the arbitrariness of the autocratic form of government with its constant exorbitant demands. The peasant and the poor man in India have always been at the mercy of the moneylender, who in Sind employed the resource of advancing money against a share of the crop, and making the loan partly in grain at prices which suited the moneylender but bore heavily against the cultivator and the artisan. The system still prevails and legislation can apparently do little to check it.

The Commissioner in Sind reported in 1847,[1] 'It is chiefly from private capitalists that the cultivators derive the means of carrying on their operations. Here as in India the great bulk of the tillers of the soil are indebted to moneylenders and for the accommodation derived from them they pay highly. They may in fact be considered as mere labourers, the wages of whose labour is limited to a mere subsistence while the creditors are a class by whom, as the means of providing the agricultural stock are advanced, its profits are realised.' Carless said in 1837, 'The condition of the lower classes of the peasantry of Sind is truly wretched.' But he exaggerated considerably when he continued, 'Unable at times to obtain a sufficiency of food and clothing for themselves, it is quite out of their power to provide for the wants of a wife and family and they never marry.' The whole economic history of India refutes this rash generalization. In such circumstances the family goes to work, the wife and the children included, and somehow or other it manages to exist and multiply. But even today in Sind one of the chief obstacles in the education of the peasant class is the fact that children of eight and upwards earn a few rupees a month by herding cattle and camels, and so cannot without financial sacrifice be sent to school. It is certain that in Moghul and Kalhōro days similar conditions were universal and that the peasantry lived their poor lives of toil and distress knowing nothing better and expecting little else. The state had not then arrived at the conception that part of its duty is to give everyone a fair chance as far as circumstances permit. The religion of Islām provided a means of assuaging poverty in the system of zakāt and

[1] Bombay Government Records, Revenue Arrangement Sindh, Vol. 203.

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the Hindu social polity employed the joint family system to the same end. But as the effectiveness of both these institutions depended largely on private conscience, which works capriciously, they were poor alleviations of the distress caused by the autocracy and oppression of those in power. An active public conscience in these matters had not yet made itself felt in India. It is fallacious therefore to apply to the defects of the system the ethical standards of a much later day, a fault much indulged in by Indian historians and economists. The subsistence level was certainly not pitched so low as to prevent the enjoyment by the poor of a few cheap pleasures, which included, as Carless says, smoking, usually indulged in to excess, while ' a strong spirit distilled from gūr is in great request amongst all who can afford to purchase it. The lower orders use bhang and intoxicating and very deleterious drugs obtained from hemp in large quantities '.[1]

The Moghul administration was always singularly successful in maintaining the purity of the coinage.[2] The chief coins issued by Akbar were the gold mōhur, the silver rupee and the copper dām. The rupee of Akbar weighed 178 grains, the dām (also called paisa or fālūs) was a massive coin weighing 323·5 grains. The gold mōhur of Akbar was worth nine rupees and the gold mōhur of Aurangzēb sixteen rupees. The exchange value of the rupee in Aurangzēb's reign was 2s. 3d. In addition to these coins, pagodas and mahmūdīs were also in circulation. The former, current in South India (Bījāpūr and Golkonda), was a gold coin worth three to three and a half rupees, the latter, current in Gujārāt, where it was the chief silver coin, was worth two-fifths of a rupee. All these coins, except possibly the pagoda, were used in Sind and in addition there were lārīs described as ' made of silver like a poynt tagg worth 12d. per peese ', in common use in Southern Persia, Sind and Western Asia. The unfortunate Withington was relieved of five of these coins by robbers in Lower Sind in 1614. Pagodas and mahmūdīs were not minted at the Imperial mints, of which there was one at Tatta. Thévenot says that ' the silver money of the Great Moghul is finer than any other ', and Ovington asserts that ' the gold of Surat is so very fine that twelve and fourteen per cent may be gained by bringing it to Europe '. Despite this there was considerable difficulty over exchange because of the number of rupees of different coinages in circulation. At any particular time the current rupee (chalānī) was accepted as standard, and earlier issues (khazāna) were accepted subject to differing amounts of discount.

The records of the second English factory in Sind contain

[1] Bombay Government Records, op. cit. XVII, New Series, p. 495.
[2] See Farūkī, op. cit., p. 485.

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many references to divergences in value between different mintages of rupees. Some of the financial transactions, usually carried out for the Company's agents by Hindu brokers, were in this way exceedingly complicated and it is not easy to understand them on the evidence available now. The shortage of small coin often hindered the factors of the first English factory in Sind when they had to make payments in the villages to weavers, who being poor men, thought and worked in terms of the copper coinage. So the Company's agents, carrying rupees about with them, were in constant need of much small change. The Bombay Diaries of 1724 throw light on the variety of coins that were accepted for silver minting by the Company in its own mint. The coining for Bombay was actually done by one Gunsēt, a Goa goldsmith, on contract under the supervision of a Mint Master, and different rates are quoted for the silver value in rupees of coins so varied as pillar dollars, mexico (sic), duccatoons, French crowns, old Sevil dollars, Crusadoes, Peru (sic), Lion dollars and German crowns.[1] The Company's rupees were in great demand in Sind in the days of the Company's trade there in the eighteenth century, as we know from the business correspondence.

Pelseart[2] has given a vivid picture of the condition of the poorer classes under the Moghul régime. He was deeply moved by the poverty and oppression prevalent everywhere. 'There are three classes', he says, 'of the people who are nominally free but whose status differs very little from voluntary slavery, workmen, peons or servants, and shopkeepers. For the workmen there are two scourges, low wages and oppression. . . . They know little of the taste of meat. For their monotonous daily food they have nothing but a little Khichri made of moth (green pulse) mixed with rice cooked with water over a little fire until the mixture has evaporated and eaten hot with a little butter in the evening; in the day time they munch a little parched pulse or other grain, with which they satisfy their lean stomachs.'[3] The picture is generally consistent with accounts of the conditions in Sind. Salbank in 1605 said Rōhrī was full of 'painful people'. Spiller in 1645 found the cultivators of Upper Sind 'miserably oppressed' and Carless in 1836 said much the same thing of Lower Sind. The report of the Commissioner in Sind in 1847 tells a similar story in more careful official language. Thus, despite the bounty of the river and the fertility of the inundated land which produced abundant crops, the poor were never well-off. The fact is that the reward of labour, agricultural, industrial or casual, has little real

1 *Bombay Diaries*, p. 39. Selections Home Series, II.
2 Chief of the Dutch factory at Āgra 1626.
3 Translated in Moreland : *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 199.

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relation to the yield of the harvest or productivity alone, but depends upon the suitable balancing of supply and demand and upon the extent to which the labourer is permitted by the government or by social standards and practice to enjoy the profits of his toil. In Sind no less than in India generally throughout the Moghul and Kalhōro periods, circumstances continually conspired to grind the poor in their poverty. While admitting this melancholy fact we shall waste our labour in deprecating it, because nothing could then have altered a system which was thoroughly ingrained in Indian life, habits and social observance. In Europe at the same time, as Farūkī has pointed out very clearly, the condition of the poor was deplorable. The Moghuls and the Kalhōra were alike creatures of their age, a harder and less sentimental age than the present. The common man was much nearer to the struggle for mere existence than he is today when, with greater respect for law and order, and greater security of life and enterprise, wealth can grow and, with wealth, the financial strength of a state which seeks to deal considerately with the woes of the unfortunate.

*(d) Irrigation*

There is no evidence that the Moghul administrators did anything to maintain or improve the irrigation of Sind. But it must be remembered that under the Moghul system the local authorities were recognized to the extent to which they could exercise local control, provided they kept faith with and observed their feudal obligations. The conclusion seems, therefore, to be that in Moghul days the care of canals, watercourses, embankments and wells was left largely to the local chiefs, who could not have afforded to neglect them since the revenue depended upon some control of the waters of the Indus. There is not the slightest doubt that skilful irrigation has existed in Sind since the earliest days and that the present system of canals is the work of generations of cultivators who by rule of thumb methods succeeded, within the bounds imposed by the limited public resources of those days, in bringing water on to the land and controlling to some extent the vagaries of a very capricious river. Raverty's monumental work on 'The Mihrān of Sind' endeavours to trace the wanderings of the Indus over Sind during historic times and is characterized by a wealth of contemporary evidence from all native sources, backed up by an extensive study of the geography of the Lower Indus plain. Modern Sind presents everywhere over its alluvial area traces of the wanderings of the Indus, ever breaking out into new channels and deserting old ones. It is still possible in many parts of the country to follow these old river courses and find on their

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banks the relics of villages which have long since disappeared. Precision of irrigation such as exists today was unknown. Instead of precision there was uncertainty or capriciousness as channels altered and fresh areas of soil came from time to time under flood.

The old Sindhi system was to use the natural river channels thus formed, dig small watercourses from them, excavate 'khuhāḍos', at which Persian wheels worked, and make the utmost possible use, by means of wheels and wells, of low-lying places where the flood waters collected. In these low-lying hollows, which go by a vast variety of names in the Sindhi language, much cultivation was possible, and even where the circumstances made irrigation impossible, there were great expanses called 'chhans' where grass and jungle scrub grew luxuriantly, nourishing the vast numbers of camels, buffaloes and bullocks which supported a large population and were the foundation of the milk, curds and ghee business and of the leather and hide industry described by travellers. In olden days the area under flow irrigation was incomparably smaller than it is today when canals have been dug on scientific principles and the levels of a canal, from its head to its tail, have been worked out to fractions of an inch. Thus rice, which is a 'flow' crop, was confined to areas where flood water could be conducted without much difficulty of control so as to give the depth of stagnant water that this crop requires. These areas were chiefly in the Lārkāna district of Upper Sind, called Chāndookah in the old records, and in the low-lying land nearer the delta in Lower Sind on what is now the lower alluvial tract of the Hyderābād and Karāchi districts.

James in 1847 has given a most attractive picture of what the rice lands of Chāndookah were like. 'Between the Ghār and the Nāra', he says, 'the rice cultivation is very extensive. The villages are principally raised mounds and in some cases further fortified from inundation by a ditch carried all round them. All the canals and most of the villages are prettily wooded. . . . Between the Nāra and the Indus the surface is more broken and intersected with many a natural water course. The lower lands, where the waters of the inundation recede, yield beautiful crops of pease, gram and barley requiring but little care on the part of the husbandman. A belt of forest clothes the banks of the Indus, averaging two miles in depth, where the silvery balem, keesum and the bābool grow luxuriantly, the intermediate space being covered with a tangled brushwood. The stranger who leaves the noble river and the cool shade of the neighbouring forest, on the open spaces of which herds of buffaloes and cows find rich pasturage, comes now upon the fresh green crops of spring and now upon the grassy meadow, passing here a group of

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temporary huts occupied by a wandering party who have brought their cattle here for pasture, and there the more pretending village . . . again entering the forest he crosses a newly cleared belt of ground, where the blackened and rugged stumps of bābool stand curiously forth, a proof of man's inroads and affording a strong contrast to the surrounding verdure; there he meets a busy throng, the temporary occupants of a few matted huts, engaged in the manufacture of reed baskets and mats, the materials for which are so plentiful.'[1] Pottinger mentions a large canal passing close to Khairpūr by which small boats approached the place during the floods. At other times the canal was quite dry and was used as a road. Rōhrī was surrounded with gardens. 'In sailing the Indus', says Pottinger, 'many large towns and villages are met with on the banks, but at certain points the nature of the country renders it so evident that extensive inundations must take place during the freshes, that the towns are for safety all built some miles away from the banks and this has led some travellers to believe that in many places the country on the banks of the Indus is deserted, which is usually far from fact.'[2] He states also that 'to the north and north-west of Shikārpūr there is a large tract of country which at one season is entirely under water owing to certain mountain streams, which come from the hills to the north and also from a great body of water which, during the freshes, forces itself through a deserted channel of a branch of the Indus which formerly flowed south-west from the main river 100 miles north of Bakhar. The water from these two sources, having no channel of escape, inundates nearly the whole face of the country and even in the dry season leaves it so cut up that it is passed with difficulty by horses.' Similar conditions prevailed in Lower Sind which was another great rice-growing area.

Del Hoste mentions the following branches of the Indus, namely Pūran, Nāra, Ārul, Fulēlī, Gūnī, Pinyārī, Gāngro, Lakhī, Sitta and Bhagār, and adds that there were also several important watercourses and extensive marshes: of the former, the Nāra Dādajī and Nūrwāh, of the latter, the Māruī, Manchur, Mīrpū and Kinjar lakes. Hamilton in 1699 has described the fertilit of the Indus silt and writes of Tatta that it stands on a spaciou plain and 'they have canals cut from the river that bring wate to the city and some for the use of their gardens'. Condition such as these were very different from those described as prevailin in Upper India in Moghul times, when Bernier was impressed b the absence of, and the neglect in improving irrigation work

[1] James: op. cit.
[2] Pottinger: *Memoir on Sinde*, p. 244.

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The truth is that Sind has always been a pioneer of irrigation in India and has had a system of canals and watercourses since the beginning of historical time, tended by people who knew very well how to use the bounty of nature. Oral tradition in Sind today ascribes many of the older canals now existing to the energy of the Kalhōra. There is no doubt whatever that the Kalhōra as Sindhis themselves realized the importance of maintaining the system. There is, furthermore, some ground for believing that the irrigation existing in those days was superior to that prevailing during the régime of the Tālpūrs, whose irrigational works were not numerous and who tended to be parsimonious in their grants for the essential annual clearance of the inundation canals and watercourses.[1] Dr Kennedy in 1840 says of the Ārul canal that 'it is an artificial canal dug in some long forgotten age by some patriot sovereign or by some wise generation which preferred spending their money on what was useful rather than the usual waste of both in which kings and subjects are alike disposed to indulge'. James states that the Shāh canal, which suffered a decline under the Tālpūrs, was dug by Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, whence its name and also the name of the village of Shāhpūr. 'The traces of extensive cultivation are visible throughout its course and the records of the Amīrs prove its former value to the government.' The Sārfarāz Wāh in the Hyderābād district is ascribed to Sārfarāz Khān Kalhōro, whose tyranny led to the withdrawal of the second English factory and to his own deposition. It is, therefore, quite fair to assume that the canal system taken over from the Tālpūrs in 1843 represented a series of public works which had been even more efficient in Kalhōro days.

We have very full evidence in the Bombay Record Office of the condition of that system in Lieut.-Colonel Scott's report in 1853 on 'the management of Canals and Forests in Scind', a most valuable official document which throws great light on the conditions which must have been prevalent during the eighteenth century and earlier. Col. Scott examined with the critical eye of the scientific engineer the irrigational system inherited by the Tālpūrs. He found much to criticize. 'It may fairly be said', he remarks, 'that the whole system of canals in Scinde is one of makeshifts and expedients to save some present expense. There are many works which are now called canals but which were probably mere improved branches. It does not appear that the Amīrs took any trouble respecting these branches. In fact I scarcely think that much can be done to them by manual labour. It appears to

[1] Shāh Bahāro, a minister of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro was an enlightened man who excavated several canals in the Chāndookah. See James: op. cit.



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me that the Indus in former days threw out many more branches than it does at present and that there has not been any very natural change in the course of the main stream.' The defects of the system which impressed themselves on Col. Scott's mind were: (1) that districts removed from the river were very scantily supplied with water even for the ordinary purposes of life; (2) that the water in wells was often very offensive from the practice of lining temporary walls with rough branches sometimes ingeniously supported by a sort of coiled plait of tamarisk; (3) that the brick sluices in the canals were defective, as they were not furnished with gates but cross beams were built into the side walls and support branches of trees and rubbish were thrown in to stop the water; (4) that the system of embankments, a peculiar feature of Sind irrigation, was very unsatisfactory.

These embankments need further description, as they were very common. 'The remains of old works show that great attention was paid to them in former times. Unless where the land is adapted to wheat cultivation unrestricted inundation appears to be dreaded. These embankments which are constructed of alternate layers of earth and brushwood and built as steep as possible, are in fact extremely insecure. The face exposed to the river is annually faced with brushwood, but even this seems to afford little protection. During high floods they require to be watched day and night and are always under repair of some sort. The water of the canals is passed through the embankments by means of brick sluices similar to those before described.'[1] In places where water lay in ponds and lakes cultivation was always by the Persian wheel, of which Sind possesses two types, the 'nār', a big wheel driven by camels, and the 'hurlō' or small wheel driven by a pair of bullocks, or even a single bullock. Such cultivation is called 'lift' because the water has to be lifted on to the land on an endless chain of earthenware pots and the crops cultivated by this method were 'dry' crops like bājrī, jowārī, cotton, sugar cane and vegetables. Wheat and barley were generally grown on flood water, 'sailāb', or on land that had a watering before the floods subsided, called 'bōsī'. These methods are still in use today and can be seen all over Sind, where each droning water wheel,[2] with its small 'lāndhī' and little orchard

[1] Col. Scott: op. cit.

[2] Dr Kennedy, who on his way to join the British army for the Afghā campaign of 1840 passed through the Lārkāna district northwards, writes 'Independent of the Ārul, which is about five miles south and takes a westerl and southerly course round the country to Sehwan, there is another can about eighteen feet deep and one hundred broad which coming from th Indus passes close to Lārkāna and proceeds westwards and north. W

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of cucumbers and castor oil plants and standing trees, is a petty social centre.

With a river that carries so much silt as the Indus and with the old winding watercourses and canals regular clearance of silt was imperative. Maintaining the flow of water was the most expensive part of the irrigational system. Elaborate rules and regulations dealt with this subject. There were four main systems: (1) the clearance of the large canals (called 'wāh') was done by the Government alone in some cases; (2) in other cases the clearance was done by the Government but the cost was partially recouped from the cultivators, called 'sherākatī' (or sharing system); (3) in the case of other canals, the smaller ones, the Government made an allowance of a certain number of 'khāsas'[1] in the 'kharār'[1] of produce as the government share of clearance—mukhādimī; (4) in all other cases the cultivators cleared each watercourse and smaller channels, called 'kariō' or 'kasī', entirely at their own expense. A whole district was liable to be called out to do canal clearance and usually received a certain quantity of food in payment.[2] Colonel Scott was unable to find any trace of regular annual clearance. There was a distinct liking for excavating new heads to canals rather than cleaning out old ones, usually a very laborious process, as the banks had from previous clearance become very high and steep so that it was difficult finding anywhere to throw the silt. 'At present the canals contract and expand without any reason whatever and there is scarcely a canal in Sinde the banks of which are straight for a single mile. The native management of the canals was in fact entirely guess-work and there was no attempt to combine the canals into one system.' Canals could often be seen running parallel with each other for long distances and the frequent jāghīrs made it very difficult for the Government to do much in the way of unifying control. When clearance was to be done and paid for by the Government, the kārdār prepared an estimate of the total sum required, without giving details. The Amīr had rude maps and lists of the canals in his territory and was familiar personally with the nature of the

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subsequently travelled a stage of fifteen miles along its course. It was dry at this time and we were told that the inundation of the previous year had not attained its height and filled its bed as usual; but within every hundred yards of its extent there were wells dug on its channel and an industrious agricultural population was seen employed in irrigating extensive tracts of the finest wheat fields.' *Narrative of Campaign of the Army of the Indus in Sind*, pp. 180-1.

[1] 'Khāsa' is 1/60 Kharār, and 'Kharār' 850 lb.

[2] Postans speaks of the forcible conscription of the Meānī tribe for canal clearance, 'but as neither pay nor food was for any length of time afforded these poor people, they invariably deserted and little or nothing was done.' *Personal Observations on Sindh*, p. 241.

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land. Calculations were made in the rupee of the district and the measure was the 'guz', which had different standard lengths in almost each pargana. A cotton rope was used to measure the work and the rise and fall of the land were measured by the eye only. The Amīrs sanctioned as much as they thought fit and the amount depended more on their idea of the kārdār's honesty than on the necessities of the work. Thus both authorities took means to protect themselves, for it was likely in such circumstances that the kārdār would estimate for more work than he actually intended to perform and it is certain that there was much corruption in carrying out clearance. In Hyderābād and Karāchi districts there were no fewer than fifty-six sets of rules governing the payment of clearance charges. Usually half of the amount paid for was paid in kind and not in money. There was generally a distinction between earth carried out by the basket and earth thrown out by the hoe. The former, which was called 'dhūlī', was more laborious, and must have been necessary in all the older canals with high banks. The latter was called 'uchal' (throwing). The difference in remuneration between the two methods was calculated as worth six guz (yards) per rupee. The kārdār superintended the work of the kāmrios (labourers) and was assisted by amīns and mōhirīs. The amīn measured the depth of the excavations and the mōhirī the length and breadth of them. To help them in their calculations, small portions of the canal beds, called tākīs (bench marks of earth) were left in their original state for measurement purposes, exactly as is done in canal clearance in Sind today.[1]

Col. Scott says that the canal clearance records of the Kalhōra are not recoverable, but, from the remains of sluices and very large canals, much more trouble and expense appear to have been incurred in days previous to the Tālpūrs. Amongst all the accounts Col. Scott was able to find only one for a brick sluice. That irrigation was allowed to decline in Tālpūr days is fairly probable. James says: 'The picturesque village of Khairō Garhī (i.e. Garhī Khairō) presents a desolated appearance, the ruins of villages are frequently met with and choked-up beds of watercourses all evidence of former prosperity', and other writers comment on canals that have fallen out of use. The Tālpūrs were undoubtedly miserly, and exceedingly anxious to amass large sums of money which they converted into jewels or else stored as bullion in their treasuries.[2] Distrusting the integrity of their kārdārs, they were always ready to cut down the demands for canal clearance and for the making

1 See Burton: *History of Sindh*, p. 37.

2 When Mir Fateh Ali died in 1801 he left thirty-five lakhs to divide amongst his brothers.

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of fresh irrigational works. Some works were, however, carried out by them, notably the bund or embankment at Alī Bunder across the Fulēlī, which is mentioned by Pottinger as the work of Fateh Alī Tālpūr in 1799. The idea, however, that the Tālpūrs were remiss in their irrigational policy coloured the views of most English observers and is probably to some extent justified. Thus Carless said in 1837 : 'The Government of the Amīrs is unpopular with nearly all classes of their subjects and the peasantry do not hesitate to express their hatred of the ruling family.'[1] But one word of caution is necessary. The Tālpūrs were no fools. They did nothing deliberately to ruin the productiveness of their country, though they may have been short-sighted and suspicious of improvement. It may, therefore, be quite possible that much of the decay attributed to their carelessness and parsimony by English observers was due partly at least to changes in the set of the river which resulted in some of the old river channels being left high and dry. Possessing no public works department and with the help only of venal, unreliable and unscrupulous revenue officers, they could hardly have been expected to indulge in costly experiments to bring water back into watercourses that the river had deserted and made unprofitable.

The Commissioner in Sind in 1848 held the view that the revenue system had 'too frequently been arbitrary and subject to no restraint but that of an indifferently enlightened self-interest'. But in this respect it did not differ from the government of the Moghuls or the Kalhōra and was probably on the whole better than either. Burnes, who is a judicious and fair-minded observer, says of the last native rulers of Sind : 'Ignorant and oppressive as her rulers are, her annals do not show that she has ever been better governed than in recent times and they have at least the merit of having maintained her in a state of tranquil and almost uninterrupted repose for the last thirty years.'[2] We may perhaps therefore conclude that irrigational conditions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries differed in essence very little from what the British found them to be in 1843 and that, if there had been deterioration, it was more likely to have been due to changes in the river Indus than to the stupidity of man. It was changes in the Indus that started the decline of Tatta and hastened the killing of the Sind cotton industry. It is not idle, therefore, to believe that deterioration may also have started with the drying-up of some of the more important canalized branches on which former prosperity had to a great extent depended. The facts in any case show beyond all reasonable doubt that the Sind canal system during Moghul and Kalhōro days must, within its

[1] op. cit.

[2] op. cit., p. 66.

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limits, have been a very important source of the country's wealth and was by no means a fit object of harsh and ill-informed criticism. It was fully capable of supplying the needs of an industrious people extremely competent at their own business of growing crops on land subject to regular flooding. The view of Burton that Sind came into British hands in an almost exhausted state and that the country was gradually becoming a desert is one that cannot be accepted without considerable qualification.[1]

### (e) *Health, recreation and amusements*

#### (A) *Health*

A hot, low-lying land subject to inundation is rarely distinguished for healthy living conditions and is particularly subject to malaria. The evidence available shows that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries public health in Sind was not good. Sind was relatively immune from famines, though there is mention of one in 1659 in the records of the first Sind factory, where it is stated that the goods to be embarked at Lāribunder ' will be fewer than usual because the famine and plague in Scinde is so great that it has swept away most part of the people and those that are left are few and what they make is bought by the country merchants at any price that causeth them not to take care it be good '.[2] During Aurangzēb's residence in Sind as Governor of Multān (1648-52) we learn that his jāghīr produced little revenue as the result of drought, locusts, plague and floods in three successive seasons.[3] Hamilton in 1699 mentions that three years previously, because of a severe plague caused by the absence of rain in Tatta, 80,000 weavers perished. The Company's surgeons were in continual demand both in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century for attendance on the local officials and the rulers of Sind. The Kalhōra in particular were very unwilling to release the Company's surgeon once he had been permitted to attend their Court. In 1759 there was great scarcity of grain caused by the demands of the troops engaged in the Sind civil war. The Company's servants at Tatta and Shāhbunder in the eighteenth century suffered many casualties and much ill-health on account of the climate. ' The Master of the *Tyger* and almost all her whole crew are very ill at Shāhbunder and the officer and detachment in the same condition at Aurangabunder. Since my last the Corporal and two topasses are dead and two or three more are dangerously ill. Mr. O'Neill has an intermittent fever every 10 or 15 days and', says the Resident, ' if I am not better on my return from the

1 *History of Sindh*, p. 43.
2 *English Factories in India*, 1659, pp. 209-10.
3 Sarkar : *History of Aurangzēb*, pp. 114-25.

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Prince, I fear I shall never get rid of my complaints without a short trip either to Cutch or Bombay for the assistance of a Surgeon.'[1] In 1764 the health of the Company's servants occasioned the Resident more anxiety. He wrote on April 11th: 'As no doctor of any reputation can be had at Shāhbunder I thought it necessary to get the ablest I could procure here and accordingly have this day engaged with Hājī Mahmūd at the rate of Rs. 15 per month, allowing for expense of country medicine to attend to the Gallivat's crew and Bombay sepoys and visit our different factories as the state of the sick may require.'

The unhealthiness of Lower Sind and the anxiety of the populace to obtain European medicine are emphasized by Burnes, who as a doctor was qualified to speak with authority on the subject. He says that fatal epidemics and frightful pestilence, resembling in some points the plague of Egypt, occasionally devastated the land, and that ague, asthma, rheumatism and pulmonary consumption, with the long train of diseases attendant on the combination of heat with corrupt exhalations from the earth, were frequently seen. Dropsy and enlargement of the spleen were also common and at certain periods a virulent ophthalmia caused by clouds of fine dust with which the atmosphere was impregnated. The Delta he found subject to heavy dews which were supposed by the natives to be extremely deleterious and even to occasion premature old age.[2] Lieutenant Carless, who surveyed the Indus in 1836-7, remarked that disease in the villages near the sea coast was so prevalent that whenever he approached a village he was besieged for medicines by the villagers upon whom the ravages of disease were 'disgustingly apparent'. He was much amused by persons coming to his boat asking if he had brought any English goods for sale, one wanting a pair of scissors for his wife, another some cheap cloth and a third a little brandy for a sick relative. In payment for these they were ready to offer fruits, butter and milk, which Lieutenant Carless politely declined to take from them in commiseration for their poverty and distress. This aspect of the common lot of the poor receives no mention at all in the pages of any of the native annalists. But the facts must not be forgotten in appraising the culture of the Moghul and Kalhōro epochs.

### (B) *Recreation and amusements*

If any reader perusing these pages has come to the conclusion that the peasantry of Sind in Moghul and Kalhōro days spent a life of unremitting toil and oppression without any lighter moments,

[1] Letter from Robert Erskine, 16 August 1760, in Bombay Government Records.

[2] See Burnes: op. cit., p. 113.

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he will have framed an erroneous conception of the facts. The peasantry of Sind are, and always have been, a happy-go-lucky people fond of laughter and amusement and well able to extract from their ordinary life all the fun that was procurable within their means. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that their amusement should have taken so strongly the form of indulging in liquor and intoxicating drugs, and in the employment of dancing girls whose immorality was a by-word. The religious Manrique was shocked in 1641 at the dissoluteness he saw in Tatta and at the shamelessness of the public women.

There is, however, a lighter side to this dark picture. It is found in the fondness of the Sindhi for conversation and listening to songs and stories, and in the whole-heartedness with which the chief festivals of the Mussalmān and Hindu year were celebrated, the two Īds, Ramzān and Bakrī, of the former, and Hōli and Diwāli of the latter. There is much contemporary evidence proving the abandon and merriment that prevailed during these festivals, when money was spent freely and much display was made with new clothes. The beautiful song of Shāh Latīf's called the 'Cotton Spinner' is written round a background of Īd. Hamilton in 1699 speaking of Hōli (which he misspells Wooly !) says that 'the populace kept a sight of the new moon in February which exceeded the rest in ridiculous actions and expense. In this mad feast people of all ages and sexes dance through the streets to pipe, drum and cymbals. The women with baskets of sweetmeats on their heads distributing to everybody they meet. The men are bedaubed all over with red earth or vermilion and are continually squirting gingerly (sic ! gingelly) oil at one another, and if they get into houses of estimation they make foul work with their oil, whose smell is not pleasant, but on giving a present of rose water or some silver coin they are civil enough to keep out of doors and in this madness they continue from ten in the morning till sunset.' The Hindu women had their arms covered with ivory bracelets from armpits to elbows and from elbows to wrists of both arms, and Hamilton notes on the very great consumption of elephant's teeth (ivory).

The Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī gives an equally vivid picture of the populace enjoying itself in one of these festivals. 'Each month', the author writes, 'has several īds for them, the first Friday after the new moon they call in the Sindh language "Māh-pahra Jūma". Such a crowd of men and women flood on this day to the Makalī mountain that there is scarce room to stand. It has become a custom among many classes to consider the similar festival of Māh-pahra Sūmar, or the first Monday in each month, a great day

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for making pilgrimages. The pleasure of visiting each other induces them to go in large parties taking with them abundance of sweet river water and food such as they can afford. The day is spent in amusements and visits to the shrines.'[1] When rain fell on the Kīra-tal, a sweet-water tank on the Makalī hill, men and women of all classes, Hindus and Mussalmāns, crowded there from morning till night, cooked their meals and feasted. The English factors could do no work during the festivals, which were times of 'madness, riot and confusion', as the records relate. At Īd the company rewarded its servants with special buksheesh and the whole place went on merry holiday.[2] Crowe speaks of the fondness of the people for sitting the whole day and night, indulging in smoking and garrulity. 'Intoxication through some measure or other', he says, 'is habituated to all descriptions of persons and bhang, a wild hemp, is the most common. They make spirit both from jāgrī (molasses) and from dates which they perfume with spices and consume a great deal—the Hindus particularly. The Sindians are excessively fond of singing and have good performers vocal and instrumental.'[3] The Āīn-i-Akbarī also mentions the fondness of the Sindhis for singing and music and the prevalence of amatory songs (kāmī).

Crowe remarks also on the corpulence of all who enjoyed ease and indolence and ascribes this to the great use of milk as a food. Rotundity of figure was much admired and accounted a beauty and the princes, many of the Balūchī chiefs and officers of the court were 'too large by far for the dimensions of any European chair'. Carless in 1837 says that in most of the towns there were numerous dancing girls and that the only amusement of the inhabitants consisted in smoking copious hookahs till they were intoxicated, while the women exhibited indecent postures before them. Intoxication with liquor and drugs was undoubtedly a curse of the country. Jahāngīr had made the drinking of wine punishable but he did nothing himself to observe his own orders and the Muslim nobles were heavy drinkers. By the time of Aurangzēb the evil had increased and he took strong measures to check it. His stringent regulations, though not capable of enforcement fully, may have effected some improvement.

[1] Elliot: I, pp. 272-4.

[2] Tavernier speaks of meeting near Daulatābād on the road from Golkonda to Surat more than 2,000 persons including men, women and children who came from the direction of Tatta with their idol which they carried in a rich palanquin on their way to visit the great idol of the pagoda at Tirupati. (Tavernier, II, p. 246.) From this it may be inferred that conditions under the Moghuls were not really so bad as a casual reader might infer from the diatribes of foreign observers impressed by the universal poverty they saw and the capricious exercise of authority by the autocratic local rulers.

[3] Crowe: op. cit.

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In Sind, however, it is by no means certain that this was actually so. It is clear from the evidence of Burton that intoxication was very prevalent everywhere in an aggravated form.[1] The poorer classes consumed the pichah (dregs) of the various alcohols and wines which were cheap and deleterious. There were two chief forms of liquor, ' gūr jō dārun ', made of molasses and bābul bark, and ' kattal jō dārun ', a spirit extracted from dates. There were in addition wines called ' angūrī ' made of grapes at Hyderābād, Sehwan and Shikārpūr, mixed with gūr, ' soufi ' made of aniseed and molasses brandy, ' mushkī ' perfumed with musk and other perfumes, ' taranjī ' made from citron peel, ' misrī ' made from sugar candy and perfumed, ' gulābī ' perfumed with rose water and ' kaysarī ' stained with saffron. The poorer classes were, however, more addicted to intoxicating drugs than to liquor and there was a bewildering array of preparations made from Indian hemp available at very cheap rates. The chief of these were ' bhang ' (' sāwo ' or ' sukhō '), consisting of the small leaves, husks and seeds of the hemp plant, ground, and drunk with water or milk, ' gānjō ' the top of the hemp plant, which was smoked in hookahs and ' charas ' the gum of the hemp, which was smoked with tobacco and eaten when it had been made into a paste. Besides these there were ' majur ' made of hemp butter, charas or dhātūra seed mixed with sugar and sweetmeats, ' khosh-khosh ' or poppy seeds, ' dhātūra jō bij ' made from the poisonous dhātūra (stramonium) plant and used by confectioners (halwāī), ' kōhī bhang ' from a kind of henbane, consumed by fakīrs and mendicants to produce aberration of the intellect and induce ecstasy, a poison which was eaten and not smoked in the Chinese fashion. The grog shops and ale houses of eighteenth century England had their counterpart in Sind in the form of ' daira ' or intoxicating drug dens, which were found outside all the larger towns, and the resorts of the hemp drinkers, frequented by the lower classes, a few Sayids and munshīs and generally by the Jelālī fakirs. Burton says that near every large town there were fifty or sixty such places, that the keepers of the dens received from the frequenters presents of money and clothes, and that they were accused of inducing young men to drink bhang.[2]

The idea, therefore, that the poor of Sind, despite their poverty, had no means of indulging in a form of amusement that appealed to them, is thus shown to be entirely unfounded. That this form of amusement was highly deleterious is not to the point. But amusements were not confined to those questionable practices. The Sindhis were a happy and pleasure-loving people and indulged

[1] See Burton : *History of Sindh*, pp. 168-9.
[2] ibid., p. 402.

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in a variety of health-giving pastimes and relaxations. The better-off were excessively fond of shikār, for which the country offered full scope in its abundance of small game. 'Their horses', says Hamilton, 'are small, but handy and swift. Deer, antelopes, hares and foxes are their wild games which they hunt with dogs, leopards and a small furious creature called by them a shoogoose. . . . They have store of peacocks, pigeons, doves, duck, teal, widgeon, wild geese, curlews, partridges and plover free for anybody to shoot.'[1] In the times of the Kalhōra it does not appear that the best shikārgāhs by the banks of the Indus in which the Tālpūrs spent so much of their time, to the great indignation of European observers, had been developed to anything like the extent they reached in the early nineteenth century. But it would be unreasonable to believe that shikārgāhs did not exist in the days of the Kalhōra, who maintained an almost regal state. The Mōhāna and other river living peoples, who possessed no guns with which to shoot aquatic birds, had developed a technique of their own by means of stick throwing, spears, decoys, and a skilful method of catching duck by hand on the water. They were always able to secure young birds which had not the strength to escape that full fledged birds could employ. Hawking was also indulged in and carried out with great skill; and the Sindhi language has a variety of technical words for the intricacies of this sport. Riding of horses and camels was also popular.[2] The Sindhi equestrian taught his horse to amble in a peculiar way that was very suitable to the rough surface of the country with its narrow dusty tracks and treacherous holes in which a trotting horse could easily break a leg. The Sindhi amble enabled horses to cover the ground at a good pace for considerable distances, and bare-backed riding was also popular and very skilful. These accomplishments are still a feature of present-day Sind. Horse and camel races were popular and made the occasion for betting and gambling under methods which had nothing to learn from the practice of the West. Polo, the great game of the Moghul nobility, does not appear to have been played in Sind, at least there is no mention of it and the game is unknown today as an indigenous sport, though it is played in the Sibī area of Balūchistān. Of the simpler forms of amusement there were many varieties. These included kite flying (patang) which was very popular with all classes and had a technique of its own,

[1] op: cit.

[2] Withington says: 'They have exceeding good horses, very swift and strong, which they will ride most desperately, never shoeing them. They begin to back them at twelve months old. The soldiers that have no horses if occasion serve will ride on their camels and enter into a battle which they bring up for the purpose.' Withington: op. cit., p. 218.

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Kabūtar-bāzī, betting on pigeons, kukar bāzī or cock fighting, ghōta bāzī or ram fighting, popular at the daira. Wrestling in the Sindhi fashion by 'malhs' was as popular as it is today, when it has claims to being the most popular sport of the country. The best wrestlers were the African negroes, brought across originally as slaves from Abyssinia, but the sport was also indulged in by the pahilwāns (or strong men) of the agricultural class in the villages. The wrestling was very expert and required a knowledge of many tricks (ārī or banū) and was peculiar in that the winner had not to throw his opponent on his back but merely to make his knee touch the ground. Wrestling in Sind is certainly a manly sport and often results in injury to the wrestlers, who throw each other with great violence on the ground. Training of wrestlers took the form of making them run, jump, hop on one leg, raise the malh (a large stone pierced to admit the fingers), break kāthī (rods) over the wrist or arm, or force an opponent to open the closed fist. Even today village wrestling matches can be depended on for attracting a huge gathering at a few hours' notice and the spectators know the finer points of this very exacting exercise. All the ordinary Indian games played by children in India were practised in Sind. Lighter amusements included shatranj (chess), nard (backgammon), pachīs, dhara (dice), chōwpar, gunjīfa (cards) and a variety of gambling games with counters at which the women were very adept, if Burton is to be believed. Last but not least were the folk dances, of which Sind possessed and still possesses a great variety and in which all classes joined with the utmost abandon. Many of the steps are very intricate and can be learned only after considerable practice. The folk dancing was very popular and was usually carried out to the accompaniment of native music played on pipes, drums and cymbals, and sometimes to the music of the ektār and sarangi, in which many Sindhis are very proficient. A popular item in such village music is often the drumming with the hand on the 'dilō' (large earthenware jar) from which expert performers are capable of producing a vast variety of rhythmic beats of differing timbre, which is very attractive. Thus these easy-going people employed many methods of relaxation which are still typical of the rural economy in which they live today and do much to add to the happiness and health of the countryside. The gloomy picture of social conditions painted by the works of Moreland must therefore be considerably toned down if a true impression is to be gained of the life of the poor in Sind during Moghul and Kalhōro days.

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# Chapter IV

## The Government and the Governed

### I. *The change in emphasis.*

Under the administrative system of the Moghuls Sind consisted of two sarkārs (divisions) of the sūbah (province) of Multān. The headquarters of the sarkārs were Bakhar for Upper Sind and Tatta for Lower Sind and each had a governor (a nabob as the Company letters called him) as the chief administrative officer. The sarkārs were divided into parganas and mahals. The ordinary features of Moghul administration were reproduced in Sind.[1] But it is not known how many of the superior grades of officials were actually posted there. There are, however, several references to the Bakhshī. We do not know if there was such a special officer as the Sadr-us-Sadūr, the Muntasib or the Beyutāt. There were of course, āmils, kānungos, faujdārs, amīns, darōghas, mahālkarīs, pātils, chaudharīs, mukhādams, patwārīs, zamindārs, killedārs, kōtwāls, kāzīs and munsifs. There must have been a mint master in charge of the mint at Tatta but I have not come across any reference to him. The Moghul army consisted of four chief classes, the tributary chiefs, the troop of mansabdārs, the dakhilī or supplementary troops and the ahadīs or gentlemen troopers. It is not clear to what extent this military system functioned in Sind but we know from native records that the feudal character of the Moghul administration depended on the loyalty of the local chiefs and their ability to put their troops at the disposal of the state. The best soldiers under the Moghul system were foreigners, Pathāns, Sayids, Moghuls and Rājpūts. An uncertain element prevailed in the Balūchī tribes and septs, rough and undisciplined and brooking little interference with their local spheres of influence. It was primarily because the Kalhōra strengthened the Balūchī elements in Sind and won their confidence that they became powerful enough to attain practical independence. It was primarily because the later Kalhōra alienated the Balūchī clans that they themselves had to give place to the Tālpūrs. It seems clear that many of the tribes could put a numerous army in the field and

[1] The Āīn-i-Akbarī, II, p. 336, states that the divisions in Sind were Tattah, Hajkān, Sewistān, Nasarpūr and Chākar Hāla with 18, 11, 9, 7 and 8 mahals respectively and a land assessment of 29,999,991, 11,784,586, 15,546,808, 7,835,600 and 5,085,048 dams respectively. It is, however, not easy to make sense of these figures because revenue in Sind was collected in kind (ghalabuksh) and not by the ' zabtī ' or ' nusq ' method.



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as long as the sardārs were faithful to the Moghul Governor he had little to fear. The Āīn-i-Akbarī mentions amongst others the Kalmānī Balūchīs near Lakhī who mustered 20,000 horsemen and the Nahmurdī or Nūmria near Sehwan who mustered 300 horsemen and 7,000 foot while the Mazārī Balūch were a thousand strong.[1]

Aurangzēb became Governor of Multān in 1648 and in November 1649 the sarkār of Tatta was added to his viceroyalty and the districts of Bakhar and Sewistān were granted him as fiefs. This brought Aurangzēb into close contact with the wildest and most undisciplined of the Balūch clans and he made stern efforts to instil in the hearts of these wild people some kind of respect for law and order. Amongst the tribes against whom he carried on determined warfare were the Hōts, the Nuhānīs, the Nahmurdīs and the Jōkhias (the latter, however, not Balūch). It was typical of Moghul policy, however, to win over the powerful and then use them as instruments of imperial force. This was the course adopted by Aurangzēb towards Ismail Hōt who was eventually conciliated because he was a rich chieftain with a large body of armed retainers. Having won him over Aurangzēb intended to employ him in helping to subdue the Nuhānīs and in supplying provisions for the war with Kandahār, which greatly interfered with Aurangzēb's measures for the improvement of Sind. Under the Kalhōra the Moghul system gradually weakened in the sense that military and feudal elements lost influence. The imperial officers ceased to be servants of Delhi and the importance of Bakhar and Tatta declined with the building of Khudābād and Hyderābād. The Moghul system of revenue administration and justice was, however, maintained without much alteration and the government became more a sort of co-operation between the Kalhōra and the chief Balūchī tribes than it had been in Moghul days. When the Kalhōra quarrelled with the Balūchīs they sealed their own fate. The Tālpūrs as Balūchīs themselves were able to weld Sind into a more complete unity than it had ever known in Moghul and Kalhōro days. But this unity was achieved by asserting a Balūch hegemony which had unfortunate results upon the non-Balūchī elements in the population, especially the Hindus. It was this aspect of the Tālpūr rule which so unfavourably impressed English observers in the nineteenth century and led them to draw entirely erroneous conclusions about the political conditions that had prevailed in Sind in previous centuries. Under the Moghuls and the Kalhōra Sind was never at peace. Under the Tālpūrs it was. But the price of peace was the tyranny of a Balūch

[1] Shāh Bahāro, a minister of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, had the management of the Chāndookah and commanded a division of 10,000 men, according to James, op. cit.

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minority which the Moghuls had always endeavoured to suppress and the Kalhōra unsuccessfully to conciliate.

The structure of the Moghul state remained unaltered and its fiscal arrangements were never disturbed by either Kalhōro or Tālpūr. Under the Kalhōra, however, the rule of the Moghul official was displaced by local substitutes who were forced to admit unwillingly the usefulness of the Hindu population in administration, trade and finance. The Tālpūrs accepted this in fact, but the pressure of the half civilized Balūch tribes, on whose military strength they relied, forced them in practice, while employing Hindus for everything that the Muslims could not do so well, to treat the Hindus at the same time with a strange mixture of apathy, cruelty and contempt. We can thus trace successively throughout Moghul, Kalhōro and Tālpūr rule an altering in the political importance of the various elements in the population. The Moghuls were autocratic but in essence they tried to be just. The Kalhōra were tyrannical and capricious because they were at one and the same time endeavouring to establish a Sind independent of Moghul, Persian and Afghān domination and also to shake off the growing power of the Balūchī clans. The Tālpūrs had no reason to fear the Balūchīs but were bent upon keeping Sind as a close preserve of Muslim power, with the result that under them non-Balūchīs and Hindus alike were treated with less consideration than they had been under Moghul or Kalhōro. It was for this reason that the British in 1843 were deeply convinced of the unpopularity of the Tālpūr rule. British aims were then concentrated on breaking the Balūchī power and all the emphasis of criticism was laid upon the sad plight of non-Balūchīs. If these general considerations are borne in mind much of the apparently contradictory evidence as to the conditions under which Sind Muslims, other than Balūchīs, and Hindus lived in Sind during the seventeenth, eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century will be found readily explicable. Balūchīs as a class are not at all intolerant. They are a hospitable, easy-going people with a high notion of chivalry and hospitality within their social code. It seems that the intolerance which ultimately developed was due to the influence of the Kalhōra who, as fanatical Muslims, were able to draw upon the prejudices of an ignorant Muhammadan population only too inclined to take a superficial and external view of the meaning of their religion. At least this is my reading of the conflicting evidence, to which I have given a great deal of concentrated study.

It is hard to reconcile the accounts of the happy camaraderie of all classes that prevailed in Tatta during its prosperous days with the distressing stories of religious bigotry common in the records of

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English observers in the nineteenth century. The Tālpūrs finding the tendencies towards bigotry well established took no trouble to correct them, as they were perfectly satisfied with their own position of personal supremacy and with their opportunities for amassing wealth. On grounds of prudence they saw no reason to invite the ill-will of the untutored clans from whom they derived their power. They followed, therefore, the easy policy of letting sleeping dogs lie. The Tālpūr rulers themselves were by no means unworthy personages. Their bearing and good manners surprised all the Europeans with whom they came in contact. Burnes and Pottinger were much impressed with their natural dignity, courtesy and intelligence. The moral, therefore, is clear that while the framework of the Moghul administration in Sind remained little altered in essentials from 1600 to 1840, the change in spirit was considerable. The personnel of the administration was adapted first to the needs of Sindhi non-Balūchīs and later to the public opinion of a Balūch minority which the ruling house dared not antagonize. The effect was to alter very greatly over three centuries the relation of the government to the governed, while retaining with unimportant changes the main features of the Moghul administrative machine, namely its feudal character, its dependence on the good will of the classes possessed of military strength, and its efficiency as a revenue collecting machine. Thus the Moghul officers disappeared and a local bureaucracy took their place. But whereas the Moghuls had tried to treat all outside the close imperial hierarchy as equally subject, the Kalhōra, and still more the Tālpūrs, were forced to discriminate against certain classes of the population, and they produced in the end a badly proportioned social system with a large number of privileged sections of the population who battened on the rest and drew their livelihood from them. These privileged classes were a strange mixed throng of very differing interests, of which some account will be given in a later chapter.[1]

## II. *Revenue and taxation*

The Sind revenue system has been minutely described by a multitude of observers. In essentials the system prevailing at the time of the British occupation of Sind did not differ greatly from the system of the Moghuls and the Kalhōra.[2] It possessed two main

[1] These influences were of course not absent during the best days of the Moghul Empire. Moreland speaking generally of conditions in the Moghul Empire says: 'It is safe to say that a relatively large number of producers contributed half of their gross income to the support of a relatively small number of economic parasites.' *From Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 303.

[2] See Burton and Postans and for the Moghul system generally the Āīn-i-Akbarī, Irvine's *Studies on the Moghuls*, Sarkar's works, and Farūkī's *Aurangzēb and his Times* (*passim*).

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characteristics, first, that the state share of the agricultural assessment was taken in kind (ghalabuksh in the Moghul records) and second, that taxation as a whole was extraordinarily comprehensive and touched in some form or other all classes of the population except those exempted as privileged. Estimates of the amount of revenue are all unreliable. It is impossible from the conflicting figures to form any accurate idea of the income of either Moghuls or Kalhōra, despite the multiplicity of statements on the subject. The tribute which the Kalhōra were required to pay to Herāt and Kābul was, according to Callendar, successively reduced from 21 lakhs (Nādir Shāh 1739) to 14 lakhs (Ahmad Shāh 1747), to 11 lakhs (Ahmad Shāh about 1760), to 7 lakhs (Tīmūr Shāh about 1775). Burnes in 1830 calculated the gross revenue of the state at 40 lakhs, whereas under the early Kalhōra it had been 80 lakhs. But these figures are guesswork. Whatever the tribute was, it was paid unwillingly and tardily and was always in arrears. Nothing short of a threat of actual invasion would have enforced better or more expeditious payment. Burnes states, a fact that can be substantiated from the East India Company records of the second Sind factory, that the Sind Government continued ' to pay tribute to the King of Kābuł in great portion in the manufactures of Tatta which they first obtained cheap and then transferred to His Majesty at false and exorbitant valuation '.[1]

As regards the incidence of the agricultural assessment the Āīn-i-Akbarī states that a third share of the crops was taken from the husbandmen. Postans says that under the later system of the Tālpūrs (probably following the Kalhōro system) the royal share of the produce was two-fifths, one-third and one-fifth according to the character of the land cultivated. Land was divided into three categories, first, land near the river that was easily irrigable without much artificial aid, second, land some distance from the river requiring the use of canals and water wheels, and, third, waste land

[1] Burnes: op. cit., p. 139.

Pottinger, however, states that by 1816 the revenue had risen from 42 to 61 lakhs since 1807 and that though the tribute to Kābul was 13 lakhs, the sum actually paid did not average one-sixth of that amount. *Account of Province of Sinde*, p. 401. The belief, therefore, that revenue fell greatly with the Tālpūrs is not corroborated, despite the asseverations of European observers that the shikārgāhs had swallowed up a large share of the assessable cultivable land.

In calculating cash rents the unit employed was the jirēb (about 100 feet square) and the quality of the soil and the value of the crops were both taken into account. Opium and indigo, both valuable crops, paid 20 and 80 rupees per bīgha. See Postans, op. cit., p. 239.

Under the Moghuls the average crop rates, according to Vincent Smith, were really selected rates, based on the average of the best field and on the average of the whole area in any given class of land.



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that had to be cleared of jungle and scrub by the process of jungal-shagāfī. It seems likely therefore that the Kalhōro and Tālpūr system was more elastic than the Moghul and took account of differences of fertility in a way unknown to the more rigid Moghul plan.[1] The Commissioner in Sind broadly confirms Postans. He reported in 1847, 'The bulk of the land revenue is assessed and realized in kind at rates not exceeding one-third of the gross produce with some small additions to meet charges of irrigation and collection. Lower rates are occasionally fixed with reference to the greater expense of irrigation in local circumstances. Money assessments exist, though not extensively; their terms are moderate considering the fertility of the soil. They are based on a standard bīgha, somewhat exceeding half an acre in extent, and the amount of cultivation under them is ascertained by annual mensuration' (bighōtī, i.e. measurement by bīghas). The Government share of the revenue in kind was kept in public granaries until disposed of and the revenue collectors used their discretion as to its disposal, by auction or contract, and also as to the time and mode of realizing the proceeds to the best of their judgement for the interests of Government.

One of the great difficulties of the Moghul system—the conflict between the demands of the central Government and those of local authority, which was a continual source of friction[2]—disappeared under the more unified government of the Kalhōra and Tālpūrs. Sind was then approaching a kind of natural and self-contained economy which argued a great increase in administrative efficiency from 1740 onwards. Jahāngīr had, on his accession, issued edicts condemning the levy of local cesses and other burdens which the assignees of every province and district had imposed for their own profit. About 70 years later Aurangzēb issued more detailed orders on the subject. The number of these cesses was enormous. Sarkar[3] cites no fewer than fifty-four of them, but his list is not exhaustive. 'There is evidence of a conflict between the central administration which attempted spasmodically to abolish these burdens and the local authorities who maintained and developed them to meet their need for funds. . . . The conclusion must be accepted that the conflict was decided in favour of the local authorities.'[4] In Sind, with the

1 'On the crops being gathered in, a Government officer attended to estimate their amount and to take the government share from the khirmān or general heap, previous to which it was not allowed to be touched under heavy penalties.' Postans: op. cit., p. 238.

2 Moreland: *Akbar to Aurangzēb*, p. 285.

3 *Lectures on Moghul Administration*, p. 120.

4 Moreland: ibid., p. 285.

In Sind besides the land revenue the chief taxes were sar shumārī, a poll tax on non-Balūchī and Jat Muslims, Sair, transit dues, and a variety of cases called abwāb. The exceptions for sar shumārī were Balūchīs, zamindārs,

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coming of the Kalhōra, these local burdens and cesses were not abolished. They continued to be levied and under the Tālpūrs the collection was even tightened up. But as all the revenue then went into one exchequer, the conflict disappeared and with it much of the unsettlement that kept the Moghul administration in a continual condition of instability. Under the Moghuls the chief heads of central revenue were land revenue, customs, mint, inheritance, presents, monopolies and indemnities. The local cesses consisted of a variety of duties levied on artisans, retailers, producers and consumers, transit dues of every description, called loosely rahādārī and jagāt. The total incidence of these was exceedingly heavy.

The system of providing funds for local needs was not originated by the Moghuls. It was the traditional system which they found prevailing in India. They endeavoured to control it in the interests of the central Government. The chronicle of Shāhabuddīn Talīsh translated by Sarkar makes the position absolutely clear. That native annalist states, ' From the first occupation of India and its ports to the end of Shāh Jahān's reign it was the rule and practice to exact hāsil (revenue) from every trader—from the rose-vendor down to the clay vendor, from the weaver of fine linen to that of coarse cloth, to collect taxes from new comers and from travellers, merchants and stable keepers.'[1] The system, as Farūkī[2] shows, was derived from the practice of Hindu dynasties and embraced almost every transaction that could be taxed for the benefit of the ruler. It went back to the Hindu law of taxation dependent upon the primitive village system of India, according to which the rāja took his share of all gains of any description whatsoever. The system is still the basis of local taxation in India, where local bodies depend largely for their income upon octroi, terminal and toll taxes, market and stall fees and, occasionally, profession taxes, the direct descendants of the old obnoxious transit dues, percentages of gain levied on manual skill and on the distribution and exchange of goods. When the British annexed Sind in 1843 they took immediate steps to abolish the more pernicious of these local exactions, which under

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public officers, military men, religious personages like kāzīs, pīrs, pīrzādas and Sayids. Large zamindārs had often the right to collect the sar shumārī. Men, women and children were all taxed and the head of the family was responsible for the amount which was one rupee per head per annum. Hindus paid no regular poll tax but were more than adequately taxed in other ways.

Postans states that the duties on a camel load of English manufactured piecegoods from the time of landing in Sind till they reached the north end of the country by land amounted to 58 rupees, and this did not include charges for hire of camels, payment of escort and other incidental expenses.

Postans, op. cit., p. 244.

[1] Quoted in Moreland : ibid., p. 284.

[2] Farūkī : op. cit., p. 481.

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the Kalhōra and Tālpūrs had attained a remarkable degree of comprehensiveness. Thus the Commissioner in Sind reported 'Town and transit duties which formerly existed have been abolished as also many inconsiderable and partial cesses prevalent under the late Government' leaving behind as the chief source of revenue land, fisheries, sea and frontier customs, excise on spirits and drugs, judicial fees, fines and miscellaneous items of small importance. One of the great curses of Moghul, Kalhōro and Tālpūr rule alike was the farming of the right to collect taxes and imposts of various kinds. This was tantamount to permitting the tax farmer to exact as much as he possibly could from every class, up to the point that the populace would bear. The system was a bad one as it admitted a middleman who had no interest in the incidence of the taxation he collected. It opened the door to all kinds of corruption and oppression, to which contemporary records refer copiously. The vigilance of the collecting staff under Moghul, Kalhōro and Tālpūr was remarkable. Few managed to escape for long from its unceasing and persecuting demands.

In Sind there was a long list of these annoying forms of taxation and the taxpayer had little or no protection against extortion. The tax farmers, ijāredārs and contractors were multitudinous and formed a close bureaucracy. They were mostly Hindus who knew very well just how far they could go with impunity. Burton has cited a number of these exactions prevalent under the old régime in Sind. Pēshkash-i-mahājan was levied on banias who had to pay five to ten rupees annually for the privilege of trading. Sar shumārī asnāfguran was a poll tax of Rs. 31 per annum paid by artisans like dyers, carpenters, smiths and masons. Dalālī was levied monthly on all brokers for permission to transact business for caravans and travelling traders. Hawāī was merchandise saved from ships sunk or wrecked and had to be paid over to the government. Furuī was the income from the sale of all camels, goats and grazing animals which were found straying into cultivated and assessed land. Charkhī was a tax paid on water wheels, garden and grain land. Ijāreh kolābha was levied on inundated lands and lakes farmed out to government servants, who paid the government one-third of all profits on reeds cut for matting, wild fowl, water lilies and edible roots. Ijāreh putta was levied on passengers using ferries. Sardarakhtī was levied at the rate of one-half or one-third on the production of mango, date and other fruit trees. It was claimed at the time of getting the fruit. Sardarakhtī was also another impost at the rate of one anna per tree charged before the tree was ripe, and collected by the kārdār. Tarāzu was a tax levied on grain, fruit, articles of food offered for sale in the bazaars and was paid at

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an average rate of one pice for five seers. Shikār-i-māhī was levied on all fishermen who had to render up one third or even one-half of their catch. Salāmatī kishtī was a charge for the safe arrival of a boat at the harbour or landing stage ; the contractor charged four annas for this, six annas called ' nath ' were taken when anchor was cast, and eight annas for every horse safely landed. Mawēsī was charged at one anna on the sale of every horse, mule, ass, camel or cow. Rēzkī was a tax on retail dealing. Every purchaser paid an anna per rupee to the government. If the sale exceeded 100 rupees, 5 per cent was charged but sawkārs and wealthy men escaped with 4 per cent, because it was bad policy to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. Panacharī was charged for the grazing of animals on government lands. Camels paid 8 annas, buffaloes 4 annas, cows 2 annas, sheep and goats 1 anna per month. Gutta or ijāreh sharāb was paid annually by each distiller upon his profits. Amīnī was a fee charged for the settlement of disputes. It was also called chouth because the fee was one-fourth of the sums disputed between parties.

A few instances of how this oppressive and comprehensive system of taxation worked will illustrate its incidence.[1] Carless quotes an incident that he witnessed with his own eyes, ' soon after we embarked,' he says, ' at its mouth (Kēdywāree River) several Karāchi fishing boats came in from the sea and made fast to the bank near us. But they had not been there long before two Balooch soldiers made their appearance to demand a share of the fish. An altercation ensued but the fishermen were bound to comply and after throwing on shore several fine large fishes they all quitted the boat in great disgust. . . .'[2] This was the levy of the Shikār-i-māhī in operation. The fishing industry was very thoroughly taxed, as we know from an official document. This says, ' There were thirteen separate cesses at Karāchi exacted by the tax farmer on fishermen.'[3] There were cesses also on tanner's bark cut by the fishermen themselves or purchased in town, on jungle wood for burning, on jungle wood for building, on boats with charcoal ; a tax on every boat quitting Karāchi harbour for Bombay or Muscāt, on tindal, serang, cook and khalāsīs ; a tax on every dōnda proceeding to Keamārī for cargo ; an export tax of 20 per cent on fish by the land route ; a tax of 9 per cent on fish taken to camp for sale ; a tax

[1] The paper manufacturers of Lārkāna had to pay a poll tax of Rs. 8-12-0 per annum. James : op. cit.

[2] Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series, Part II, p. 596.

[3] Account of the Fisheries of Sind by John Macleod, Collector of Customs, Karāchi, 1847. Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series, Part II, p. 704.

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on twigs used in the walls of houses. On fish of all descriptions exported to Darājah, Shāhbunder and Sōn Miānī of a value of one hundred rupees a duty was levied equal to Rs. 13-10-9 per cent.

Pottinger describes the working of the ijāreh system of custom farming in Karāchi. In 1809 the Hindu customs farmer paid into the treasury ninety-nine thousand rupees and himself received twelve thousand; and in 1816 the amount paid in was one lakh twenty-three thousand and the ijāredār obtained nearly twenty thousand for his trouble. It was little wonder that a system of taxation so oppressive, collected by means of tax farmers through the agency of a multitude of corrupt petty officials backed by the Balūch soldiery; made the Government far from popular with the common man, who, now that peace reigned over the land, might have expected to retain some of the profits of his labour, industry and skill. Almost every kind of modern taxation was employed in some form or other in this most comprehensive system which forced rich and poor alike to pay heavily to the Government treasury. Had the proceeds of this taxation been employed generously on public works and on education, there would have been something to say in favour of it. But the money thus wrung from the pockets of the populace was employed to enrich the ruling house and to enable it to amass great stores of jewels and treasure for personal aggrandizement, pleasure and display.

### III. *The administration of justice*

Sind was a Muslim state and in theory justice was administered according to the tenets of the Korān. In practice, however, the Shariat did not suffice to cover adequately the field of jurisprudence. The Korān is not a legal code; and not the combined force of sunna, ijmā and qiyās was adequate for dealing with day-to-day problems of law and order, criminal and civil jurisdiction, and the demands of equity. Much of course was achieved by the Qānūn-i-shari and Qānūn-i-urf, but it would be idle to pretend that the kāzī in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind performed the functions of the magistrate and the criminal and civil courts of today. In Moghul and Kalhōro days every man was to some extent the defender of his own rights. He took the law into his own hands as the speediest solution of his problem. The evidence already cited in this book will prove how ineffectively ran the writ of the Great Moghul and the Kalhōro prince. Judged by present-day standards the police force was lamentably insufficient. The police were in the hands of the subordinate revenue officials. They were miserably armed and miserably mounted. A dozen of these poor creatures were considered sufficient for any large town. The medieval system o

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collective responsibility for the malefactor prevailed everywhere. 'The principle was that the people of a township or parish were answerable for every offence committed within their borders and were bound within forty days either to produce the body of the offender, or else make good the damage and pay a fine.'[1] This is not a description of Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but of medieval England. The description, however, might very well apply word for word to the Sind of Moghul and Kalhōro days. For in Sind the system prevailed that the village or locality was responsible for stolen property traced to it and proved not to have gone beyond it.

The Kōtwāl was the chief functionary invested with executive police powers but his jurisdiction did not usually extend far beyond the town or larger village where he was stationed and where he held a small court for administering summary punishment. Sind contained then many expert thieves, and, as a sort of natural compensation, equally expert trackers (pagīs or pērīs) capable of following the footprints of camel, horse or man over miles of countryside. A stranger arriving at a village could claim the protection of the village watchman and if he lost his property, the responsibility for the loss lay on the village. The machinery of the law consisted of kārdārs who decided cases according to the Korān, which was expounded by muftīs, who were learned in such lore. The death penalty was but seldom inflicted. Mutilation by chopping off the left hand or cutting off ears and nose was almost the extreme form of punishment. The government was, however, usually ready to commute these barbarous penalties for a suitably heavy fine. 'The apprehension and detection of criminals,' says James, 'devolved principally upon the injured party. If the zamindār to whose village a thief was traced produced the thief the latter was robbed of the whole of his property, and the surplus, over what was claimed by the person who had been robbed, was carried to the credit of the government. If the thief was poor he was thrown into prison until his friends made good the claim against him and the fine to government.' A particularly revolting part of this punishment of malefactors was the custom of making prisoners beg for their maintenance and any surplus over bare maintenance that the prisoners succeeded in getting in alms became the perquisite of the kōtwāl.[2] It was perhaps because of these effective methods of bringing the crime home to the offender that crime was, comparatively speaking, so little rife in Sind if one is prepared to make two qualifications, first, in respect of the almost universal pastime of stealing cattle, which

[1] *The Story of Scotland Yard*, by Sir Basil Thomson, pp. 11-12.

[2] Burnes says: 'It is not unusual to see prisoners attended by their guards begging for subsistence in the public streets.' op. cit., p. 141.

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was regarded generally more as a form of clever amusement and dexterity than a crime,[1] and, second, of the wildness of the Balūchī tribes, many of them half civilized, who indulged in armed forays and plundered and murdered at their will. It was to provide against these unwelcome gentry that watch towers were erected in the villages and sometimes in the fields and that many villagers had 'kōts' or high walls within which some shelter was possible.

In a semi-barbarous land trial by ordeal was practised. James gives several instances of this. 'The ordeal of fire and water was frequently resorted to in cases where the prisoner declared his innocence and there was no direct proof. The trial by water (tubī) was as follows. The accused was placed under water whilst a man shot an arrow from a bow as far as he could. Another man was sent to pick it up and if the prisoner could remain under water until the arrow was brought back to the spot he was declared innocent. . . . The trial by fire (charr) was equally difficult. A trench was dug seven cubits in length and filled with firewood which was lighted and the accused, with his legs and feet bound, had to go from one end to the other through it, his escape from injury deciding his innocence.' Under the Tālpūrs there were no regular civil courts. Litigants were mostly referred to the kāzī or panchāyat or to munsiffs selected by the parties. The chief cases decided by the kāzī were disputes concerning hereditary property, marriage claims and the like. They were dealt with under the principles of Muhammadan law. The kāzī decided which party should take the oath and gave a written finding, which was drawn up very carefully and had all the authority of the rulers' sanad. Panchāyats dealt with disputes between Hindus, usually in cases where there was a question of local custom involved. The panchāyat was presided over by the mukhī and a smaller committee was the instrument of investigation and decision. Munsiffs were employed on other matters by Muhammadans and Hindus alike. Sometimes written documents were put in, sometimes a case was decided by one party taking the oath and his opponent consenting. The munsiff was regarded with great respect and his decisions were rarely called in question. The munsiff was often employed to settle boundary disputes, which he did by calling on one of the parties to take the oath with the Korān on his head. The munsiff produced a written decision which was given to the successful litigant. Another way of settling boundary disputes about islands along the Indus was more primitive. It

[1] Bartle Frere said in 1853: 'Cattle stealing, however, is hardly regarded as a crime and murders generally arising from quarrels about women are commoner than in India,' p. 662. Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series, Part II.

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consisted of letting pots float down the river to see on which bank they came to rest. Burnes[1] has some very pertinent observations on the administration of justice. He says, 'As the state religion of Scinde is taken from the Korān, so the system of jurisprudence is derived from the same source and when exercised between two subjects of the more favoured creed would appear to be pretty fairly administered by the kāzī. . . . The administration of justice costs little or nothing to the state. . . . The Hindus for the most part settle their differences among themselves by panchāyats or arbitration without a reference to the public authorities. The Balūchis seem generally to take the law into their own hands and to act on the simple principle of retaliation.'

[1] Burnes: op. cit., pp. 140-1.

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# Chapter V

# The Privileged Classes

*The working of privilege—(a) The landed classes*

The Moghul Empire was ruled by fear and favour. The strong were forced by circumstances to seek the help of the weaker. Else the administration would have ceased to function. This meant the wholesale creation of privilege. The Kalhōra, weak followers of Moghul models, with less strength behind them and controlled by the fanaticism of an ignorant populace, were even more dependent on the existence of privileged classes. It was the Kalhōra's practice of deferring to the priestly class that led to the extraordinary reverence for pīrs, Sayids and holy men, which may be said to have been the predominant characteristic of eighteenth century Sind. The privileged classes under Moghul and Kalhōro were (omitting the Government officials) the jāghīrdārs, the zamindārs, the Sayids, fakīrs, pīrs and holy mendicants, and the most powerful Balūch tribes which could not be antagonized.[1] The predominance of the Balūch, however, as a privileged class did not become pronounced until well into the Kalhōro régime.

The system of land tenure in Sind, so far as is known, has always been feudal. In all feudal systems the chief method by which the overlord assured himself of the homage of his vassals was by the grant of fiefs. In Sind these grants took a great variety of forms. The two classes most important in the scheme were the jāghīrdārs, the holders of jāghīrs, and the zamindārs, the holders of land on payment of the assessment fixed. In Sind the term jāghīr has been used to cover a large number of differing types of holding, but in essence the jāghīrdār held his land either entirely free or on payment of a small rent and was entitled to collect for himself the land assessment. Jāghīrs were granted principally to chiefs who provided armed retainers, to officials who discharged public duties, to menials who performed

[1] The length to which privilege went can be realized from the statement of Winchester in his topographical report on the city of Tatta and its environs in 1839, where he says that the following tribes were exempted from taxes unless engaged in trade, in which case only half the ordinary duty and custom was exacted.

Sayids, Rājwi or Mahadvī, Sikhlāī, Sūfī, Meerukhī, Amīrkhānī, Shirāzī, Bokhārī, Lōdī, Mūlla, Abbāsī, Kāzī, Mooftī, Ākhund, Jhōkia, Bakhalī, Butteārah, Halālkhōr, Junkra, Jutī (fishmongers) and Brahmins, Sāraswat, Pōkarna and Hussainī, and all mendicants and priests. Bombay Government Records, Selections XVII, New Series, Part II, p. 273.



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domestic services and to courtiers who had won the favour of the court. A jāghīr, however, differed from a plain gift (inām) in that it involved obligations which terminated with the death of the jāghīrdār and the sanad was called in and had to be regranted to a successor at the will of the ruler. An inām was a free irreclaimable gift. The area of land held in jāghīr and inām was estimated[1] in 1847 by the Commissioner in Sind at one-tenth of the total area of the Government land. Policy in respect of jāghīrs varied and M. Ellis[2] remarked that ' the Tālpūrs, though liberal in their grants to their own immediate retainers and dependants, were not remarkable for generosity in confirming grants of their predecessors. Certain grants in the old Shikārpūr Collectorate (in Sukkur district) were found to be traceable to the time when the Afghāns had possession of Upper Sind.' Afghān settlers, favoured by the rule of their own countrymen, purchased land from the indigenous population and sometimes bought new land under cultivation. The new cultivators wishing to secure a light assessment petitioned their sovereign . . . and obtained puttas (leases) for the cultivation of certain lands on payment of a stipulated sum or on condition of the remission of the Government demand. On the annexation of Sind the British recognized three kinds of these alienations, first, jāghīrs which had been held from antiquity, and were allowed to continue hereditarily, second, puttadārī holdings of old standing, and third, grants of a religious or charitable character (wakf). The first class, jāghīrs, were held mostly by Balūch chiefs of influence and importance. The puttadārīs, in Upper Sind especially, are held mostly by Afghān settlers dating from the time of Nādir Shāh, and even earlier from the days of the Arghūns and Tarkhāns.[3] But I am myself familiar with at least one case of a claim of puttadārī by a Hindu descendant of an Āmil in the service of the Government.

The religious and charitable grants were at the disposal of mosques, Sayids, pīrs, fakīrs and holy men of all descriptions. Garden grants were a common feature and a useful one. The Commissioner in Sind reported of them, ' These gardens were to be found throughout the whole province and consisted chiefly of allotments in the

[1] Bombay Government Records. Revenue Arrangement Sindh, Vol. 203.

[2] ibid., Selections LXVI, New Series, p. 45.

[3] Upper Sind at the period of the sack of Delhi by Nādir Shāh formed part of the sūbah of Multān. On the dismemberment of the Empire of Delhi the portion named Moghulī, comprising Sukkur, Bakhar and Shikārpūr and its dependencies, was annexed to the Durānī kingdom founded by Ahmad Shāh Abdalī. At that time the Afghān possessions in Sind extended to the north-east of Kashmōre on the Multān frontier, north to Rajkan and the desert and south to Mundajī on the Lārkāna river. Report by Major Goldney on Shikārpūr Collectorate, p. 688. Bombay Government Records, Vol. XVII, New Series.

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neighbourhood of towns. Planted by their owners or their fathers, they were in the hands of all classes, from influential Balūch jāghīrdār or Afghān puttadār down to the poorest faquīr or gosain. Some assumed the form of "topes" or groves. All were, however, more or less public benefits created by private cost and labour. It was owing to them that the wayside traveller did not lack shelter, shade, refreshment and repose.'[1] Amongst the tribes amongst whom jāghīrdārs were to be found were Tālpūrs, Nizamānīs, Laghārīs, Marrīs, Jamālīs, Bhugrāīs, Bhagrānīs, Rinds, Chāngs, Chalgarīs, Lashārīs, Nuhānīs, Lunds, Kalvīs, Jettōrs, Nundānīs, Jelālānīs, Khōsas, Khōkhars, Abras, Katiāns, Sayids, Pīrs and Pathāns. The vast majority of these are Balūchī tribes.

If the jāghīrdārs were the princes of the privileged autocracy, the zamindārs occupied the position of a honourable middle class. The zamindār played an important part in the social system. He paid the revenue, he made regular advances to the cultivators, and he enjoyed a large number of feudal privileges in respect of the husbandmen who tilled his land and took their share of the produce for their pains. He had enough of the good things of life to keep him contented, horses for riding, a gaily caparisoned camel or two for display, an 'ōtāk' where he talked with his friends, bhang to smoke in his hookah, palāō and ghōsht for special feasts and a considerable latitude in his relations with the womenfolk, though this might have serious consequences now and again. Over his zamindārī the zamindār had a great deal of dictatorial power which he knew well how to use.[2] He was in fact a petty feudal overlord with a territory that might run to several square miles. He gave his orders and he expected them to be carried out at once. 'The zamindār', says Postans, 'was at liberty to let to parties under him any portions of the land he proposed to cultivate, but he was always held individually responsible for the revenue of the whole.'[3] He paid his workpeople of every description in grain, even the carpenter who mended the wooden plough and the patwārī who weighed the grain at the time of batāī. In some places the zamindār elected a sort of representative for the management of public affairs. He was called Mukhādam or Arbāb, a title that has not yet died out in Sind. The boundaries of the village 'dēh' were defined, but the fields were not separated from each other. The lands were held on

[1] Bombay Government Records, Vol. LXII, New Series, p. 170.
For the working of the zamindārī system see *Sind Gazetteer* on the system prevailing in the Sahiti pargana.

[2] Despite the fact that his extravagant habits led him continually into indebtedness to the Hindu money lender, he had his own means of preserving his position and enforcing his will.

[3] Postans: *Personal Observations on Sinh*, p. 238.

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the tenure common throughout many parts of India, of undisturbed occupancy as long as the revenue was paid at the settled rate. The settlement was made usually with the zamindār individually and rarely with a village jointly. The zamindār had also duties to the government in respect of detection of criminals and arrest of them, and his intelligence system was usually good enough to keep him informed of thefts by men of his own holding or by men of neighbouring holdings, in which the universal sport of cattle stealing proceeded without check. The zamindār also was powerful enough, usually, to procure the murder of his enemy if he wanted, and it was always very difficult to bring the crime home on the instigator. The zamindārs, however, did not care much to assist the investigation of crime for several good reasons. They did not want to be cited as witnesses as this lowered their ' ābrū ' (reputation) and forced them to take sides. They were thereby frequently treated with disrespect and might find themselves at the mercy of a dishonest tracker who alleged that he had traced the stolen property to their land. Furthermore, if the zamindār was himself in any way implicated indirectly in a crime he had good reasons for not placing himself at the beck and call of the kārdār, the Āmil, the mukhtiārkār or the kōtwāl. The countryside, however, was prepared to accept the importance of the zamindār's position and to treat him with deference accordingly. He was a kind of father confessor to his husbandmen and his influence was often able to settle their never-ending disputes about women, and the theft of cattle. He was in fact a kind of country squire on whom depended largely the co-operative agriculture of the zamindārī and whose word was, within certain limits, regarded as law.

*(b) The religious hierarchy*

So much for the privileged classes of the landed aristocracy. There remained the much more formidable privileged class of the religious ' hierarchy '. The extent to which holy men or reputed holy men were reverenced and pampered in Sind is almost outside the bounds of credibility. This was the least satisfactory feature of the Sind social structure. There was a Persian proverb about Multān that applied equally to Sind that it consisted of heat, dust, beggars and tombs. The aphorism was certainly true of Moghul and later still truer of Kalhōro and Tālpūr days. The facts admit of no dispute and are extremely unedifying. The Sayids, the Pīrs, the Pīrzādas, the Kalandars, the Sūfīs and a host of others were the real power in the land. No ruler could afford to neglect them and all were afraid of them. The reason lay in the peculiar psychology of the Sindhi Muslim peasantry. The social religion of Sind was built up round the reverence of the murīd for the murshid, and the

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sanctity of the Pīr. The system goes back for its roots to the beginning of Islām, but few Muslims have carried a respect for sanctity so far. Sir Alexander Burnes remarked, ' Nothing more arrests the notice of a stranger on entering Sind than the severe attention of the people to the forms of religion as enjoined by the prophet of Arabia. I have observed a boatman quit the laborious duty of dragging the vessel against the stream and retire wet and covered with mud to perform his genuflexions. In the smallest villages the sound of the Muazzin, or crier, summoning true believers to prayers may be heard and the Muhammadans within reach of the summons' sound suspend for the moment their employment that they may add their Amen to the solemn sentence when concluded.'[1] All this is admirable and shows a deep and profound respect for the tenets of faith. But the practical results were not so encouraging. Dr Burnes said, ' There is no country in Asia or rather on earth that is so perfectly priestridden. It is said to possess no fewer than one hundred thousand tombs of saints ', and MacMurdo estimated the expense of the ecclesiastical establishments at one-third of the gross revenue enjoyed by the state. Crowe,[2] writing shortly after the Kalhōra were displaced said, ' There is no zeal but for the propagation of the faith, no spirit but in celebrating the Īd, no liberty but in feeding Sayids and no taste but in ornamenting old tombs.' Elliot says, ' Much of the conquered land was, during the whole course of the Arab occupation, liberally bestowed upon sacred edifices and institutions as wakf or mortmain, of which some remnant dating from the earlier period is found even to this day. The large population of Sayid families are due to the Alī refugees, some of whose descendants settled at Lakhiārī (Lak aliāvī) and Matiārī (Mat aliāvī) and as mujāwars of the tomb of Lāl Shāhbāz at Sehwan exercised much influence. Many Sayids of Eastern India traced their first settlements to Tatta, Bakhar and other places in the Indus valley.'[3] The populace showed a superstitious respect for Sayids. Burnes remarked, ' The meanest wretch who can boast his origin from the holy stock enjoys a place in society higher than temporary rank can bestow. Among the crowds who came to me for medicine all readily gave place to the Sayids. No person under any provocation would dare to abuse or strike one unless at the risk of being torn to pieces by the populace, and, in consequence of the privileges and immunities they enjoy, they flock from all the neighbouring centres into Sind where they are a constant tax on the poorest of the inhabitants.'[4] His brother, Sir Alexander Burnes, says, ' The

1 Quoted in Dr Burnes's book, op. cit.
2 Crowe: p. 23. MSS. Selections, No. 93 of 1802.
3 Elliot: I, p. 481.
4 Burnes: op. cit., p. 75.

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mendicants in Sind are more numerous than in any other country in Asia. They can scarcely be called beggars, for they levy tribute in crowds and by threats of great arrogance. One of the most common is to sit all day on the house top and repeat the sacred name "Allāh" as many thousand times as the tongue can utter it.'

Captain Del Hoste describes the conduct of this privileged class. They went about wearing sword and shield, and riding horses, declaring that they would not move till given sums of money varying from two or three to one hundred and fifty rupees. They enforced attention by blowing horns, ringing bells, beating drums and shouting at the pitch of their voices. Del Hoste speaks of one Sayid who sat himself in front of the British Ambassador's tent and addressed the Ambassador, 'O Feringhee Ēlchī, give me a hundred rupees or I will stay here all day; and, if you do not, I will stay here all day; and, if you do not, I will tell Mīr Murād Ali Khān not to comply with anything you purpose, whereas if you make me your friend, you shall get whatever you want.'[1] The streets of the towns were infested by such persons whose importunity and insolence made heavy demands upon the superstitious poor under threat of all kinds of penalties. The well-known shrines and tombs noted for special sanctity displayed similar scenes, the most notorious of all being the shrine of the Kalandar Shāh Lāl Bāz (or Udēro Lāl) at Sehwan where Hindus as well as Muslims paid tribute to the demands. Further light on this superstitious regard for holy men is thrown by Lieutenant James in his account of the Chāndookah. Describing the tomb of Shāhul Muhammad Kalhōro, who became a saint on his death at a battle fought at Fatehpūr six miles from Lārkāna, he says, 'The doorway of this court and of the mausoleum is hung with native offerings of those who consider that their prayers for any particular blessing have been heard through the mediation of the saint. These consist chiefly of iron bells and strings of shells. The tomb itself is covered with rich silk and brocade, the offerings of the wealthier visitors. . . . On descending from the edifice a party of miserable mendicants, whose duty it is to keep the courts in a state of cleanliness, clamorously demand a fee, a portion of which is retained by them and the remainder distributed to the poor surviving descendants of the family.'[2] Such instances could be multiplied a hundred fold but it is needless to elaborate the matter further.

Many of these fanatical exhibitions by an ignorant and unlettered populace met with the disapproval of learned and cultured Muslims, who, however, were powerless to interfere and knew better than to try to do so. Thus the author of the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī is quite frank

[1] Quoted by Burnes: op. cit., p. 76 from Del Hoste's MS. Journal.
[2] James: op. cit.

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about the undesirable nature of many excesses of popular superstition shown in Tatta in the dancing of darwīshes before the shrine of Shaikh Patta, Shaikh of Shaikhs. 'This custom, however much opposed to the laws of Islām,' he says, 'has been transmitted from generation to generation and all attempts of wise teachers and just governors have never succeeded in putting a stop to it.'[1] The real form and meaning of Islām in Sind is not to be found in these ebullitions of popular and incredible fanaticism, but is to be read in the beautiful spiritual poems of Shāh Abdul Latīf. It will be most unfair to judge Sind by the former and forget the latter. Pottinger, commenting on this feature of Sind Muslim psychology, goes so far as to say, 'The whole of the religion may be summed up in their liberality to Sayids, Fakīrs and other religious mendicants who overrun the entire country and whose self-will and insolence is not to be controlled by the Amīrs themselves. Their possessions are very great in the country and they have great establishments at Sehwan, Hālakhandī and other places where they have the absolute right of collecting customs and transit dues.' At Moghulbhīn the fishing rights had to be granted to a mosque and there were many other instances of valuable alienations in favour of the priestly caste. I think there can be little doubt that the tendency to pamper holy men became more pronounced under the Kalhōra who were typical Sindhis and themselves invested with a halo of sanctity as murshids, in view of their descent from the sainted Ādam Shāh. The Tālpūrs could do nothing to check this tendency. They added indeed to the number of the privileged classes by granting farms and showing extraordinary preference to the Balūchī tribes whom they were afraid to oppose.[2] The Kalhōra were men able to dominate the Balūchīs. 'During the period when the sacred tribe of Kalhōra brought under their control nearly all districts, Gujerāt on the eastern bank of the Indus, the Karmatīs and Jōkhias towards the sea, the Nūmrias between the villages of Shaul and Jinger and the Chāndias along the hills above Sehwan still maintained their independence or became tributaries of Khurasān and were never even by the Tālpūrs more than partially subdued.'[3] The records show

[1] Elliot: I, p. 274.

[2] The habits of the Balūchīs had not changed from the days of Withington (1613) or the days of Aurangzēb's Governorship of Multān (1648-52). Withington's words are memorable: 'These are a people that deal much in camels and in these parts most of them are robbers on the highway and also on the river, murdering such as they rob. About the time I was in Scinda the Balūchīs took a boat wherein were seven idolators and one Portugale friar, which fought with them and were slain every man.' Withington, op. cit., p. 220.

[3] Letter from Captain Pelly 1-1-1856. Bombay Government Records, Vol. LXII, New Series, p. 104.

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that in Karāchi several Balūch tribes were exempt from taxation. Del Hoste gives an interesting example of how powerful Balūchīs had become. When he was at Hyderābād two camels belonging to Lieutenant Morris were stolen during the night from near the officers' tent. When the theft was discovered trackers were called in who traced the animals to the tents of Balūchīs some distance away.[1] The matter was investigated by the Kōtwāl and, despite clear proof of the theft and the guilt of the thieves, the Mīr said he was powerless to get them restored but would replace the camels himself by two others altogether. From this and other evidence which is too voluminous to cite it is impossible not to agree with Pottinger's conclusion that the population of Sind could be divided into three classes: the first was the privileged class consisting of Amīrs, Chiefs, Balūchīs, Sayids and religious mendicants, the second, of the pastoral agricultural and other Mussulmān tribes found all over Sind in the rural areas and constituting the majority of the population, and the third, of the Hindus who were 'tyrannized over in the most infamous and open manner by all classes of Mussulmāns'.[2] The plain facts were that theun privileged classes had to support, in the manner already described, by their toil and industry the privileged so that the latter could lead lives of display, extravagance and indolence.

### (c) *The change from Moghul to Kalhōro régimes*

Comparing conditions under the Kalhōra with conditions under the Moghuls, we can find a subtle change in the categories of the privileged classes. The great granting of privilege to religious persons began to be pronounced under the Kalhōra, as distinct from the ordinary Muslim system of wakf which had existed from the original Arab conquest. The Moghuls did not exempt Balūchīs, at least in theory, from the taxation imposed on Muslim subjects generally, though it is far from likely that they were very successful in collecting the full demand from these tribesmen. Thus, while under the Moghuls the privileged classes consisted of the feudatory chiefs and officials, many of the latter being foreigners, the rest of the population, Hindu and Muslim, were obliged to pay what the state demanded, the Hindus being subjected to certain taxes and exactions as non-Muslims, according to the practice of Aurangzēb. Under the Kalhōra, however, it became no longer necessary to support an alien Moghul bureaucracy. The position of privilege formerly occupied by the Moghul aristocracy was taken by the

[1] Del Hoste: op. cit., p. 26.

[2] For the maltreatment of Hindus see Pottinger, Postans, Burnes and Burton *passim*.



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rulers themselves, the jāghīrdārs and leading zamindārs. Sayids and fakīrs began to be treated with great respect, which the taxation system acknowledged, while the ordinary cultivating and pastoral classes, the true Sindhis, the Jats and camelmen, the fishermen and hunters, were fully exploited.

The Hindus' position deteriorated still further. They came to be regarded as a sort of gold mine to be drawn upon at will. All the wandering immigrants, mostly Hindus from Gujārāt, Jaisalmīr and Mārwār, who entered Sind, became thereby liable to the taxes that fell upon the indigenous Muslim population. The Balūchīs were by this time becoming too powerful to tax properly and claimed immunity from the taxation that pressed on the indigenous Muslim population. This immunity they became more and more successful in obtaining. Thus the system was in essence less just than that of the Moghuls. But, as Postans has remarked, the common people were reconciled to it and had no means of resisting. The Hindus regarded the numerous demands upon them as a sort of capricious income tax and doubtless they managed to pass some of them on to the consumer, as without the Hindus as traders and accountants the commerce of the country would have stood still and the revenue system would have been unworkable. It happened thus that Hindus continued to live in Sind advancing money to the zamindār class, financing trade and commerce, farming the revenue, and owning all the petty shops in the villages. There is no doubt that many of them became rich, though they had to adopt all kinds of subterfuges to conceal their wealth. It is not a pleasant picture. But this condition of affairs was inevitable with a capricious autocracy ruling the land, and an exceedingly ill-balanced distribution of labour between the agriculturist and trader on the one hand and between the privileged and the unprivileged sections of society on the other. As the privileged sections possessed all the power and controlled all the military strength, the unprivileged had no option but to accept their fate with resignation. It was this characteristic of the government of Sind which provoked the numerous diatribes of English critics in the early years of the nineteenth century. But the plain fact simply was that the social condition of the country was due to the gradual disintegration of the Moghul system influenced by the psychological attitude of complaisance shown by the Muslim populace in respect of autocratic government and its reverence for holy men. In such circumstances the trading and commercial elements were crushed as between the upper and nether millstones. A quasi-theocratic state, dependent on an unsound division of labour of this kind, could have taken no other form.

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# Chapter VI

# A Poet and His People

## I. *The idols of the market place: some exhibitions of popular religion*

No description of the Sind of Moghul and Kalhōro days would be adequate without some account of the life of Shāh Abdul Latīf. He stood at the parting of the ways between the rule of the Moghuls and that of the Kalhōra. He witnessed himself the transition from the Sind of the Delhi Empire to the Sind of the struggling independence. His dates are not established with complete certainty. But they may be taken as extending from 1689 to 1752. He was a poet who sang for the people of the rural countryside. His poetry was inspired by the noblest message of Islāmic teaching in its spiritualized and mystical form. His poems have become a kind of national heritage. But the life and poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf cannot be seen in true perspective unless first something is known of the popular religion of the people amongst whom he lived and for whom he sang. The scholar who studies the poems finds himself faced with a difficult problem: how is it possible to reconcile the poet's lofty etherealized religion with the actual practice of the common folk? While the value of a religion must always depend upon its ideals and its highest form of expression, the popularity of a religion is a measure of the beliefs and practices of the majority of its followers. 'The history of a church', says Dean Inge, 'ought to be a biography of ideals'[1]: and, to quote the same writer once more, 'A religion as believed and practised cannot be far in advance of the mental and moral capacity of its adherents. A religion succeeds not because it is true but because it suits its worshippers.'[2] In seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind a great gulf yawned between Islām's ideal and the practical working of Islāmic belief.

Sind was a Muslim state which struggled to semi-independence in the mid-eighteenth century. It sought to found its basis on the theocracy of Islām, amongst a population composed for the most part of converted Jats. The history of Islām in Sind is extraordinarily complicated. It has not yet been adequately described in any book. The majority of the population were followers of the Sunnat. But very influential sections held Shia tenets, though none

[1] Inge: *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*, p. 4.
[2] ibid., p. 14.



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of them embraced the thorough-going heterodoxy of the Persians. The Sindhi is by nature an easy-going being, not given to religious subtlety. This tolerant trait in Sindhi character has produced a rare phenomenon. Though the religious leaders belonged largely to a school of religious thought at variance with the ideas of the greater part of the population, they did not thereby lose their position of predominance.

The leaders of religious thought in Sind were drawn from four main classes, the Sayids, the Kureishīs or Siddīkis, the Alāwīs and the Abbāsīs. Of these the Sayids were incomparably the most influential. All these religious families trace in some degree their origin to the Arabia of the Prophet. They entered Sind at various times from the Mussulmān lands that lie between Arabia and India. They were a heterogeneous mixture of many races. No adequate account of them can be given without tracing in detail the Mussulmān occupation of Sind from the days of the Arabs to the days of the Moghuls, a period of eight hundred years. The Sayid families were either Hassanī or Husainī. Most of them were named from their place of origin, like Bukhāra or Shirāz, or from the places in which they eventually settled in Sind. They were nearly all Shīas by persuasion. The extent to which Sind attracted contemplative and religious-minded persons during the middle age of Islām is well known and is the foundation of its school of Sufī thought. Abul Fazul, the statistician of Akbar's reign, gives from his own family history an interesting example of the process of immigration. He himself had some claims to being a Sindhi. He says (Āīn III, p. 418) that Shaikh Mūsa, his fifth ancestor, withdrew from the association of his fellows, abandoned his home and set out on travels. 'In the ninth century by the decrees of heaven he settled in quiet retirement at Rēl, a pleasant village of Sewistān, and married into a family of god-fearing and pious people. Although he had come from a desert to a civilized town he did not exchange his retired habits for the occupations of the world.' Burton, speaking of the Sind Sayids, says, 'Many are learned men, much respected by the commonalty in spite of discrepancy of belief. Under the Kalhōro dynasty they became possessed of large landed estates granted as inām in perpetuum.' The Sayids of Sind showed some unusual peculiarities. They would not allow their daughters to marry Muslims of less dignified stock than their own. If either of the parents was a Sayid, the children must be called Sayids too. There was in this way a considerable watering-down of the original Arab, Persian, Turk and other Asiatic strains in them.

Throughout the Muslim domination of Sind for eight centuries there was a continual recruitment of the saintly families from outside. It is possibly this fact, taken in conjunction with the

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superstitious hero-worship of the common people of Sind, which explains the extraordinary influence which they wielded. To understand the reason for this we must go farther back into Sind history. The facts are, however, very obscure. The indigenous population of the Lower Indus valley in the eighth century consisted of Hindu races speaking a Sanskritic language. During the days of the Arab occupation the land was held by Arab garrisons supported by grants of land. 'They were probably', says Kaye, 'mainly concentrated in the important cities. . . . The internal administration of the country was necessarily left largely in the hands of the Hindu landlords paying the land tax (kharāj) and the capitation tax (jizyā).'[1] 'Towards the end of the tenth century Islām in Sind appears to have been influenced by a wave of Qarmatian heresy from Egypt and Irāq. In the beginning of the eleventh century Mahmūd of Ghaznī found both Multān and Mansūrah in the occupation of this Ismailī sect. From the first quarter of the eleventh century onwards the Arabs began to be displaced by Turks from the north while the local administration remained in the hands of petty local Hindu chiefs.'[2] Most of the population was converted to Islām in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, though the ruling autocracy of Sūmra appears to have been converted earlier. Some time in the early eleventh century (circa A.D. 1025) the Hindu tribe of Sūmra became the rulers of Sind. In 1228 Mālik Sinān-ud-dīn Chatīsar, the then Sūmro prince, submitted to Junaydī, the general of Iltutmish and became a vassal of the Delhi Sultān. According to Hasan Nizāmī 'Coinage was struck and prayers read in the name of Shamsuddīn as far as Qasdār and Mekrān.' It is clear from the name that the ruling family had already adopted Islām. Elliot (I, 491) believes that they were tainted by the heresy of the Qarmatis by the eleventh century A.D. In the middle of the fourteenth century the Samma displaced the Sūmra (Elliot, III, 322). The Āīn-i-Akbarī states that the Sūmra (Rājpūt) line of thirty-six princes reigned for five hundred years. But research has established that the probable duration of the Sūmra regime was from circa 1025 to circa 1360, though there is confusion as to the exact dates and also as to the authority wielded over Upper and Lower Sind, which have had very different histories.

The Samma seem to have come from Cutch. In the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī it is stated that the labouring classes and landholders of the Samma held the Hindu faith. But Elliot shows (I, 266) that they were very strange Hindus, because they never drank wine without partaking of a young buffalo calf. 'The Samma took the title of Jāms and their latest and greatest capital Tatta was founded

[1] *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 21. [2] ibidem, p. 22.

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on a lucky day settled by Brahmans and astrologers ' (Elliot, III, 273). During the days of Jām Nizāmuddīn, also called Jām Nundo, who flourished about A.D.1461, Islām spread widely over Sind and the mass of the common people became Muslim.

These facts seem to establish the interesting conclusion that, while the earlier leading families of Sind were influenced by Shīa ideas and many of the saintly families continued to be so influenced for many centuries, when the mass Sunnī conversions occurred they did so amongst a population deeply wedded to Hindu practices and Hindu superstitions. The result was twofold ; first to break down very considerably the clear-cut distinction between Sunnī and Shīa which elsewhere runs like a knife-edge through Muslim society : and second, to make it inevitable that Islām, as far as the common people were concerned, would be to a great extent influenced by Hindu predilections. It is stated of Shāh Abdul Latīf that, when questioned whether he was a Sunnī or a Shīa, he replied that he was between Sunnī and Shīa.[1] In reality he was more a Shīa than a Sunnī, because he intended at a later stage of his life to make the pilgrimage not to Mecca but to Kerbela. The existence of a large number of unorthodox practices in the religion of the common people in Sind must almost certainly be due to Islām's being unable in a few hundred years to cast off the superstitions of a pre-Islāmic belief. The fact remains that right up to the time of Burton the austerity of the Arab religion was toned down by practices which were frowned on by the educated Mussulmāns. Whether the exaggerated respect for the pīr is due to the remains of Hindu influences of hero-worship cannot be predicated ; but it is possible that some such influence has been at work in Sind. Another form that popular belief took was to carry to extremes what is little less than worship of the dead. How are we to explain the extraordinary phenomenon of Hindus visiting Mussulmān shrines and making votive offerings at them, and the general easy-going character of Sind orthodoxy ? The question is important because the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf, while itself in the true tradition of Islāmic mysticism, nevertheless exercises over Hindus in Sind a spell almost as complete as that exercised by it over Muslims. The complex religious history of the country has therefore produced some surprising results : an almost incredible veneration for Sayids as such, a great accretion of superstitious practice in the belief of the multitude, and a common basis of understanding, by Muslim and Hindu alike, of the mystical message of Islām as expounded in the teachings of the Sindhi Muslim mystics.

Before dealing with the life of Shāh Abdul Latīf we must examine a little more closely the implications of these facts. As regards the

[1] Gurbuxānī : *Shāh jō Risālo*, I, p. 50.

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veneration in which Sayids, pīrs and holy men were held, there is an overwhelming mass of evidence in the Tuhfat-al-Kirām and in the pages of Burton. The Sayid who was also a pīr exercised as a murshid over his murīds an almost regal power. The pīr was usually connected with some shrine. He was invested with the pag (turban). He sat, as on a throne, upon his holy seat, himself the gādinishīn before whom on saints' days the multitude came to offer obeisance. When he went on tour to visit his murīds his progress was one of almost regal magnificence. He rode a gaily caparisoned camel attended by bands of followers usually dressed in some kind of uniform and armed with an assortment of arms. The devout pressed forward for the honour of touching his stirrup leathers. The pīr had thus a spiritual power which was always tending to take temporal forms, exactly as happened in the most influential days of the papacy in medieval Europe. The pīr received the offerings of his murīds, settled their disputes often very satisfactorily, and led the prayers on solemn occasions. The countryside became in this way the home of an immense number of these petty imperia. The whole system was of course closely bound up with the theocratic, or, if the phrase may be used without criticism, the hierarchical organization of Islām, as elaborated through the centuries out of the simple foundation of faith laid by the Prophet of Arabia. The extravagance of many of these ebullitions of popular religion, however, often earned the disapproval of the more intellectually-minded of Muslim theologians. The Kalhōra were the murshids of the Tālpūrs. It was because of the hold they thus possessed over the Balūch shepherd tribe that the Kalhōra were able to use the Tālpūrs for their own political aggrandizement. When the Kalhōra commanded as murshids, the Tālpūrs as murīds had to obey. The veneration of the murīd for the murshid did not in essence have much to do with the personal character of the latter. In Islām, as in every other religion, many of the persons most venerated have in their personal character done little to merit the respect in which they were held. But human nature being what it is, and as the desire for personal power lies deep in the heart of most men, there was no help for occasional abuses under any system however strict. Actually, it was an outrageous act by a Kalhōro which shocked the public opinion of the day and led to the displacement of the Kalhōra, the murshids, by the Tālpūrs, their murīds. The abuse of veneration could not, therefore, be carried beyond the limits which the public conscience would tolerate.

As regards the accretion of superstitious practice upon the plain austerity of Islām in Sind the evidence is overwhelming. Many instances can be cited from the Tuhfat-al-Kirām. In his *Folklore*

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*of Northern India*, Crookes has described some of the outstanding methods by which religion was captured by superstitious practice or debased by widely current superstitious belief. There were miracle-working tombs. There was the canonization of reputed holy men. There was the personal worship of pīrs. There was the institution of caste saints. There was the working of miracles by holy men. There were nine-yard tombs. There was the strange cult of Khwājo Khizr. There was the efficacy of holy relics for the cure of disease. Examples of all could be cited from Sind. Amongst these the cult of Khwājo Khizr attained a peculiar religious significance of its own, linked up with the worship of the river Indus and supported by Muslim and Hindu alike. Demonology and magic were rife and there was the universal use of talismans, especially by the peasant class, as a protection against the evil eye and all kinds of human ills. The powers ascribed to saints were immense and extraordinarily varied. To quote only a few of these powers : there were causing the birth of children, especially in cases of barrenness and old age ; curing complaints and diseases like madness, deafness, dumbness and blindness ; appearing in person at a distance to protect friends against unknown dangers ; exercising dominion over birds, beasts and fishes ; breaking through chains, fetters, doors and walls ; living without food, drink or sleep ; compelling inanimate objects to behave as if possessed of life and volition ; stilling storms and changing female into male children. There was hardly a power in the long records of hagiology which could not be found credited to some sacred shrine or holy man in Sind.[1] James in his account of the Chāndookah says : ' Near Shāhdādpūr there is a pair of large millstones in a garden about four feet in diameter. It is on the banks of the Dāto canal, so called from Dāto Khuhāwar, a man renowned for his wealth and the canals dug by him, as for his unbounded liberality. He was Chāndookah's Hātim of Tāyyī. It is related of him that no one passed his door unfed and the above millstones are now considered sacred. For we are told that God was so pleased with his piety and liberality that even if a handful of grain was thrown in the supply of flour was equal to all demands. They are approached with bare feet and the precincts are kept in cleanliness and good order. There is a tomb over the remains of a celebrated pīr on poles, round which are seen the heelropes of horses. For whenever an animal in the neighbourhood is afflicted with disease the owner prays at the tomb and on the recovery of the animal offers the heelropes in gratitude for the saint's assistance. If a person breaks a branch of the tree which overshadows the tomb he is supposed to be doomed to meet with some mishap.'[2]

[1] Burton, pp. 229-30. [2] James, op. cit., in Bombay Government Records.

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Khizr, or Ēlias, was supposed to have drunk of the fountain of the waters of life and believed not to die till the last trump. Khwājo Khizr was for this reason called in Sind Zinda Pīr (The Living Pīr). He had a shrine on an island in the Indus at Sukkur. He was the patron saint of waters and rivers and hence had come to be regarded as the god of the river Indus. Muslims offered him oblations of lamps and flowers. These were launched upon the river on Thursday evenings in the fifth month of the solar year. At this time there was held the festival of the Bēra (raft) when a raft was launched upon the river in honour of him.[1] In the mosque of Khwājo Khizr at Sukkur there is an inscribed stone dating from A.D. 952-3 which reads:

> 'Know, that when this fabric was raised
> Khwājo's waters encompassed it about.
> This pleasing hemistich Khizr wrote:
> "In the court of God the date is found."'[2]

Burton gives more particulars of this strange river cult, in which Islām and Hinduism are curiously intermingled. He also quotes at length a hymn in honour of the river Indus.

The debasement of Islām found in these and similar practices seems undoubtedly to have been due to the popular religion of the indigenous Sindhis, sometimes called Jats. The Jats constituted the majority of the population. It is thus quite clear that in the Islām practised by these people, very punctilious in the performance of external duties, there subsisted a vast body of superstitious belief dating from before the days of Islām.

But let us pass from these extravagances of the personal religion of the unlettered multitude to the true achievement of the Sindhi genius in the life and poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf. He is incomparably the greatest man whom Sind has yet produced in the realm of imaginative art. The whole of the present work up to this point has been written solely for the purpose of making clear the kind of people amongst whom he lived and the historical background of their age. Without a deep historical understanding of these matters no one unfamiliar with Sind as a country and unacquainted with the Sindhi language can hope to realize the depth of his genius or the meaning of his verse. He is the real jewel of the Kalhōro age. He has written poetry that deserves a wider public than it has yet attracted. His life is an epitome of the age in which he lived and of the rural circumstances of the people amongst whom he dwelt. The fact that since his poetry was composed it has retained its universal appeal proves that the spontaneity of his message lies deep in the

[1] Raverty: *Mihrān of Sind*, op. cit., p. 491.
[2] ibid., p. 492.

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hearts of all classes of Sind's population, Muslim and Hindu, lettered and unlettered. The reason must be that, despite the debasement of religion which we have just considered, there is in his poetry something of higher and nobler content in this exposition of Islām than can be depreciated by the extravagances of ignorance and superstition. In the second part of this work I shall endeavour to explain and interpret this meaning in the light of the circumstances of the poet's day with reference to the intellectual and mystical development of Islām.

## II. *The Life of Shāh Abdul Latīf*

There is no really satisfactory account of Shāh Abdul Latīf's life. Nor will there ever be. The facts of his life have been but sparsely recorded in script. Most of what is known comes from oral tradition. Until the eighties of last century it was still possible to trace oral tradition up to its source because old men were still alive who could recall what their grandfathers had told them and some at least of these grandfathers must have been contemporaries of the poet. Sayid-worship being however what it is, many of the items in the oral tradition must be treated with great caution. Many of them of the miraculous order must be ruled out altogether. They are merely part of the halo of a growing sainthood. Miracles of this kind are like fairies. They cease to exist when people no longer believe in them. The most competent student of Shāh Abdul Latīf's life is Mirza Kalīch Bēg. His assiduity was remarkable. He had the good fortune to be able to test for himself the quality of the oral tradition from the lips of men who had it from the lips of men who had seen Shāh Abdul Latīf in the flesh and spoken with him. This source is now stopped. There is no likelihood of any further accretion of hard facts, though this will not prevent the oral tradition from developing further. Many of the facts collected by Mirza Kalīch Bēg are prefaced by some such phrase as 'Men say that' or 'They write that.' We must, therefore, employ the tests of evidence to compute their worth. Professor Gurbuxānī's edition of the Risālo represents the latest scholarship on the poet and his poetry. Some enquiry of the kind conducted by Mirza Kalīch Bēg was made also by Dāyarām Gidumal and Līlarām Watanmal. But there is little in their researches that cannot be found better in Mirza Kalīch Bēg's work.

The exact dates of the poet's birth and death are not known. But the evidence is in favour of his having been born in 1689 and having died in 1752. His life coincided almost exactly with the change from Moghul to Kalhōro rule in Sind. When Aurangzēb died Shāh Abdul Latīf was a youth of eighteen years of age. As a young man

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he saw the rise of the early Kalhōra to power. He was fifty years old when Nādir Shāh sacked Delhi and made Sind tributary to Persia. He was fifty-eight when Ahmad Shāh Durānī brought off his coup against the dying Delhi Empire, founded modern Afghānistān and made Sind subject to Kābul. Five years later, and six years before the second East India Company's factory was established at Tatta, Shāh Abdul Latīf died at the age of sixty-three. He produced a very considerable quantity of verse. But it contains little or no reference to the current political events which he had witnessed. He was interested not in the transient phenomena of his age but in eternal verities, which formed a much better subject for immortal verse than the petty wars and intrigues of the Kalhōra. Shāh Abdul Latīf's life was in fact uneventful. He spent nearly all his life living in a very restricted locality in the northern part of what is now the Hyderābād district. In that locality he resided successively in villages called Hāla Hawēlī, Kōtrī and Bhit Shāh. He took no active part in the great movements of his time. In this respect he recalls the instances of Kant and Hegel who, living in the midst of stirring political events, took no notice of them. He was a man of quiet and unassuming disposition completely immersed in the interpretation of the ideas which absorbed the greater part of his attention and concentration. As a boy and young man he exhibited unusual traits. He was contemplative and thoughtful, fond of loneliness and loved to wander by himself. He found pleasure in passing his time with holy men and fakīrs in an effort to understand the ideals which they strove to interpret. His fondness for retirement and seclusion and his setting-out upon travels in furtherance of religious contemplation follow the well-known lines of Islāmic asceticism. Shāh Abdul Latīf's habit is closely parallel with that of Shaikh Mūsa, one of Abul Fazul's ancestors, who, according to the Āīn-i-Akbarī 'ever contemplative on his prayer carpet of introspection wrestled in prayer with himself and spent his previous days in the ordering of the wayward spirit'.[1]

Many stories of the miraculous order are told of him. But no serious-minded person will attach any value to them. They are merely the stock-in-trade of hagiological adulation. One typical story of this kind is that when he was being taught the alphabet he would not go beyond the letter Alif, which is the symbol of God and unity. The moral drawn from this is, of course, that from the days of his childhood he was engrossed by a vision of the divine unity.

He belonged to a notable Alite Sayid family of Matiārī. Hence he was the scion of the most illustrious religious house of Sind tracing a connexion to Herāt. His ancestor in the fourth generation

[1] Āīn, III, p. 408.

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before him was the famous Sayid Abdul Karīm (floruit circa A.D. 1600) whose durgāh was at Bulrī in the Gūnī tāluka of the Hyderābād district and is still a great place of yearly pilgrimage for its Shāh Karīm fair (mēro) held on the saint's 'urs' day. It is not known how the family had migrated to Bulrī or why, in the generations immediately preceding Shāh Abdul Latīf's birth, it had returned to the vicinity of Matiārī. But the poet's father, Sayid Habīb Shāh, was living at a place called Hāla Hawēlī, now in ruins, not far from Matiārī when Shāh Abdul Latīf was born. The poet was, therefore, born to a position of dignity and power as one of the privileged class treated with the superstitious respect described in a previous chapter. He was, as an Englishman might say, born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He himself never showed any personal desire to use his position unworthily. All through his life he evinced no liking for the comforts and elegances that appeal to worldly-minded men. His whole life was one of continence and abstemiousness then sufficiently rare amongst the race from which he sprang. He was characterized by a gentleness of manner and speech, an innate gentlemanliness, a bent of kindness, compassion and generosity which make him, as a man, a person worthy of the utmost respect. He is said to have hated cruelty and to have been unable to bear to beat an animal or cause physical pain to man or beast. In an age and amongst a population that set little store by chastity, he exhibited towards women a self-control that was remarkable. He left no heir, and the oral tradition, which in this respect there is no reason to disbelieve, records the decorum and dignity of his family life.

According to the oral tradition collected by numerous enquirers, the poet in his prime was a well-set-up, handsome, bearded man of average height with fine black eyes, an intelligent face, a noble forehead and the solemn look of a deep-thinking and penetrating mind overcast with thought. At Bhit are still preserved several relics of him; the long stick he used to use when walking, his turban, a piece of cloth he wore, and the beggar's bowl of coconut husk from which he ate and drank frugally. The first years of his boyhood were spent at Hāla Hawēlī. Some time later his father, Shāh Habīb, went to live in a nearby village called Kōtrī, which, like Hāla Hawēlī, is also in ruins today, and there Shāh Abdul Latīf spent some of the years of his adolescence. That ascetic trend of his nature which led him to frequent the company of holy men and spend days by himself in solemn contemplation did not accord with the position which his father deemed due to his son. But Shāh Abdul Latīf showed his mettle by living his life in his own way. For a person of that age he was well travelled. It is true that he did not travel far, but he visited some of the lands adjoining Sind and

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traversed a great part of Sind in his quest for religious truth. In this way he brought to the practice of his poetry a breadth of view which he could not have shown had he remained continuously in the centre of the self-satisfied Sayid society of those days established in the neighbourhood of Matiārī and Hāla.[1]

A friend of his younger days was one Mirza Moghul Bēg, who, in 1713, died an untimely death at the hands of robbers and whose daughter he eventually married. The independent ways of the young ascetic and contemplative were certain to arouse the jealousy of the orthodox 'hierarchy', especially as the fame of the young man with his saintly manner of living was becoming known and was attracting to him a number of murīds. At this stage of his life, therefore, he found himself ranged against the Sayids of Matiārī who succeeded for a time in enlisting the support of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, then the most powerful man in Sind. The Kalhōra, as I have already explained, were greatly influenced by the Sayids and the holy men whom they dared not antagonize. This fact must explain the early hostility of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro to a young religious leader of independent and unorthodox views. Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, however, became later convinced of the sincerity and worth of this remarkable young man and attached himself to him in friendship. Indeed tradition likes to add that the birth of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro was the result of the blessing of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

By this time Shāh Abdul Latīf was showing the strength of his poetic fervour by the composition of some of his powerful poems which soon attracted the ready attention of an admiring public. The next stage of his life was marked by the further development of his genius, when he cut himself off from the old ties and founded a village of his own at a place called Bhit (sandhill), so called from its being built on sandhills, in the true ascetic spirit of the religious eremite. Bhit itself, though unattractive as a residence, was set in the midst of striking scenery. It was close to the Kirar lake which was fed by the Alī Ganj or Pahar canal. There were several small sheets of water near by with trees and a certain richness of greenery not common in the arid land of Sind except in the immediate vicinity of the river or its large riverain branches. Mirza Kalīch Bēg and Gurbuxānī give some account of the topography of Bhit as it was in Shāh Abdul Latīf's time. It was characteristic of the man that he helped to build the village with his own hands. The

[1] Gurbuxānī says that he visited the places of pilgrimage in Sind and Lakhpat, Girnār, Jaisalmīr, the hills on the western borders of Sind, Lāhut, Lāmakān, Hinglāj, Sabar Sakhī and even went to Kābul and Kandahār. But I do not know on what authority he holds that Shāh Abdul Latīf went so far. *Shāh jō Risālo*, Gurbuxānī's edition, I, p. 21.

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whole episode had a vivid popular appeal enhanced by the fact that he was now reaching the summit of his power as poet and as a man of saintly reputation.[1] The last years of his life were spent in a halo of sanctity in which the reverence of his followers for him played an important part. Thousands would come to listen to the magic of his poetry and to enjoy the beauty of its message. It is said that he had intended to make the pilgrimage to Kerbela in the last few years of his life, but was dissuaded from doing so by the insistence of his followers that he should not desert them. Instead of going to Kerbela Shāh Abdul Latīf is said to have composed the Sur Kēdāro which deals with the story of Hassan and Husain. It is recorded that shortly before his death he retired into solitude. Coming out again he performed his ablutions, put on a white sheet and ordered the singing of songs. When the music stopped, he fell into a reverie of divine contemplation.[2]

How far Shāh Abdul Latīf was an educated man has proved a great puzzle to scholars. The popular tradition is that he had no regular education but taught himself everything. Popular tradition in this respect is, however, unreliable. His poems show clearly an acquaintance with Arabic and Persian far beyond the ordinary accomplishments of his time. It is certain that he was familiar with the work of Jalāluddīn Rūmī. Indeed it is related that Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro, from whom he had become estranged, won back the poet's favour by presenting him with a fine copy of the Masnawī. An imposing tomb was built for his body by Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro in 1754, according to the tradition, in the year that Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro died. Līlarām Watanmal states[3] that the Korān, the Masnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī, and the Sindhi verses of Shāh Karīm were always in the poet's hands. If there is any truth in this story, and there probably is some, it would dispose of the assertion that the poet was not a well-educated man. The mystical form of his poetry could never have been achieved without a deep and sympathetic understanding of the mystical development of Islām that came to India through the work of the great Persian poets. Thus whatever the facts of Shāh Abdul Latīf's education may have been (and it is a typical conceit of hero worship to pretend that all knowledge came to him as a sort of special revelation) it is clear that his education was neither superficial nor contemptible. Tradition says that he did not write his poems at all but that they were collected and transcribed by amanuenses. This passes the

[1] His father Habīb Khān died in 1742 and was buried in Bhit a few paces from where later in 1754 Shāh Abdul Latīf's own tomb was erected at the expense of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro.

[2] *Sharah Latīfī*, Part I, p. 7.

[3] *Shāh Latīf* by Līlarām Watanmal, p. 11.

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bounds of credibility. The poems were certainly later collated by scribes and formed into a regular collection which exists in several manuscript forms.[1] The amanuenses whose help was invoked to record the poems as delivered were named Tamar and Hāshim. A great friend of the poet was called Bilāl: another was called Ināyat, himself a poet, some of whose verses are inserted or quoted in the Risālo as it exists today. There is no doubt that these men, or others like them, did form the poems into a kind of anthology. But oral tradition has exaggerated into a sort of miracle what was merely a fairly skilful piece of literary editing.

In this formation of the poet's literary tradition some will find it difficult to resist the belief that it was partly influenced by the story of the compilation of the Korān, which very likely was gathered together exactly in the manner that has been ascribed by hero worship to the compilation of the Risālo. Dāyarām Gidumal[2] quotes an anecdote which has reference to the manuscript of the Risālo. When Tamar and Hāshim, the poet's favourite disciples and secretaries, brought him the complete Risālo, Shāh Abdul Latīf turned over the pages and remarked of the frequent laments of Sasuī that the work was simply a safety valve for the peccant humours of the flesh and flung it suddenly into the Kirar lake. His secretaries expostulated with him and he allowed them to rewrite the whole from memory. If a story of this kind has any authenticity at all, it can be no more than a stupid magnification of some trivial incident. But it is more likely to be a legend intended to build up the tradition of the inspired delivery of the poems, which were reduced to writing with difficulty after they had been declaimed. Anecdotes of the poet are numerous. Most of them are designed to show that Shāh Abdul Latīf possessed unusual or even miraculous powers. Those who are interested in this uncritical form of hagiology will find many of the anecdotes in the works of Līlarām Watanmal, Mirza Kalīch Bēg and Gurbuxānī dealing with the poet and his poetry. To the scholar these childish stories are interesting not for the alleged facts they assert but as showing the working of popular psychology in the creation of an oral tradition. One story from Dāyarām Gidumal may be quoted to show the kind of mentality at work. 'It is said that the Shāh's wife while enceinte longed one day for a certain kind of fish and her maid sent one of his followers to procure it. The Shāh happened to enquire about this follower and learning the cause of his absence observed: 'When

[1] For the manuscripts of the Risālo see Gurbuxānī's *Shāh jō Risālo*. I have consulted a very inferior manuscript copy of the poems in the library of the India Office, London.

[2] Dāyarām Gidumal: *Something about Sind by Sigma*, p. 41.

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the embryo is such a trouble to my fakīrs, what will the full blown adult be ? May such a blossom be nipped in the bud ! The child, we are told, in consequence was still-born to the great grief of the mother and the Shāh left no heir surviving him.'[1] Clearly the object of this fairy tale is to account for the poet's childlessness.

The fine mausoleum built for the poet's body by Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro was ornamented by a well-known mason of the time, one Īdan from Sukkur. Since the poet's death the poems have been recited weekly on Fridays in the mausoleum which has become a kind of holy shrine which still draws its crowds. Dāyarām Gidumal describes his visit in 1882 to one of these 'wakes'. He says, 'The deepest silence occasionally broken by a hearty "Allāhu" prevailed in the wide courtyard where I kept my memorable vigil with more than a hundred men, women and children. The subdued and tranquil look of these people—their simple habits—their gentle demeanour—their strong faith and their erect but humble attitude of mind made a very great impression upon me and inspired me with a most profound veneration and admiration for the poet saint who was their recognized spiritual teacher and whose burning words and breathing thoughts moved them to tears.'[2]

[1] Dāyarām Gidumal : *Something about Sind by Sigma*, p. 42.
[2] ibid., p. 3.

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# Appendix II

## The Ships of the East India Company trading in Sind during part of the Eighteenth Century

Names of vessels mentioned as being in the Sind trade about 1758-60.

Defence (wrecked near Shāhbunder), Swallow, Drake, Bombay, Success, Revenge, Despatch, Tartar, Houghton, Stormont, Tiger.

*Marine Force for Service of Bombay (or Surat)*

| | Burthen computed at Merchants Tonnage | Number of European commanders or officers included | Number of Christian Topasses | Number of lascars or country sailors | Total number of seamen on board each vessel | Number of guns | Size of guns (pounders) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Revenge ship .. .. | 470 | 100 | 20 | 40 | 160 | 20 | 12 |
| Bombay grab .. .. | 363 | 80 | 16 | 34 | 130 | 20 | 9 |
| Drake ketch .. .. | 220 | 40 | 12 | 24 | 76 | 14 | 6 |
| Success ketch .. .. | 145 | 16 | 10 | 16 | 42 | 12 | 4 |
| Tartar grab .. .. | 200 | 16 | 10 | 16 | 42 | 12 | 4 |
| Tiger gallivat .. .. | 43 | 2 | 2 | 16 | 20 | 5 | 1=2 |
| Swallow galley .. | 160 | 16 | 6 | 20 | 42 | 14 | 4=1<br>4 |

*Notes on Vessels*

*Ship Revenge* continues to be a very serviceable cruizer and a prime sailor ; may last a number of years ; she proceeded under the command of Admiral Steevens to the Coromandel coast in March last.

*Drake ketch* continues a very serviceable cruizer and may last many years ; she arrived from Bussorah the 22nd October since which she has been cleaned and repaired and is now ready for service.

*Success ketch* continues a very useful cruizer ; she sails prime well and may last many years with necessary repairs. She has been chiefly employed in conveying the trade, etc. to and from the northward and cruising off the port.



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*Swallow galley* proceeded to Bussorah with despatches for Europe in March last and then to lay guardship at Gombroon.

*Tartar grab.* She has been gone to Scindy ever since the month of April last to lay as a guard ship in that river during the monsoon but by stress of weather she was obliged to go from thence to Cutch where she remained for some time before she returned; she is a very useful cruizer and sails well and will last a number of years with common repairs. She is daily expected.

*Tyger Gallivat* is still at Scindy where she continues to be of great service; but is old and cannot last long.

*Swallow* and *Fly gallivats* are still employed to the northward and answer extremely well as they are both good stout vessels and may last a number of years.

(From Public Department Diary 35, 1760, pp. 1039-43. Dated 31 December 1760.)

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## Appendix III

### Table showing the Length, Breadth and Depth of the Canals in the Chāndookah Purgunnah

| Name of Canal | Length in yards | Breadth in feet | | Depth in feet | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Near the mouth | Towards the tail | Near the mouth | Towards the tail |
| Mittah or Nusrat | 25,000 | 21 | 15 | 12 | 4 |
| Heerah .. .. | 22,000 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| Khyrah .. .. | 28,000 | 15 | 12 | 9 | 5 |
| Beerah .. .. | 30,000 | 18 | 15 | 10 | 6 |
| Dātah .. .. | 42,000 | 21 | 10 | 9 | 4 |
| Shāh .. .. | 35,000 | 18 | 12 | 11 | 7 |
| Maksoodah .. | 25,000 | 15 | 8 | 9 | 5 |
| Nourung .. | 16,000 | 40 | 10 | 9 | 3 |
| Chulah (continuation of above) | 18,000 | 30 | 10 | 9 | 3 |
| Meer wāh .. | 15,000 | 15 | 8 | 8 | 3 |

Another statement shows the number of wells and minor canals as follows :—

Pukka wells, 997 ; kutcha wells, 264 ; temporary wells, 2,030 ; minor canals, 877. The number of wells out of repair, 256 (included in total figures).



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# APPENDIX IV

## TABLE SHOWING THE ESTIMATED RELATIVE VALUE OF UNDER-MENTIONED CROPS TO THE CULTIVATOR

| | Rupees per bigha for years 1845-7 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1845-6 | 1846-7 | 1847-8 |
| Sugar cane .. .. .. | 60 | 90 | 30 |
| Tobacco .. .. .. | 8 | 25 | 17 |
| Cotton (bhosee) .. .. | 4 | 12 | 8 |
| (selābee) .. .. | 5 | 10 | 5 |
| Rice .. .. .. .. | 4½ | 18 | 13½ |
| Pease, etc. .. .. .. | 3½ | 10 | 6½ |
| Wheat .. .. .. .. | 4 | 10 | 6 |
| Jowāree .. .. .. .. | 5 | 10 | 5 |
| Bājhree .. .. .. .. | 4 | 7 | 3 |

## COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF THE CULTIVATION OF THE PRINCIPAL GRAINS IN THE CHĀNDOOKAH PURGUNNAH TAKEN FROM THE RETURNS OF THE SPRING, MIDDLE AND AUTUMN CROPS, 1255 and 1256 A.H. (1845-6)

| | Spring crop | | Autumn crop | | Middle crop | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1255 Bighas | 1256 Bighas | 1255 Bighas | 1256 Bighas | 1255 Bighas | 1256 Bighas |
| Pease .. .. | 4,696 | 5,083 | | | | |
| Barley .. .. | 4,631 | 4,246 | | | | |
| Wheat .. .. | 4,200 | 4,250 | | | | |
| Gram .. .. | 3,000 | 2,460 | | | | |
| Mustard .. | 1,500 | 30 | | | | |
| Goolmasfar .. | 9 | 11 | | | | |
| Jowārī .. .. | | | 30,964 | 57,550 | | |
| Rice .. .. | | | 40,000 | 34,000 | | |
| Bājhree .. .. | | | 6,757 | 11,892 | | |
| Moong .. .. | | | 2,500 | 3,470 | | |
| Koonjud .. | | | 1,427 | 2,250 | | |
| Mandawah .. | | | 124 | 250 | | |
| Cotton .. .. | | | | | 8,475 | 7,239 |
| Sugar .. .. | | | | | 223 | 106 |
| Indigo .. .. | | | | | 19 | 10 |



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# Appendix V

## Synopsis of Important Events Useful for an Understanding of the Historical Part of this Work

| | *Events in Sind History* | *Events in Indian History* |
|---|---|---|
| 1555 | Accession of Turkhāns. Sack of Tatta by Portuguese. | |
| 1558 | Death of Ādam Shāh Kalhōro. | |
| 1592 | Defeat of Mirza Jānī Bēg Turkhān and annexation of Sind by Akbar. | |
| 1600 | 'Tawārīkh-i-Sindh' written by Mīr Muhammad Masūm of Bakhar. | |
| 1605 | Rise of the Dāūdpōta in Shikārpūr and Upper Sind. | 1605 Death of Akbar and accession of Jahāngīr. |
| 1613-14 | Visit of Nicholas Withington to Sind. | 1613 English factory established at Surat. |
| 1621 | 'Tawārīkh-i-Tāhirī' written by Mīr Tāhir Muhammad Nasyānī. | 1622 Kandahār taken by Persians. |
| 1625 | 'Bēqlarnāma' written by Amīr Sayid Kāsim Bēqlar. | 1627 Death of Jahāngīr and accession of Shāh Jahān. |
| 1636 | English Factory established at Tatta. | 1638 Kandahār surrendered to Shāh Jahān. |
| 1641 | Visit of Manrique to Sind. | |
| 1648-51 | Aurangzēb Governor of Multān and Sind. | 1649 Final loss of Kandahār. |
| 1654-5 | 'Turkhān-Nāma' written by Sayid Jamāl. | |
| 1658 | Civil War between Aurangzēb and Dārā Shikōh ending in defeat of Dārā Shikōh and his death after pursuit through Sind.<br>Siege of Bakhar.<br>River War at Sehwan.<br>Kalhōra begin to oppose the Moghul troops. | 1659 Enthronement of Aurangzēb. |
| 1662 | English Factory in Sind given up. | 1664 Sack of Surat by Shīvajī.<br>1666 Death of Shāh Jahān.<br>1668 Bombay transferred to East India Company.<br>1674 Enthronement of Shīvajī. |



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| *Events in Sind History* | *Events in Indian History* |
|---|---|
| | 1676-80 Shīvajī's conquests in south and south-west India. |
| | 1682 Aurangzēb invades the Deccan. |
| 1689 *Birth of Abdul Latīf Shāh Bhitāī, the author of the 'Risālo'.* | 1687 Bombay becomes headquarters of the East India Company. |
| 1699 Visit of Captain Hamilton to Sind. | |
| 1701 Yār Muhammad Kalhōro obtains grant from Aurangzēb. | 1702 Agreement between English trading companies about Indian trade. |
| Defeat of the Dāūdpōta in Upper Sind. | 1707 Death of Aurangzēb and accession of Bahādur Shāh. |
| | 1709 Union of two English East India trading companies. |
| 1711 Yār Muhammad Kalhōro extends power in Upper Sindh. | 1712 Accession of Jahāndar Shāh. |
| | 1713 Accession of Farūkhsiyar. |
| 1719 (approx.) Death of Yār Muhammad Kalhōro and Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro becomes 'Khuda Yār Khān'. | 1719 Accession of Muhammad Shāh. |
| | 1720 Office of Pēshwa becomes hereditary. |
| | 1731 Compact between the Nizām and the Marāthas. |
| 1736 Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro becomes Sūbedār of Sind. | 1739 Sack of Delhi by Nādir Shāh. |
| 1740 Nādir Shāh invades Sind which becomes subject to Persia. | |
| | 1744 Outbreak of War of Austrian Succession. |
| | 1748 Ahmad Shāh Durānī begins invasion of India. |
| 1750 Sind becomes subject to Afghān Kingdom of Ahmad Shāh Durānī. | 1749-54 War of Succession in Carnatic. |
| 1752 *Death of Abdul Latīf Shāh at Bhit.* | 1750-4 War between English and French Companies in Carnatic. |
| 1754 Ahmad Shāh Durānī invades Sind: flight and death of Nūr Muhammad Kalhōro. | 1754 Accession of Ālamgīr II. |
| 1757-8 Commotion and civil war in Sind ending in ascendancy of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro. | 1756-8 Sikhs rise in the Punjāb.<br>1756-63 Seven Years' War.<br>1757 Battle of Plassey. |

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| *Events in Sind History* | *Events in Indian History* |
|---|---|
| 1758 English Company's Factory established at Tatta. | 1758 Marāthas occupy Punjāb. |
| | 1760 Battle of Wandiwash : defeat of the French by Coote. Marāthas capture Delhi. |
| | 1761 Defeat of the Marāthas at Pānipat by Ahmad Shāh Durānī. |
| | 1764 Sikhs become masters of Lahore. |
| | 1765 Clive obtains 'diwānī' of Bengal for East India Company. |
| 1768 Foundation of Hyderābād. | |
| 1767-8 and 1773 'Tuhfat-al-Kirām' written by Ali Shēr Kānia. | |
| 1771 Death of Ghulām Shāh Kalhōro. | 1771 Warren Hastings Governor of Bengal. |
| 1773 Accession of Tīmūr Shāh at Kābul. | |
| 1775 Misgovernment in Sind. English factory at Tatta given up. | |
| 1776 Sarfarāz Khān Kalhōro deposed for misgovernment. | 1776 War with Marāthas. |
| 1778 Ghulām Nabī Khān Kalhōro becomes ruler of Sind. | 1778 France declares war on Britain. |
| 1778 Civil war between Kalhōra and Tālpūrs begins. | |
| | 1783 Treaty of Versailles : French possessions in India restored. |
| 1793 Death of Tīmūr Shāh. | 1793 War with France. Permanent Settlement of Bengal. East India Company's charter renewed. |
| | 1799 Capture of Seringapatam and death of Tīpu Sultān. |
| | 1801 Annexation of the Carnatic. |
| 1803 Ascendancy of Tālpūrs finally established. | |
| | 1817 Third and last Maratha War. |
| | 1823 Ranjit Singh master of Multān, Kashmir and Peshāwar. |



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# Appendix VI

## Note on the Spelling and Transliteration of Oriental Words

This work contains many transliterations of Arabic, Persian and Sindhi words. I have not thought it necessary or desirable in a book which is meant to appeal to the general reader to employ the system of transliteration approved by the Royal Asiatic Society. Thus I have not shown by diacritical marks the distinction between the various forms of the 'h', 's', 't', 'd' and 'z' sounds which occur in Arabic, Persian and Sindhi. The absence of the distinguishing marks is not likely to trouble scholars of Arabic and Persian who are familiar with the correct spelling. Readers, however, who are ignorant of the Arabic, Persian and Sindhi characters find in phonetic meticulousness merely a disturbance and annoyance which has no compensating advantages. Where Oriental words have become Anglicized into some generally accepted form I have used these forms. But otherwise I have followed a system which remains faithful to the original to the extent that aspirated and breathed sounds are indicated by the presence of the letter 'h'. Thus I have accepted words like 'Sind' and 'Sukkur' when on a principle of formal consistency I should have written 'Sindh' and 'Sakhar'. The transliteration of Sindhi words is difficult because every word in Sindhi ends in a vowel sound either pure or nasalized. Burton endeavoured, in some of his notes to his *History of Sindh*, to show these final short vowels. The result is not satisfactory and I have not followed his example. I have, therefore, omitted all the final short vowels where these occur. Another difficulty with Sindhi is the frequency of nasalized sounds which cannot be represented conveniently by any form of English transliteration. Scholars of language who are interested in this matter must go to the Sindhi alphabet for instruction. In the numerous quotations from old records and from writings of past generations which I have given I have almost always retained the spelling found in the originals, even though this spelling is more often than not erroneous. This explanation will make clear the apparent inconsistency with which the same words are spelt throughout this work



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# Appendix VII

## Note on the References to Sind in the Bombay Government Records in the Bombay Record Office

An examination of the press lists published shows an enormous gap in the references to the trade of the Company in Sind. The earliest reference traceable is one dated 8 December 1646 (the first year available) from the ship 'Hart' at Sindy Road from John Spiller, Henry Gary and Gilbert Harrison. Letters from the same three persons and from Nicholas Scrivener are found addressed from Tahtah, Kandeārah till 1657, when the last letter is from Nicholas Scrivener regarding the Company's cargo of lead on 13 October 1657. From that date there is a complete blank till 25 November 1744, when there is a letter from Mr Symmons at Tattah to the Chief and Factors at Surat. Thereafter references to Sind become more numerous but are not common till 1758, when the Sind Factory was re-established. There is a regular record of the Sind Factory from August 1762 to July 1764, the letters being dated sometimes from Tatta and sometimes from Shāw Bunder. In a list of Company's Covenanted servants at Bombay and Factories subordinate there is no mention of any servant residing in Sind. There is mention of factories at Gombroon, Bussorah, Gulph of Persia and Cambay. This list is with a letter dated 28 August 1739 and covers the time of service of factors during the period 1712 to 1738.

In the Press List of Ancient Documents for 1646-1700 the following years are unrepresented: 1648-55, 1658-9. The record for some of the years of the period is also very scanty. From 1701 to 1719 there is very little record for the following years: 1705-7, and nothing at all for the years 1710 to 1718.



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# BOOK II

## LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

'The very songs I frame
Are faithless to thy cause
And steal the honours of thy name
To build their own applause.

Create my soul anew,
Else all my worship's vain :
This wretched heart will ne'er be true
Until 'tis formed again.

Descend, celestial fire,
And seize me from above :
Melt me in flames of pure desire,
A sacrifice to love.'

ISAAC WATTS.

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# Introduction

## Principles of Poetry and Poetical Criticism

'Poetry', like 'romance' and 'religion' and other general terms of the same nature, is a word of vast but undefined meaning. Poetry in the sense of poetical composition is capable of examination from two utterly diverse points of view, the exoteric and the esoteric. The former is concerned with form and expression as a mere technical achievement in the exposition of language. The latter deals with poetry as a vehicle of thought and meaning. It also takes within its scope the aesthetic or the pleasure-giving quality of poetry. Now it is precisely because of the confusion prevalent in most works of literary criticism and aesthetics in respect of the two-sided character of this esoteric examination of poetry that it is necessary to guard against an extremely common fallacy. This fallacy arises from a failure to distinguish between the content of a thought and the state of mind of the person thinking about it. The point will be made clear by considering for a moment the parallel case of aesthetics, which is concerned with the meaning and value of beauty. 'People ask,' says Mr Sturge Moore, 'why is this beautiful?' 'Authorities reply,' he continues, 'because all its parts are subordinated according to their degree of essential truth, as Coleridge taught; or because it resolves an emotional conflict, as Mr Richards now professes at Cambridge, or because it is intuitive, as Signor Croce has thundered from Italy. But no: these ingenious dicta answer the wrong question. "What is true about beauty?" was not what we meant to ask, but "What makes beauty evident?"—For beauty can alone be seen by admiration. The intellect cannot see it.'[1] Now does this sound? It is not. There is a complete confusion of thought running through the argument. There is a failure to distinguish between the qualities that satisfy the canons by which a thing can be declared beautiful and the emotional content of the person aware of a beautiful thing. A more adequate analysis would show that beauty cannot be apprehended unless there is in the act an intellectual judgement as well as a feeling of pleasure. The judgement is certainly an activity of the reasoning mind whereas the experience of pleasure is a flowing of the emotions in a particular direction. Nothing but muddled thinking can result from confusing the two together in a vague mental synthesis.

[1] *Armour for Aphrodite*, p. 153.



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Now the kind of argument which has just been criticized in respect of beauty is very commonly employed in respect of poetry. In our appreciation of poetry there are similarly both an intellectual judgement and an experience of pleasure. The problem before us is, what enables us to decide that a certain composition of language is poetry and what differentiates good poetry from bad poetry? The answer is easier to reach if we remember that in the appreciation of poetry there are three separate elements. There is, first, an examination of external form, words, language, rhythm, subject matter and musical composition. There is, second, an intellectual judgement as to the meaning and significance of the thought expressed in this external form. There is, third, an emotional attitude called up by the aesthetic effect of the poetry on the mind. The first is the exoteric point of view. The second and third together constitute the esoteric point of view. The first element can be isolated and made an external object capable of scientific analysis by certain fairly well-recognized standards. The second is an exercise of the rational faculty. The third is purely a psychological activity. It is chiefly due to the vagaries of the aesthetic taste that so many divergent opinions are held on the merits of any particular poetical composition. It follows from this argument that in order to understand any piece of poetry fully we must be able to examine it as a material construction in language and rhythm, to grasp the ideas it seeks to convey, and to experience the pleasure which it is intended to communicate. According, therefore, as a piece of poetry satisfies these standards of good and skilful composition, of clearness, dignity and truth in its ideas, and of aesthetic excellence it is to be judged as good poetry. These are the three criteria of poetical value. Each belongs to a clearly distinguishable field of mental activity. Nothing but confused thinking will be found in any literary criticism which fails to recognize this fundamental fact.

The point merits further examination. Let me take an instance at random from modern literary criticism. 'It is evident', says Dr I. A. Richards in his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 'that the bulk of poetry consists of statements which only the very foolish would think of attempting to verify. They are not the kind of things which can be verified. Poetry affords the clearest example of this subordination of reference to attitude. It is the supreme form of emotive language.'[1] Now, here a number of generalizations are made about poetry. Not only are the generalizations untrue but the manner in which they are expressed shows that the function of the intellect and the aesthetic activity which forms the equipment

[1] *Principles of Literary Criticism*, pp. 272-3.

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for the appreciation of poetry have been confused with each other. The statement that poetry is the supreme form of emotive language cannot be substantiated. There are many kinds of emotive language. Rhetoric and prayer are well-known kinds. Who shall decide which of the many forms of emotive language is supreme? At the best Dr Richards' statement is merely a doubtful opinion. But perhaps all that is meant is that poetry has a strong emotional appeal couched in beautifully expressed and skilfully arranged language. What can possibly be the meaning of the assertion that only the very foolish would think of verifying the kind of statements that poetry makes? As it stands the statement is palpably untrue. If all that is meant is that symbolism and imagery and the turns of language which poetry must employ cannot be understood in the plain everyday sense of the words used, it seems that two important points have been omitted from consideration. First, language is allusive as well as literal; and second, ideas are verifiable by reference to general probability and to a scheme of truth and reality. In any ultimate analysis the statements of science possess no greater validity than those of poetry. Thus, as Dr Richards would hardly deny this, his meaning would appear to be no more than that the statements of poetry are not quite in the same category as judgements like 'two and two are four' and 'grass is green'. Again by the assertion that in poetry reference is subordinated to attitude it seems to be implied that the emotional content produced by poetry affects the significance of the idea. Of course it does nothing of the sort. What it does affect is the listener's conception of the idea, a very different thing. If the assertion that emotional content affects the significance of the idea were accepted, it would be a clear example of the very fallacy we have been endeavouring to avoid, namely that of confusing the content of the thought with the state of mind of the person thinking about it.

There is nothing whatever mysterious or difficult about poetic meaning, however hard it may be to explain the exact significance of any words a poet may have written. In poetry the method of expression is definitely calculated, by means of tricks allied to the tricks of music, to play upon the emotions of the listener. But this has no relation to the emotional content called up by the words. This emotional content is to be judged not by any power, akin to a kind of hypnotic influence, which it may exercise upon the listener but by its ability to create in the listener's mind a recognizable picture of reality in some of its many aspects by bringing into use the rational or thinking faculty in man. The mere fact that the method of expression in poetry employs statements or judgements which cannot in a literal or word-for-word sense be regarded as the

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everyday expression of conceptual experience is not essentially or exclusively a problem of poetry at all. All human language is allusive as well as direct. From its very nature poetry is prone to employ generally that primary form of thinking, the association of ideas, which is the source of simile, metaphor, imagery and symbolism. But this form must necessarily be used in all thinking that goes beyond the barest type of assertion open to the meanest intelligence working within the narrow range of direct perception. Thus Blake asks :

> ' How do you know but every bird that cuts the airy way
> Is an immense world of delight closed to your senses five ? '

Here he is speaking a language that is being put to a subtler and more advanced use than that employed in learning the alphabet or in asserting that two and two make four. His words have an allusiveness which refers to a conceptual attitude built up indeed from the facts of primary perception but going far beyond them. He is not asserting that birds have this peculiar quality which he suggests they may possess, nor does he expect a scientist to verify by induction and experiment the truth of this statement. He is merely using language in a developed way to picture a point of view somehow or other related to reality and capable of being understood by the reason working through a deep emotional content. The form of poetry has no relation to its meaning or significance. Some of the most profound and most difficult poetry is expressed in the simplest of language. The distinction between form and matter in poetry is fundamental. All sound literary criticism must differentiate between the thought and the manner of its expression. Prose is not poetry ; nor is jingling doggerel ; nor is banal triviality expressed in skilfully contrived verses. But in all these cases the failure to reach the standard of poetry springs from utterly divergent sources which must not be confused together.

This warning is particularly true of mystical and metaphysical poetry where symbolism and hidden meanings are characteristic features and language takes on a quality of transcendence.

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# Chapter I

## The Birth of a Classic

The emergence of genius is an event which in the present state of human knowledge approaches the inexplicable. Heredity and environment are certainly an inadequate explanation. There is usually little in the immediate circumstances of his birth and his upbringing to account for the manner in which an exceptional man towers above his fellows. In Shāh Abdul Latīf's case the enquirer finds small help towards knowing how this outstanding poet came to the fulfilment of his genius. Shāh Abdul Latīf's life in fact would seem to prove the truth of the old adage 'poeta nascitur, non fit'. It is true that Shāh Abdul Latīf came of a well-known family of Sayids and that down the centuries Sayids in Sind have produced a number of men famous for their learning and their saintliness. The poet's great-great-grandfather was the Shāh Karīm whose name is still held in reverence in Lower Sind. Though some poetry is attributed to Shāh Karīm and a few of his verses are believed to be incorporated in the Risālo there has come down to us nothing of outstanding merit. Nor is there in Sindhi literature either before or after Shāh Abdul Latīf's time anything fit to be compared with the Risālo.[1]

The East in general is a place where learning and the love of learning cannot be said to be widespread. The learned man is exceptional. If he lives amongst a simple, rustic and largely unlettered people, he obtains easily a reputation for wonderful achievement which the critical examination of a later age may find to be undeserved. Very little is known of the education of Shāh Abdul Latīf. One of his preceptors was a Nūr Muhammad Bhattī of whose scholastic ability we are singularly ignorant. 'We do not know', says Līlarām Watanmal, 'how long our poet studied with Nūr Mahomad or how much he learnt from him.'[2] We shall not, however, be far wrong in assuming that Shāh Abdul Latīf was familiar with the traditions of his own family and that he must have had some command over the kind of learning which a studious Sayid of his time could have acquired. Tradition says that the Korān, the Masnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī and the Sindhi verses of Shāh

[1] There is a big edition of the poetry of Sachal (Sarmast) by Aghā Ghulām Nabī Khān Sūfī.

[2] *Shāh Latīf*, p. 11.



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Karīm were constantly in his hands. The general truth of this assertion need not be doubted. But though it may explain some of the characteristic literary and scholarly qualities of the Risālo, it does nothing to account for the poetic excellence of the verses. We are thus reduced to the simple fact that genius knows no limiting bounds. Shāh Abdul Latīf must by nature have possessed those qualities of observation, expression and sincerity of thought which enabled him to put his own ideas and the ideas of the common people amongst whom he lived into verses that can without exaggeration be said to have a claim to immortality.

In the days when these verses were composed Islām in Sind preserved the true native form of its characteristic power. That power had been contributed to by a succession of Muslim dynasties which for centuries had set their seal upon the land. The thinking of the common people was permeated by ideas which, much more than they do in present-day Sind, penetrated deeply the Muslim consciousness. Today that territorial dominion has been lost. With the break-up of the typical theocratic society much of the structure of its social polity has disappeared. Thus against the whole mental background of those days there stood out a quality which is vital no longer in quite the same way and with quite the same power. The Muslim India of the Middle Ages, of which eighteenth century Sind was a relic, was in some of its features very reminiscent of medieval Christian Europe. There was the same sort of moving about to fairs and on pilgrimages. The 'mullo' and the mosque corresponded to the priest and the church. The darwīshes were a kind of wandering friars. The structure of society was perhaps in an external way more deeply religious than it is today. Economic conditions were simpler, even if economic comfort was harder to attain. Owing to the general fatalistic and uncritical attitude that the average man adopted when faced with the blows of ill-fortune or distress it is probable that hardship was borne more stoically than today. It may not, therefore, be true to say that the economic struggle did not then absorb so much of human spiritual energy as it does now, when people are readier to worry about the attainment of creature comfort and when they see that the possibility of reaching a higher standard of living is not so distant as it used to be. But society was certainly then more static and more graded into classes. Men, therefore, accepted the blows of fate with greater complacency because they had not realized the extent to which human effort can alter the conditions under which people live.

The Sind which was the soil from which the poetry of a Shāh Abdul Latīf could spring was more like the 'Merrie England' which prevailed in the days of the economic self-sufficiency of the village,

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the small town and restricted local enterprise. It was a society of landholders, petty cultivators, herdsmen, craftsmen and traders, knowing little of the outside world except what could be seen of it at markets and fairs, in the gatherings of strangers at tombs on saints' days or in the company of fellow pilgrims. Islām has never had the established hierarchy of Christian medievalism. To that extent it had a greater sense of the democracy of man and the common people shared more in its widely-flung culture of religious idea and belief. Life was hard but it was not without its compensations in a common ability, through certain social customs, to find simple relaxations from the rigours of a penurious existence. In such a society the saintly man, the interpreter of the simple creed of the Korān, the 'mullo', the 'shaikh', the 'ākhund' and the 'ustād' exercised a kind of authority which departed when life became more complex and the economic struggle more absorbing of mental energies. Shāh Abdul Latīf was born at a time when a great transition was beginning. This transition continued throughout his lifetime. The supreme territorial authority of the Muslim dynasties was breaking up and the settled structure of a medieval society was wearing a little thin. The elements which went to the making of this structure were numerous. There was the acknowledgement of man's state as the result of God's disposal of the world. It was accepted that there shall be the rich man in his palace and the poor man at the gate. The holy man was still a kind of uncrowned king amongst an illiterate people. Nothing has ever quite taken the place of this structure. When in a multitude of ways individualism began to supplant authoritarianism, much of the contentment which accompanied a quiet resignation to things as they were disappeared. The world ceased to be 'merrie'. Human endeavour became more self-centred and men were more prone to demand 'rights'. The other-worldly days of the poet, sage, saint were beginning to be numbered.

In Shāh Abdul Latīf's lifetime we can trace fairly easily most of the signs that the old order was soon to pass away. The poet's own life displays the successive stages he went through from poet to sage, ending finally in sainthood. The important point, however, is that Shāh Abdul Latīf is the last of the great medieval poets. He sang for a people whose religious outlook, intelligible and respected today, has lost for ever that quality of homogeneity with its environment which is so characteristic of medievalism. It is extremely doubtful whether poetry like Shāh Abdul Latīf's can ever again be composed in Sind. The verses can of course be imitated and have been imitated. But we feel that such imitation, however skilful, can be nothing but a feeble copy of something that has lost the lively

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meaning it once held. This statement may perhaps seem paradoxical since the poems of Shāh Abdul Latīf still bind Sind with a powerful spell of love and admiration. But there is really no paradox. Modern delight in the poems is of a different genre entirely. It comes partly from the development of a literary taste that is quite modern. It springs partly from a sentimental regard for the fine things of the past characteristic of all peoples at certain stages of their cultural development. Though the ideas in the poems are still believed they are not believed in quite the same way or for quite the same reason. It is precisely because the simpler and more burning conviction of a previous age has gone that the probabilities are all against Sind's producing a second Shāh Abdul Latīf.

To expect this to happen would be like expecting another Donne or another Milton to appear in present-day England. The emphasis of literary conception has altered. Values have changed. People have fuller minds than they had in those simpler days. Donne and Milton are still admired and loved. But the ideas they preached do not strike the modern mind in the manner that appealed to seventeenth century England. These ideas can now be seen to be capable of examination from quite another angle. To change the metaphor, they are like some exquisite work of art which later ages see only through a camera obscura, real indeed but somehow invested with a penumbra of unreality. In the field of art when something has been done once supremely well, the achievement becomes static. It reaches a sort of finality and becomes not an object of emotion so much as a subject for introspection, which is a very different matter. The uniqueness of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry must therefore be explained in some such way as this. Shāh Abdul Latīf was the first great exponent of the imaginative use of the Sindhi language. His achievement took place in days when Sind was still medieval in outlook. His poetry has in consequence been stamped with a peculiar cachet of its own, one that can never be applied again. No one will ever produce again this particular kind of poetry amidst the same local environment and in the same halo-content of thought, belief and feeling.

The poverty of Sindhi literature before Shāh Abdul Latīf was the result of the late emergence of the Sindhi vernacular as a vehicle of literary expression. While Islām was setting its authoritative seal upon the structure of thought in all Muslim India most of the inspiration came from the great Arabic and Persian tradition. The emperor Bābur was profoundly contemptuous of the merits of India. He has shown this by the caustic comments in his memoirs, 'the people of Hindustan have no good houses, no good flesh, no grapes, no muskmelons, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or

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bread in their bazaars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick'.[1]

It was not surprising that Urdu was regarded till the late seventeenth century as a barbarous and uneducated tongue unfit for the gems of poetic inspiration. The Courts used the Persian language. Persian was the medium of literary expression. Learned men wrote in Arabic or Persian. Except in areas where Sanskritic languages had reached a scholarly standard, no one thought it worth while attempting to employ the language of the common people with superlative skill or to discover in the vernaculars their potentiality for linguistic felicities. But now all has changed. Persian in India has become a language of pedantry used for the writing of literary conceits and *jeux d'esprit*, and not for the spontaneous local expression of literary thoughts. Sindhi too, has now developed on modern lines. If great poetry is to be written in it hereafter it will be in a manner congenial to modern ideas of thought and expression. A present-day poet may imitate Shāh Abdul Latīf's turns of phrase, employ his imagery, and indulge in a wealth of Sūfi philosophy, but it will be modern poetry and in so far as it seeks merely to be a facsimile of what was better said in the eighteenth century it will fail to live. Every age evolves for itself its own methods of literary expression best suited to proclaim its living convictions and beliefs and nothing which merely apes the past will be more than an unsubstantial shade. Thus are we left with the strange uniqueness of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry, the only gem cast up from the sea of Sind's vernacular literature at a time when that was able to express with patent sincerity the convictions of a living medievalism.

Shāh Abdul Latīf is no mere imitator of Jalāluddīn Rūmī, of Jāmī, or Hāfiz or Al Bistāmī. He is actually expressing in his own language ideas that were the current thought of his time. The uselessness of mere imitation has been well brought out by Professor Browne. Talking of the later Persian poets in India he says: 'These poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced what the late Professor Éthé has happily termed the "Indian summer" of Persian poetry, and they had of course a host of imitators and successors as long as Persian continued to be the polite language of India. These last who were at best skilful manipulators of a foreign idiom I do not propose to notice.'[2] Browne is here speaking of the Indian poets who wrote in Persian, imitating the language and form of Sanāī, Attār, Mahmūd Shabistarī, Jāmī and others. There is little in their work that cannot be recognized for what it is, namely the slavish copying of ideas better expressed

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 333.
[2] *Persian Literature in Modern Times*, p. 168.

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by others, the manufacture of verses from which the light of life has departed. Shāh Abdul Latīf stands in a different category. He is a poet using for the first time with supreme skill the language of the country folk and employing it to interpret ideas of beauty and of religious philosophy, which, while drawing much inspiration from Persian models, succeeded in maintaining a high level of native originality and local eloquence. He was a man steeped in an understanding of the mystical teaching of Islām and familiar with the form of thought found to perfection in the great Persian masters. But this method of expression and his use of these ideas are quite individual and sincere because they actually responded to a true impulse to interpret the deepest ideas of the common folk amongst whom he spent the whole of his life. If it is the function of a poet not merely to express felicitously the ideas of his time but also to use his own language musically in order to bring out great truths, then Shāh Abdul Latīf has established his claim to be an original poet of his own right and not a soulless copyist of ideas better expressed by others before him.

The tyranny which Persian models have exercised over Indian poetry in general is bad. It has confirmed the poets of India in their common failing—a failing not confined to Indian poetry alone—to imitate rather than to initiate. The fault is due in some measure to inherent complacency strengthened by the conservatism of Oriental poetry, which tends to limit its interests to certain topics only, and worse still, to employ the same imagery and the same symbolism as have been used with success by the masters of another idiom. Shāh Abdul Latīf cannot be called conspicuous for any great originality of thought. But he expresses supremely well a species of religious philosophy current amongst the better educated men of his time.

Of what did this better education consist in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind? There is not much direct evidence of contemporary character which can be called reliable. Mirza Kalīch Bēg has, in his 'Old Sind', given some account of the learned men of Tatta during the period of its greatest splendour.[1] The learned men of Moghul and Kalhōro Sind do not make a company imposing in achievement, though their number is not small. Their learned works were concerned mostly with religious disquisition, with the duties of the true Muslim, with annals, chronicles and histories as then understood and with verse on the Persian model. But these authors, some of whom were erudite and highly cultivated people, wrote in Persian and Arabic and not in the language of the countryside. This was the result partly of the tyranny of a

[1] op cit., pp. 173 sqq.

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conservative literary tradition and partly of Islām's insistence on the superiority of the languages of Islām's historical progress. Some mention has been made in the first volume of the present work of the native historians, their merits and their defects. In a land where the Muslim theocratic theory prevailed so strongly it was inevitable that religion and education should go hand in hand. Thus most of the learned men of Old Sind were Sayids, Kāzīs, Mullas or persons concerned with the teaching of the Korān and the exposition of the Muslim faith in one way or another. If they were not themselves actively engaged in this form of activity they had certainly gained all the learning they possessed at the 'maktabs' and 'madressas' presided over by 'mullas', 'ākhunds' and 'ustāds'. The Memons, a class of Muslims hailing originally from Cutch, were remarkable for their interest in learned things. They have produced, says Burton,[1] 'many very learned men and done much to introduce the religious sciences into this country.'

Mirza Kalīch Bēg gives long lists of famous names associated with light and learning in Tatta during its days of glory. It will suffice for our present purpose merely to mention some of them. The standard of their learning and the quality of their scholarship are now difficult to determine because they have left few relics of their work. At least, if such relics do still exist, they must be buried in manuscripts which are in the hands of private persons and which have not been published for the benefit of succeeding generations. Of famous Kāzīs at Tatta, Mirza Kalīch Bēg cites Kāzī Nāmat Ullāh, Kāzī Hamad, Kāzī Abīqullāh, Kāzī Shakīkh Muhammad. Other names are Shaikh Sadaruldīn, Makhdūm Rukhanaldīn, Makhdūm Mīran walad Moulāna Yākūb, Makhdūm Fazalullāh, Makhdūm Ferōz, Makhdūm Usmān walad Makhdūm Bahāwaldīn, Mūlla Muhammad Damāghī, Makhdūm Abdul Jamīl, Makhdūm Faizullāh, Makhdūm Hamzo Wāiz, Moulāna Muhammad Tāhir, Makhdūm Mahmūd, Makhdūm Ādam mīan Abul Hasan, Makhdūm Rahamatullāh and many others. Of poets and writers there is also a formidable list containing the names of Muhammad Mukīm, Mulla Abdul Rashīd, Abdul Kayūm, Mulla Mohabat Alī, Mulla Salāmī, Mulla Abdul Hakīm, Mulla Yār Muhammad Khadam, Mulla Razā Hāshmī, Mirza Ghulām Alī Mōmin, Asadullāh Tabāh and others. Poetry, astronomy, medicine, philology, dialectics, and similar learned subjects were the topics of discourse. The chief centres of learning were Tatta, Matiārī and Rōhrī, places famous for the residence of Sayids and holy men attached to tombs, mosques and shrines. It was characteristic of much of the learning of those days that the writers belonged largely to families that had immigrated into Sind. They were not Sindhis

[1] *History of Sindh*, p. 248.



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by birth. During the days of the Afghāns who preceded the Moghuls, and even earlier, Sind proved a favourite home for learned men of this type which has always appealed to Islām. Both the Afghāns and the Moghuls showed a tendency to encourage the settlement of men of this character who were further attracted by the reputation which Sind had gained for its Sūfī philosophy and its Sūfī exposition of Muslim doctrines. The age of the Arghūns and Tarkhāns was specially notable for the entrance of this kind of intellectual aristocracy who spoke and wrote, however, a language that was intelligible only to the learned intelligentzia. It could have had but little effect upon the unlettered cultivator class who knew of Arabic little beyond what they learned at the mosque for their religious devotions, and who used neither Arabic nor Persian in their daily speech. In this respect Sind was merely typical of Muslim India generally. 'The foreign immigrants,' says Arnold,[1] 'and their descendants, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Mughals and Pathāns formed an important element in the total Muhammadan population and exercised a preponderating influence in the administration, the social organization and the religious life. The missionaries to whose proselytizing efforts the conversion of whole tribes is attributed and the saints whose tombs are still venerated throughout all parts of Muslim India were for the most part of foreign extraction. The effect of this constant stream of foreign immigration has been to keep India in close contact with the main currents of theological belief and speculation in Islām.'

Sind has always had a number of persons called 'hāfiz' who know the Korān by heart. But this does not mean that they have any scholarly knowledge of the Arabic language. Burton has very sarcastic remarks to make on the standard of Persian and Arabic knowledge displayed in Sind by persons who professed to be familiar with these languages. The ancestors of Abul Fazul, the statistician of the Āīn-i-Akbarī were typical instances of the immigration of learned men from the highlands of Central Asia when the intellectual standard of Islām was high and the pursuit of learning was accounted a matter of great worth. Shaikh Mūsa, Abul Fazul's great-great-great-grandfather settled at Rēl, a pleasant village of Sewistān, and married into a family of God-fearing and pious people; and he did not exchange his retired habits for the occupations of the world. 'His son and grand-children,' says Abul Fazul, 'following his example lived happily and were instructed in the esoteric and exoteric doctrines of philosophy. In the beginning of the tenth century (i.e. Muhammadan) Shaikh Khizr set out impelled with the

[1] 'Islām in India' in *Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V, pp. 895-7.

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desire of visiting the saints of India."[1] Among the holy men he visited was Shaikh Yūsuf Sindhī 'who had traversed the fields of secular and mystic lore and had acquired many perfections of the religious life'.[2]

These illustrations bring out clearly some characteristic features of learning and education in Sind. Both learning and education were part of the great impulse of Islām and they were largely kept alive from outside. The system of education followed the general type found in Muslim countries. Education centred round the mosque to which the 'maktab' was attached. There were 'madressas' for higher study of a medieval scholastic nature. There flourished a well-established school of Sūfī thought which long continued to attract that studious religious type of mind so often found amongst Muslims who have the time and the means to penetrate into the arcana of their faith. We have no contemporary account of the working of this educational system in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Sind. The best description of it has been given by Burton who, in his own meticulous fashion, elicited the facts orally from learned men of the last century still retaining personal memories of what had been handed down to them or told them by their elders in an age when oral tradition had a much greater force than it possesses today. This education was then exactly the education prevalent generally throughout the countries of Islām.

It is certain that in its heyday Tatta was a great centre of erudition and learning. But it is impossible to believe Hamilton when he says that the Tatta of his time (circa A.D. 1699) contained four hundred colleges and schools. It is true that Hamilton may be referring not to Tatta alone but to Sind generally when he says, 'The city of Tatta is famous for learning in theology, philology and politics and they have above four hundred colleges for training up youth in these parts of learning. I was very intimate with a Sayid who was a professor of theology and was reckoned a great historian. He asked me one day if I had heard of Alexander the Great in my country.' Hamilton[3] wrote up his fascinating memoirs long after he had retired from adventurous living. His account of Sind must have been compiled at least twenty years after 1699. As his writings are usually fully circumstantial and detailed we are justified in assuming that he must have maintained diaries and records of what he saw. But it is beyond the bounds of credibility that a place the size of Tatta could have been provided with so many centres of instruction.

[1] Āin, III, pp. 418-9.
[2] ibid., p. 419.
[3] Hamilton, op. cit., in Pinkerton. Hamilton appears to have died about 1732 and is believed to have written his memoirs about the second decade of the eighteenth century.

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Even one hundred schools would have been excessive. The only inference that can reasonably be drawn from Hamilton's account is that Tatta had a large number of 'maktabs' and seminaries frequented by students and presided over by men learned in Islāmic teaching.

Law's well-known work on the 'Promotion of Learning during Muhammadan Rule' is of very little assistance in respect of Sind during Moghul days. Nor would it be wise to accept Law's wide generalizations about the enlightened educational policy of the Delhi Emperors. The evidence in fact does no more than show that as a general rule the Moghul Emperors were not insensible to the promotion of education and learning and that they and their nobles occasionally, and fitfully, helped to found certain important institutions and libraries. When Aurangzēb decreed that in Gujārāt every year teachers should be appointed at the cost of the public exchequer and stipends be paid according to the recommendation of the Sadar and the tasdīq of the teacher, the grant made was small and only three moulvis were appointed, one at Ahmedābād, one at Pātan and one at Surat and only forty-five students were given subsistence allowance (Mirāt-i-Ahmadī 272). The Moghul Empire indeed was framed for quite another purpose than the propagation of learning. It is beyond all dispute that the proportion of the state revenues actively devoted to education through the Department of Alms, administered by the Imperial Almoner, the Sadr-us-Sadūr, was very small indeed. Poets and learned men were encouraged at the court. But that is not to say that there was any recognized educational policy. Many of these poets were no more than courtly flatterers engaged in extolling the virtues of the prince in the usual Oriental style of hyperbole. The chief manner in which education was encouraged was by the bestowal in wakf of ināms, jāghīrs and grants to mosques and religious foundations. But many of these exhibitions of favour were the result of the religiosity of local rulers and not of the enlightenment of the Delhi throne. Law says pertinently 'While speaking of the schools and colleges of those days we should not lose sight of the educational work done by distinguished learned men teaching pupils in their houses. They supplemented the educational work done by the literary institutions and provided a field for post-collegiate studies."[1] There is certainly no evidence that I have seen that would warrant the belief that a single educational institution in Sind owed its origin to any act of an Emperor of Delhi.

Jahāngīr promulgated an ordinance that whenever a well-to-do man or a rich traveller died without any heir his property would escheat to the Crown and be utilized for building

[1] *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, p. 164.

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and repairing 'madressas', monasteries, etcetera. But we know of no instance in which Sind benefited from these orders. The Moghuls themselves were fond of learning and books. Some of the Delhi Emperors were widely read and intelligent men, but it is more than doubtful whether they ever carried out consistently any comprehensive educational scheme amongst the subjects of their dominions. Indeed one of the sayings of Akbar recorded in the Āīn is definitely retrograde. 'The prophets were all illiterate. Believers should therefore retain one of their sons in that condition.'[1] We shall, therefore, not be wrong in concluding that Sind in Moghul days showed merely the operation of the Islāmic educational system and was helped in no way except that in which education is encouraged by Islāmic teaching. The chief support of the literary groups came from revenues granted in the form of ināms to mosques and to 'maktabs' attached to mosques. Learning in any real sense was confined to small coteries of studious men whose chief stimulus towards self-improvement came from the religious doctrines in which they believed with high sincerity. The great mass of the people remained illiterate. Beyond the smattering of Arabic required for their religious devotions the common people had little acquaintance with the written word. But in an age when learning is rare the scholar attains a sort of sanctity which attaches to him a small band of admirers. It is mostly from these small nerve centres of thought that learning was transmitted in an imperfect way to the population at large.

Enough has been said to show that education and learning in Sind followed the usual Muslim practice. This practice can be studied better in the accounts of those centres of Islāmic learning like Cairo, Baghdād, Cordova, Samarkand or Bukhāra of which descriptions are available. Primary and secondary courses of study both prevailed. The course of higher studies under the Muslim system shows many resemblances to the trivium and quadrivium of medieval scholasticism in Europe. This medieval system regarded learning more as a means to purely intellectual exercise or debating dexterity than as a commentary on the actual life of the day. Primary education was very hidebound. When the child began to speak he was taught the Muslim articles of faith, the words from the Korān 'Exalted is Allāh, the King in truth : there is no God but He, the Lord of the stately throne of Heaven' (xxiii. 1170) ; the throne verse (ayāt-al-kursī) ii. 256 and the last two verses of sūra lix. (surat-al-hasr). At seven began the systematic study of the Korān combined with instruction in important religious precepts and usages, the correct responses of the azān, the different kinds of washings and the prayers in the mosque and the procedure of joint prayer.

[1] Sayings of Akbar in Āīn, III.

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This was accompanied by the writing on tablets or boards (takhtī) and exercises in reading and writing in the Arabic script. Legends of the prophets and stories of holy men formed part of the regular course. Poetry was also studied but all eroticism in poetry was strictly excluded. Burton has much to say on the system he found prevailing in Sind. He mentions the importance attached to caligraphy and the five qualities which a good reed pen must possess : it must be sanhī (fine), sāīn (straight), salīra (well pierced), surkha (red) and supak (well grown).[1]

Secondary or higher education also followed a well-defined course of study at ' madressas '. We do not know, however, if more than a few studėnts carried their education so far in Moghul, Kalhōro and Tālpūr times. Burton has described fully the course of study. He learnt this by personal enquiry from one who had himself gone through the course. Students acquainted with the medieval university system will recognize the similarity of the course of study to that pursued in typical middle age universities in Europe. In the primary course the student had already learnt the simple form of the Arabic conjugations. The works studied were the Mīzān-i-sarf by Lāl Shāhbāz, the famous scholar and saint of Sehwan. Then followed study of the Ajnās or Munshaīb rules for the formation of the increased derivatives, and the Kisim-i-doyyūm for the irregular verbs. Both these works were by Lāl Shāhbāz but were written in Persian. The next book to be read was the Akd, also by Lāl Shāhbāz, in Arabic and Persian mixed, dealing with the permutation of letters. After them came the Zubdat. Much of this part of the course was committed to memory either as it stood or by means of rhyming mnemonics. After this grounding in the dry structure of language the pupil next proceeded to Nahw (declension of the noun and pronoun) and went into the deeper study of Sarf, reading either the work of Mīr Sayyid Alī Sharīf or the Sarf-i-Zarradī composed in Persian and Arabic by the poet Jāmī. Nahw was then continued in more difficult works like the Nahw-i-zararī of Abul Hasan Alī, and then advanced to the study of logic (mantiq), where the chief works to be read were he Isagūjī (Isagōgē of Porphyry) translated into Arabic by Asīr al din Abbāsī ; the Kalakūlī, a commentary on the above ; the Shamsiyā, a book on dialectics by the poet Hāfiz; and various commentaries. From logic and elementary dialectics the advanced student proceeded to higher dialectics and had then to study the authoritative works of the Hanafī theology, like the Hidāyat, the Wilāyat and similar books, and peruse some commentary on the Korān and the Ilm-i-hadīs. Burton says that very few students advanced as far as to study rhetoric and those who did seldom

[1] Burton : *History of Sindh*, p. 396.

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proceeded beyond the text book called Talkhīs and its commentaries the Mukhtasar and Mutawwal. The highest branches of study were the pronunciation, reading and chanting of the Korān, dialectic, prosody, medicine, the occult sciences of geomancy, astrology and divination by numbers, and philosophy. At all stages of this course a great strain was placed upon the memory and pupils were expected to learn long passages by heart. There does not seem to have been much inspiration or intelligence about the teaching and the hide-bound nature of the course of study must have smothered originality, and indeed everything except subtlety in argument and adroitness in dialectic on topics that bore very little practical relation to the everyday life of the people. Learning was thus a kind of self-centred knowledge of limited scope, a closed science with fixed rules, the unfortunate student having for years to overtax his memory and devote his mental energies to such subjects as grammar, formal syntax, formal logic, dialectical argument and similar dry bones of study.

This peculiarity of Muslim learning in the special conditions of Sind accounts fully for the reverence with which men learned in this lore were held by the uneducated populace, who could not possibly have understood the jejune formal ideas which occupied the minds of these erudite but narrowly-confined intelligences. While intellectualism in Islām has had its renaissance, it has never had a romantic revival, which in fact it would have resisted. The result has been to maintain till a very late day a purely scholastic attitude towards knowledge of God, life and human activity. In Sind, which has never been distinguished for learning and could have had few chances in medieval times of maintaining anything like a Muslim university, the effect of this starved intellectualism was to atrophy much of what was learnt by only a few persons after prodigious feats of memory and concentration. Nor have we any reason to think that the products of the learned men of Sind challenged comparison with what was achieved in other and more enlightened parts of the Muslim world. It is quite certain that Shāh Abdul Latīf was not a learned man in the narrow scholastic sense. Nor should we be justified in assuming that he had more than a smattering of the higher education of his day. The works of Hāfiz, Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī were, however, known in some fashion to the leading ākhunds of his time. Shāh Abdul Latīf with his deep sense of poetry and his understanding of some of the more personal aspects of the Muslim conception of God and mankind's relation to Him, must have picked up enough Arabic and Persian to be able to realize better than his teachers the spirit of the Muslim theosophy preached by the great writers of Persia. In this he was typical of the best

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thought of his own and preceding generations. In Sind this took the form of a simple-minded conviction of the tenets of a tolerant Sūfism. From this have flowed certain important consequences, namely the establishment of a Sūfī school of thought, a more pantheistic conception of Islāmic doctrine than prevails elsewhere, an absence of bitterness between Sunnī and Shīa, and a kind of rapprochement between the deeper mystical ideas of Muslim and Hindu thought. The last especially helps to explain the extraordinary fact that the typical Islāmic mysticism of the Risālo is understood and loved in Sind by Hindus as much as by Muslims.

It does not appear that the teaching profession has ever been held in any great respect in Sind. Burton comments on the practice of giving perquisites to teachers to supplement their meagre earnings. The 'ākhund' refused to start anything new without a fee. At the three great Īds of Bakr, Fitr and Barāt the teacher used to write two or three couplets upon crudely ornamented paper. For this he received from four annas to a rupee in payment. These compositions were called 'īdīs' and were hung upon the walls of the house. Teachers were seldom paid more than half a rupee by each pupil per month. In the time of the Tālpūrs Sind possessed six 'madressas', at Sehwan, Trippat near Sehwan, Khōhra north of Sehwan, Matiārī, Mōhar or Walhārī near Umarkōt and Chothiyārī on the Nāra river. In his account of the Town and Port of Karāchi in 1840, Captain Hart states 'Each scholar takes a handful of rice and a few sticks with him as a present to the master daily and a rupee or two is paid monthly by the parents. The Persian language is taught by the Mullas of whom ten or twelve have classes which generally assemble in the mosques. The children of those who intend them for employment in the service of the government are there instructed, the charge varying from a tunga to Rs. 3 or 4 monthly, according to the progress made by the pupil; and on the completion of the child's education it is usual for the master to receive a present. . . . Muhammadan females are taught to read the Korān.'[1] Burton states, however, that a boy was nine years old before he began the systematic study of his own language in Sindhi. When he did the course of study was (1) the Nūr Nāmo of Abdul Hāshim, an easy religious treatise on the history of things in general before the creation of man, (2) the works of Makhdūm Hāshim beginning with the Tasfīr, (3) tales in prose and verse, such as the adventures of Saiful or Lail-i-Majanō, the adventures and sayings of celebrated saints of the golden age of Islām and books on the life and death of the Prophet. It is unlikely that conditions

[1] Government of Bombay Records. Selections. New Series, XVII, Part I, p. 216.

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were any better in the ruder and rougher days of the Moghuls and Kalhōra. The Sindhi language was much neglected as a medium of instruction except by Hindus, who used a non-Arabic script. The whole system was dull and deadening. It emphasized the exercise of the memory at the expense of the intelligence, a defect of vernacular teaching that has not yet been cured anywhere in India. These facts about education and learning in Sind make still more remarkable the creation in the eighteenth century of the great Sindhi classic of Shāh Abdul Latīf. They prove indeed the truth of the saying that the poet is born and not made.

If the poems of the Risālo have their origin partly in the expression of Muslim thought, they have another source in music and singing. The poems are due to the lyrical impulse. They were originally composed to be recited, intoned or sung to a musical accompaniment. This close connexion with music they still retain. Europeans have found much difficulty in understanding the music of India because it presents features which, superficially at any rate, differentiate it strikingly from the familiar music of western Europe. In addition Indian music has a religious and mythological background utterly out of keeping with the scientific structure of western music. Indian music is only now ceasing to partake of the character of a black art known to initiates alone and is still devoid of any kind of universal system of script notation. All these features of Indian music put it into a category which Europeans find difficult to appreciate, since music in the West has long since been emancipated from such trammels and has been reduced to the form of science, which anyone can learn if he has the skill and powers of application.

The difference between eastern and western music is, however, only a surface difference. The principles of music are the same everywhere. Research in Indian music has revealed its essentially primitive character. But this primitiveness in structure and content has not been dissociated from an amazing elaboration of detail after the Oriental fashion. Indian music is on much the same footing as the Sanskrit language, which is a primitive vehicle of expression overlaid by an enormous quantity of elaboration and complicated by artificial grammatical rules. The real truth is that Indian music is simpler than European music because it has become completely conventionalized on certain early and primitive lines which were deserted by European musicians centuries ago. These primitive lines have, however, been elaborated with a complexity of detail exactly similar to the intricacy of ornament found in the carvings of Hindu temples, or in the involved tracery of script writing used for decorative purposes. Music in India has in fact fallen under the same general influence as complicated the grammar

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and syntax of Sanskrit and the principles of Indian philosophy. These influences tended to make music a closed field of semi-secret lore within which generations of ingenious and subtle minds have thought out a vast variety of permutations and combinations of a few simple originals. Thus while European music has shed itself of all modes except the major and minor scales, with a few straggling relics of earlier modes hardly used except in brief moments of expression, Indian music has continued to employ a large number of modes and has also retained and developed a system of musical intervals which make little appeal to the European ear. European music has concentrated on exploring the major and minor scales and has generally enhanced their significance by the systematic development of harmony, counterpoint and the application to musical instruments of the potentialities of the four basic kinds of human voice, the bass, the baritone, the tenor or alto and the soprano. Thus while rhythm and melody remain common to both Indian and European music, there is a vast divergence in the field of harmony, the chief glory of European music, which, though present, is still in a very rudimentary form in Indian music, and in the treatment of musical intervals. It is characteristic of musical modes that they employ different runs of notes for the expression of melody. As Indian music has many more modes than European music and as it has also been extremely conservative about the manner of employing these runs of notes, Indian music has a greater range of melodic possibility but has utterly failed to develop that richness which European music has lavished on its treatment of the two modes which, alone of all those it once possessed, it has deliberately retained. Indian music has furthermore suffered greatly from its remaining a closed system in the control of professional performers and musicians who have kept the practice of it by traditional methods in their own hands. As a result of the failure to develop harmony musical instruments in India are generally of a very simple type, quite incapable of producing the effects of such developed and intricate instruments as the organ, the piano, and the variety of instruments which when played together make possible orchestration on a grand scale.

These defects of Indian music are being gradually realized in India today. A strong movement has arisen to rescue music from the hands of the professional musician or minstrel class who have hitherto preserved it as an almost magical field of their own, to introduce general scales of notation which will enable anyone to write down melodies and perform them for himself, and to explore the possibility of extending harmony in Indian music. But there is no unanimity of view in these matters. Thus while the

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professional minstrel, who is usually a person of poor education and is often indeed illiterate possessing merely a certain dexterity in performing on his simple instrument, has lost a great deal of the respect in which he used to be held, a general knowledge of music is still hindered by the absence of a common written notation. The taste of the public is moreover becoming debased by the adoption of the handblown harmonium tuned to the European major and minor scales, and also by the excruciating cacophonies of incompetent brass bands playing garbled versions of European tunes. These bands are employed to give an impression of opulent uptodateness at weddings and similar ceremonies once graced by the performance of genuine Indian music by proficient exponents of the minstrel class.

In the days of the Shāh jō Risālo this demoralization of musical taste had not set in. It was still possible to write poetry with the assurance that it would be accompanied musically in the manner intended by the poet. The minstrel was still a person commanding respect, despite his low social position. The disreputable character of the minstrel's private life was often responsible for his low social standing, for he commonly associated with persons who indulged in opium, bhang and other intoxicants capable of producing a kind of frenzied exuberance and his womenfolk were engaged in the unedifying occupations of prostitution and nautch dancing. So uncritical was the public of those days that the mere dexterity of the performer and his capacity to produce on his sitār, sarangī or bīna melodies, which only a member of his class could so perform, was sufficient to create in the minds of the listeners a belief that this music was a kind of mysterious and almost superhuman art closed to the bulk of mankind. For this naive and childlike attitude of thought the vague sentimental mythology which linked music with religion as one of the mysteries of grace and light was largely responsible. Music in fact was still a form of mumbo-jumbo. This primitive appraisement has appeared at all early stages and had not died out entirely in Europe in the middle ages. Shakespeare makes effective use of it in ' The Merchant of Venice '.

> ' There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
> But in his motion like an angel sings
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims :
> Such harmony is in immortal souls.
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.'

The Sur Sōrath in the Risālo is based on the same idea of the mystery and magic, the holy force, of music. The poem is interesting not only because it depicts the great power of the musician, ' the man

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of music', who by playing on his strings, can induce the king to yield up his head in willing sacrifice in sheer mystical abandonment, but also because it makes clear the relation believed to exist between music and immortal things. 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music', says Jessica in 'The Merchant of Venice', emphasizing the power of music to bring the mind to thinking of the deeper things that move the spirit of man. This attitude is typical of the musical influence that runs through the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf. Without an understanding of it the full force of the poetry cannot be apprehended. This message is not yet lost in the East where music, despite its modern debasement, is still, in popular esteem, regarded in some way as the handmaid of religion.

The poems of the Risālo are arranged according to their musical settings, though not all of them are named after the tunes to which they are sung. To understand this system of nomenclature we must consider for a moment some of the characteristics of Oriental music in India. While the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf is typically Muslim in sentiment and expression, the musical foundation owes little to Islām. The Āīn-i-Akbarī describes the music of Sind as 'kāmī' (amatory). It also gives an account of the rāgs and rāginīs prevalent in India. The rāgs and rāginīs constitute a form of Hindustān music pure and simple. There is nothing essentially Muslim in them. The Arabic chant song, the important influence in Muhammadan music, is quite different. This delighted in rhythm rather than in melody and was built up on the natural quantities of the syllables in the Arabic language. This chanting is heard in the intoning of the Korān in the mosques. The song music was different but that too depended upon correct rhythm and the beating of time upon the hand-drum. Monotony is, therefore, a characteristic of Muslim music. Ghazzālī divides Arabic songs into religious pilgrim songs, war songs, songs of joy, love songs, and songs expressive of religious ecstasy. The religious significance of music is much stressed by this great Arabic writer. 'And I say that to God Most High belongs a secret consisting in the relationship of measured airs to the souls of man so that the airs work upon them with a wonderful working. . . . The seventh kind of listening is the listening of him who loves God and has a passion for Him and longs to meet Him so that he cannot look upon a thing but he sees it in Him (whose perfection is extolled) and no sound strikes upon his ear but he hears it from Him and in Him.'[1] Here Ghazzālī is speaking more of the metaphysic of music than of its structure. Indeed he connects the listening to music with 'wajd', or the rapture and ecstasy of the

[1] *Emotional Religion in Islam as affected by Music and Singing.* Translated by D. B. Macdonald, *J.R.A.S.*, 1901, p. 229.

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Sūfīs. In a puritanical strain blasphemous and obscene poetry is barred and so are the poems extolling the beauty of any particular woman. Nor must music be listened to if it stirs up thoughts contrary to the teaching of the Korān. While it would not be right to hold that influences of this nature are absent from the musical attitude of Shāh Abdul Latīf, it would be more correct to say that the Sindhi poet, in using the musical accompaniment to emphasize the meaning of his verse, employed the musical forms of India, which were the most suitable vehicles for his purpose because they were indigenous and understood by all classes of the populace.

There is no distinctively Sindhi school of music. The music of Sind is part of the musical heritage of Hindustān. The broad facts about Indian music have been made clear by Clements in his masterly 'Introduction to the Study of Indian music'. Indian music belongs to two great groups, the Hindustānī prevalent in the north and west of India and in the Deccan, and the Karnatic prevalent in the south and east. 'Many scales', says Clements, 'are common to both and the general aspect of the two systems is apparent from the scales which are first taught to beginners. In the west the scale is the same as the just major scale of Europe. In the south it is a chromatic scale. In Hindustānī music it is called the Rāga Bhairava, with semitones between the first and second, third and fourth, fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth degrees.'[1]

The Hindu theory of music serves the present-day forms of melody types (rāgas) through (1) grāmmas, (2) murchanas, scales of seven notes for the string called the murchana of the note chosen, (3) jātīs which introduced a drone accompaniment, fixed final notes, vādīs and semivādīs, and (4) grāmma rāgas. Into the technicalities of this process of development it is unnecessary to enter here. Indeed to do so would be irrelevant to the present purpose. The point of the matter is that the rāgas developed in this manner from the melodic schemes into which all the tunes of Hindustān's music fall. The classification of these melodic schemes follows a highly fanciful system which has been described by many authors but by none so clearly as the famous early Orientalist, Sir William Jones. 'The different position of the two semitones in the scale of seven notes gives birth to seven primary modes, and as the whole series consists of twelve semitones, every one of which may be made a modal note or tonic, there are in nature (though not universally in practice) twenty-seven other modes which may be called derivative. . . . The Hindu arrangement is elegantly formed on the variation of the Indian year and the association of ideas, a powerful auxiliary to the ordinary effect of modulation. The modes in this system are

[1] Clements' *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music*, p. 2.

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deified and as there are six seasons in India, namely two springs, summer, autumn and two winters, an original Rāg, or God of the Mode, is conceived to preside over a particular season. Each principal mode is attended by five Rāginīs, or Nymphs of Harmony. Each has eight sons or Genii of the same divine art : and each rāg with his family is appropriated to a distinct season in which alone his melody can be sung or played at prescribed hours of the day or night."[1] There is thus a great deal of artificiality and mythological make-believe hampering the artistic development of the art of music in India, confining it to conventional channels and limiting particular melodic forms to particular times and particular purposes only. Musicians in consequence are restricted to certain definite notes only, namely those permitted in the modal form, in the expression of any melodic idea. Furthermore, since the melodic forms have become deified and are represented in religious art in stereotyped ways as gods and goddesses with special powers, the whole system has tended to be identified with religion and the practice of the art has been confined in the typical Hindu manner to castes of performers. The poems of the Risālo are all set to melodic forms of this rigid character. Most of the musicians in Sind have been Hindus and not Mussulmāns. Possibly in this circumstance may be found another reason why the Islāmic poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf exercises so strong a spell over the non-Muslim inhabitants of the land. While the thought may be Islāmic, the musical forms in which the poems are sung are part of the Hindu heritage of India.

The poems of the Risālo are set to rāgs and rāginīs of the generic types described. These types have of course many local variations. Many of the modal rāginīs to which some of the surs are sung are Sindhi variants of Hindustānī generic forms. In his commentary on Shāh Abdul Latīf, Mirza Kalīch Bēg has classified the rāgs and rāginis according to the system of Indian music. He finds six forms of rāg, namely Bharava, Malakūs, Srī, Mēgh, Hindōl and Dīpak with their accompanying rāginīs, 'sons' and 'associated relatives', extending to a very considerable number. Those who are interested in this topic may be referred to the writings of Mirza Kalīch Bēg.[2] The subject is a technical one and has no relevance to the poetic worth of the Risālo itself. I have mentioned it here merely with the object of showing how important the musical influence was in the formation of the poems. Of the twenty-seven separate poems in the Muntakhab all but a few are named after the musical modes directly traceable to the musical system of India. The few exceptions to this general rule are poems like Suhinī, Sasuī Ābrī, Mōmul

1 *Works*, Vol. XIII, pp. 312-14.
2 *Shāh Abdul Latīf Bhitāī*, pp. 175 sqq.

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Rāno, Līlan Chanēsar and Khāhōrī which are named after the subject matter. But even in these cases the musical accompaniment will be found to fall into some melodic form suitable to the type of subject matter, the time of the year or the time of day when the song should be sung.

There is nothing distinctive in the music of Sind. The instruments employed are chiefly the ektār, the sitār, the sarangī, the tambūr, and the various kinds of pipes and drums employed elsewhere in India. The bīna, or vīna, is hardly ever seen. The professional musicians are drawn mostly from the minstrel class, which is held in low esteem. There are many capable amateur performers. Doubtless there have always been such, because Sind has long had a reputation for proficiency in musical execution prevailing amongst all classes. Burton has remarked of the poetry of the countryside that ' it is much more various and valuable than the prose and yields not in importance either to the Marāthi or the original compositions in the Hindī and Braj dialect. . . . Its poetry is not without its charm. To a great variety of expression it unites terseness of idiom with much freshness and some originality of idea and language. . . . The favourite figure is alliteration and this combined with omission of the casal affixes and of other such prosaic appendages gives a very distinct and peculiar rhythm.'[1] The people are very fond of music and singing to which the natural rhythm of the language offers much aid. Of the peculiar native form of poetical and musical composition Burton cites the ' fatehnāmo ' or song of battle composed by Langāhs and resembling in vigour the productions of the old Arab poets, the ' kāfī ' or ' wāī ', generally amatory, the ' baita ', or couplets sung to the tambūr or guitar, the ' dohad ' accompanied on the ' duhad ' or kettledrum, and the ' sanyāro ', or amorous missive, sung to the music of the nāī or pipe and particularly popular amongst the wilder clan people.

[1] *History of Sindh*, p. 77.

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# Chapter II

## The Poems of the Risālo

### (a) *The nature of the Risālo and its subject matter*

The poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf consists of a large body of verse. The poems were all originally intended to be recited or sung to a musical accompaniment. In essence, therefore, they are lyrical. The poems, as we know them today, have, however, suffered from the fact that they were not written down as composed. They have also been subjected to careless compilation by persons unfamiliar with literary tradition and ill-equipped with scholarly taste. In the form in which they now exist there is much extraneous matter. It is often difficult to say with any accuracy whether a doubtful passage is the work of Shāh Abdul Latīf or not. The manuscripts of the poems are very discrepant in this respect. Among the more obvious signs of careless compilation and lack of literary taste are the frequent incorporation in the poems of explanatory asides like 'As Shāh Latīf says' and the insertion of short verses by other poets, as for instance Ināyat, Lakhmīr and Jūnējō. The verses have been emended so as to embody these inartistic asides and these alien intrusions. Thus the poems as we know them today are not identical with the verses that came from the lips of Shāh Abdul Latīf himself as he recited them. They are instead the verses as subsequently written down by others, altered by them, and edited by them.

There is already an immense literature on Shāh Abdul Latīf and his poetry. It is written almost wholly in Sindhi and is consequently a closed book to persons unfamiliar with the language of Sind. This literature, both critical and expository, owes its origin largely to the influence of English education in India during the last eighty years. While it is true that the poems had a very complete and lively existence during the days of the Kalhōra and Tālpūrs as spoken and sung verse, it was only after the settled days of the British occupation of the country that there was born that type of literary curiosity which calls forth books of comment and criticism. In actual fact the first scholarly attempt to put the poems into permanent form for the use of future generations was made by a foreign missionary named Ernest Trumpp, who lived in the days when Bartle Frere was Commissioner in Sind. The vast development of general education in Sind under British rule, with the predominantly



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literary cast which it owes perhaps to the ideas of Macaulay, has stimulated the study of the poems as literature. This fact, combined with the love and reverence with which the common people regard the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf, has in several generations produced a multitude of books written about the poems and the poet. Most of these books are of a very elementary type. They find their greatest interest in retelling, much in the fashion of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, the Sindhi love stories which form so large a part of the Risālo. There has, however, been good work of a more scholarly calibre. The conclusion none the less hardly admits of any doubt that without the stimulus of English education and the interest in literature produced by it the poems of Shāh Abdul Latīf would still have been today in much the same condition as that in which the British found them in 1843. That is to say, they would have remained a rather vague body of sung and recited verse handed down from one singer to another and familiar, as songs, to the Sindhis who delight in listening to this form of literary composition.

The poems which I have translated do not form the complete mass of verse attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf. They are instead the poems contained in the abridged compilation called the 'Muntakhab' arranged by Kāzī Ahmad. This collection is fully representative of the nature of the poetry and the scope of its subject matter, and forms probably the best known anthology of the poems in use today. There has lately been a tendency to expand and enlarge the volume of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry and it has not always been judiciously pursued. But fine work has been achieved by two first-rate Sindhi scholars, namely Mirza Kalīch Bēg and H. M. Gurbuxānī, each of whom has produced editions and commentaries which merit the serious attention of all scholars of oriental poetry in general and of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry in particular. Other useful editions have been brought out by Līlarām Watanmal and Tārachand Showkīrām, but their scholarship is not to be compared with that of Mirza Kalīch Bēg and H. M. Gurbuxānī.

The Muntakhab consists of twenty-seven poems of very unequal length in a variety of metres. The whole tone of the poetry is mystical. Shāh Abdul Latīf would, like Spinoza, be not incorrectly described as a God-intoxicated man. The poetry is deeply religious throughout and inspired by that spirit of Islāmic mysticism which is characteristic of the Sūfī poets of Persia. These poets have exercised since the sixteenth century in India a profound influence over all non-Hindu poetry. Broadly speaking, the topics with which the Muntakhab deals fall into three great classes, first, the mystery of divine love, second, the folklore of Sind in its love-stories, and third, some prominent features of the common experience of the Sind



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rustic countryside. But whatever the topic may be, a deep mystical note prevails, whether the poet be praising the grace and mystery of God, recounting the woes of separated Sindhi lovers, describing the joy of the peasant cheered by the falling of rain on the arid soil, or telling the thoughts of the spinning woman working at her wheel. The main ideas, expressed through a wealth of imagery in the rustic language of the common people, are concerned with the splendour and wonder of beauty, the oneness and majesty of God, the unity of experience and the mystic union of man with the divine.

The arrangement of the poems in the Muntakhab is very unsatisfactory. The poems are gathered together without coherent reference to their subject matter. They are collected under the various modes or styles of musical accompaniment to which they are sung. This haphazard arrangement is not of course without its merit. It makes clear, for instance, with considerable fidelity the utterly unstudied way in which the poetry itself was born. But it is not useful for a scholarly appraisement of the poetical worth. It is for this reason that in translating the poems I have declined to follow the order of the poems given in the Muntakhab. Instead, while keeping the individual poems entire, I have rearranged them according to their subject matter in such a way as to bring out the sweep of the poet's interest. I have, therefore, divided the poems into three categories. The first contains the poems that may be described as primarily mystical in form and expression, poems of mystic and divine love concerned with the qualities of divine mercy and grace, the goodness, power and mystery of God. The second category includes the poems that describe characteristic features of Sind rural life, like the coming of the welcome rain, the habits of fakirs and holy men, the tragic story of Hassan and Husain, the thoughts of the spinning woman. The third category, which forms the greater bulk of the poetry, comprises the Sindhi love stories told by mothers to their children in the cradle and deeply penetrated by the affectionate sentiment of the common folk.

### (*b*) *The mysticism of Shāh Abdul Latīf*

The mysticism which runs all through the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf is a love mysticism with a rich religious significance. It is not a philosophic mysticism. In fact the lesson of the Risālo could be expounded from the text of the forty-second Psalm, 'As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for the Living God. When shall I come and appear before God?' It might be paralleled also with the flaming words of Richard Rolle: 'O sweet Jesu, I bind thy love in me with a knot unable to be loosed, seeking the treasure that I desire

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and longing I find, because I cease not to thirst for thee.' The poems do not make easy reading unless their religious background is seen in true perspective and unless the Sūfī imagery in which so much of the thought is cast is seen in its historical setting as a development of the mystic elements of Islām which were introduced into Sind centuries ago and found there a congenial home.

A few short quotations will make clear the nature of the main ideas in this mystical content. The beauty of the Beloved, that is, the beauty of God which satisfies and completes the being, is described in these lines from the Sur Barvo Sindhī :

'In gracious emergence when walks the Belov'd
E'en earth itself sings
"In God's name :" and lo ! on the tracks of his feet
Are the road's kisses planted.
The houris astonied stand by in respect.
I swear by the Lord
The face of Beloved's most lovely of all.'

The emphasis on the oneness of God, the unity of all experience and the need for sinking individuality in the ocean of divine union is the subject of these lines from the Sur Āsa :

'Across Life's ocean no one yet
With "I" as guide his foot hath set :
God indeed who is one
Adoreth oneness alone.
Take twoness off to burn with fire :
Existence may man's tears require.
This weeping should be done
Before oneness alone.'

A frequent topic is the union with God, the meeting of those separated by the vain tricks of earthly delusion till they find ultimate satisfaction in the truth and beauty of the divine. This is the subject of the following lines from the Sur Maizūrī :

'Restrain myself howe'er I try
I cannot stay unless I see
Beloved's face. Unbounded grief
Without my love assaileth me.
Avaunt tomorrow : I'll not bide
By promise that tomorrow tells.
I cannot wait tomorrow's day.
Or meet me, love, or kill me, else.
Bring union to a wretched girl
Or kill her : only show her eyes
The Friend she loves. Sad soul, dismiss
Thy sorrow from thy memories.'

The prevailing tenor of the poetry is thus that of a religious mysticism. It is not a pure love mysticism, nor a nature mysticism, nor an intellectual mysticism. The characteristic imagery is that employed to describe the separation and the reunion of lovers and the language used is usually that of human love-longings. The

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poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf has on this account a certain superficial resemblance to the poetry of Shelley and Browning ; but does not bear any close affinity to the poetry of Blake, who is a pure religious mystic. It has little in common with the poetry of Donne, whose mysticism is of an intellectual type.

' Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity.'

So sang Shelley and the words would be a fair description of Shāh Abdul Latīf's attitude. It has been said of Shelley that ' to Shelley death itself was but the rending of a veil which would admit us to the full vision of the ideal, which alone is true life. The sense of unity in all things is most strongly felt in "Adonais", where Shelley's maturest thought and philosophy are to be found.'[1] When Browning says :

' For life and all it yields of joy and woe
And hope and fear—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love '

he is speaking the same kind of language and expressing the same kind of idea as Shāh Abdul Latīf speaks and expresses in the Risālo. It is true that Browning uses very different imagery and has a modernity of expression quite unlike the formal Persian model of the Sindhi poet. But this outward difference merely obscures the one great quality both have in common, namely the all-importance of love as a key to understanding how God and man can meet. In complete contrast to this is the religious fervour, almost the religious madness, of Blake, which takes the form of asserting not the divinity of God but the divinity of man in his search for God and in the working of the human imagination which passes beyond the poor self-centred comprehension of the senses. In ' The Everlasting Gospel ' Blake makes God speak to Christ :

' Thou art a man : God is no more.
Thy own humanity learn to adore
For that is my Spirit of life.'

It was the utterance of sentiments somewhat of this kind that le at one stage of Islāmic history to the killing of Mansūr Hallāj, a early free-thinking Sūfī, whose heterodoxy was too strong for th thought of his time. Such an attitude as these words of Blak portray is, however, poles asunder from the mysticism of Shā Abdul Latīf. The Sindhi poet is a true Muslim in that for him Go and man are things apart and that approach to the divine is possib only by a long period of struggle and effort, disappointment an fatigue over which determination prevails at last. There is

[1] Spurgeon : *Mysticism in English Literature*, p. 35.

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Blake's treatment of the struggle an intrusive element that owes little to respect for God and love of Him.

' Bring me my bow of burning gold ;
Bring me my arrows of desire.
Bring me my spear : O Clouds, unfold.
Bring me my chariot of fire.
I will not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till I have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.'

In these stirring lines there appears to be a touch of the social reformer, a product of another day, and of the burning conviction so strong in Blake that man has but to use his imagination in the right way and the difficulties will vanish. So it is doubtful whether ' Jerusalem ' to Blake meant what it did to the religious mystic Hilton : ' Jerusalem is as much to say a sight of peace and betokeneth contemplation-in the perfect love of God.' But it certainly has some affinity with that ' Jerusalem the Golden with milk and honey blest ' which goes back to Saint Bernard and early Christian mysticism. Wordsworth is a nature mystic, alien to the spirit of Shāh Abdul Latīf, though some of the shorter lyrical passages in the Risālo at times bring memories of the simple directness of the lake-land poet. The romanticism of Wordsworth would, however, have made no appeal to Shāh Abdul Latīf, brought up in the stern school of Islāmic monotheism.

That other great mystic poet Donne is in the Platonic tradition of intellectualism. Yet so strange is the mixture of influences which have brought the Platonic mysticism into English thought that there are, even in this, affinities with the Sūfī philosophy. Though Donne uses love imagery in his deeply metaphysical poems he never subordinates the reason to the dreaming self-hypnotism of the man intoxicated with God. Despite the sensuousness of much of Donne's imagery we feel that even Donne's ' extasie ' falls suitably into its place in a scheme where intellect and reason reign, in the realm of the formal ideas, those perfect ensamples of the poor facsimiles open to mankind's erring sensations. This kind of rational and critical self-examination has nothing in common with the mysticism of the Risālo. It would none the less be possible to find in Donne passages which express certain metaphysical ideas in language almost similar to that of the Risālo, as for instance where self and not-self are contrasted with each other or where truth is to be attained by studying the promptings of one's own heart and not by looking outside it. The general point of view is, however, fundamentally different. For the Donne of the religious and metaphysical poems, not the Donne of the love poems, is profoundly influenced by a

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rationalistic philosophy which finds little place for the mystical attitude and is indeed contemptuous of it. Dr Spurgeon says that Donne holds the Platonic conception that love concerns the soul only and is independent of the body or bodily presence and that 'in the Ecstasy he describes the union of the souls of two lovers in language which proves his familiarity with the description of ecstasy given by Plotinus'.[1] Donne seems to me to be an educated erudite Elizabethan talking the language of Plato and Plotinus. Sir Herbert Grierson, the great authority on Donne, is profoundly impressed by the fervour of Donne's religious poetry. 'He is', he says,[2] 'our first intensely personal religious poet, expressing always not the mind simply of the Christian as such, but the conflicts and longings of one troubled soul, one subtle and fantastic mind.' This is true enough. But the fervour of Donne is not to be compared with that of the true religious mystic and is very far from the clear emotional vision of Crashaw or Isaac Watts. There is a certain likeness between Donne and Shāh Abdul Latīf in such a passage as this of Donne's:

'But we know ourselves least: mere outward shews
Our minds so store
That our soules no more than our eyes disclose
But forme and colour. Only he who knows
Himselfe knowes more.'

But the likeness is due to one point in common in the philosophy of the two poets, namely the difficulty that the self offers as an approach to reality. But while this plays an unimportant part in Donne's ideas, it is deeply significant in Shāh Abdul Latīf's. The similarities between Shāh Abdul Latīf and Watts (1674-1748) and Crashaw (died 1650) are much more remarkable.

The hymn of Watts which begins

'For in the Heavens my God retires,
My God the mask of my desires,
And hides his lovely face'

and the other hymn which says

'Lord, 'tis against thy face
My sins like arrows rise'

or again the lovely poem of Crashaw's whose opening lines are

'Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face,
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire
I die in love's delicious fire'

might nearly have been written by Shāh Abdul Latīf. They all breathe the selfsame spirit of mystical surrender which irradiates the Risālo

1 *Mysticism in English Literature*, p. 75.
2 *Metaphysical Poetry, Donne to Butler*, p. xxvii.

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and the turn of expression is surprisingly alike. Here the intellectualism characteristic of Donne is wholly absent. The clear difference between the two types of mysticism is manifest, that of the heart as against that of the head, of the emotions as against the intellect.

### (c) *The religious character of Shāh Abdul Latīf's mysticism*

These examples from English poetry have been given in order to emphasize how far the message of the Risālo is like and unlike the message of the typically English mystic poets. There is in Shāh Abdul Latīf a strain of love mysticism which shows some affinity with the love mysticism of Shelley and Browning. There is nothing quite like it in Wordsworth and little in it that is common with Donne. The nearest English parallels to Shāh Abdul Latīf in his love religious mood are Crashaw and Isaac Watts. In these two poets the philosophy of love is preached in emotional language as a means to a true understanding of the nature of God and to effecting the mystic union with the divine by lifting the false veil of the phenomenal world and probing the depths of the human heart. The true message of the Risālo, however, is religious and there is a real difference in this respect between the Sindhi poet and Shelley and Browning. While Shelley and Browning see in love the key to understanding the world, Shāh Abdul Latīf finds it in union with God through the difficulties and vicissitudes of love. Love is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Although the love mysticism of Shelley and Browning has a philosophic depth which takes it outside any assimilation to eroticism, the scheme of things in which, for them, difficulties dissolve and disturbances are reconciled in peace, is a unity that comes from a union of lovers thinking similar thoughts and finding complete satisfaction in the loving relationship.

Shāh Abdul Latīf is not satisfied with such a solution. He finds his solution instead in the submissive sinking of individuality in the divine and in a conception of God which is truly Muslim. It insists upon the utter unworthiness of man when compared with the majesty, mystery and completeness of God. Thus love for Shāh Abdul Latīf is merely the means of approaching the divine. It is not a description of the divine itself. Read the solemn dedication to God with which the Muntakhab opens :

'In the beginning Allah is,
Who knoweth all, who sits aloft,
The Lord of all the world that be.
He is the mighty, old of days,
Of His own power established.
He is the Lord, One, only One,
Sustainer and Compassionate.
Sing ye the praise of Him who heals,
The True One, sing ye praise of Him.'

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To get an English parallel to this sustained attitude of worship we must go to the predominantly religious hymns where we find something very like it.

'O worship the King,
All glorious above.
O gratefully sing
His power and his love :
Our shield and defender,
The Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendour
And girded with praise.'

Thus despite all the love mysticism with which the Risālo abounds, its import is deeply religious. Its object is the respectful adoration of something far above ordinary human endeavour. We shall look in vain in Shelley or Browning for this attitude which, while typically Muslim, is also 'Christian' in the strain of the Old Testament, definitely Hebraic in conception and unaffected by the gospel of the New Testament. Even Blake, the greatest and most comprehensive of the English mystic poets, fails to reach this pinnacle of single-minded adoration. Blake is so overcome with other ideas of the complexity of the divine and he is so obsessed with the power of the human imagination to rake reality that he cannot confine himself to a jejunely monotheistic attitude. Isaac Watts, who does soar to the heights of adoration, is nearer Shāh Abdul Latīf but he is a poet of much narrower range.

In fact to give any idea of the complicated mysticism of the Risālo we must recognize it as a blending of many elements. It has something of the love idealism of Shelley and Browning, something of the wild religious fervour of Blake, and something also of the simple human conviction of Watts and Crashaw. So complex a phenomenon is mysticism in Islām and Christianity and so intimately have the two been at various stages inter-related that it is possible to trace in each influences that have gone to the making of both. Islām has been little affected directly by the Christianity of the New Testament but it has many contacts with the religion of the Old Testament and with the old Greek philosophy. This philosophy started with Plato and rose to intellectual mysticism in Plotinus whence it reached a religious consummation in Iamblichus and Dionysius the Areopagite and so produced much of the typically Christian mysticism of the middle ages in Europe. It was about this period that the language of the Arabs formed the chief means of communication of ideas between East and West. By that time Islām itself had become deeply penetrated with the thinking of Persia and was not wholly closed to Buddhist and Vedanta ideas. The history of mysticism is thus a complicated story of the fusion

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and blending of a vast body of beliefs that came in different ways from a limited number of sources.

*(d) Variety of poetical moods in the Risālo*

Of the great variety of lyrical poems which constitute the Risālo of Shāh Abdul Latīf some description may now be given. There are short ecstatic poems of deep emotional content of the kind found in Watts, Crashaw and Clough. There are purely religious hymns whose sustained eloquence recalls the psalms of David and whose appeal and diction are very similar to those of Christian hymnology, like

'For thee, mine own dear country,
Mine eyes their vigils keep'

and

'For ever with the Lord,
Amen : so let it be.'

and

'I'm but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home.'

In contrast to these there are psychological questionings and interrogations that read like Browning : and there are gems of the pure lyrical spirit that remind us of Shelley and Wordsworth. Some of the finest examples of this singing mood in its highest perfection are found embedded in the long Sindhi love narratives. For instance, there is the beautiful lyric in the Sur Suhinī which begins :

'Oh sisters ! how the tinkling bell
Has set my limbs to sprightly dance.
To stranger folk how may I tell
The love that doth my heart entrance ?'

There is that other song, scarcely less lovely, from the same Sur which starts :

'My heart of its hopes is shorn :
No strength within me lies.
Come back to me now, my love,
O Sāhir, lordly and wise.'

Above all there is the magnificent collection of lyrics about rain which comprise the Sur Sārang :

'See, saith Latīf, the sombre cloud
Hath lowered and the big-dropped rain
Is fallen. Take the cattle out
And make your way across the plain.
Desert your huts : your panniers fill
Against the need of coming hours.
It is no time in God-despair
To sit and idle. Lo ! it showers !'

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It is in such songs that Shāh Abdul Latīf reaches his highest summit as a poet talking the universal language of poetry, not bound by any restriction of time, place or narrow mood. The beautiful short song of gladness for the company that the rain brings would not disgrace Shelley :

'The season's here.
Glad converse and sweet music sound :
Shrills cuckoo clear.
The ploughmen fit their ploughshares for the ground.
Herdsmen are happy. Yea ! his bright array
For joyous rain my friend has donned today.'

In yet another mood is the Sur Kēdāro, the ballad of the sorrow of Muhurram, the deaths of Hassan and Husain, the tragedy of Kūfa and Kerbela which has ever since divided the Muslim world into two camps, the descendants of the Prophet and the Khalīfs, the Shīas and the Sunnīs, the believers in personal transmitted holiness and the believers in the impersonal majesty of the Prophet's unending mission :

'Come, O thou Lord Muhammad, come,
Causer of Causes, rise :
An early dove from Kerbela
Its weary journey flies.
Halting by God's apostle's tomb
It uttereth this doom :
" Muhammad, Causer of Causes, Lord,
Come, rise up in thy might.
The glitter of the flashing sword
Hath shone before my sight." '

Yet another note is struck in the flirtatious liveliness of the Sur Līlan Chanēsar. This deals with a broken love match in a spirit that is nearly flippant and somehow succeeds in combining flippancy with dignity. In much the same gay abandon is written the Sur Kapātī where a pleasure-loving spinning girl is upbraided for her laziness. The longer love poems are a medley of emotions. Sometimes the plain facts of the lovers' trials are described. More often the treatment is deeply psychological, busy not with the fate of the lovers but with the effect events have on the lovers' minds. Narrative is continually subordinated to introspection and soliloquy. We feel that the poet is interested not so much in the sad plight of Suhinī, Sasuī and Māruī as in the manner these unlucky creatures bore their afflictions and trials so that they found a way of release in self-examination and in self-fulfilment. There are few of the deeper-seated feelings on which the genius of Shāh Abdul Latīf does not play cunningly in that strange mixture of thought and emotion in which his music sings. Such is the stuff of all real poetry, combining elegance and rhythm of language with that sense of a distant far-off

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beauty which men reach with difficulty, stretching out their hands in longing for the further shore. 'Poetry', says Wordsworth, 'is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge.' Through a sensuous musical medium the search goes on for truth and beauty while endeavour seeks to pierce through the changing phantasmagoria of experience to discover behind the unity of things diverse.

'I too have seen
My vision of the rainbow aureoled face
Of her whom men name Beauty, proud, austere,
Divinely fugitive, that haunts the world.'[1]

This is the poet's quest. Shāh Abdul Latīf is amongst those whose words have helped to lift the veil that obscures the vision of delight and fulfilment.

[1] 'The Dominion of Dreams' quoted in Richard's *Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 19.

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# Chapter III

## A Web of Many Strands

### (a) *A mixture of influences*

In dealing with a cultural heritage so complex as that of Sind, the scholar will perceive that many diverse influences have gone to its fashioning. Furthermore, the cultural heritage of Sind came to fruition in the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf at a time when the Moghul Empire was showing clear signs of its ultimate dissolution. Naturally, therefore, the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf would conform to the general type of poetry produced in similar conditions during the early part of the eighteenth century under the Moghul dominion. Evidence can easily be produced to prove this. But in the case of Sind there were certain peculiar circumstances which cannot be omitted from consideration. The chief of these are the comparatively late conversion of the bulk of the population to Islām, and the absence of any considerable body of native literature in the Sindhi language. The latter phenomenon is due to the fact that the intelligentzia of the province was drawn mostly from the learned and privileged classes, many of them not original inhabitants of Sind but immigrants who arrived at various stages of the Muslim domination. Moreover the learned languages were Persian, and, to a lesser degree, Arabic.

The practice of the Moghuls was certainly to encourage in India the development of poetry on the Persian model with which they were familiar in the court of Delhi. It was thus inevitable that when poetry was written it should assume the same general form and deal with subjects similar to those dealt with by the great Persian masters. It was during the Moghul régime that Urdu poetry began to be written in considerable quantity. But some time elapsed before work of high merit was produced in that medium. There is a great similarity in form and manner of treatment of subjects in Indian, Persian and Urdu poetry. The reason for this is, as explained above, the dominance of the Persian language as the language of the court, of literature and of polite intercourse generally. The position was in some ways rather akin to that in England for the first two centuries after the Norman conquest when French was the language of the court and the nobles and a vernacular literature had not been established. By the time of Shāh Abdul Latīf there were, however, a sufficient number of learned persons imbued with the



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ideas of Persian and Urdu poetry and beginning to transfer their thoughts into the medium of the vernacular. But when this stage was reached the Persian mould and the Persian treatment of subjects were so strongly established that it was impossible to dispense with them.

The importance of Shāh Abdul Latīf, however, is that he did succeed in breaking away to some extent from the prevailing intellectual domination. He found in the life of the country people in their everyday doings and in folk stories current amongst them a subject for poetical treatment which brought out the inherent genius of the Sindhi language. But he could not go beyond a certain stage in this progress. I have myself not the slightest doubt that one great reason for the popular appeal of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry is the fact that it was the first great attempt to interpret the feelings of the populace in language that all, both Muslim and Hindu, could understand, and that he was the first successful poet who spoke a language that everyone could accept not merely as literature or as a highly artificial construction of words but as something that everyone felt. During the Muslim domination of Sind from the fourteenth century onwards the thoughts and religion of the Hindu population received but scant acknowledgement in the literary forms of the day. But there was a great body of Hindu semi-belief and Hindu predilection still lying dormant in the country and not fully catered for by the Manghanhārs, Bhāts and inferior wandering minstrels who supplied the common people with their music and their rough verse for weddings and festivals and similar ceremonies. Some of this dormant semi-belief was always at the back of Shāh Abdul Latīf's mind. He was adept at fashioning it, inside the Persian model, in such a way that it appealed to a much wider public than could have been approached by poetry written in the manner of the Moghul court poets and of the Urdu poets who consciously imitated the Persian model, often in the most slavish way. But this does not alter the fact that the poetry of the Risālo is Islāmic poetry with an appeal which was wider than the Islāmic poetry of the day and was accepted by the non-Islāmic elements as something that had a message for them too. It was so superior to the rhymes and jingles of the wandering Hindu bards that its predominance was from the very first assured. The conclusion, therefore, must be that the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf, while essentially Muslim and based on Persian influences current in the educated world of his day, reached beyond that to a body of thought and belief that had a more general appeal. The music to which the poems were sung was essentially Indian, that is to say, Hindu in origin, as we know from the names of the tunes to which the poems were and still are sung. Furthermore,

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the Sūfī strain of thought which permeates the whole of the verse has in Sind always had an appeal to Hindus, though to what extent this appeal is due to its being influenced by Hindu religious ideas is a subject of the greatest obscurity. Enough has been said to show that the poems are a web of many strands, which it is now my business to disentangle.

(*b*) *Arabian influences*

The chief strands which can be identified are Arabian, Persian, Indian (including in that term the influences of Urdu poetry, Hindu music and local folklore), Balūchī and Sūfistic. The Arabian influence in Sindhi verse is very small. The history of the land accounts partly for this. Sind was under Arab governors for a period of nearly three hundred years—the names of the Governors during the Ummāyid period are known in detail. It remained under Arab influence for a considerably longer period when the early dynasties of Multān and Mansūra were in power in Upper and Lower Sind till nearly the end of the tenth century A.D. Yet the Arabs left no permanent impress upon the land. The reason is that they were merely a military garrison living amongst strangers with whom they did not mingle. Often their position was very insecure. With the Qarmatian dynasties, which succeeded the Qaraishite Ghālibīs and Halbānīs when Sind ceased to have Arab governors sent to it from the Ummāyid empire, there arose independent Sind dynasties amongst which the Sūmra soon became prominent. The Sūmra were a local dynasty of Rājpūt origin. Tod in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān* identifies them with the Parmār or Puār race. But the verifiable history of these people is obscure and the authorities are all unsatisfactory. Ray believes ' that southern Sind was never thoroughly conquered by the house of Ghaznī and with the first sign of decay the Sūmra, a local tribe living in the vicinity of the Tharī, established their supremacy in that region. According to the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī their territory included Ālōr in the north and their capital was Muhammad Tūr in the pargana of Dirak, identified by Elliot with Shakapūr a populous village about ten miles south of Mīrpūr on the borders of Tharr.' (Elliot, I, pp. 256, 403, 404).

Whatever the real facts be, it is certain that the influence of the Arabs in Sind had long been waning before they ultimately ceased to be a power in the land. The very small cultural influence they exerted in the days of their supremacy had disappeared long before the twelfth century. What conditions were in the days of Arab domination has been characterized by Ray as being largely in the nature of a military occupation. ' The land was held by Arab garrisons supported by grants of land. They were probably mainly

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concentrated in the important cities and were possibly assisted by levies of Sindian troops. . . . The internal administration of the country was necessarily left largely in the hands of Hindu landlords paying the land tax (kharāj) and the capitation tax (jizyā).[1] Masūdī says that the Arab merchants at this period formed the commercial communication between Sind and the neighbouring countries of India. They brought the produce of China and Ceylon to the sea-ports of Sind and from there conveyed them by way of Multān to Turkistān and Khurasān. Islām continued to spread but not rapidly, and the conquerors followed a policy of toleration, adopting stern measures of repression only when resistance was offered, as at Daibul, to the armies of Islām. Towards the end of the tenth century Sind was infected by Qarmatian heresies from Egypt. Mahmūd of Ghaznī found Mansūra in the occupation of an Ismaili sect with this Ismaili belief.

It is thus clear that the Arab penetration of Sind was of a very partial character affecting only a small portion of the population and that the effects were entirely lost in the course of the succeeding centuries. The conversion to Islām of the agricultural indigenous peoples of Sind took place at a much later stage of the Muslim conquest of Upper India when Arabian ideas and thoughts were of much less importance than Persian in the world of Islāmic India. In fact Sind was converted to Islām not by the Arabs but by the central Asian peoples who took up the tale of Muslim penetration of India from the twelfth century onwards. All through the reign of the Sūmro and Sammo dynasties this Islāmic penetration proceeded and by the time of the Lōdī Afghāns in the sixteenth century the agricultural population and the land-holding class were almost entirely Muslim, the Hindu population being confined to the business of writing and to trade and commerce. This was largely the state of affairs that persisted down to the British annexation in 1843. Thus the cultural influence of the Arabs, never very strong, has disappeared entirely except for a few minor details, because Sind became a predominantly Muslim land at a time when Central Asian influences, and Persian influences, were at full strength. Such, however, is the importance of Arabic in the cultural heritage of all Muslims that some slight effect has been maintained through the religious vitality of the language for the purposes of the Muslim faith.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that though Arabic has always been known and spoken in Sind by a few learned men and though the Korān is known by heart by large numbers of devout Muslims in the province the effect of Arabic on the poetical literature of Sind is negligible. It is possible, however, to underestimate this

[1] Ray: *Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 21.

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effect. The powerful rhythm of the Arabic language and the practice of musical intoning which is to some extent acquired in the mosque by every Muslim brought up in the tenets of his faith have certainly done something to mould the form of poetical composition amongst Muslims. They have done more to standardize the nature of the music that appeals to them. It has already been stated that the poetry of the Risālo had its birth in music and singing. Though this music is actually Indian music, it has not been unaffected by Muslim practice. For it is noteworthy that much of the best music and singing is associated with religious observance at tombs and shrines of Muslim saints.

The connexion is therefore clear. But it is difficult to fill out the picture in detail. The chief kinds of serious poetical composition cultivated by Sindhis have been 'madahs', 'munājāts', 'marsiyāhs' and 'kowārs' or 'lānats'. The first are praises of God, the Prophet and Saints. The second are the religious hymns *per se*. The third are elegies generally concerned with the martyrdom of Hassan and Husain. The fourth are compositions which deal with the moral virtues and the vices of mankind. Naturally, in a Muslim land the virtues and vices are those of the kind set out in the religious teaching. Such compositions are common to the whole Muslim world and there is in them nothing that can be ascribed to Arab influence specially. Of lighter forms of composition Sindhi boasts fatehnāmos or songs of victory, kāfīs or wāīs, a form of amatory verse, baita or couplets and sanyāros or love messages. Of these only the fatehnāmos bear any resemblance to the old Arab poetry. But the reason for that perhaps is that songs of victory must necessarily assume a rather restricted form from the very nature of the subject matter. The other lighter and amatory verse of Sind can be shown to have a closer resemblance to Persian than to Arabic models, and to possess a local character. This is only to be expected of such forms of composition in a Muslim land that has for several hundred years had a fairly self-contained individuality of its own. The Risālo contains many quotations from the Korān and has many Arabic words. But this is only natural and means no more than that Sind, like the rest of the Muslim world, had its full share in the freemasonry of Muslim culture.

Sūfistic thought has been very prominent in Sind at various times and this naturally implies that many of the forms of expression and the terms of language employed in Sūfism would find a place in the language and literature of the province. The Sindhi language is a Sanskritic language with a large Arabic and Persian vocabulary which shows the historical development of the Sindhi culture. But it would be wrong to infer from this that the Sindhi literature

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displayed in the Risālo depends to any great extent upon the Arabian influences which at one time had a chance to imprint themselves deeply upon the country. What Arabian influences still remain are due to the character of the predominant religion and the cultural effects which flowed from that predominance over Muhammadan India generally. The Muslim idea of music as part of the service of God has also played some part in the making of Sindhi poetry. In so far as this has occurred it may be said that Arab influence is still alive in Sindhi poetry. Ghazzālī has described this union of music with thought and religion in beautiful words. 'The seventh (kind of listening),' he says, 'is the listening of him who loves God and has a passion for Him and longs to meet Him so that he cannot look upon a thing but he sees it in Him—(whose perfection is extolled) and no sound strikes upon his ear but he hears it from Him and in Him. So listening to music and singing in his case is an arouser of his longing and a strengthener of his passion and his love and an inflamer of the tinder box of his heart and brings forth from it states consisting of revelations and caressings description of which cannot be comprehended . . . he who has tasted them knows them and he rejects them whose sense is blunt so that he cannot taste them."[1] Doubtless there is something of this kind of spirit breathing in the beautiful poem of Shāh Abdul Latīf called the Sur Sōrath, which uses a common folk-story to convey something of the mystery that brings the music listener into communion with the divine. In that poem the singer, the 'master of music', is depicted as charming the king so overwhelmingly as to induce him to yield up his head to the singer in loving sacrifice which gains him communion with God.

'Welcome thou art, O man of music,
Thy meaning's drift I knew. What thy tongue sped
I comprehend completely, all thy words.
What falleth to the ground
Be pleased to take.' All three in tune were wed,
The music's chords, the dagger and the neck.
'For no such prize, O man of music,
Hast thou, ere this, made journey. God be praised,
O man of music, that thou sought'st the head.'

Here in this unlikely form may be seen arrayed in lyrical garb that doctrine of religious ecstasy in music which Ghazzālī, the great scholastic gathering the message of Arab thought, has expounded with word and argument that recall some of the higher flights of St Thomas Aquinas. Thus despite the broken contact of Sind with Arabia there may still be heard in the songs of Shāh Abdul Latīf a few deep echoes of an earlier Muslim scholasticism.

[1] *J.R.A.S.*, 1901, p. 229.



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*(c) Persian influences*

The Persian influences in the Risālo are much stronger than the Arabian and for a very good reason. Persian was the language of polite intercourse and of conventional poetry in the days of the Moghuls. It was thus inevitable that any poet not writing under the influence of a Sanskritic culture should either consciously or by mere habit follow the style of Persian poetry in which he had been brought up. To what extent Shāh Abdul Latīf was acquainted with the great Persian poets we do not know. There is no evidence that he had studied any of them except Jalāluddīn Rūmī, a copy of whose 'Masnawī' was said to be constantly in his hands. The Masnawī has been called the Korān of Persia. Professor Nicholson says of it : 'Its author professes indeed to expound the inmost sense of the prophetic revelation but anyone looking through the work at random can see that its doctrines, interwoven with apologues, anecdotes, fables, legends and traditions, range over the whole domain of medieval religious thought and life. . . . The poem has been well described as "an attempt to purify the religious sentiment by love."'[1] Apart from this essentially literary and religious influence, exerted through the work of a supreme master of the Persian idiom, upon the expression and thought of Muslim India during its most flourishing days, there is the not less powerful domination which Persia itself exerted over the Islām of the Abbāsid period, when the Arabic influences declined and the Persian influences attained a supremacy which was never shaken off. 'Under the dominion of Islām', says Professor Lehmann, 'the individual life of the Persians developed into a strong network of roots which has become the basis upon which the culture of the Eastern Caliphate—though it goes by an Arabian name—has been built : from its politics, customs and dress to its arts, science and poetry, even to its religious innovations.'[2] Thus as the Arab race began to lose their predominance, their place was taken by the Persian race, and thereafter so well did this Persian penetration succeed that in the Muslim history of India from the time of the fall of the Abbāsid empire onwards the chief cultural influence has come from Central Asian peoples who were completely enthralled by Persian culture.

The Muslim domination of Upper India was completed by the inroads of men of Turkish and Mongol race who in their turn assimilated with gladness the lessons of Persian Islāmic culture. It is this which explains the typical nature of Muslim poetry in India from the thirteenth century onwards. It is this which accounts for the slavish imitation of Persian models adopted by the Urdu poets

[1] *The Legacy of Islām*, p. 234.
[2] *Mysticism*, pp. 59-60.

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who began at a later stage another form of Islāmic expression in a language which was itself the result of the mingling in India of peoples who had themselves no Persian and Arabian tradition of their own. The influence of the court in moulding literary expression has already been explained. Another link in the strength of this Persian literary dominance of Upper India was the Sūfī philosophy which, expressed most felicitously in poetry by the great Persian masters, found in India and in Sind particularly a very congenial home. The fact that Sind was the home of several skilled exponents of Sūfī thought during the middle ages accounts fully for the mastery of Sūfī expression exhibited by Shāh Abdul Latīf. In these circumstances it is of course inevitable that there should be great similarities between the ideas of the Risālo and the thought of the typical Persian poets. Nor need we account for these similarities by arguing that Shāh Abdul Latīf must have been familiar with the work of many of the Persian masters. Even if he had known only Jalāluddīn Rūmī and known nothing of Jāmī, Farīduddīn Attār, Bāyazid of Bistām, Hāfiz, Sadāī, or Abu Sayid Abu'l Khair, the explanation would be fully sufficient. For the particular type of thought and expression seen to perfection in Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī was a kind of closed field where the ideas themselves were few in number and where the wealth of imagery, immense as it is, was confined to a certain definite range of symbolism capable of easy and effective assimilation. Actually it would have been enough for the author of the Risālo to be familiar with the Masnawī alone. But it is of course most unlikely that he had not at least a smattering of the work of other Persian poets. We do not need, however, to assume this in the circumstances, as anyone who was familiar with the Masnawī would have known as much as was necessary for the complete exposition of similar ideas covering the whole field of Persian Sūfī idealism.

With these remarks we may confine our attention to pointing out some of the similarities in the Risālo to the work of the great Persian masters. Compared with Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Jāmī, or Farīduddīn Attār, the Sindhi poet is cast in a much more homely and simple mould. He has not the sweep of thought, or the wealth of imagination of those great poets. His philosophy is expressed in comments and asides and not in the beautifully sustained argument that draws upon an amazing power to find beauty in the most unlikely things. In comparison with the achievements of the great Persian masters Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry is as the miniature of the plaque artists when set beside the great canvases of Michael Angelo or Rafael; or as when the minor elegances of the light operas of Sullivan or Offenbach are put in juxtaposition with the magnificent music of

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great operatic composers like Wagner or Verdi. The work is fine but it is on an infinitely lower plane of achievement. Excellent in a humble way though it be, it is not in the same class. Shāh Abdul Latīf is at his best when he is painting in vivid language the delight of the rain falling on a barren land and is drawing therefrom the lesson of the goodness and generosity of God ; or when he is depicting the sorrow of the crane divorced from the flock of cranes, left alone in the marsh when its companions have flown away, and the fowler's net threatens the straggler with destruction. Or again he is in his most effective mood when describing the feelings of abandonment felt by the woman separated from her lover on the distant bank of the river she will never cross, and hearing the sounding of the tinkling buffalo bells that comes from the further shore. This is high art. But it is not the highest. The Risālo has nothing comparable with this passage from Jāmī :

' See where the tulip grows
In upland meadows, how in balmy spring
It decks itself and how amidst its thorns
The wild rose rends its garment and reveals
Its loveliness. Thou too, when some rare thought
Or beauteous image or deep mystery
Flashes across thy soul, canst not endure
To let it pass but hold'st it, that perchance
In speech or writing thou mayst send it forth
To charm the world.'[1]

Shāh Abdul Latīf has much to say of the beauty of the Beloved but he never rises to such a height as this.

Or take this passage from the ' Masnawī ' dealing with the holiowness of individuality as cutting mankind off from the union with the divine :

Where are we and I ? There where our Beloved is.
O thou, who art exempt from us and me,
Who pervadest the spirits of all men and women ;
When men and women become one, Thou art that One.
When their union is dissolved, lo ! Thou abidest.
Thou hast made these " us " and " me " for this purpose,
To wit, to play chess with them by thyself.'[2]

Such sublimity of expression will be looked for in vain in the verses of the Sindhi poet.

Yet when Shāh Abdul Latīf is drawing a moral from some little everyday occurrence or stating the simple conviction of the Oneness of things, the delights of union with God, or the pangs of separation,

[1] Translated in Wisdom of East Series : Jāmī (Hadland Davies) ' *Yūsuf-Zulaikha*, p. 71 *sqq*.

[2] *The Spiritual Couplets of Maulāna Jalāluddīn Rūmī*. Translated by Whinfield, p. 31.

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he can be fully as effective as any of the great Persian poets. Many of his shorter passages would not disgrace them. He has the faculty of stating a simple truth in telling language with an appropriate turn of phrase or an apt and picturesque metaphor. A few examples will suffice. In the Sur Dāhir he sings :

'O may the Lord cause wind to blow
That joineth friends together :
Go, that way choose, lest heart may lose
All hope of kindly weather.
O Allah, like thy name, as great
My hope is. Vast, unbounded,
Thy patience reigns. Creator, Lord,
Within my soul is founded
The name of Thee, as sweet it be,
So lives my great hope sweetly.
No door like Thine is. I have seen
Of doors my round completely.'

In the Sur Rip occur these lines :

'All day my heart is out of place
As strays the herd of camels far.
I loved no love to love displace.
My head is cloudy : from mine eyes
The misty fogbanks do not rise.
Within my heart hath rained today
The plenteous showering of my love.
Beloved, come, and carefully
Look after me for I am wrapped
In separation and entrapped.'

Then in the Sur Āsa, in a more religious and solemn strain, we find :

'On self alone while eyes be set
No truth of worship canst thou get.
First kill all life's emprize.
Say word of sacrifice.
What-No-Existence-Knows hath grace
To raise the slave to lofty place.
Who secret are in their heart
Are secret in outward part.'

Perhaps the true conclusion is to say that the genius of the Sindhi poet is essentially lyrical. It is neither philosophic nor discursive. While he has complete command of the ideas that live in the greatest of the Persian poets, he feels in himself the power not so much to expatiate on these as to use the shorter love-song to convey the impression by suggesting the background of solemn reality which can give a deep meaning to the most trivial occurrences of daily life. But everyone familiar with the Persian poets will be able to find in Shāh Abdul Latīf clear evidence that his thought is compact throughout of the same intellectual material as has been used with supreme skill by masters like Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī. Beyond that it is perhaps not safe to generalize.

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*(d) Balūchī influences*

There are certain features of the poems of the Risālo which make it desirable to consider the possible influence of Balūchī poetry upon the work of Shāh Abdul Latīf. The Balūchīs have been in Sind for many generations. Their political importance, however, dates from the time when they were called in by the Kalhōra in the eighteenth century to stiffen the military forces at the disposal of the Prince of Sind. Long before that, however, tribes of Balūchīs were settled in various parts of the country. As we know from Withington's misadventures in Sind in 1613 the Balūchīs in the lower part of the country at that time had no good reputation for law-abiding habits. Upper Sind, however, rather than Lower Sind was the chief region to attract them, and it is chiefly in what are now the Upper Sind Frontier, the Lārkāna and the Sukkur districts that most of the Balūchī population was found. The Upper Sind Frontier district is still a kind of Balūchī preserve. Shāh Abdul Latīf was a man of Lower Sind. He spent most of his life there. But he had travelled widely for his day and must have been familiar with Balūchī custom and ways of life. Besides, in the Kōhistān and Kōtrī localities not far from his own residence there must have been many Mēkrānīs and other inhabitants of the southern Balūch country.

Now the poetry of the Balūchīs is remarkable in several ways. It is popular in origin and form. As Longworth Dames has shown, 'There are no ghazals, no artificial arrangements of poems in dīwāns, none of the pedantry of Persian prosody. Balūchī poetry is simple and direct in expression and excels in pictures of life and country which it brings before us without any conscious description on the part of the singer. As might be expected in a parched-up land where water is scarce and rain seldom falls, the poets delight in describing the vivid thunderstorms which occasionally visit the mountains and the sudden transformation of the countryside which follows a fall of rain.'[1] But apart from this simple untutored expression Balūchī poetry is remarkable for the fact that it is wholly oral and that it is sung by professional minstrels called Dōms or Dōmbs who sing the songs in the gatherings of the clans. This oral tradition is exceedingly strong. By means of it a very considerable body of verse has been handed down from one generation to another. Some of this poetry consists of love songs and lyrics, some of it is religious and didactic. Of the former kind, some poems are love songs pure and simple, but others, says Dames 'are tinged with Sūfiism and hide a religious meaning under amatory language'.[2] There are compositions called dastanāghs sung to the music of the flute or nai

1 *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, pp. xv-xviii.
2 ibid., p. xxvi.

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which are very similar to the sanyāros of Sind. It is not, therefore, fanciful partly to ascribe the simplicity and directness of Shāh Abdul Latīf's best poetry to the influence of or to influences similar to those found in Balūchī poetry current in Sind. When some of the poems are examined a little more closely the conviction is strengthened that the poetry of Sind and that of Balūchistān have certain elements in common.

There are many references to 'Sindh' in Balūch poetry. It is true that Sind so used means not the modern political division thus named but the valley of the Indus. But there remains the undoubted fact that some of the localities mentioned as in 'Sindh' are actually Sindhi places, in the country that lies in the Indus valley south of Multān and reaches far down the river on its way to the sea. The Dōms also speak amongst themselves a dialect of Sindhi or Western Punjābī. One important point is that the poetry is the outpouring of countrybred people who dislike living in towns, just as the modern Balūchī in Sind prefers the open fields to a house in a street inhabited by others. Dames states that Balūchī love verse shows that the bazaar atmosphere is to some extent tempered by a breeze from the desert. 'The Balūchī is not a born townsman, but only a chance visitor and although his love may be set on a lady of the bazaars he often draws his images from nature. The clouds, the rain, the lightning, the creeping plants, the flame of the log fire share the realm of jewels and scents and show that the author is not a town bred man.'[1] Now this is a characteristic of the poems of the Risālo also. They are concerned with the open-air life of a population that works and lives largely in the fields, turning the river waters on to the land, and gathering the grain from the threshing floor into the large earthenware jars that hold a home food-supply sufficient to last till the floods of the Indus inundate the lands once again in the due fulfilment of the seasons.

To Sind, properly so called, there are many references in Balūchī poetry. There is mention of a war between the Jatōīs and the Mazārīs, tribes strongly represented in Sind, and the Indus is personified under the name of Khwāja Khizr, an old man clothed in green. 'The Mazārīs untied a boat from the ferry and let it float in the Khwāja's waves.'[2] As it stands this might be a description of the annual floating of the rafts to the river god that takes place on the Indus at Sukkur near Dīn Bēlo. Again mention is made of the effeminacy that comes from dwelling too much on the plains away from the hard life of the barren hills. 'Drunkards', sings the Balūchī bard, 'are the young men of the Sindh country: there is much water and bhang is cheap and wood

[1] *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, p. xxvii. [2] ibid., p. 73.

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is plentiful near their houses.'[1] Another poem says, 'Let no one cherish my Pīr, the Husaini, son of light and fosterer of the poor, Murād Buksh Shāh who comes down in a light to his disciples: also Shāhbāz, the generous to his friends, a firm embankment erected by the Ruler of the Faithful.'[2] This is a reference to the famous Sindhi saint Sayid Muhammad Husain called Pir Murād whose tomb is in Tatta, and to whom is attributed the saying, 'It is better to restore one dead heart to eternal life than life to a thousand dead bodies.' The Shāhbāz is of course the famous Lāl Shāhbāz, or Jīvelāl, the 'living Pīr' whose shrine at Sehwan attracts a great gathering of both Mussulmāns and Hindus every year in a strange mixture of worship.

But more interesting than all these allusions from the point of view of the Risālo are references to a Bhuimpūr, to Kach or Kēch, and to the men of Ārō in one poem. It seems impossible that this can be more than a variant of the folk-story which is the inspiration of the longest collection of germane poems in the Risālo, the tale of Sasuī and Punhūn. In the Sindhi form of the poem the place is called Bhambhōr, the Balūchīs come from Kēch, and the tribe to which the hero belongs is the Ārī, or the Āriānī. Actually the topography of the story is most confused. It appears to be originally a tale of Cutch and the place is Bhambhōr, the site of which is variously identified. In the Balūchī version Kach is taken to mean Kach on the borders of Upper Sind, near Sibi, or Kēch of Kēch Mekrān. Bhuimpūr is either Bhuinpūr, the town of the land, a Sanskrit form which would mean that the story dates from the time when the land was still inhabited by Jats before the Balūch invasion: or else it is Bompūr or Bampūr in Persian Balūchistān. Whatever the real facts may be, it seems to be clear that the Balūchī poet and the Sindhi poet were both working upon similar material. The confusion that has resulted between Sind and Balūchī place-names must be the result of local influences and the operation of popular philology. These instances may, however, suffice to show that there has been a close inter-relation between Sindhi and the Balūchī poetry though it is not possible to disentangle the character of the relationship now. The importance of rain in Balūchī poetry has been emphasized. One of the most beautiful poems in the Risālo deals with the wonder of the falling rain. While it would not be wise to ascribe this similarity to Balūchī influence, since rain songs are a common feature of Hindu poetry going back to very early days, it is not fanciful to think that both Balūchī and Sindhi songs of rain have something in common beyond the mere similarity of the subject matter. However that may be, Balūchīs and Sindhis have been living together long enough now to make it certain that poetical inspiration must have had some

[1] *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, p. 35. [2] ibid., p. 146.

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common starting ground. The Dōms visited the villages of Sind wherever there were Balūchīs to listen to them. We should be stretching incredulity too far if we believed that none of this minstrelsy was heard by the non-Balūch population. Certainly a poet so keen to find music in words as Shāh Abdul Latīf was, can hardly have been unaffected by the music of the Balūchī singers whom he must have heard many a time.

### (c) *Urdu and Hindu influences*

The influence of Urdu poetry on the Risālo is utterly negligible. Urdu has never been a language which has taken kindly to Sind soil. As has been made manifest already, the literary currents which played in Sind came from Persian and Arabic sources. The striking similarity in the subjects dealt with in Urdu poetry and the resemblance of some of the Sūfī thought prevalent in the Urdu poets of the eighteenth century to the subject matter of the Risālo and the mode of expression used by Shāh Abdul Latīf do nothing more than emphasize the predominance of the Persian literary tradition under Moghul domination. Urdu poetry is a comparative newcomer on the literary field. It is certainly younger than the natural ebullition of the vernacular languages of India. But some profit may be gained from a cursory examination of what is common to Shāh Abdul Latīf and Urdu poetry. Rām Bābu Saksena in his *History of Urdu Literature* says that the Urdu poets not only appropriated the metres of the Persian poets but also ' annexed the readymade much expressed imagery and hackneyed themes ' of these writers. ' They were imported wholesale without much regard to the origin and capacity of the Urdu language and in course of time constituted the whole stock in trade of succeeding poets.'[1] The prevailing tone of this poetry, where it was not light and amatory, was sūfistic and permeated with pessimism. The subjects dealt with commonly were complaints of hopeless love, the cruelty of the disdainful mistress, the ecstasy of love, the conventional pictures of beauty associated for ever with Persian poetry. Urdu poetry later began to be affected by the influence of Hindu poetry which tended to conventionalize it on certain narrow lines. As it is impossible to hold that such influences did not also affect poetical inspiration in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sind some of these conventionalized topics are worthy of passing mention. Common subjects in Hindu poetry are beseechings to the lover to be kind ; lamentations for the absence of the loved one, complaints of the difficulty of meeting the lover because of trouble caused by the female relatives in the family, exclamations to female friends and sisters appealing for their aid.

[1] *History of Urdu Literature*, p. 23.

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Such tricks of composition are common in the Risālo. Indeed the frequency with which the poet changes from the character of himself as the speaker to the character of the heroine soliloquizing, and the breaks in thought between comment by the poet on the sufferings of the heroine, and the appeals made by the heroine herself are common features of the surs which deal with the love stories of Sasuī and Punhūn, Suhinī and Mehar, Māruī and Mārū, Mōmul and Rāno. These breaks in the thought are unpleasant to European taste and make really effective translation unconvincing to European readers. Sometimes it would appear better if the poems were arranged in the manner of the classical Greek drama, where the soliloquies of the chief actor are answered by the wise words of the 'impartial spectator', such as occurs in the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. But to do this would spoil the native characteristics of the poetical expression and would therefore itself be inartistic. Europeans brought up in the more logical arrangement of Western poetry must therefore accept Oriental poetry as it is and make the best of it, allowing for this peculiar feature of jerkiness and lack of continuity. Doubtless the poetry of Orientals owes this untidiness to its origin in half spontaneous lyrical composition, a kind of semi-improvisation which permits thoughts to be uttered exactly as they are conceived, in a rough and unstudied order of inconsequence, the poet darting from one thought to another without great attention to logical construction. This tendency has been aided by the practice of Hindu poetry and Hindu music, where, it seems to me, spontaneity of expression is regarded as a greater merit than logical consistency.

Oriental poetry as a whole is always something of a hotchpotch. Gems of beauty and wisdom are inextricably jumbled with passages of utter bathos and banality. Except in the great Persian poets there appears to be no dissatisfaction with this untidiness. The poetry of the Risālo is full of these defects of arrangement. Most European readers would agree that rigorous excision of inferior passages and a severe cutting out of the poet's own comments on the psychological conflict raging in the bosom of the hero or heroine would vastly improve the poetical standard. Unfortunately Indian taste in these matters is very different and is prepared to tolerate without much criticism anything whatever that has been uttered by the poet. These faults of expression and arrangement seem to me to be particularly common in Urdu poetry where it has been influenced by the poetry of Hindustān. As the Risālo shares to a considerable extent in this lapse from artistic perfection, it is not perhaps unfair to trace as its origin the effect of Hindu poetry on poetical structure and the jerkiness that arises from the Indian musical accompaniment with which the poetry is inseparably associated. Indian poetry has

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suffered from its too close connexion with music. There is of course an intimate relation between poetry and music, but the field of the two arts is neither co-extensive nor conterminous. Whether this truth has yet been fully realized in the East is doubtful. Until it is realized we may perhaps entertain few hopes that the poetry of India will burst the crippling bonds of convention and conservatism which now hold it fast, limiting its scope and shackling the higher flights of the imagination. The Risālo for all its virtues is not free from this criticism. When the poetry is so good, it is a pity that it could not have been made better by a clearer conception of what poetry is and what it has the power to achieve through the orderly arrangement of thought and a greater breadth of interest. The Risālo is thus a complicated web composed of many strands. Without doubt the most important of these strands is Sūfī philosophy. But discussion of this vast subject must be reserved for a later chapter of this book where it will receive the fuller treatment it deserves.

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# Chapter IV

## The Eye of the Poet

### (*a*) *Poetic diction and observation*

In an earlier chapter the meaning of the word 'poetry' was analysed. The analysis revealed the three essentials of good poetry: first, that it must be mentally satisfying to the intelligence: second, that it must have the power of producing an aesthetic content: third, that it must have a musical or a rhythmical excellence. In other words, the poet must have an intellectual message to deliver: he must be capable of producing pleasure by expressing it: and he must have some of the power of a musician. What then does the eye of the poet see in common things to convert them by subtle alchemy into poetical composition? Critics have given innumerable answers to this question, most of them partial and unsatisfactory. Sings one modern poet:

> 'Go, poet, make a song about a fool
> Who sought for Beauty, and who found her deep
> Below the ripples of a lilied pool
> Where shadows sleep:
> Who saw her dancing in a night-lit sea
> Clothed in the stars and jewelled by the moon:
> And caught her dreaming in a willow tree
> At sun-charmed noon.'[1]

Compare this word painting and succession of vivid images with the cold logic of Bridges' *Testament of Beauty*:

> 'Yet since
> the sublimation of self whereto the Saints aspire
> is a self-holocaust, their sheer asceticism
> is justified in them: the more because the bent
> and native colour of mind that leadeth them aloof
> or driveth, is that very delicacy of sense
> whereby a pinprick or a momentary whiff
> or hairbreadth motion freeth the content of force
> that can distract them wholly from their high pursuit.'[2]

The passages are very dissimilar. The first appeals plainly more to the emotions than to the intellect, while the second as plainly is addressed to the intellect more than to the emotions. This contrast brings out the two-fold character of poetic appeal. It is a search for both truth and beauty in anything. Now the poetic appeal of the Risālo is to be judged by precisely these principles and no other.

[1] Printed in the *Observer* over initials A.R.U.
[2] *Testament of Beauty*, pp. iv, 11, 441 sqq.



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What was the raw material out of which Shāh Abdul Latīf fashioned his search for truth and beauty ? He addressed himself constantly both to the emotions and the intellect but, as with all poets, the emphasis is sometimes on the one, and sometimes on the other. We may arrive at some conclusion on this matter by considering first, the imagery which he is fond of using, second, the details of the rustic civilization on which he loved to dwell, and third, the folk stories round which he has sung some of his most moving songs.

The imagery employed in the Risālo is largely drawn from the great treasure house of Sūfī thought. Shāh Abdul Latīf was not a conscious and consistent philosopher. We do not expect to find in his poetry the wealth of imagery found in Jalāluddīn Rūmī, in Jāmī or in such a passage as this from the Tarjiband of Sayid Ahmad Hātif of Isfahān :

'O Hātif, the meaning of the Gnostics, whom they
sometimes call drunk and sometimes sober,
When they speak of the Wine, the Cup, the
Minstrel, the Cupbearer, the Magician, the
Temple, the Beauty and the Girdle,
Is those hidden secrets which they sometimes
declare in cryptic utterance.'[1]

But his poetry gives a very comprehensive idea of the prodigality of Sūfī symbolism. Here in one short passage is the imagery of the moth and the flame, and clay in the oven.

'If fancy make a moth of thee
The flames thou seest, faltering not.
Beloved's rare effulgence see
And enter in as bridegroom ought :
Still art thou as the unbaked clay.
Thou knowest not the oven is hot.'

Then another passage displays the well-known imagery of the wine and the wineshop familiar to all lovers of Omar Khayyām.

'If sipping hath thy fancy led
The wineshop is the place for thee.
Beside the winejar lay thy head
And yielding it in bargain fee
Quaff many cups of wine instead.'

The contrast between the false and the true wine which is the false and true love (ishq majāzī and ishq hakīkkī) is drawn convincingly by implication

'Who dull existence would conserve ?
For no such aim the lover strives.
One breath from the Beloved's lips
Is better than a thousand lives :
And can this skin and bone of mine
Compare with the Beloved's wine ? '

[1] Translated in Browne : *Persian Literature in Modern Times*, pp. 296-7.

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The camel, that gross unmanageable animal, is symbolic of the stupid waywardness of the human heart. This is how Shāh Abdul Latīf employs this form of imagery :

'The camel, mother, for my needs,
I brought and tied beside the tree.
When he on wealth of buds might feast
He, sneaking, on the saltbush feeds,
The mean and miserable beast,
Undoing all my work for me.'

Another common image in Sūfī poetry is that of the Healer or the Physician. This is used frequently in the Risālo with great effect : and the image is often combined skilfully with other typical forms of symbolism. In the Sur Kalyān is found the following passage :

'The friends who planted in my heart
The questings of my pain,
My friends have gone and from my mind
Have sorrow's fardel ta'en.
Nor pleaseth the voice of the Healer now.
'Tis an empty sound and vain.'

In the Sur Yaman Kalyān the poet sings :

'When there's no need no healer calls.
Had Love's sore pain been in thy side.
Then surely had the healers come
And healing hand to thee applied.'

In the same poem the Physician is mentioned thus :

'O Thou Physician, give me not the dose
That maketh well,
For I shall then be strong.
To ask of me how now mine illness goes
Then never Friend may haply chance along.'

For the Friend or Beloved there is a bewildering variety of symbolic expression. The emphasis is usually laid on the difficulty of reaching the Beloved, or on the sorrow that comes from separation from the Friend.

So the poet sings in this strain :

'O lover, sit by loved one's path,
Nor weary from Friend's lattice go.
The loved one mercy's medicine gives
And from thy hot wounds takes the glow.

O lover, sit by loved one's path
And when from out the wineshop's store
They offer wine, keep steady head,
And go not near the vintner's door.'

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Or again :

'I did not meet my love although
An hundred suns to setting sped.
O let me yield my life when I
Have seen him, hence my journey made.
I have not met my love but thou
Art sinking to thy rest, O Sun.
The messages I give thee take
And tell to my beloved one.
To Kēch go, say : 'Twas not for me
To meet my love ; death supervened.
I'll die, be nothing utterly
In separation from my love.'

The commonest image, however, in the Risālo is the struggle on the 'path' or the 'way' to the Beloved, the dangers of the journey and the affliction of pursuit. This image recurs again and again in a multitude of forms and is the main symbolism in all the love stories of separated lovers. Some of this symbolism is exceedingly beautiful in its simplicity and frankness. The sand on the road, the dust on the way, the danger of the passes, the hard rocks of the mountains to be crossed before the journey can end in fulfilment are all employed to depict the idea :

'O Mountain, first to my Friend
Shall I heap up your name with scorn.
How my feet were crushed by the stones,
How my soles to ribbons were torn.
Not a thought for me, not a jot
Of rue in your heart was borne.

"'Tis the Mountain that brings me woe :"
This my cry to heaven will soar
O Mountain, torture me not :
I have suffered much before.
No joy do I call to mind
I remember of grief full store.'

Or again in another mood of despair the girl separated from her lover complains :

'My body burns. With roasting fire
I am consumed but make my quest.
Parched am I with Beloved's thirst
Yet drinking find in drink no rest.
Nay ! did I drain the ocean wide,
'Twould grant in not one sip a zest.'

In the beautiful poem of the Spinning Woman, which has a deep mystical meaning, God is the banker, the sarāf or merchant, who weighs out the spun yarn and rewards the righteous spinners according to their merits.

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'Spin, tremble and spin
Lest good luck you spurn.
Those who spin, mother, meet
And forgather each turn.
With conceit in their hearts
If fine yarn they spun,
Not an ounce would the merchants
Accept of the run.
With love in their hearts
If they spun but poor stuff,
The merchants would take it,
Unweighed, as enough.'

These instances of the type of symbolism and imagery used in the Risālo will give some idea how depth and sincerity of thought are wedded to beautiful and melodious language. Those who are familiar with the expression of Sūfī philosophy will find no difficulty in recognizing how true Shāh Abdul Latīf is to the spirit of Sūfī belief and how his simplified statement of many of the main ideas proves his ability to use the common images in a manner admirably adapted to the rustic culture which he understood so well. There is more than one passage of the Risālo that recalls the ecstatic exclamation of the great woman mystic Rābia : 'My God, if it is from fear of hell that I serve Thee, condemn me to burn in hell : if it is for hope of Paradise, forbid me entrance there : but if it is for Thy sake only, deny me not the sight of Thy face.' We may leave it at that.

The historical portion of this work has given a picture of the rural condition of Sind in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was a land of cultivators and herdsmen, keepers of camels, buffaloes, sheep, goats and oxen, of tombs and Sayids, of dust and heat, of the annual rise and fall of the waters of the Indus but inefficiently controlled by a crude system of irrigation. For the common folk living in such a country Shāh Abdul Latīf composed his verses. The background of the poems is therefore that of a simple, unsophisticated countryside. Lacking as it does all interest in description of natural scenery, or studied portrayal of the manners of the people, the Risālo is not a treasure house of graphic detail of matters well known to the populace for whom the songs were sung. We shall, for instance, find in it nothing like the descriptive passages of the Odyssey which enable us at this late day to picture for ourselves the houses and house furnishings of the ancient Homeric Greeks, the kind of harness the horses wore, the manner in which the harvest was cut and gathered in, the tackle of the boats, or the character of the games in which the common people indulged. Shāh Abdul Latīf, like most Oriental poets, is not concerned with these things in themselves. So his references to social conditions and the life of the peasant folk are all incidental to his main purpose which

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is to explore a psychological problem. But as that problem arose amongst a rustic people he cannot avoid alluding to the common things. From these *obiter dicta* scholars must now obtain their indirect knowledge of the human side of his poetry. There is surprisingly little of Sind topography in the Risālo. Places are indeed mentioned: mountains are named and features of Sind scenery receive passing remark. But there is nothing individually distinctive of place, mountain or scenery: nothing of the peoples of the land, and nothing whatever of the stirring political events of his own day. Where a mountain is named it is more to emphasize the danger and difficulty of crossing it than with any idea that its location and character have any human interest. His place names might be any place names for all the value they possess as guides to definite localities. Thus the knowledge of Sind and its rustic civilization to be culled from the Risālo is gained from the study of internal evidence and not otherwise.

Reading the poems, however, with this handicap upon us we can none the less obtain some vivid pictures of the life the people lived. The power and might of the river naturally are often referred to with the flooding of the inundation, the channels which are cut out by the force of the waters, the islands left dry, the sweep of the waters, the peril of the crocodiles that lie in the pools. Then there are landing places where the boats halt, the good banks and the bad banks, the tying up of boats and the ropes that serve so many purposes on board a boat. The camel is almost as great a stimulant of thought as the river. We learn of its bad manners, of the resting places where the strings of camels wait, of the bushes it eats, of the hobbles put upon its feet to prevent it wandering too far when it is left to graze and browse. Another topic that the poet dwells on frequently is the joy of the falling rain that brings the grass, sets the neat-herds wandering over the plains in search of pasture grounds, and brings friends together again on the grassy expanses. There are pictures of the clouds towering up to points in the sky, and the flash of the lightning from the dark sky and the humming of the rain-drops. There is the cold of the dry north wind that whistles through the flimsy grass huts and withers up the edges of the grass. Some beautiful lines in the Sur Mōmul Rāno tell of the prominent constellations seen in the velvety night sky of Sind. The hot sandy desert, the sand hills and the burning heat of the sun are prominent in the poems that describe the sufferings of Sasuī in her search for her Balūch lover. Of birds there is little mention, though few countries are as rich as Sind is in bird life. The crane in the marsh, the crow which in Sind is a harbinger of good tidings, the vultures looking for carrion in the desert, and the bābihō, the desert lark, are amongst



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the few birds to receive notice. To domestic scenes there is a greater wealth of reference. The ploughmen fit their ploughshares for the ground : the Persian wheels raise the water for the crops ; the whey froths within the jar. The earthenware pot is baked in the potter's kiln. The spinning wheels stand in the huts, and the swinging cots adorn the houses of the well-to-do. The coverlets are spread upon the couches. The women do their hair in a fine parting and put kohl upon their eyes. There are necklets and bracelets for their decoration. The gossip and scandal of the village is commented upon freely. The spinning women assemble for spinning and spend the time chattering with each other. The cattle bells are heard tinkling from afar. The desert people live in brushwood huts surrounded by hedges and the wealthy man has a house with upper storeys, a rare event. The miser is confounded by the bounty of the rain which prevents him trading on the scarcity and raising the price of grain five fold. The trader packs his goods and departs on the boat for a far country to do his trafficking. When the boat comes back the girl recognizes it as containing her lover by its rig and the bunting that flutters from the yards. There are the many gatherings of friends when music sounds and people sit round happily in new clothes midst great gaiety. There are the marriages when the crowds assemble dressed in their very best. The Sayid riding in state on his noble horse has his stirrup leather seized in entreaty by persons craving for his help or intercession. The bodice of the poor woman has been stitched a hundred times and her blanket is tattered and torn. Imprisoned against her will, the girl refuses to wash her hair or put incense upon her head. The desert women dye their coarse rough cloth in lac dye. The skill of the craftsman is not so good as it used to be.

'The lapidaries now are gone
Who diamond pierced and ruby red :
But they who followed after them
Have not the skill to work in lead.
Where craftsmen wrought of yore, the smiths
Beat worthless pewter now instead.'

A prayer is said at the tomb of the saint for the safety of the ship at sea. The fakīrs and holy men who wander about the land submit themselves to severe asceticism, uttering no word and roaming amongst the people 'quietly'. The minstrel decks his fiddle with tassels and rattles and sings his song. The wife separated from her husband in the cold night clings to the door pin hoping that with the dawn her husband will return. It is in vivid pictures of this kind that the Risālo is so rich. No one familiar with Sind will dispute how true a portrayal this is of a simple rustic civilization of

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husbandmen and cattle herds, and how typical it all is still of the predominant features of this agricultural countryside.

(*b*) *The folk stories*

Despite the depth and sincerity of the mystic philosophy of the Risālo, it is doubtful if the poems would have attained their overwhelming popularity had it not been for the fact that several of the best known of them are written round folk stories current in the Sind countryside. The religion of the Risālo is thoroughly Islāmic. God has at least thirty-four different appellations, several of them from the list of the Ninety-Nine Names of God. But this would in itself be against the popularity of the poems amongst Hindus. As we have seen already, the poems are loved by all classes in Sind. The chief reason for this is the convincing manner in which they retell some well-known stories, of the kind that would appear in children's fairy books in England. In the Muntakhab there are half a dozen such stories, five of them concerned with the tales of lovers, and the sixth about a minstrel and a king. The telling and the retelling of these stories occupy most of the modern Sindhi books on the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf. There seems to be no end to the number of publications which recount in simple language the tales of the Sindhi lovers. The best work of this kind has, however, been done by Jēthmal Parsrām, who has, with a great deal of feeling and in beautifully expressed Sindhi, retold the tales in a most attractive way, showing how deeply he understands from the Hindu point of view the real meaning of the Sūfī philosophy. Jēthmal Parsrām's understanding is, however, tinged with the ideas of the Hindu Vedanta and a kind of theosophical universalism which is quite unlike the Islāmic mysticism of the Risālo itself. This characteristic of Jēthmal Parsrām's work is clearly brought out in his interesting volume on ' Sind and its Sūfīs ' which is instructive as showing the philosophical appeal of the poetry to an educated and cultured mind brought up in the tenets of the Hindu religion.

The five love stories in the Muntakhab concern themselves with the tragic tales of Sasuī and Punhūn and of Suhinī and Mehar, and the much lighter semi-comedies of Līlan and Chanēsar, Mōmul and Rāno, and Māruī and Umar. The story in each case is attractive, though overlaid with miraculous detail of the kind so popular in the East. The story of Sasuī and Punhūn is the one in which the greatest interest centres, as is evidenced by the fact that in the Muntakhab no fewer than seven of the surs are on this subject. These surs are the Sasuī Ābrī, the Maizūrī, the Kōhiārī, the Husainī, the Dēsī, the Rip and the Dāhir. The bulk of these together forms the greater part of the collection of poems. The quality of the

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poetry in these seven surs is most uneven. Gems of the purest lyric inspiration are mixed with passages of absurd bathos and conventional soliloquizing of little merit. The Husainī, which is the longest individual poem, is one of the poorest of all. But the Sur Rip and the Sur Dāhir contain some beautiful inspired poetry.

The genius of Shāh Abdul Latīf being purely lyrical, and lyrical inspiration being difficult to maintain for long at high levels, we shall find the poet's best work not in any single complete poem but in short passages where a pure lyric idea is expressed in simple telling language of great power. No European can understand these love stories as they stand without some idea of the nature of the stories themselves. The reason for this is that the poet is not interested in telling the story at all. He is absorbed with the feelings of the chief actors in the stories and immersed in exploring the psychology of their minds. Thus the incidents of the stories are assumed to be known, as they actually are known to all Sindhis, and only the effect of the incidents receives the poet's attention. Persons ignorant of the stories will be unable, from the actual words of the poet, to follow the sequence of events in them. An examination of the structure of these poems reveals the interesting fact that it is always the climax of the story, the dénouement, with which the poet is concerned, that particular point in the tale that sets the dramatic note of the whole. Thus in the tale of Sasuī and Punhūn the interest centres on Sasuī's realization that she has lost her Punhūn, who has gone off secretly with the camel train, and that she must make a long journey to find him if she is ever going to fulfil her love's ambition. In the tale of Suhinī and Mehar the poet selects the tragic moment when Suhinī, separated from her love by the pouring waters of the river and hearing the tinkling of the buffalo bells on the farther shore, determines to risk her life by crossing the river on an unbaked clay pot which will come to pieces in the water. In the story of Māruī and Umar, the poem deals with the agony of mind of Māruī while she was still shut up in the upper storey away from her people and had not yet been rescued. In the story of Līlan and Chanēsar, the poem deals with the disillusionment of Līlan when she finds that she has tricked herself and lost Chanēsar as well, because her stratagem to win his favour has failed. In the story of Mōmul and Rāno the poetic interest lies in the sudden conviction that comes to Mōmul that she has made a mistake and has lost her lover for ever. The poems in fact have an intense dramatic interest associated with the climax of the adventure in every case. They would make a fine subject for drama but afford only poor material for the art of the novelist.

The stories are all Hindu in origin. It is plain that most of them relate to the Sind of pre-Islām days. The story of Sasuī and Punhūn

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appears to have come originally from Cutch, which is a country intimately connected with Sind. Indeed the language of Cutch is considered to be a dialect of Sindhi. It is a predominantly Hindu place. In her interesting book *Cutch or Random Sketches of Western India*, written in 1839 by Mrs Postans, the author remarks that the tale of 'Soosie and Punoon' is 'a very favourite tale related as a Bhat both in Cutch and Sind'.[1] In the Cutch form the topography plainly is that of Cutch. In Sind the tale has become confused and the topography is mixed. The story wanders from Cutch over Lower Sind to Kēch Mekrān and we have already seen that the tale has, in some form or other, been taken up in Balūchī poetry so that names nearly similar have been given as belonging to places in the land of the Balūchīs. The story must, therefore, be an old one which in the course of the centuries has taken several different local forms. The story of Suhinī and Mehar is a Punjāb tale which has found a home in Sind and it must have come into Sind through the immigration from the Punjāb of those Hindu races which form an important element in the population, as has been made clear in the Census of India volume for 1931 relating to the Bombay Presidency. The story of Mōmul and Rāno is a Lower Sind story connected with the Sōdha who live in the Thar country near Umarkōt. It manifestly relates to a period when this portion of Sind had not been converted to Islām. The tale of Umar and Māruī belongs to the same locality and seems to go back to the days when the Sūmra were the chief political power in the country, that is, to the period just after the disappearance of the Arab military governors. There is nothing in it which suggests any connexion with Islām. The locality of the tale of Līlan and Chanēsar is not so clear. But evidence points to the fact that it is a Lower Sind story and must relate to about the same period of time as the tale of Umar and Māruī. The name of Chanēsar is Sindhi and there was a Sūmro king of that name who reigned in Lower Sind for about 18 years, circa A.D. 1228. This was the period when nothing very definite is known about the religion of particular rulers. The Āīn-i-Akbarī states that the Sūmro Rājpūt line of thirty-six princes reigned for five hundred years. The Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī says that from the year of the Hijra 700 until 843 the Hindu tribe of Sūmra were the rulers of Sind. Elliot (I. 4) thinks that there are grounds for believing that the Sūmra were tainted with the Qarmatian heresy as early as the eleventh century A.D. However that may be, the story as it is found in the Risālo gives no indication of anything Muslim. We are justified in holding that the tale goes back to a time before this part of the country was converted to Islām. The story of Sōrath and

[1] *Cutch or Random Sketches of Western India*, p. 199.

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King Diāch, which appears as the Sur Sōrath in the Risālo, is one that comes from Cutch or Kāthiawār and must go back to the twelfth century A.D. at least. In Shāh Abdul Latīf's version the king has become a Sultan but this does not necessarily mean anything in itself. The story is plainly a Hindu tale in all essentials and not originally one that is placed in Sind.

These facts will make clear the raw material of the stories in the Muntakhab. The complex literary heritage of the poems will now be evident. The thought and expression are Islāmic coloured by the doctrines of the Sūfī philosophy. The music is Indian. The stories are Hindu, one of them from the Punjāb, two of them from Cutch or Kāthiawār, and the rest are stories of Lower Sind current amongst the Hindu peoples living on the borders of the Thar prior to the general conversion of these people to Islām. From these considerations it is easy to see that the present-day Hindu peoples of Sind feel that their culture no less than the culture of Islām has gone to the fashioning of the final product. The poetic eye of Shāh Abdul Latīf has seen in these plain folk-tales of long gone generations material for the composition of dramatic psychological poems instinct with the philosophy of Sūfī thought.

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# Chapter V

## The Mystic Vision

The poems of the Risālo are shot through with a deep religious mysticism. They cannot be understood without a clear idea of what this mysticism is. Like most other terms which deal with different ideas not easily reducible to simple language, ' mysticism ' is a word which is consistently misused. There are particular difficulties about defining it, largely because the subject matter of mysticism is found in a sphere where ordinary language is inadequate. There is, however, little trouble in indicating the province of mysticism. Mysticism is an emotional attitude of man towards God or the divine. This emotional attitude takes two main forms, an emotional quest for union with God, ' unio ', or for communion with God, ' communio ' ; and most great mystics, so far as they are consistently devoted to one type of emotional attitude, can be clearly divided into one or other of these two classes. This is quite simple. But the matter is complicated by the fact that in addition mysticism is tinged with another element, namely the belief that by means of it man is able to apprehend truth, beauty, goodness and perfection in a manner not open to the working of the rational element. It is this second element which takes us back to the philological basis of the word from the Greek original, which has reference to the ' mysteries ', matters that are hard and difficult to understand and capable of comprehension only after initiation and enlightenment. In fact the word is itself derived from ' muein ', to shut the eye, and therefore has its birth in the very field of metaphor which is typical of all mystical thought. Shutting the eye has two meanings : first, not seeing with the organ of vision, which is regarded as inadequate for this kind of sight ; and second, by a widening and generalizing use of thought, being able to see with the inward eye after a process of initiation. It is precisely because this relation of the outward to the inward eye is so vague and ill-defined and has been explained in so many different ways by the experience of mystics that the full meaning of mysticism is so hard to reach. Actually, in all mysticism there is a fusion of intellect and emotion which defies expression through anything but metaphor and simile.

In no sphere of mental activity is the inadequacy of language as a means of expression more apparent than in mysticism. Various writers have held various ideas of the origin of language in the matter



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of significance. Some have stated that common language is a graveyard of dead metaphor and that as a language grows older it strews its progress with metaphors which have become conventionalized and lost their original directness.

A study of language *per se*, however, seems to show that language has its origin in perceptual directness and that as man's mind became more complex in its power to reason and think, perceptual symbols became utterly inadequate to express meaning in themselves. The process of thought is by generalization and association of ideas, by comparing things little known with things which are known and extending the use of simile and metaphor. It is true that as language grows, many of these similes and metaphors fall by the wayside and lose their original perceptual clarity but it is equally true that new and more complicated similes and metaphors take their place as ideas become harder and more difficult to define.

Thus the language of mysticism, which deals with the most subtle and least perceptual subject matter, is necessarily forced to employ an advanced and hypostatized form of imagery not easily intelligible to any but those who have exercised their minds in an endeavour to understand what the ideas are. This process is nowhere more clearly shown than in the writings of Plotinus, the supreme form of the intellectual mystic. Of Plotinus and those like him it has been said, 'They record a sense of the Supreme so vivid and intense, of felt communion so ineffable that it is not the analytical intellect that perceives but the very pulse of the soul that feels the inadequacy of expression whatsoever in human words. Such expression indeed is felt to be so limiting that, instead of quickening, it narrows, stifles and denies the fullness of experience. Unless the mystic speaks in consciously inadequate symbols he finds that every phrase he utters recognizes restrictions and implies limitations which his sense of the infinite has transcended and rejected.' (Wicksteed, *From Dante to Aquinas*, pp. 39-40.) Plotinus is an intellectual mystic. That is to say that God for Plotinus was the pure rational and reasoning faculty from which all contact of personal intimacy was shut out. But the religious mystics who find God to be an intensely personal being, with whom they can have communion or union through human feeling and emotion, are equally aware of the inadequacy of language to express their thought. St John Damascene said, 'It is fitting for us to be aware how impossible it is for us, wrapped up in gross flesh as we are, to understand and express in speech those lofty and immaterial actions of the Godhead unless by availing ourselves of figures and images and signs consonant with our nature.' A modern mystic has said the same thing 'Since we have no direct vision of things divine revelation must be to us of an indirect character : it

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must come down to us by analogy, by simile, by type, by parable, by something or other which shall translate the truth into terms within our capacity. . . . The mind of man must gradually be led from symbol to reality, from metaphor to mystery.'[1]

I am not here concerned with whether the mystic attitude is true, in the sense that it may enable man to find truth, or whether it is a huge illusion and aberration. I am concerned here merely with the fact that the mystical attitude is a real event in human experience and am now endeavouring only to describe the characteristics of that attitude, so that its expression may be understood. Writers like Leslie Stephen, Bertrand Russell, C. E. M. Joad and Julian Huxley do not believe that the mystic has any sure grasp on truth. But against these are host of others who find in mysticism the most satisfying experience of which the human mind is capable in its search for reality. Psychologically mysticism is a reality capable of explanation whatever its value as a measuring rod of truth may be. Mysticism is an excursion into the realm of belief and subject to all the disabilities from which belief itself suffers. Belief, as Dr Flint has pointed out, is coextensive with true and erroneous judgement, with real and imagined knowledge. 'Belief', he says, 'should be coextensive with knowledge, coincident with truth. Actually it is far more extensive than knowledge and coincides largely with error and not with truth.' (Flint's *Agnosticism*, p. 424.)

In her very fully documented book on Mysticism Evelyn Underhill describes four characteristics of the mystic state. First, it is active and practical, an organic life process. Second, its aims are wholly transcendental and spiritual : the heart of the mystic is set upon the changeless One. Third, this One is for the mystic not merely the reality of all that is, but a living and personal object of love. Fourth, living union with this One—which is the goal of the mystic's adventure—is a definite form of enhanced life requiring an arduous process of remaking the character . . . the progress along the Mystic Way. These four characteristics may be taken as a fairly correct description of the mystic state. Fundamentally all mystics are at one in this however they may differ from each other in their account of their experience. Dean Inge has put the position even more clearly in the well-known terminology of Christian mysticism. The mystic loves to figure his path, he says, 'as a ladder reaching from earth to heaven which must be climbed step by step. This *scala perfectionis* is generally divided into three stages. The first is called the purgative life, the second the illuminative, while the third, which is really the goal rather than a part of the journey, is

[1] Kolbe : *The Four Mysteries of Faith*, p. 255.

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called the unitive life, or state of perfect contemplation '.[1] To trace the various interpretations of this fundamental idea of mysticism through the mystics of the world would be an endless and utterly bewildering task. In the mysticism of Islām, with which I shall deal in the next chapter, we shall see that the fondness of the Arab mind for classification has produced a multitude of intricate patterns of mystic analysis. To examine these in detail is, however, no part of my present purpose. There is always a danger in dealing with mysticism in excessive detail that the study is apt to lose itself in a wilderness of technical terms which, in their variety and nuance of meaning, are even more intractable than the technical terms of philosophy. The Sūfī philosophy, which is one of the most striking ebullitions of the mystic spirit in Islām, is most formidably equipped with technicalities. There are many learned works which deal adequately with this aspect of the matter and few of them are more satisfying to English readers than the learned studies of Professor Nicholson, familiar to all serious students of this difficult subject. I think it will be sufficient for my present object merely to indicate some of the salient features of typical mystical expression so that I may be in a position to illustrate them from the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf in due course.

The mystic is a restless being. He is not satisfied with himself. He seeks for improvement and to obtain this self-improvement he craves for certain things. In the first place there is in him the urge to be a pilgrim or wanderer in search of the lost home, the better country from which he is separated in this poor and inferior mundane world. As the Christian hymn has it :

'I'm but a stranger here :
Heaven is my home.
Earth is a desert drear :
Heaven is my home.
Danger and sorrow stand
Round me on every hand :
Heaven is my fatherland :
Heaven is my home.'

The world and all its earthly show are simply obstacles in the path, curtains that shut off the light, veils which must be pierced. In Persian mysticism this is one of the dominant traits, often ending in a form of pessimism commoner in the East than in the West.

'There was a door to which I found no key :
There was a veil past which I could not see :
Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seemed—and then no more of Thee and Me.'[2]

[1] *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 9-10.
[2] *Rubaiyāt*. Translated by Fitzgerald, XXXII.

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So sang Omar Khayyām and so sings Shāh Abdul Latīf in more than one passage of poetry.

In the second place there is the craving of heart for heart ; the soul longs to find its perfect mate : it is a lover waiting and hoping and striving for the Beloved. This is the deep seated emotionalism which makes the mystic state so real and fills the lover with the certainty that will eventually bring the ecstasy of fulfilment. Christian and Islāmic mysticism are full of this sentiment. Perhaps the former has the finer expression of religious fervour : but the latter has certainly a greater range of sheer beauty and power. It was St Bernard, the author of two of the most sublime mystical hymns in the Christian hymnology, namely ' Jerusalem the Golden with milk and honey blest ' and ' For thee, mine own dear country, mine eyes their vigils keep ' who, in quite another mystical strain, declared ' Let no one believe that he has received the kiss divine, if he knows the truth without loving it or loves it without understanding it. But blessed is that kiss whereby not only is God recognized but also the Father is loved : for there is never full knowledge without perfect love.' Or again, in words which are startling to the more restrained imagery of present-day Christianity, St Bernard said : ' Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. Who is it who speaks these words ? It is the Bride. Who is the Bride ? It is the soul thirsting for God. . . . She who asks this is held by the bond of love to him from whom she asks it. If then mutual love is specially befitting to a bride and bridegroom, it is not unfitting that the name of the bride is given to a soul that it loves.' (*Cantica Canticorum*, Sermon vii.) Compare this devout spiritualizing of a sensuous relation, typical of medieval Christian mysticism, with the treatment of the Beloved in Jāmī :

' In solitude where Being signless dwelt
And all the Universe still dormant lay,
Concealed in selflessness, One Being was
Exempt from " I " or " Thou "-ness and apart
From all duality. Beauty Supreme
Unmanifest except unto Itself
By Its own light, yet fraught with power to charm,
The souls of all : concealed in the Unseen
An Essence pure, unstained by aught of ill,
No Mirror to reflect its loveliness ;
No comb to touch its locks ; no collyrium
Lent lustre to its eyes : no rosy cheeks
O'ershadowed by dark curls like hyacinth,
No peachlike down was there ; no dusky mole
Adorned Its face : no eye had yet beheld
Its image. To Itself it sang of Love
In wordless measures. By Itself it cast
The die of Love.'[1]

[1] *Jāmī—Yūsuf-Zulaikha.* Translated by Davies, p. 71.

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Or contrast these lines of Abu Sayid Ibn Abu'l Khair :

'O Thou whose visage makes our world so fair,
Whose union, night and day, is all man's prayer,
Art kinder unto others ? Woe is me !
But woe to them if they my anguish share !——

Said I : " To whom belongs thy Beauty ? " He
Replied " Since I alone exist, to me,
Lover, Beloved and Love am I in one,
Beauty and Mirror and the Eyes which see." '[1]

In the third place the mystic has a craving for the attainment of perfection of heart. When he is conscious of his deficiencies he is plunged in a slough of despond which is sometimes called The Dark Night of the Soul. When he is conscious of perfect attainment he is suffused with a glow of happiness. To reach this perfection he will undergo cheerfully the rigours of asceticism. When he attains the perfection he seeks he speaks in an exalted and highly emotional strain which rarely fails to impress itself upon his hearers. Thus the grim ascetic and the contented saint are but stages in this quest for the ideal goodness, a quest that in Christian mystics often takes on an ethical character. Allied to this idea of perfection through the self is the idea common to all mystical thought that the self holds the key to the understanding of God. Richard of St Victor said : 'If thou wishest to search out the deep things of God, search out the depths of thine own spirit.' God, says the mystic, is closer to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. Jāmī says :

'Both power and being are denied to us ;
The lack of both is what's ordained for us :
But since 'tis He who lives within our forms
Both power and action are ascribed to us.'[2]

In the Masnawī Jalāluddīn Rūmī has said :

'Strive then from mere hearing to press on to seeing :
What ear has told you falsely eye will tell truly.
The ear too will acquire the properties of an eye.
Your ears now worthless as wool will become gems :
Yea ! your whole body will become a mirror.
It will be as an eye or a bright gem in your bosom.
First the hearing of the ear enables you to form ideas :
The ideas guide you to the Beloved.'[3]

The consciousness of unworthiness which keeps the soul from attaining its ideal of fulfilment has been beautifully expressed by Isaac Watts :

1 Browne : Translated in *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II, pp. 264-6.
2 *Jāmī*, op. cit., pp. 66, 67.
3 *Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, op. cit., p. 271.

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'I love the Lord. But ah! how far
My thoughts from the dear object are!
The wanton heart how wide it roves
And fancy meets a thousand loves.

If my soul burn to see my God,
I tread the courts of his abode
But troops of rivals throng the place
And tempt me off before his face.'

'No poet', says Professor Shairp, 'has ever made the most of human life who has not regarded it as standing on the threshold of an invisible world, as supported by divine foundations.'[1] The theology of St. Paul is full of this mystical conception. The things that are seen are temporal but the things that are not seen are eternal. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is a *locus classicus* of this mystical attitude 'And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith but have not charity' (that is love) 'I am nothing—For now we see through a glass darkly but then face to face: now I know in part but then shall I know as also I am known.'

So much for the difficulties that impede the heart in its search for truth. The mystical certainty that comes from fulfilment is expressed beautifully in the third chapter of Second Corinthians: 'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory.' In fact in the mystic Vision, which perceives that there is a land of pure delight where saints immortal reign, illumination, knowledge, contentment and ecstasy are fused into a kind of unity which is truly ineffable in that no language is capable of expressing the feelings of the believer. This is the ground where the spirit of poetry meets the spirit of religion, where ecstasy touches the chord that responds in the heart of the poet, philosopher and saint alike. Something of this ecstasy of illumination can be felt in the lines of Shāh Abdul Latīf from the Sur Āsa:

'These paltry eyes of mine
Have brought me favour's grace.
If evil but before them be
I see love in its place.
All day they look and yet
They halt out there to see.
They saw and recognized Love
And have returned to me.'

[1] Quoted in Inge: *Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*, p. 83.

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And again in the beautiful Sur Barvo Sindhī occurs this passage :

'I swear by the Lord
The face of Beloved's most lovely of all.
It's the way of the world
To alter Love's virtue and change it to dross.
No one ever eats
The flesh of mankind. In this world will be left
Only fragrant delight.
All the rest of mankind wear but friendship's false cloak :
Only one or two are
Who are one with our heart. O Giver, vouchsafe
That friends present be.
On the tongues of my friends there is mention once more
That we're reconciled.
My friends have this way that, break I with them,
They break not with me.'

Of the three cravings of the mystic spirit, to be a wanderer, to find consolation in union, heart with heart, and to reach perfection, all may be exemplified in the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf. The first is especially clear in the love stories, particularly that of Sasuī and Punhūn, which describes the perils and dangers of the journeying. The closely allied idea that journeying physically is itself useless, since the real travelling must be within the wastes of one's own soul, is emphasized time and again. A passage in the Sasuī Ābrī exemplifies this.

'However far thou journeyest forth,
Lo ! is thy Friend still at thy door.
Return and ask thyself again.
Thy Friend is on thy very floor.
The loved one that thou sufferest for
Of very sooth resides in thee.
Why go to Wankar, if not here
Thou searchest thy Belov'd to see ?
Go with thine heart towards thy love.
Cease, Sasuī, wanderings of thy feet.
Ask not the sand how lies the path.
To travel soul-fully is meet.'

The craving of heart for heart, the real human emotional appeal of mysticism, runs through the whole of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry. It is beautifully expressed in the Sur Samundī, that allegory of the wandering soul, wherein love is a sailor who sets out to sea and sails to distant lands leaving the lover disconsolate behind. The appeal of the following verses is unmistakable :

'Surely my melting soul is nought :
For while I stood on the strand,
Love came himself and the cable sought.
And pushed the boat from the land.
Of sailors I knew no useful lore.
Else had my body's strength,
While the boat was standing there by the shore
Been twined in the cable-length.

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I was standing myself by the very wharf
When my love let the hawser go :
Within my heart must some weakness be ,
Or else my love coming back to me
Doth wondrous kindness show.'

The third craving, for perfection of heart and the perfect joy of attainment, which comes from union with the divine, is also evident in the last passage quoted. In the Sur Āsa the soul confesses its weakness before God :

' If Thou but touch this iron " me ", gold I should be by reason.
Thou Giver art of Gifts : the rest but wandering beggars are.
There falls in its due season rain : but Thou in very season
Dost shower Thy precious bounty far.
O wouldst Thou to my house but come,
All wealth I'd have and every sum.'

The joy of union is described in the Sur Samundī :

' If thou wouldst come to me now, my Love,
Full joy to my soul I'd impart.
If, Mother, mayhap my lover should come,
I'd cling to him, cleave to him here in my home
And speak out the words of my heart.'

The mysterious unity of the soul with God is a constantly recurring theme often expressed in language the exact meaning of which is hard to understand. In the Sur Sōrath occur the words :

' Man is my secret : I am his.
Here lies the key to mysteries.
This phrase the singer took to sing
The song he sang before the King :
And when he sang, where there were two,
The pair to single One-ness grew.'

The mysticism of the Risālo is Islāmic. The emphasis throughout is guided by the stern monotheism of the Prophet. The banishment of all duality is more important than the attainment of loving perfection in God, which is more the Christian point of view. Thus the gentler idea of the Christian hymn :

' God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.
He sets his footsteps on the sea
And rides upon the storm '

is overborne by a harder doctrine of ideal unity. In this strain Shāh Abdul Latīf proclaims his belief :

' God who is One no rival hath.'
Herein of Him the Oneness is,
And righteousness of truth. But who
Embraced false Twoness lost indeed
The savour and the salt of life.'

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What has been said will show that the mystic vision of Shāh Abdul Latīf, while differing in detail from the mystic vision of Christian writers, has affinities which make its appeal wide. In fundamentals his religious mysticism is closely allied to that of Christian mystics. The chief difference lies in the differing content of the idea of God or the divine.

The method of approach to God is much the same in all mysticism, though the language of the mystic experience is, naturally enough, coloured by the religion of the mystic. A rationalist writer like Joad puts his finger on the weakness of the mystical attitude in that it cannot convey its content. ' In affirming ', he says, ' that mystical experience is at once exalting and exciting, and that it brings a feeling of emancipation from self, the mystics are unanimous : but they have not succeeded in conveying its content. The God of whom they speak may be nothing but a generalized name for the world of value, a symbol to denote the element of perfection and permanence in the universe.'[1] This is a vital point. Possibly it is just this deification of value which enables mystics of diverse kinds to understand each other. The inability to convey content is easily explicable. The cause lies in the fact that mystical belief is an emotional experience and hence wholly individual, and also in the poverty of language to express the meaning of subtle and intensely personal feeling. Though mysticism is emotional, it is not unalloyed emotionalism. The reason is a directing influence, and within its limits, the mystical experience follows certain logical rules. In his deeply thoughtful work on *Christian Mysticism* Dean Inge has emphasized this cardinal fact. ' A revelation ', he states, ' absolutely transcending reason is an absurdity : no such revelation could ever be made. In the striking phrase of Macarius, "The human mind is the throne of the Godhead "—for reason is still king. Religion must not be a matter of feeling only. Those who blindly follow the inner light find it no "candle of the Lord " but an *ignis fatuus* and all the great mystics are aware of this.'[2] The precise place of reason in the mystical complex constitutes a problem of analysis that no one has solved adequately and perhaps no one ever will. The ecstasy of the mystic's certainty has qualities in common with the ecstasy of great poetry which, as we have already seen, contains elements of thought, feeling and music. It is unnecessary for us to proceed to the extremes of those thinkers who hold that ecstasy is the substance of poetry. To believe, as Mordell believes, that ecstasy includes ' the scientist's or philosopher's passion for knowledge, the idealist's

[1] Joad : *The Present and Future of Religion*, p. 208. See Chapter X, *passim*.

[2] *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 19, 21.

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devotion to a cause, the warrior's madness for battle, the patriot's ardour to die for his country, and man's submission to his God"[1] is to widen the meaning of ecstasy till it becomes nearly meaningless.

The truth is that in certain situations man reaches a psychological state in which he feels out of himself and one with a greater unity or whole. This is a state of high emotion induced by thought and produced by a vivid conviction. This state is certainly reached by the great poets in their moments of what we call 'inspiration' (a question-begging term) and makes it easy to compare their poetic expression with the description by mystics of the mystic vision. This state of exaltation is called forth by a multiplicity of excitants. Kant and Hegel reach sublimity in contemplation of the universality of mind. Shelley, Keats and Browning are uplifted by the wonder of beauty. Plotinus is enwrapped in a burning conviction of a universal soul. Shakespeare is stimulated to it by the play of human emotions and wills in the life workings of mankind. The mystics reach the plane of inspiration by 'experiencing' a personal contact with the divine. In all the moment of vision has been achieved by a process of thought in which logic is certainly not lacking, whatever the value of the final conclusion may be. To quote Dean Inge once again: 'The phase of thought or feeling which we call mysticism has its origin in that which is the raw material of all religion, and perhaps of all philosophy and art as well, namely the dim consciousness of the beyond, which is part of our nature as human beings. Mysticism arises when we try to bring this higher consciousness into relation with the other contents of our minds.'[2]

Since mystics as a class are all engaged in exploring the same field of experience we need scarcely be surprised that there is much similarity in their expression of that experience. The many facets of God evident in the mystic's vision are markedly common topics of mystical writing. The symbols used are also strangely of a kind. Abu Sayid Abu'l Khair, the famous Sūfī, said: 'The veil between God and his servant is neither earth or heaven, nor the Throne nor the Footstool: thy selfhood and illusions are the veil and when thou removest these thou hast attained unto God.' This is strongly reminiscent of Johannine Christianity. 'The soul', said St Bernard, 'will know therefore that the Lord is nigh when it feels itself burned by this fire and when it can say with the prophet "From above hath He sent fire into my bones and it prevaileth against them."' 'O Love,' exclaimed St Catherine of Genoa, 'he who feels thee cannot comprehend thee and he who desires to know thee cannot understand thee. O wounded heart, thou art incurable and brought to the

[1] *Literature of Ecstasy*, p. 241.
[2] *Christian Mysticism*, p. 5.



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point of death. I would that I might be able to express it. How joyous a thing it were to speak of love if only one could find the words.' In words that might have been uttered by some Islāmic mystic Tauler said, ' All things are gathered together in one with the divine sweetness and the man's being is so penetrated with the divine substance that he loses himself therein as a drop of water is lost in a cask of strong wine : and thus the man's spirit is so sunk in God in divine union that he loses all sense of distinction and there remains a sweet still union without cloud or colour.' Mechthold of Magdeburg said, ' O soul, before the world was, I longed for thee and I still long for thee and thou for me. Therefore when our two desires unite Love shall be fulfilled.' ' It is necessary ', said St John of the Cross, ' to be on fire with love and that with anxiety.' We may agree with Miss Underhill that if the great Christian mystics could be all brought together ' the world would soon perceive that they constitute one of the most amazing and profound variations of which the human race has yet been witness '.[1] But we need not confine ourselves to the Christian mystics : we could include all mystics. At the same time we should have to observe that the differences which they would exhibit would be differences of minor detail only and not of fundamentals. Mysticism is essentially similar wherever it arises. The mystics are engaged in ploughing and reploughing the same small plot of land. Even if the ploughmen are differently garbed and handle their ploughs with a variety of techniques we do not see that these circumstances matter very much to the character of the furrows they carve from the selfsame soil.

[1] From Evelyn Underhill.

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# Chapter VI

## Influences in Islāmic Mysticism

It is no part of the object of this book to trace the development of mysticism, an immense subject on which a vast amount of erudite scholarship has been expended. The poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf is an expression of the later Sūfism in India, especially as influenced by the Muhammadan domination of Upper India from the fifteenth century onwards. Sūfism is merely one of the forms in which mysticism has altered the simple religion of the Prophet. As a system and as a mode of thought it can be clearly distinguished from the many kinds of asceticism and other-worldliness which have emerged in the course of Islāmic history, the latter chiefly in the orders of darwīshes, eremites, and fakīrs in a variety too complicated to receive attention here. Thanks to the labours of profound Orientalists, as, for instance, Professor Nicholson, who has given most of his life to a study of the subject, the lines of enquiry into Sūfism are more or less well known to scholars. Nicholson, who speaks with greater authority than almost any other, has declared, 'No single cause will account for a phenomenon so widely spread and so diverse in its manifestation. Sūfism has always been thoroughly eclectic, absorbing and transmuting whatever "broken lights" fell across its path and consequently it gained adherents amongst men of the most opposite views—theists and pantheists, Mu'tazilites and Scholastics, philosophers and divines.'[1] In the same work he has come to the conclusion that the 'four principal foreign sources of Sūfism are undoubtedly Christianity, Neoplatonism Gnosticism, and Indian asceticism and religious philosophy'.

No more unpromising field for the growth of mystic ideas could be imagined than the stern monotheism of the Korān. But, as Dean Inge has pointed out, mysticism is part of the raw material of every religion. Thus even in the Korān may be found passages that are mystical in meaning[2] and perhaps set the minds of early Muslims thinking in ways that were unintended by the Prophet. In the fiftieth sūr (15) we find the following: 'We created man: and We know what his soul whispereth to him and We are closer to him than his neck-vein.' In the eighth sūr (24) it is said: 'Know that God

[1] *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 390.

[2] See Chapter VII of *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islām*, for D. B. Macdonald's views on Mysticism in the Korān.



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cometh in between a man and his own heart.' A still better known passage, which will recall words in the English prayer book, is in the fifty-eighth sūr (8) ' Three persons speak not privately together but He is their fourth·: nor five but He is their sixth : nor fewer nor more, but wherever they be He is with them.' But the Korān viewed as a whole is completely non-mystical. We cannot but agree with Mr North when he says : ' No one reading the Korān would lay much stress on such passages unless he were looking for the like of them.'[1] If indeed the Korān is responsible for the subsequent development of mysticism in Islām it is largely because its stern rejection of the kind of attitude in which mystics indulge made the intrusion of a more personal emotionalism sooner or later inevitable.

The early Sūfīs were ascetics much influenced by the practice of Christian hermits, who in their turn were familiar with Neoplatonic ideas. There were many of these ascetics in Arabia before the days of Muhammad. After the establishment of Islām they carried their ideas on. The early Sūfīs were all ascetic and quietist. Their point of view was a sort of protest against the formalism of the new religion which placed great emphasis on external duties and enforced, with strict insistence, a rigid belief. Mysticism appeals to the mind that declines to be trammelled in any such narrow way. It seeks always to find a personal method of self-expression, to emphasize the personal, as apart from the impersonal element in religious practice. Speaking of the first Sūfīs, Browne remarks : ' This ascetic Sūfism is regarded by von Kremer as the early Arabian type, which if influenced at all from without, was influenced rather by Christian monasticism than by Persian, Greek or Indian ideas.'[2] The conceptions of illumination, gnosis and ecstasy which later come to play so important a part in Sūfī expression are all Neoplatonic in origin. They are themselves derived ultimately from the later Greek philosophy which had set its mark so deeply on the Christianity of the first four centuries after the death of Christ. There is therefore nothing fanciful in tracing throughout Sūfism the development of ideas which have directed the progress of Christian thought. Dean Inge in a masterly book[3] has shown how persistent throughout Christian literature has been the continuance of this Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition. The characteristic features of the later Sūfism in Oriental literature largely result from the manner in which the Persian mind took up and interpreted this strain of thought.

The vital change occurred when the centre of the Islāmic world was shifted from Damascus to Baghdād. By this change Arab

1 *Outline of Islām*, p. 106.
2 See also O'Leary : *Arabic Thought and its Place in History*, chapter VII.
3 *Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought.*

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influences became subordinated to Persian. 'The Abbāsids', says Bowen, 'came to power as the champions not only of the zealots, but also of the oppressed foreigners. They found their greatest support in the Persians: the revolution was above all a triumph of the Persians over the Arabs. From its beginnings the Abbāsid court was Persian in character: its manners, its ceremonies, the buildings in which it was housed were all Persian. The Caliph lost more and more the character of an Arab chieftain—a first among equals—and as he retired behind his factotum, the Vizier, took on more and more that of an inaccessible Chosroes.'[1]

On the soil of Persia at this time Buddhist and Vedanta ideas flourished in some fashion. Thus were passed into Sūfī thought some of those beliefs and modes of expression which are characteristic of Hindu India. The result of this mixing and fusion of ideas in the Abbāsid age quickly brought about a state of affairs that had been foreseen by Muhammad himself when he predicted that Muslims would split up into a large number of sects. The result was in fact two-fold. In the first place the ascetic and quietist character of the early Sūfīs began to give place to a pantheistic tendency often expressed in sensuous and imaginative language which was utterly alien to the hard austerity of the Korān and the Traditions. In the second place the attack of heterodoxy on orthodoxy, in a land where the orthodox religion was itself alien, produced inevitably the labours of the scholastics culminating in the supreme achievement of Ghazzālī. Ghazzālī's genius succeeded in reconciling the claims of the rigid belief of Arabia with the luxuriant free-thinking of the non-Arab peoples, who by this time held the political power of Islām. Into the process of this transition we have no need to enter. The subject has been dealt with exhaustively in the works of Professor Nicholson. The vital point for my present purpose is that one of the achievements of Ghazzālī was to give Sūfism a firm and assured position within the church of Islām. This result was of course achieved through a system of interpretation of Sūfī utterances by which it was shown that, however much the words of the Sūfīs might differ from the words of Muhammad, there was a deep resemblance in their real and ultimate meaning. In this way the Sūfīs, who began as ascetics and quietists and later became heterodox theosophists at variance with the established dogma of their time, ended as orthodox Muslims teaching a deeper and subtler meaning in the words of the Korān and using sensuous and emotional imagery quite at variance with the austerity of Muhammad. Sūfism had in fact become swallowed up in the Islāmic church, and, within Islām, made itself into a religious system of its own. It became both a school of

[1] *The Life and Times of Alī bin Īsa*, p. 17.

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thought and a system of practice and belief. It produced its orders of adherents, its darwīshes and its saints, and showed all the outward signs of an institution of fixed character. In this strange way were the conflicting ideas of the Arabs and the Persians reconciled. In this strange way also from the religious experience of India there came into Islām elements quite alien to it. But this very mixing of opposites enabled mysticism in Islām to retain the appeal it has today amongst people brought up in an utterly different religious tradition. So the poetry of the great mystic poets, like Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Jāmī, Farīduddīn Attār, Bāyazid and Abu Sayid Abu'l Khair and many others, can be read, understood and enjoyed by peoples to whom the utterances of the Prophet make no appeal whatever.

Sūfī thought is in fact a wonderful example of the fusion of diverse elements, the stern monotheism of Islām with the pantheistic love of beauty characteristic of the Persian mind. Other-worldliness was in fact reconciled with the human love for beauty and the need for free personal self-expression in religious emotion. It is the intellectual mysticism in Sūfī thought that allies it with the mysticism of Christianity largely derived from Greek philosophy. It is the beauty mysticism, with its emphasis on self-abandonment in the divine and the sinking of individuality in the One, which allies it with the doctrines of Buddhist and Vedantic ideas so powerful in the religion of the Hindu peoples of India. Professor Nicholson believes that Sūfism in its ascetic, moral and devotional aspects was a spiritualized Islām but it continued to do lip-service to the established religion. Thus Allāh, the God of Mercy and Wrath, was in a certain sense depersonalized and worshipped as the One Absolutely Real (Al-Haqq).

No one who wishes to understand Sūfism can escape the long task of studying both Islāmic thought and Islāmic history from the beginning. Professor Nicholson in his ' History of Arabic Literature ' has indicated the main lines of this study. He distinguishes a period of rationalism and free thought in the Abbāsid age from the period of orthodox reaction which commenced from A.D. 847. During the first period there were the dogmatic battles with the Mu'tazilites and the Zindiqs which led the way to the final reconciliation of tradition and reason by Ghazzāli in the second half of the eleventh century. During this period Sūfism underwent many changes and suffered the intrusion of some non-Islāmic constituents. Prominent names during this period of making were Marūf al Karkhī (died A.D. 815), Abu Sulaymān (died A.D. 830), Dhu'l Nūn al Misrī (died A.D. 860). During this period, says Nicholson, ' the stream of Hellenic culture flowed unceasingly into the Moslem world. Innumerable

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works of Greek philosophers, physicians, and scientists were translated and eagerly studied. Thus the Greeks became the teachers of the Arabs '.[1] In Irāq, Syria and Egypt there was a plentiful harvest of ideas—Neoplatonic, Gnostical, Christian, mystical, pantheistic. In Mesopotamia were people who called themselves Sabians. The greater number of them followed a mode of thought that is like the Neoplatonism of Proclus and Iamblichus. 'There may be', says Nicholson, 'Indian elements in Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, but . . . . the immediate source of the Sūfī theosophy is to be sought in Greek and Syrian speculation.'[2]

According to Merx the real mystical origin is traceable to Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite, identified with the Syrian mystic Stephen Bār Sudailī, who flourished about A.D. 500. The writings of the pseudo-Dionysius consisted of four treatises, two of which, one 'On Mystical Theology', and another 'On the Names of God' were of immense importance in the development of Christian mystical speculation. O'Leary in his work on 'Arabic thought and its Place in History' says that this Bār Sudailī was the abbot of a convent at Edessa and that his works, which may be referred to the latter part of the fifth century A.D., were translated into Syriac soon after their first appearance in Greek, and must, owing to their being familiar to the Syriac Christians, have become indirectly known to the Muslims. O'Leary has made very clear the debt which the Muslims owed to their subject peoples. Most of the learned works of this time were written in Arabic. But they were not the works of Arabs, who had by then lost the hegemony that was theirs under the Ummāyids. Of influences bearing directly on the trend of Sūfī speculation must be mentioned the ascetic tone of the Manichaeans and Maskdelites, the gnosticism of the Sanīya of the fen country between Wāsit and Basra, and Buddhistic traces in Eastern Persia and Transoxiāna due to the fact that Buddhist monasteries had existed in Balkh. Junayd of Baghdād (died 297 of the Muhammadan era) systematized the teachings of Dhu'l Nūn Misrī and emphasized the doctrine of tauhīd, the union of the soul with God, which became so prominent a feature of Sūfī thought. This doctrine has clear affinities with Neoplatonism, but ascribes to piety and devotion what is ascribed by Neoplatonism to the intuitive faculty as the means whereby the soul achieves union with the divine. O'Leary finds in the tauhīd of the earlier Sūfīs and the 'hulūl' of Al Hallāj a fusion of the old pre-Islāmic Persian beliefs with the Neoplatonic conception of the rational element or soul 'as an emanation from the Agent Intellect to which it will ultimately return

[1] R. A. Nicholson : *Literary History of the Arabs*, chapter VIII, p. 388.
[2] ibid., p. 389.

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and with which it will be united'. 'This', says O'Leary, 'is an extremely interesting illustration of the fusion of oriental and Hellenistic elements in Sūfism and shows that the theoretical doctrines of Sūfism, whatever they may have borrowed from Persia and India, receive their interpretative hypostasis from neo-Platonism.'[1]

Evelyn Underhill holds that Neoplatonism taught the illusory nature of all temporal things and in the violence of its idealism outdid its master Plato. It spoke of the existence of an Absolute God, the Unconditioned One, accessible in ecstasy and contemplation, and thus made a direct appeal to the mystical elements in man. The pseudo-Dionysius, carrying on the Neoplatonic idea of the transcendence of God, proceeded in the treatise on the Divine Names to find God to be 'Goodness, Unity, Light, Beauty in respect of His transcendence but in respect of His distinction from the finite world to be also Non-Being, Obscure and Ineffable. (See Wulf : *History of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 83-4.) Something of this puzzlement between the knowable and the unknowable of the Divine Nature runs all through the philosophy of the Sūfīs and is the occasion for some of the most obscure utterances in their writings. It is as if the human mind were unable to take a firm stand on which viewpoint to adopt, whether that God is Incomprehensible or is so All-Comprehending that everything has meaning only in Him. This bewilderment is characteristic of Neoplatonism and is common in most of the great mystics. Thus Catherine of Siena says (*S. Catharinae Senensis Legenda*, II, 190), 'To explain in our defective language what I saw would seem to me like blaspheming the Lord, or dishonouring Him by my speech : so great is the distance between the intellect, when rapt and illumined and strengthened by God, and what can be expressed by words, that they seem almost contradictory.'

When Sūfism became a system and ceased to be the scattered emotional outpourings of individual mystics who found the rigid monotheism of Islām cramping and unsatisfactory, its beliefs began to be collated and defined. One important work which served this purpose was *The Doctrine of the Sūfis*[2] of Abu Bakr al-Kalabādhī who died in A.D. 995. The object of this author was to demonstrate the essential orthodoxy of the heterodox and rebellious spirits. Amongst the main beliefs attributed to Sūfī thinkers as a whole by this learned man were the following. First, as to the characteristics of God, the Sūfīs were agreed that God is One, Alone, Single, Eternal, Everlasting, Knowing, Powerful, Living, Hearing, Seeing, Strong, Mighty, Majestic, Great, Generous, Clement, Proud, Awful, Enduring,

[1] O'Leary : op. cit., pp. 184-94.

[2] *Kitāb-al-Taaruf li Madhtab ahl-al-tasawwuf.* Translated by A. J. Arberry.

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First, God, Lord, Ruler, Master, Merciful, Compassionate, Desirous, Speaking, Creating and Sustaining. Second, in the doctrine of the Gnosis of God, the Sūfīs held that the only guide to God was God Himself and that the part to be played by human intelligence is that of an intelligent person in need of a guide. Third, in the doctrine of Spirit, the Sūfīs believed that the spirit is an object through which the body lives, a light fragrant breath (rūh) through which life subsists, while the soul (nafs) is a hot wind (rīh) through which the motions and desires exist. Fourth, in the doctrine of Union, the Sūfīs held that union implied being inwardly separated from all but God, seeing inwardly—in the sense of veneration of none but God. Fifth, in the Doctrine of Love, the Sūfīs asserted the utter difference between human love and the love of man for God : the first was a pleasure, the second an annihilation, in which astonishment, surrender and bewilderment play an important part. To Rābia the woman mystic is attributed the saying :

' 'Tis purest love when Thou dost raise
The veil to my adoring gaze.'

Thus love for the Sūfīs is illumination, a piercing of the veil of illusory and temporary things. Sixth, in the Doctrine of Separation the Sūfīs found a deeply ethical and purifying content separating the mystic from carnal longings and from the desire for pleasant and pleasurable things. Seventh, in the Doctrine of Revelation and Veiling, the Sūfīs believed with Sahl that ' Revelation is three states : revelation of an essence which is unveiling : revelation of the qualities of essence which is illumination : revelation of the condition of essence which is life of the world to come.' Lastly in the Doctrine of the Seeker and the Sought, the Sūfīs identified the Seeker with the Sought 'for the man who seeks God only seeks Him because God first sought him '.

All these ideas will be found in the poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf who represents an Indian Muslim development of the philosophy of Jalāluddīn Rūmī. In his characteristic way the Sindhi poet uses simple folk stories to teach great lessons. Thus in the Sur Māruī, which deals merely with the abduction from her lover of a Sindhi girl by a man for whom she felt no love, the poem opens with the subtlest and deepest metaphysics of which Sūfism is capable. The imprisoned Māruī, shut up in the upper rooms from which she can make no escape, exclaims :

' When there fell on mine ears the Word
" Am I not then your Lord ? "[1]
And with " Yes " my heart gave assent,
It was then that my promise I made
With the folk in the hedges pent.

[1] From the Korān. Rodwell's Translation. Edition Everyman, p. 310.

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'Twas my fate to be prisoned. It falls!
How else could one enter these walls?
They were shown me by writ of the Stone.
My life, body, life have no joy
If I be from the goatherd alone.

O Lord! by thy will this decree
With her Mārūs that Māruī be.
Life engaoled was the fate that I took,
That I should live miserable here.
"Body here, soul with Thee", saith the Book.'

To find an exact parallel to this we have to refer only to Whinfield's introduction to *The Spiritual Couplets of Maulāna Jalāluddīn Muhammad-i-Rūmī*,' where he says, 'Sūfīs who all accept Islām as a divinely established religion suppose that long before the creation of the world a contract was made by the Supreme Soul with the assembled world of spirits who are parts of it. Each spirit was addressed separately thus "Art thou not with Thy Lord?" that is, bound to him by solemn contract. To this they all answered with one voice "Yes!"'[1]

The two great characteristics of Sūfī thought, namely a belief in the unity, through effort, of the human soul with God, and the transitoriness of temporal things, which are a veil hiding the true nature of illumination from the comprehension of man, are evident in all Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry. Like the great poets of Persia he employs a variety of images to bring out this essential lesson. Prominent is the distinction between the true love (ishk hakkīkī) and the false love (ishk majāzī), between the true wine and the false wine.

'Set no love's store against the wine
Nor count wine dear at such appraise.
Prepare that head for cutting, thine.
The wineshop is the place for them
Who by the wine-jars end their days.

Who dull existence would conserve?
For no such aim the lover strives.
One breath from the Beloved's lips
Is better than a thousand lives.
And can this skin and bone of mine
Compare with the Beloved's wine?'

Wine in this sense is what uplifts and exhilarates the spirit in its search for God. The intoxicated ones are those overcome with the glorious delirium of divine illumination. Sometimes it is a realization of God's love, sometimes it is the act of loving God. The Vintner is God who vouchsafes a sip of the wine that brings a true realization of Him. Here enters the idea that there is danger and

[1] *The Masnawī-i-Manavi*. Translated by Whinfield. Introduction, pp. xxii-xxvii.

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difficulty in the process: the soul meets with peril and must be prepared to lose itself and disappear. The love itself is a poison that can ruin and destroy. In a passage which fuses together a number of Sūfī images Shāh Abdul Latīf draws the distinction between the false and the true wine, the danger of the draught, the knife of the vintner who slays, and the fulfilment that comes with final extinction.

'Why for such drink do yearners ask
If back they flee to save their lives
Whene'er the vintners draw their knives?
But they whose heads are given for wine
May sip the wine within the cask.'

One of the commonest figures of speech throughout the Risālo is that of separation from the Beloved, the state in which the soul is apart from God and has failed to achieve union with Him. According to the Sūfīs, before the human soul is embodied in a human body it lives in the ālami itlāk, where it is regarded as loose from the body. This is for the Sūfī non-existence, because it is existence apart from God. When God places the soul in the human body it lives in the ālami takayyūd or binding world, in which state it is bound to the body and held to be in prison. The soul is then separated from God. It is separate from the Beloved and regarded as a stranger wandering from its true home. For the Sūfī in this frame of mind the words of the Christian hymn are literally true:

'For ever with the Lord!
Amen. So let it be.
Life from the dead is in that word:
'Tis immortality.
Here, in the body pent,
Absent from him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home.'

There is hardly a poem in the Risālo that does not preach this doctrine in striking and beautiful language. In fact the general text of the poems might be taken from the couplet in the Sur Kalyān:

'The seas of separation roll
And drown each single separate soul.'

Here the emphasis is on the word 'separate'. Another of the commonest forms of expression in Sūfī thought is that of the path or way, the progress towards mystical fulfilment. The stages on this progress are very differently described by different writers. But speaking generally we say that there are four, nasut or humanity, where there is obedience to the tenets of orthodox religion: tarīkat, or the way in which the forms of religion give place

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to spiritual adoration : aruf or knowledge, where inspiration begins to take the place of plain belief : and hakīkat or truth, where the Sūfī attains union with the divine. The soul of man is a searcher upon the path. As Sell points out, the great object of life being to escape from the hindrances to pure love and to return to the divine essence, the Tālib, or seeker, attaches himself to a murshid or teacher and becomes a Sālik, or traveller, passing through periods of service, love, seclusion, knowledge, ecstasy, to truth, union with God (wasl) and fanā (extinction of individuality in the divine).[1] The Sūfī philosophy thus demands a strict self-discipline with renunciation of selfish feelings and a curbing of evil passions. It is based on a deep ethical system and lays stress upon purity of heart. The self, during the stage of purification, is thus a danger and an obstacle. It misleads the seeker and interposes between him and the Sought a veil that is hard to pierce. The poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf abounds in allusions to this scheme of belief. Although the self is a kind of will-of-the-wisp it is also, since it comes from God and seeks to return to God, one of the chief means of reaching illumination and seeing the Vision of truth, beauty and goodness.

As has been made manifest already, Shāh Abdul Latīf is primarily a poet and not a philosopher. We look, therefore, in vain for any long passages of Sūfī metaphysics in his verses. There are, however, occasional glimpses of the philosophy of the Sūfī system. In the Sur Maizūrī the poet hints at the permanence of the human soul which is not interrupted by the passing accidents of birth and death.

'By dying live that thou may'st feel
The Beauty of Beloved. Thou
Wilt surely do the righteous thing
If thou wilt follow this advice.
They who so died before their death
By death were not in death subdued.
Assuredly they live who lived
Before their life of living was.
Who lived before their living was
From age to age will live for aye.
They will not die again who died
Before the dying came to them.'

The play of meaning on life and death in this passage is very puzzling. But the significance lies probably in the Sūfī doctrine that the soul of man differs infinitely in kind but not at all in degree from the Divine Spirit 'whereof it is a particle and wherein it will ultimately be absorbed'. Allied to this metaphysic there appears also to be some suggestion of the Christian belief prominent in the New Testament of man dying to eternal life in the perfect love of God.

The technical terms of the Sūfī epistemology are not frequent in

[1] *The Faith of Islām*, pp. 92-4.

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Shāh Abdul Latīf. But they are not entirely absent. In the Sur Suhinī we find

'Learn well the lesson, Suhinī, of the hidden law
How by the Mystic Way the Truth of Justice speeds.
True knowledge is in sooth the joy to them who love.'

In the Sur Kōhiārī there is a play of meaning on the word 'Lāhut' which in its mystic sense is one of the stages on the path towards fulfilment—non-existence—and in its plain sense is the name of a village believed to have been in the Mekrān country near Sind. The holy mendicants pass on their way to Lāhut over the waste of sand.

'For they that certain knowledge won
Where stands on barren hill the town.
Behind them empty thoughts they put
To make them townsmen of Lāhut.'

Much greater than on any other of the metaphysical doctrines of the Sūfīs in the Risālo is the emphasis put upon the place of Self both as a distraction and obstacle and as a sure means of illumination. In the Sur Rāmkalī Shāh Abdul Latīf says :

'If thou dost think "I will a Jogi be"
Drain cup of nothingness and sitting gaze
On Nothingness itself : lay hold of it.
(Where there is "I" that nothingness displays)
O Seeker, full thy joy of pasture be
With God, One, Perfect One.'

In the same poem he says :

'Selfness destroy and from the self
Lay self aside. No life hath "This,"
No life at all. They're fools
Whose "I" in talking is.'

This is the same idea as is found in the Masnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī :

'Thou hast made these "Us" and "Me" for this purpose
To wit, to play chess with them by Thyself.
When Thou shalt become one entity with "Us" and "You"
Then thou wilt show true affection for these lovers.
When these "We" and "Ye" shall all become one Soul,
Then they will be lost and absorbed in the "Beloved."' [1]

The other idea of the self is developed in the Sur Sasuī Ābrī in the Risālo

'"Thy love is in thy lap" : then why from travellers
dost thou make thy quest ?
"Thy love's within thee ! See'st thou not ?" This
saying ponder well and know :
"Thy love is in thy lap." Why askest thou like
this for sign of him ?
"Nearer than vein of neck is he." Thine own is
with thy very self.'

[1] *The Masnawī.* Translated by Whinfield, p. 31.

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The same idea is found in the same poem

'The loved one that thou sufferest for
Of very sooth resides in thee.
Why go to Wankar, if not here
Thou searchest thy beloved to see ?

Another common idea in Sūfism is the need for rending the veil of the temporary and ephemeral. This is the spirit which moves Jāmī to exclaim : ' Remove from our eyes the veil of ignorance and show us things as they really are. Show not to us non-existence and existence nor cast the veil of non-existence over the beauty of existence. Make this phenomenal world the mirror to reflect the manifestations of thy beauty and not a veil to separate and repel us from Thee.'[1]

This idea occurs again and again in the Risālo. The wayward and the froward heart is one of the chief obstacles to the rending of the veil that hides God from man. The froward heart is likened to a camel which will not behave reasonably but insists on having its own stupid way. In a passage from the Masnawī which combines several favourite symbols together Jalāluddīn says :

'The wine is from that world ; the vessels from this.
The vessels are seen but the wine is hidden !
Hidden indeed from the sight of the camel,
But open and manifest to the spiritual.
O God, our eyes are blinded.'[2]

Exactly in this strain is one of the finest poems in Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry in which the simile of the camel is developed in a very moving manner.

'The stupid brute I tell and tell
That in the milkbush there's no zest.
Yon poison bush is many's knell
But hath his silly head obsessed.
Around in plenty for his need
Is ripened scrub of sandalwood.
The sulky grumbler pays no heed
And makes me weep my tears in blood.'

These examples will serve to show how Shāh Abdul Latīf is in the authentic line of Sūfī poets. Writing of the Persian Sūfī poets Nicholson has said, 'The real basis of their poetry is a loftily inculcated ethical system which recognizes in purity of heart, self-renunciation and bridling of the passions, the necessary conditions of eternal happiness. Attached to this we find a pantheistic theory of the emanation of all things from God and their ultimate union with

[1] *Selections from the Lawāih.* Translated by Hadland Davies, p. 55.
[2] *The Masnawī.* Translated by Whinfield, p. 262.

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him."[1] All these traits are evident in the Sindhi poet. More than one example has been given of the resemblance of his thought and expression to that of Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī. Occasionally he preaches a severe ethical righteousness that is strictly on the lines of orthodox Islāmic didacticism.

'Be patient; bow thy head and see.
Lo! Anger is a mighty woe.
In patience there abideth joy.
O honest sir, this surely know.
Be patient. Patient folks prevail.
The stiff-necked are in sorry plight.
The palate of all hasty men
Hath never savoured patience right.
He eats the bread of punishment
Whose early anger breaketh forth.
The man of malice holds his robe
And finds within it nought of worth.'

The complex history of Sūfism can therefore be read in every page of the Risālo. Here there is an echo of Plotinus and Hellenism: there of Alexandrine Christianity with a hint now and then of something that springs from the Buddhism and Vedanta doctrines of India. It would be a great mistake however to assume that the religion of the poet is anything but that of Islām. Strange is it that the mysticism of Christianity is not alien to the spirit of the Sindhi poet. For in the beautiful poem of Clough 'The Hidden Love' is something very much akin to the emotional and religious attitude which characterizes the work of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

'O let me love my love unto myself alone
And know my knowledge to the world unknown.
No witness to my vision call,
Beholding, unbeheld of all:
And worship Thee, with Thee, withdrawn apart,
Who e'er, what e'er Thou art,
Within the closest veil of mine own inward heart.'

No one can exhaust by description the many facets of Sūfism. Like a Persian carpet or the sea over which the soft breeze plays it takes its colour from the light that falls upon it. From so many angles can the eye behold it that there is no end to the variety of its appearances. All that can be done is to trace some of its main ideas and show how they are expressed with emphasis now on this aspect now on that of the simple emotional longing of man for what he regards as the divine. Now it is beauty, now it is self-renunciation, now it is the hopelessness of the ideal and the unworthiness of man which absorbs the whole thought of the mystic.

Who shall summarize the changing forms of such an attitude?

[1] *Selected Poems from the Diwāni-Shamsi Tabrīz.* Introduction, p. xxvi.

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Historically we may trace as far as we can the origin of some of these ideas. Philosophically we may analyse the depth of the thought or the worth of the metaphysic. Aesthetically we may describe the effect upon the introspective mind of him who listens to the poetry in which Sūfism is declared. But beyond that we cannot go. Thus fully conscious of the limitations upon me by the very nature of the subject matter I have had to be content with illustrations of the Sūfī mood in the Sindhi poet and allow the reader to find out for himself from the verses what other meaning and what other aspect of truth and beauty they may convey. The similarity of Shāh Abdul Latīf's attitude to that of the great Persian Sūfī poets, and especially Jalāluddīn Rūmī and Jāmī I have mentioned more than once. Indeed it would be possible to fill a whole volume detailing the resemblances. But to do this would not only weary the reader but would also destroy some of the pleasure that all good poetry brings, the joy of finding out the many-sidedness of its beauty for oneself. I prefer, therefore, to end on the serious note of Sūfism, the great harmony it makes with the deepest feelings of the true believer in religion, submissive and humble before the wonder of something that far surpasses the individual imagining of one finite mind. This is the prevalent note of Islāmic mysticism. Whether, as Macdonald thinks, the main influence comes from the religion of Muhammad himself, or whether it has been wrought to final perfection by the peculiar bent of the Persian mind working on that Islāmic material matters not. After all the achievement is there for us to make of it what we will. There is a province where poetry, religion and philosophy all meet on common ground. Sūfism has certainly found the path to that fusion of the deepest thoughts of which the introspective mind of man is capable. All are melted together in a universal comprehension where the accidents of life and death make no difference to understanding.

> 'Love of my life! the patient dead will throng
> About us as we step on that grey sand,
> Singing and hear all heaven in the song
> And doubt and see our eyes, and understand.'[1]

This may be all delusion and word-weaving. But if it is merely delusion, the delusion is a very pleasant one, shared by many, like Shāh Abdul Latīf, whose verses will continue to delight mankind.

[1] Humbert Wolfe.

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# Chapter VII

## Tasawwuf by the Lower Indus

The practice of Sūfism by the common people in Sind was a very different thing from the refined system of the poets and theologians. The changes which Sūfism underwent in the course of its history have already been indicated. It is not possible to trace in any detail the progress of tasawwuf in Sind. When Sūfism became a system of practice it became associated with the rise of various orders of darwīshes and mendicants. In the Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī it is stated ' Besides the shrine of the Shaikh of Shaikhs, Shaikh Pattā, there are (i.e. in Tatta) some ten or twelve other places where darwīshes perform their dance. These excitable men often work themselves into such a state of holy ecstasy that they cast themselves on the rocks of the mountain of Makalī : but by the blessing of their learned doctors and teachers no harm befalls them. This custom, however much opposed to the laws of Islām, has been transmitted from generation to generation and all attempts of wise teachers and just governors have never succeeded in putting a stop to it.'[1] Popular Sūfism in fact degenerated into something that the mullas viewed with distaste.

There is no reliable account of the progress of the movement in Sind. The Tuhfat-al-Kirām, which is a treasure house of curious information of a non-scientific character, was written by a man who is described by Elliot as ' very credulous in recording the miracles of saints so numerous that there is scarcely a village in that priest-ridden country which has not its tombs of holy men whose lives and powers are here recorded with implicit faith.'[2] But this kind of information is useless. Nor is any of the modern day Sindhi work on this subject in better case because it is founded on the material of the Tuhfat-al-Kirām and other works of similar quality. A few of the Sind Sūfīs stand out as famous saints and men of some learning. But the rest of them must be taken on trust. That there were a number of cultured and thinking men imbued with the higher tenets of Sūfī philosophy is open to no doubt. But we have very little information about them. The best-known early one was Sayid Usman Shāh Marwandī who became famous as Lāl Shāhbāz with a popular shrine at Sehwan. He was the author of a number of works used for the instruction of youth in a later age, as noted by Burton.

[1] *Tārīkh-i-Tāhirī.* Elliot: I, pp. 272-4. [2] Elliot: I, op. cit.



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Jēthmal Parsrām has given some account of him and his companions in his book on ' Sind and its Sūfīs ' ; but the facts are meagre. He was a Kalandar and attained a great reputation for sanctity in his lifetime and after his death. The gathering at his tomb on his saint-day produced and still produces strange sights. Religion and superstition are mingled and Hindus and Muslims assemble together to do honour to his memory. Jēthmal Parsrām remarks, ' In Sehwan where Lāl Shāhbāz (also called Kalandar Lāl Marwandī) lived and died you find during the annual fair thousands of Hindus and Muhammadans camped round the tomb, mixing freely, and singing the Sūfī songs that ever melt the heart. Wrong things have also entered into the celebration of these holy days, but that is what always happens.'[1] Of the Sūfī poets of Sind about whom an immense modern literature is now poured forth, none are superior to Shāh Abdul Latīf and most, if not all, of them are later in date. Between the thirteenth century when Lāl Shāhbāz flourished and the eighteenth century when Shāh Abdul Latīf lived there is very little that can be said to be securely established in the way of verified historical fact. Sachal Sarmast (The Intoxicated) is the best of these poets and he appears to have been born some time between 1739 and 1757 and is alleged as a boy to have met Shāh Abdul Latīf.

For our knowledge of tasawwuf in Sind we are indebted to Burton. ' Tasuwwuf', says Burton, ' under the native governments was as formidable a political engine as most of the secret confraternities recorded in history . . . . Even among the mild Sindhis a noted Pīr (religious superior) formerly might safely order one of his Murīds or disciples to murder an enemy. Yet the native princes encouraged it partly from superstition and partly because the price of every Pīr was well known to them ' (*History of Sindh*, pp. 203-4). The Pīrs held positions of great personal authority. The Sūfī fakīrs of Sind belonged to the two great orders of Jelālī and Jemālī darwīshes. They underwent courses of initiation which followed more or less the discipline of the Muslim darwīshes about whom much recondite information can be gleaned from Brown's great work on ' The Dervishes '. The Jelālī fakīrs of Sind wore a felt hat like a fool's cap called ' taj ', a coat of black wool with white threads like a shroud without sleeves called ' kafnī ' and a blanket of wool called ' gōdrī '. Such persons were in reality professional beggars and part of their stock-in-trade consisted of a ' tasbīh ' or rosary, an ' asā ' or staff of ebony or blackwood, a " berāgan ' or forked stick used to support the forehead for meditation or repose, ' dhāga ' or a girdle of black twisted wool, ' gano ' or black wool mixed with red strands used as a necklace, a ' gābrī ' or wallet to

[1] op. cit., p. 93.

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contain food and necessaries, and a ' tumbī ' or beggar's gourd used for collecting alms and as a drinking vessel. The Sind Jemālī fakīrs belonged to four orders, the Kādirī, the Nakshbandī, the Suhrawardī and the Chishtī. The shughls and huzūrs of some of these orders are described by Burton. Much curious information about these religious exercises has been given by him. (See *History of Sindh*, pp. 213-22.) The discipline does not differ greatly in detail from the common run of ascetic practices elsewhere in Islām, and is interesting chiefly as throwing a sidelight upon human psychology. It is hard to see what religious merit can have resulted from many of these practices. Some of the saintliest Sind pīrs seem to have had the same idea of them. Pīr Murād who is reputed to have said that ' it is better to restore one dead heart to eternal life than life to a thousand dead bodies ' would appear to have believed that faith is a more reliable weapon than works, an article of belief that Islām shares with Christianity.

Some idea of the sanctity attaching to persons of the religious mendicant class may be gathered from the poem of Shāh Abdul Latīf called Rāmkalī and translated by me under the title ' The Holy Men '. That poem, while ostensibly referring to Hindu Jōgīs, Bairāgīs, Adēsīs and other religious beggars, is much wider in its appeal, as is apparent from the passages that can refer only to a belief in Islām. It was typical of Shāh Abdul Latīf's eclecticism that he should lump all religious mendicants together in this way. But his puritanical religion is brought out clearly in the scathing passages in which he refers to false practices, and to lapses from the stern rigour of asceticism.

' But of the Lord alone true worship is.
There's none of pīr or prophet. They do sin
Who worship pīrs and worse than these are they
Who worship idols, those poor luckless folk,
From path misled who grasped untruthfulness.
Self worship not, thou faithful, pure of heart.
They, who do this, believe not ; let disgrace
Their faces blacken.'

It would, however, be absurd to believe that the common man applied these severe standards of righteousness to the Kalandars and so-called Sūfī beggars who wandered far and wide over Sind taking their toll of the superstitious country people. Nothing is more certain than that the criticisms of this system passed by Burnes and Burton are more than deserved. Nor would it be fair to judge tasawwuf in Sind by the standards of the lowest pretenders to it. It is not fair to value Sūfism by its aberrations. It should be judged by its successes and not by what ignorant persons interpret its ideals to be.

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Writers like Macdonald hold that the practices of the mendicant orders, whatever the ultimate backslidings to which they descended, have a solid foundation in the sayings and injunctions of the Prophet. He finds in the Korān several indications of the ideals of these mendicant orders. 'There is a phrase', he says, 'which evidently had caught the imagination of Muhammad and to which he returns again and again. It is that of "The Face of Allāh". He uses it quite differently from the other anthropomorphisms in the Qurān. . . . and later Islām has taken it and developed it and found in truth all the mysteries of the emotional life in it given indirectly with it.' Macdonald quotes from the Korān these passages. 'Men act out of desire for the Face of Allāh': they 'desire the Face of Allāh': they act 'for the sake of the Face of Allāh': and 'Everything goes to destruction—is going to destruction—except His Face.'[1] From such passages as these Macdonald infers that 'something more lies in these phrases than the essence of Allāh'. There is in fact a deep mystical consciousness not dissociated from the idea of direct communion with God through a kind of untaught inspiration.

Another great influence in the development of mystical practice came from the 'remembering of God' (zikr), the great source of devotional exercise which was carried to extremes by the darwīsh orders. In fact in its more violent forms this practice of zikr developed into a species of autohypnotism used to produce the holy trance or ecstasy so prominent in the discipline of the mendicant orders. It was precisely this form of emotional excitement which made the strongest appeal to the common man and convinced him of the divine inspiration and saintliness of the holy mendicant. Lastly there were the company of the saints, the 'friends of Allāh'. 'There is no fear upon them, nor do they grieve.' Amongst the chief of these is Al-Khadir, who drank the waters of immortality. In Sind under the name of Khwājo Khizr this saint has always exercised a great power and has in popular superstition become somehow identified with the spirit of the waters and, by an easy transference of thought, with the deity of the river Indus. In Balūch poetry the Khwājo is identified with the Indus and is represented as an old man dressed in green. 'The Mazārīs untied a boat from the ferry and let it float into the Khwāja's waves. Round featherless arrows and four-feathered arrows were all mixed together: the Khwāja himself will remember that battle.'[2] So runs a Balūch song. The Daryā-panthīs of Sind are believers in the sanctity of the River God or the God of Waters, and the belief affects Hindu and Muslim alike. Khwājo Khizr has a place all to himself as the Zinda Pīr, the living

[1] *Aspects of Life in Islām*, VI, pp. 184-209 *passim*.
[2] Longworth Dames: *Popular Poetry of the Baloches*, p. 73.

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Pīr, who has drunk the waters of life and will live till the last day when, after being reduced to dust, he will be raised up again with the rest of mankind. Burton quotes a hymn in honour of the Indus where the river is addressed as Khwājo Khizr (*History of Sindh*, p. 327).

Then finally there prevails throughout Islām the belief that the saints are not dead, but merely sleeping. They are within their tombs. Their tombs have become their houses which they can leave and whence make journeys. They are accessible to prayer and grant favours. This is the solid foundation of the extraordinary devotion paid in Sind to the tombs of the deceased saints, pīrs and holy men. This devotion is bound up with the system of personal religion that exists in the relation of pīr to murīd. The disciple must obey his spiritual director. From this have risen many darwīsh orders commonly called after the name of the saints who founded them. Thus present practice and continued tradition combine to weld the whole into a coherent system, the roots of which go deep into the past.

From the thirteenth century onwards there was a great immigration into Sind of learned and religious-minded men from the centre of the Muslim world. Lāl Shāhbāz, who came with several companions, some of whom made names for themselves elsewhere in India, was a man of this kind. The ancestor of Abul Fazul was another. The great ascendancy of the Sayids in Sind doubtless dates from about this time. It was a time when Islām was expanding territorially once more. The labours of the Muslim scholastics had hammered out a kind of stabilized religion in which the austerities of the Korān and the Traditions had been widened and softened by the influence of the Persianized Muslims of Central Asia. It is noteworthy that at an even earlier stage there had been signs of unorthodoxy amongst the governing oligarchy in Sind. For we know that there had been more than a trace of Qarmatian doctrine. We know also that some of the native Sindhi rulers who succeeded the immigrant Muslims as rulers from the eleventh century onwards were affected by this, when they began to turn towards Islām. Most of the Sayids were of Shīa persuasion and it is possible that Sind was for a time a congenial home for these immigrants. That there has been any consistent progress of Sūfism in Sind I do not believe. What seems to have happened is that occasionally an exceptional man versed in the literary heritage of Persia emerged from among his fellows and gained a reputation for learning and sanctity.

That the refined and idealized religion of a man like Shāh Abdul Latīf was really typical of the populace at large cannot be true.

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The esoteric meaning of mystical poetry does not come to an unlettered multitude. But failure to reach this level of understanding does not mean that the poems as musical compositions did not make their appeal or that they failed to illuminate the beliefs of the common man. But a mighty gulf yawns between the thinking of Shāh Abdul Latīf and the utterances of the itinerant fakīr who calls on Allāh with unwearied reiteration till exhausted he tinkles his bell while his mind wanders in amazed ecstasy. Yet popular nomenclature would make both men Sūfīs. We might as well expect Plato and the village mummer to speak a common language. The real message of tasawwuf is with the intellectuals, not with the professional performers of routine. Sūfism in Sind has been handed down by a handful of learned men from age to age. It is they who have kept alive the spirit of its idealism. Its philosophy needs no intoning reiteration. It depends for its enunciation on the services of no wandering beggar clad in woollen cloak and clutching in his hand a hollow gourd.

'Live on, O Sweet One, Live.
May mine ears never hear
An evil word of Thee.
Brought each to other near
Mine eyes and heart combine
To speak of Thee and Thine'

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# BOOK III

## THE POEMS

'Ah Love! Could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!'

RUBAIYĀT OF OMAR KHAYYĀM.

'The veil between God and his servant is neither earth nor heaven, nor the Throne nor the Footstool: thy selfhood and illusions are the veil, and when thou removest these thou hast attained unto God.'

ABU SAYID ABU'L KHAIR.

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## Translator's Preface

In presenting this verse translation of the *Shāh Abdul Latif jē Risālē jō Muntakhab* I take the opportunity to offer a few explanations. The translator is always faced with a dilemma. Is he to reproduce the words or the spirit of the original ? Is he to be a photographer or an artist ? There is no resolving this dilemma. In the end the translator falls back on some kind of compromise because rarely is it possible without loss to transmute the genius of one language into that of another.

In the difficult poems of this eighteenth-century Sindhi poet I have striven throughout to catch the spirit of his poetry. But I have also endeavoured to keep the actual words of the translation as close to the text as circumstances will allow. My translation is generally faithful to the original, except where the exigencies of metre make some latitude inevitable. But these concessions to the needs of English have been few. The metaphors and similes of the original have been retained even where they may appear strange and unfamiliar to English readers. In only a few cases have I slightly altered metaphors or changed the order of words. I may state quite frankly that I have found it impossible to reproduce the brevity and succinctness of the Sindhi text. The poet employed a highly developed form of language admirably adapted for its poetical, mystical and religious purpose. He knew throughout that his hearers were familiar with its implications and allusions. The translator into a foreign idiom is therefore handicapped. He cannot merely translate and remain intelligible. He must explain subtle nuances of meaning which the Sindhi takes for granted.

Another matter of importance is that the attempt to catch the spirit of the original has necessitated the use of a vast variety of metres. Most of these are based on conventional English models. For the finest of the short lyrical poems indeed English proves itself an admirable vehicle of expression. The translations will also make clear the general seriousness of the poetry. It is only occasionally that a lighter and more flippant note is struck. In a few cases I have tried experiments in English verse which are more in the method of modern poetry with its greater freedom from restraint in metrical form. Thus in some of the poems in 'The King and the Minstrel', in 'Līlan and Chanēsar' and in 'Māruī and Umar' will be found examples of unconventionality, of attempts to explore new ways of sounding the lyrical possibilities of the English language.



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One great difficulty in dealing with the mass of poems of the Muntakhab lies in the irregular length of the baits. It is not easy to run one bait into another in order to obtain the regularity characteristic of English poetry. The baits are usually self-contained. The thought often changes abruptly from one to another. The unequal length of the baits is therefore something which the translator can do little to cure, even if it be thought that a cure is desirable. Personally I regard the irregularity in length as something worth preserving because it is a sign of the spontaneity which is a supreme merit of the original. No translator can regard his work as satisfactory unless he induces his readers to seek the original for themselves. I am hopeful therefore that this work, whatever its shortcomings, will lead to the study of the Sindhi text. Scholars and lovers of rhythmical language are assured of finding in it something that will prove of lasting delight.

H. T. SORLEY

Bombay

*March* 31*st*, 1938

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# THE RISĀLO OF SHĀH ABDUL LATĪF OF BHIT

*Re-arranged and translated into English verse*

'Life like a dome of many coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity.'

SHELLEY.


PART I. MERCY AND GRACE

PART II. THE DAILY ROUND

PART III. LOVE


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## *Arrangement of the Surs in this Translation and in Pōkardās's edition of the Muntakhab*

| *This Translation.* | | *Pōkardās's Edition.* Surs showing cantos, couplets, verses and wals. |
|---|---|---|
| **PART I** | | |
| I | Kalyān | 1 |
| II | ,, | 2 |
| III | ,, | 3 |
| IV | Chaman Kalyān | 1 |
| V | ,, ,, | 2 (1-3) |
| VI | ,, ,, | 2 (4-7) |
| VII | ,, ,, | 3 |
| VIII | ,, ,, | 4 |
| IX (I, II and III) | Samundī | 1, 2 and 3 |
| X | Srirāg | 1 |
| XI | ,, | 2 |
| XII | ,, | 3 |
| XIII | ,, | 4 |
| XIV | Khambhāt | 1 |
| XV | ,, | 2 |
| XVI | Āsa | 1 |
| XVII | ,, | 2 |
| XVIII | Prabhātī | Whole |
| XIX | Barvo Sindhi | Whole |
| XX | Bilāwal | 1 |
| XXI | ,, | 2 |
| **PART II** | | |
| I (I) | Sārang | 1 |
| (II) | ,, | 2 |
| (III) | ,, | 3 (1-3) |
| (IV) | ,, | 3 (4-7) |
| (V) | ,, | 4 (1-5 (2)) |
| (VI) | ,, | 4 (5(3)-(11)) |
| (VII) | ,, | 4 (6-8) |



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| *This Translation.* | | | *Pōkardās's Edition.* Surs showing cantos, couplets, verses and wais. |
|---|---|---|---|
| II | (I) | Kēdārō | 1 |
| | (II) | ,, | 2 |
| | (III) | ,, | 3 |
| | (IV) | ,, | 4 |
| | (V) | ,, | 5 |
| III | (I) | Sōrath | 1 |
| | (II) | ,, | 2 |
| | (III) | ,, | 3 and Wai |
| | (IV) | ,, | |
| IV | | Khāhōrī | Whole |
| V | (I) | Rāmkalī | 1. |
| | (II) | ,, | 2 |
| | (III) | ,, | 3 |
| | (IV) | ,, | 4 (1-4) |
| | (V) | ,, | 4 (5-8) |
| | (VI) | ,, | 5 |
| | (VII) | ,, | 6 |
| VI | (I) | Kāpātī | (1-8) |
| | (II) | ,, | (9-13) |
| | (III) | ,, | (14-25) |

PART III

*Sasuī and Punhūṅ*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I | Rip | 1 |
| II | ,, | 2 |
| III | Dāhir | 1 |
| IV | ,, | 2 |
| V | ,, | 3 |
| VI | Kōhiārī | 1 |
| VII | ,, | 2 |
| VIII | ,, | 3 |
| IX | ,, | 4 |
| X | ,, | 5 |
| XI | ,, | 6 |
| XII | Sasuī Ābrī | 1 |
| XIII | ,, ,, | 2 |
| XIV | ,, ,, | 3 |

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| *This Translation.* | | *Pōkardās's Edition.* Surs showing cantos, couplets, verses and wais. |
|---|---|---|
| XV | Sasuī Ābrī | 4 |
| XVI | ,, ,, | 5 |
| XVII | ,, ,, | 6 |
| XVIII | ,, ,, | 7 |
| XIX | ,, ,, | 8 |
| XX | ,, ,, | 9 |
| XXI | ,, ,, | 10 |
| XXII | Dēsī | 1 |
| XXIII | ,, | 2 |
| XXIV | ,, | 3 |
| XXV | ,, | 4 |
| XXVI | ,, | 5 |
| XXVII | ,, | 6 |
| XXVIII | Maizūrī | 1 |
| XXIX | ,, | 2 |
| XXX | ,, | 3 |
| XXXI | ,, | 4 |
| XXXII | ,, | 5 |
| XXXIII | ,, | 6 |
| XXXIV | Husainī | 1 |
| XXXV | ,, | 2 |
| XXXVI | ,, | 3 |
| XXXVII | ,, | 4 |
| XXXVIII | ,, | 5 |
| XXXIX | ,, | 6 |
| XL | ,, | 7 |
| XLI | ,, | 8 |
| XLII | ,, | 9 |
| XLIII | ,, | 10 |
| XLIV | ,, | 11 |
| XLV | ,, | 12 (1-4) |
| XLVI | ,, | 12 (5-24) |
| *Sukinī and Mēhār* | | |
| I, II, III, IV, V | Suhinī | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| VI | ,, | 6 (1) |
| VII | ,, | 6 (2-4) |

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| *This Translation.* | | *Pōkardās's Edition.* Surs showing cantos, couplets, verses and waīs. |
|---|---|---|
| VIII | Suhinī | 7 (1-3) |
| IX | ,, | 7 (4-15) |
| X | ,, | 7 (16-25) |
| *Mōmul and Rānō* | | |
| I, II, III, IV | Mōmul Rānō | 1, 2, 3, 4 |
| *Līlaṅ and Chanēsar* | | |
| I | Līlan Chanēsar | 1 |
| II | ,, ,, | 2 (1-5) |
| III | ,, ,, | 2 (6-11) |
| IV | ,, ,, | 3 (1-3) |
| V | ,, ,, | 3 (4-6) |
| VI | ,, ,, | 3 (7-13) |
| *Mārui and Umar* | | |
| I | Mārui | 1 (1-5) |
| II | ,, | 2 (1-5) |
| III | ,, | 1 (waī) |
| IV | ,, | 2 (6-9) |
| V | ,, | 3 (1-10) |
| VI | ,, | 3 (waī) |
| VII | ,, | 4 |
| VIII | ,, | 5 |

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'Why dost Thou hide Thy lovely face? O why
Does that eclipsing hand so long deny
The sunshine of Thy soul-enliv'ning eye?
Without that Light, what light remains in me?
Thou art my Life, my Way, my Light: in Thee
I live, I move and by Thy beams I see.'

FRANCIS QUARLES: 'The Divine Lover.'

'Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything?'

GEORGE HERBERT: 'Love.'

'Let this immortal life where'er it comes
Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms.
Let mystic deaths wait on't: and wise souls be
The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.'

RICHARD CRASHAW: 'Upon the book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Teresa.'

'Dead be my heart to all below,
To mortal joys and mortal cares:
To sensual bliss that charms us so
Be dark, my eyes, and deaf, my ears.'

ISAAC WATTS: 'The Farewell.'

'Said I: "To whom belongs thy Beauty?" He
Replied "Since I alone exist, to me:
Lover, Beloved and Love am I in one,
Beauty and Mirror, and the Eyes which see."'

ABU SAYID IBN ABU'L KHAIR.



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# Part I

## Mercy and Grace

'God of Mercy, God of Grace,
Show the brightness of Thy face.'


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| XXI | The Guide .. .. .. .. .. .. .. | 331 |




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## I. God the All-Powerful

In the Beginning Allāh is,
Who Knoweth All, Who sits aloft,
The Lord of all the World that be.
He is the Mighty, Old of Days,
Of His Own Power Established.
He is the Lord, One, Only One,
Sustainer and Compassionate.
Sing ye the praise of Him Who Heals,
The True One, sing ye praise of Him.
He is the One, Who Hath No Peer.
Confess ye this. In heart of heart
Acknowledge ye The Praised One, who
The Causer of the Causes is.
Why go ye then and bow yourselves
In front of others, why go ye?
Men were who said: 'He is the One,
Without a Peer', in heart of heart
Acknowledging the Praised One, who
The Causer of the Causes is.
Such men did from the righteous path
Set not an erring foot astray.
Men are whom God the One hath cut,
Whose bodies He hath cut in twain.
Who, having seen the severed parts,
Doth not for self, unfortunate,
Desire like theirs the severance?
God who is One no rival hath.
Herein of Him the Oneness is,
And righteousness of Truth. But who
Embraced false Two-ness lost indeed
The savour and the salt of life.

## II. The Hard Way

My weakness pleaseth. In God's ears
The cries of my love-torment ring.
I tasted from the gallows tree
The goodness that my sorrows bring.

The gallows calls me. Oh, my friends,
Will any friend now come with me?
They who have found the name of love
Must go of love's necessity.

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The scaffold of its very self
Doth summon lovers. Do ye seek
To know what love is? Fare not forth.
Put heads aside as little worth
And, asking then what love is, speak.

The noose ('tis in the web of things)
Adorneth lovers. Sayid sings:
'They saw love's spear and trembled not.
Upon the block they took their stand.
Love called and they dissembled not.
Love set them there. 'Twas love's command.'

When love takes knife in butcher hand,
Sharp be it not. But rather may
Its edge be blunt. For then on thee
Beloved's hands will longer stay.

Of love thou knowest why and how?
The knife falls. Let no grumble start.
Tell nought to others of the smart
Beloved caused thee. Make thy vow
And keep the pain within thy heart.

In front are lovers on the block.
With heads prepared, they stand behind.
Cut off thy head. So failing not
Thou mayest true acceptance find.
No severed heads then on the ground
Will bring thy failure to thy mind.
Within the wineshop slaughter rolls
In waves of flooding unconfined.

If sipping hath thy fancy led
The wineshop is the place for thee.
Beside the wine-jar lay thy head
And, yielding it in bargain fee,
Quaff many cups of wine instead.

Set not love's store against the wine
Nor count wine dear at such appraise.
Prepare that head for cutting, thine.
The wineshop is the place for them
Who by the wine-jars end their days.

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'Tis poison that all lovers sup.
But lovers see it and rejoice.
The bitter and the deadly cup
Is theirs by use, by wonted choice.
'Love's arrow pierced them', says Latīf.
The seas of separation roll
And drown each single, separate, soul.

Why for such drink do yearners ask
If back they flee to save their lives
Whene'er the vintners draw their knives?
But they whose heads are given for wine
May sip the wine within the cask.

Yes; let them think of wine indeed
Whose severed bodies lie apart,
Whose flesh within the cauldron burns,
Who let their hands, with deadly turns,
Wreak havoc on their living heart.

Who dull existence would conserve?
For no such aim the lover strives.
One breath from the Beloved's lips
Is better than a thousand lives.
And can this skin and bone of mine
Compare with the Beloved's wine?

## III. Love is Enough

The friends who planted in my heart
The questings of my pain,
My friends have gone and from my mind
Have sorrow's fardel ta'en:
Nor pleaseth the voice of the Healer now;
'Tis an empty sound and vain.

O taste thou wisely, sweetness all,
Of bitterness ne'er a trace,
Beside thy friends thou shalt surely find.
But the griefs that have settled on thee
And made thee their dwelling-place,
To stranger folk wilt thou call to mind?

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The folk will ask, and a smile extend,
'Tell us, where is hand of thy Friend?'
But lovers from 'neath the spear of love
Take not themselves away.
The lover meets death, head held above,
And when there cometh the hour to slay,
'Tis for death, thus slain, that the martyrs pray.

## IV. The Physic

All wretched folk 'neath aching wound who bend
Are grateful for the pain that dwells within.
They wind the clew of torment to its end
And cut not short the thread of life they spin.

O thou Physician, give me not the dose
That maketh well. For I shall then be strong.
To ask of me how now my illness goes
Then never friend may haply chance along.

False healers have my feebleness unmanned.
The true physician did not come to me.
But quacks employed their cauterising brand
And brought more aches and pains than formerly.

## V. The Fire of Love

In agony loved ones are turning.
There streameth the cry of 'Woe'
There is torment of fire and the burning
Consumes their vitals and, lo!
From their reins cometh savour of burning.
Come look at this hap with discerning
If, trusting in faith, ye go.

Do I shrink if my body be toasted
On embers of bābul and thorn?
On the spit let my vitals be roasted.
I am gone from the hands of the Healer.
To my friends I must hie me forlorn.

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Ask the moths what know they of burning
That have offered their lives to the blaze.
A thrust from the lance of yearning
Hath pierced their vitals turning
And put an end to their days.

## VI. The Flames

If fancy make a moth of thee
The flames thou seest, faltering not.
Beloved's rare effulgence see
And enter in, as bridegroom ought.
Still art thou as the unbaked clay.
Thou knowest not the oven is hot.

Near the devouring fire they came,
These moths determined. Scorching blast
Did not their steady courage tame.
All on the flames their bodies massed
In one wild weltering holocaust.

Within the heart red embers glow,
But never outward vapours rise.
Heap up the fire and fan desire
That being burnt may make thee wise.

They surely in the trial have won
Who died by death within the flame.
But they whose hands put out the brands
Have gotten darkness for their name.
Within whose heart love's fires glow,
They've learnt all men can ever know.

## VII. Love's Pain

By lovers ne'er is God forgot.
In sighing dies their breath away.
They take no rest and sink o'erwhelmed
If one sharp word Beloved say.

For lovers are not like to thee.
Unmaimed limbs thee lusty keep.
They stand before Beloved's door
And daily tears of anguish weep.
Nor any other way is right
To find acceptance in Love's sight.

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Even now a mere straw pricks thee
And a trickle of blood doth start
But the wounds that thy loved ones cause thee,
How wilt thou bear their smart ?
And why seekest thou to discover
This love that tears the heart ?

It doth not make thee loverwise
To hide behind the screen and peep.
Thy body in Beloved's yard
Thou hast not mortified nor marred.
It is but empty vain emprize
To laugh and eat and sleep.

O mother ! if thou hast not shut
The peeping crannies where folk peer,
Thou wilt not the Beloved see
In perfect beauty full and clear.

O lovers ! sit by loved one's path,
Nor weary from Friend's lattice go.
The loved one mercy's medicine gives
And from thy hot wounds takes the glow.
Without thee, Love, life hath no spell.
But Thou, without us, livest well.

O lovers ! sit by loved one's path
And when from out the wineshop's store
They offer wine, keep steady head
And go not near the vintner's door.

## VIII. The Healing

When there's no need no healer calls.
Had love's sore pain been in thy side,
Then surely had the healers come
And healing hand to thee applied.

Whate'er the healer gave to thee
Be brave and suffer. Say not this :
'They severed friend from friend apart.'
Say rather 'Friends they joined in bliss.'

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Be patient, bow thy head and see.
Lo ! anger is a mighty woe.
In patience there abideth joy.
O honest Sir, this surely know.

Be patient. Patient folks prevail.
The stiffnecked are in sorry plight.
The palate of all hasty men
Hath never savoured patience right.

He eats the bread of punishment
Whose early anger breaketh forth.
The man of malice holds his robe
And finds within it nought of worth.

## IX. The Sailing (I)

O Mother, stay where the boatmen stay ;
Where their hawser is, remain,
That they may not leave thee and slip away
Plunging thy life in pain.

O Mother, hard by their hawsers stay,
Filling thy mind with woe,
Lest the boatmen cheat thee and slip away
Having kindled thy heart to a glow.

While still their anchor unweighed they leave,
Take speed in the chance and go,
Lest the sailors pass from the land to cleave
The channels where waters flow.

O happy youth and happy tide
When my friends cast out on the trail !
I wept and wept but they would not bide.
Ah misery : what can avail ?
My tortured soul the trader hanged
When he left me and hoisted sail.

Ah, lack a day ! when they went away,
To leave me alone, alone :
Age followed age in unending stage
But there came back never an one.
For them who went will the heart be rent
Of a stricken woman o'erthrown.

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When the sailors sailed out over the deep
The surge of the ocean's trend
Did bear them off, and they went away
Whither journeying hath no end.

O mother of mine ! in my paltry life
This sailor memory stays,
And the trader seeking the distant port
Made the days succeed the days.

The sailor bond that binds my heart
Is surely with grief entwined
The trader hath rent my soul in twain
That he leave me alone behind.

Love pierced my soul and he fell to tears
When he set his hands on the prow.
This commerce that thou hast learned, O Friend,
Have thou no truck with it now.

Love letteth me not the rope untie,
But graspeth the very spar.
This night, O Friend, for me remain ;
Go not, Beloved, to part us twain
In thy seeking to fare so far.

Surely my melting soul is nought,
For while I stood on the strand,
Love came himself, the cable sought
And pushed the boat from the land.
Of sailors I knew no useful lore,
Else then had my body's strength,
While the boat was standing there by the shore,
Been twined in the cable length.

For friends who set on their journey forth
My body doth live in pain :
O tell me in happy notes, O Crow,
When will they hither again ?
'Twas some powerful cause that banished my friends
In an exile over the main.

O come, Belov'd, the tips of the sedge
Have been seared by the wind from the north.
For thee, O Master of mine, my mouth
Thousands of vows sent forth.

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If thou would'st come to me now, my Love,
Full joy to my soul I'd impart.
If, Mother, mayhap my lover should come,
I'd cling to him, cleave to him, here in my home
And speak out the words of my heart.

If, Mother, my loved one should come to me now,
In quarrelling joy would be sped.
Thou didst promise, my love, but few days to be gone ;
How long are the days that have fled ?

O heart within me, out sally and see
The abode that the Loved One doth know :
And there on his threshold stoop thee down
And kisses on kisses bestow.

Me let them not forgetful desert,
Those friends for whom I did stay :
(And my eager eyes did scan the skies)
When they will come to me, enter my home to me,
My griefs they'll all banish away.

## IX. THE SAILING (II)

In sooth today the traders talk
Of going away : and my friends
Have set their hearts on departing too.
I weep but it makes no amends,
They will not linger. O Mother of mine,
How long can I hold them back,
Those sailors who set their ships on the deep
When they made the cable slack ?

From my heart there are those whom I may not loose,
Nor may I forgotten be.
For their life to my own lifestrings is bound.
And lo ! The crew when the north wind blew,
Did set their canvas free :
They weighed their anchor and took their course
Where the tide ran favourably ;
And longing there stays in my heart always
For the men who plough the sea.

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The north wind's season is come and yet
My heart hath no rest from pain.
The sailors, I trow, twist lanyards now
And are oiling their boats again.

O Mother, I said (for I knew the sails)
The sailors are back from the world.
Oh ! on this ship may my loved one come.
The bunting flutters ! The sails are furled !
Those women, I vow, are smiling now
Whose friends have reached their home.

## IX. The Sailing (III)

Though I move my limbs yet I may not reach
The ports that are far for me.
I have no purse, not a money-lot,
To make my truck with, and pay my scot,
And climb where I wish to be.

O Thou who ferriest folks across,
Make me my loved one meet.
O Captain, I stand at thy cabin door
To pour my prayers at thy feet.

They had no scot to pay their lot ;
The sailors without their fee
Would grant no passage : and all the day
Till sunset came, the ship made way
Across the waters' face,
And when it served the vessel's need
(So sings the Sayid) the Lord decreed
An excellent landing-place.

I was standing myself by the very wharf
When my friends let the hawser go.
Within my heart must some weakness be :
Or else my friends to come back to me
Some wondrous kindness show.

O Mother of his, hold not thou back
That trader son of thine.
Till the twelfth month sere did he not appear ;
Then his gear on the shore he gathered once more
And sailed off over the brine.



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I was standing myself by the very wharf
When my love let the hawser go :
Within my heart must some weakness be :
Or else my love to come back to me
Doth wondrous kindness show.

## X. The Trafficking

I have gained by my haggling the flimsy and false,
The vows of my God I have broken.
My head on its empty framework of sins
Is a crushed and a miserable token.
O dullard, thou knowest the sense of this thing,
For its speech hath already been spoken.

Thou hast gained by thy haggling the flimsy alone,
Go, tell then to God thou art lacking.
Drive out thy deceit. For the Lord loveth truth.
Love's bonfire blazing and cracking
Kindle within thee : and so wilt thou trade
That gain there come of thy packing.

The swing of the surge sets foul and the boat
Cannot suffer its flooding and swelling.
I loaded her up to her hatches with sins
In multitude far beyond telling.
God ! show Thy favour and take me across
This ocean in terror compelling.

Go. Make thy purchase of goodly gear
That loseth no virtue in aging.
For this thou will sell on a distant strand
And lose not a plack in thy gauging.
So traffic in gear that will keep thee secure
In the hazardous fight thou art waging.

The galley is aged. Heap not so high
The chattels that are of thy lading.
Her timbers are riddled ; by keel and by strake,
The waters pour through them invading.
Her doom hath been sealed. Oh ! ponder thou well
The doings of yesterday's trading.

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Thou hast heard with thine ears the watery surge :
'Tis here by thine eyes for the seeing.
In the watches of night when men sleep, says Latīf,
Thou didst not remember its being.
Thou didst bring thy craft to the eddying surf.
For neglect this thy weird thou art dreeing.

That galley of thine that goes crazy with age
Mayst thou save from the blasts that are blowing.
For weak are the folk whose ship thou hast set
On the waterway turgid and flowing.
These chattels of thine mayst thou bring, says the poet,
Where the lights of the harbour are showing.

The grains that are stuff of thy trading bring
And load on the boat for the sailing.
The waves will fight thee, forgetful one,
But sit not thus, sad one, bewailing.
When thou will find thyself cast in the surf
I know not, a wretch unavailing.

O boatmen ! the best of both worlds can't be won.
If all night by rudder you're sleeping,
Morning-news of you there, over there, all will ask.
(Sleep-drowsed, in their helmsman trust keeping,
On board all are sleeping ! You sleep, sailors, too !)
All who're sheltered of God, their trials will pass through
No port-peril harvest's for reaping.

## XI. Blessed are the Meek

O all thy works to God commit,
To God on whom there falleth praise.
In meek submission being true
From tribulation free thy days.
With mercy then the Mighty Lord
Will fashion what thy heart essays.

Among good folk to do good deeds
Is surely everybody's plan.
Thou dost good deeds amongst the bad.
Is there, like thee another man ?

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Good deeds are by good people done:
Ill deeds are with the wicked found.
They works of goodness do perform
Whom good with fitting grace hath crowned.

The lapidaries now are gone
Who diamond pierced and ruby red.
But they who followed after them
Have not the skill to work in lead.
Where craftsmen wrought of yore, the smiths
Beat worthless pewter now instead.

The taste is all for tawdry trash,
When pearls are given in change away.
If I offered truth in garment's hem
Of very shame I'd die today.

Where'er today the pearls are found
There now, alas, the thieves abide.
Good honest luck today is theirs
Who laid their precious gems aside.

## XII. THE LADING

To thee I said, O good my friend,
No crazy wreck on work engage.
The waves, of certainty, will swamp
The sails and sheets that fail for age.

The surge will fight thee, foolish man,
Arise and ask that mercy be.
I know not how it happed yestreen
Thou wert not cast within the sea.

Cloves, cardamoms and store of cloth,
Sweet-smelling grass and ambergris,
O merchant, let thy cargo be
That thou dost set upon the seas.
No crazy wreck on work engage,
For hark! Ahead the breakers rage.

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Ināyat says: 'The water's dread
Lives in the rolling ocean swell.'
The milk of luck stays in the house
Of them with whom true things do dwell.

Cloves, cardamoms and cloth and pearls,
They won wherewith to fill their store.
Down in the water deep they found,
Of precious lockers, wealth galore.

They tied their boats with hawsers fast,
So doth Latīf the Poet tell.
They clomb aboard and to the Lord
The Prophet vows they vowed well:
'O Thou-that-Art-with-Mercy save
The boats they set upon the swell.'

## XIII. THE VOYAGING

Where shoals the channel, pull thy boat
And tie it up beside the brink.
Who but thyself will help thee bring
It where to the depth the waters sink?

They who can swim upon the sea
Swim o'er the runnels small and great.
But they who swim not load their heads
With burden of their turbans' weight.

In trash I traded: not a pearl
I laid in store. The Sayid sings
'In lead I trafficked'. Thus, O God,
My state unto thy mercy clings.

While by the port the danger lasts,
O helmsmen, stay from slumber far.
The whirling of the waters is
As frothing whey within the jar.

The lightning flashed. To luckless men
Fool slumber came: and they who thought
They were from dire occurrence free
Were by their very sleep unwrought.

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Let Mecca be thy port or no,
Delay not, urge thy vessel on.
Repeat at Lord Muhammad's tomb
The holy words of God and doom,
That succour come to thee anon.
So regulate thy ways and strive
That thou at Mecca mayst arrive.

## XIV. Beloved's Beauty

On the forehead of my Belov'd are set signs that are kind for me.
With a smile he comes to my courtyard where I long for him, mine own.
Who claims that the moon with the sun of Belov'd can ever the equal be,
Though the moon to a white perfection on the fourteenth day be grown ?
In my house there are folk a-talking of Beloved at the door :
In my house are happy welcomings. The jealous jealous be !
And yet, were a thousand suns to rise and moons four score and four,
In the name of Allāh, without my love I should nothing but darkness see.
O moon, such a paltry thing as thou art, would I ever compare to the Friend ?
His splendour gleameth for ever : and lo ! only at night thou art bright.
At the hour of thy morning's uprising first thy glance on Beloved bend :
' Beloved ! on thee are our trusting eyes set every day without end ',
For Allāh's sake, speak thus in his ear of our lovesick sorrowful plight.

## XV. The Wayward Heart

O camel, cease thy lingering
And lengthen out thy pace.
This once my loved one bring me nigl
Then in thine ears there cannot ring
The semblance of a yearning sigh.

O camel, cease to lag behind
And lengthen out thy pace.
This night I have it in my mind
To see my loved one's face.

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For thee I bring the sandalwood.
Let others salt-bush eat.
This very night be thine the mood
To take me where my loved one stood
That there we twain may meet.

The camel, mother, for my needs
I brought and tied beside the tree.
When he on wealth of buds might feast,
He, sneaking, on the salt-bush feeds,
The mean and miserable beast,
Undoing all my work for me.

The stupid brute I tell and tell
That in the milkbush there's no zest ;
Yon poison bush is many's knell
But hath his silly head obsessed.

Around in plenty for his need
Is ripened scrub of sandalwood.
The sulky grumbler pays no heed
And makes me weep my tears in blood.

And wilt thou thus, O camel, pass
The sandalwood, nor drink thy fill ?
Thou seekest not the fragrant grass
But spurnest it as something ill.
It must be thy distorted mood
That made thee find the salt-bush good.

Arise and bind him. Let him free
And he will lose himself and roam.
I feed him and he sulkier gets.
Put on the saddle when he frets.
With shackled feet still growl will he
But will not wander far from home.

To keep him fast I tied him up :
The shackles bound with tug and strain.
The beast has gone with hobbles on
To eat the salt-bush once again !
O Lord, into this camel's head
Put something that in sense doth share.
O save him, Lord of Mercy, save :
Such is Latīf the poet's prayer.

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## XVI. One-ness

Across life's ocean no one yet
With 'I' as guide his foot hath set.
God indeed who is One
Adoreth One-ness alone.

Take Two-ness off to burn with fire.
Existence may man's tears require.
This weeping should be done
Before One-ness alone.

On self alone while eyes be set
No truth of worship can'st thou get.
First kill all life's emprise:
Say Word of Sacrifice.

What-no-existence-knows hath grace
To raise the slave to lofty place.
Who secret are in their heart
Are secret in outward part.

Here how can mystery be told
Which the Beloved doth enfold?

## XVII. These Paltry Eyes Of Mine

These paltry eyes of mine
Have brought me favour's grace.
If evil but before them be,
They see Love in its place.

If paltry eyes of mine
Did aught but Love disclose,
I'd pluck them out to cast
As morsels for the crows.

Mine eyes have made a feast
Where kin and friends engage.
It is as if life, body, soul
Had gone on pilgrimage.

All day they look, and yet
They halt out there to see;
They saw and recognized Love
And have returned to me.

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Strange habits have mine eyes
To trade with others' pain.
Love's conquest they have made
Where weapon brings no gain.

## XVIII. The Musician

Musician, you are wearied. Where were you yesterday?
Give up, Latīf is saying, your ways of giving in.
The door of the Almighty, go beg there on your way
And gifts that are of value win.

The gifts of the Almighty do not depend on caste.
The worker is the finder. The King, All-Powerful, Great,
Bears coaxings of the ignorant. With Him the night who passed
Will find that trouble's burden hath no weight.

So, daily, earnest effort make before the Giver's door.
No other business has a singing stroller but to sing:
'Thou mighty art: I yearner am. Thou gift on gifts dost pour,
While I am but a senseless thing.

I heard Thy call, O God, and put my fiddle on my shoulder.
Thou mighty art: I yearner am. Thou gift on gifts dost pour.
I am a blockhead: but Thou art of magic stone the holder,
While I am only iron's core.

If Thou but touch this iron 'me', gold I should be by reason.
Thou Giver art of gifts; the rest but wandering beggars are.
There falls in its due season rain; but Thou in every season
Dost shower Thy plenteous bounty far.
Oh, would'st Thou to my house but come,
All wealth I'd have and every sum.'

## XIX. The Joy of Beloved

After what goest thou? Why dost thou remain
The servant of others?
Stirrup-leather lay hold of, the Merciful One's,
E'en the Lord of the World's.
For certain that man will be happy whose love
Towards Allāh is turned.

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Today my poor eyes have remembered my friends
And the dropping of tears
Doth not cease from my cheeks. At the sight of loved ones
My desire doth not die.
Mankind covets wealth. But all the day long
Covet I my Belov'd.
I renounce the whole world for the sake of that Friend
Whose name made me glad.
When the memory comes of the love of that Friend
Sudden cries burst on cries.
In gracious emergence when walks the Belov'd
E'en earth itself sings:
'In God's name': and lo! on the tracks of his feet
Are the road's kisses planted.
The houris astonied stand by in respect.
I swear by the Lord,
The face of Beloved's most lovely of all.
It's the way of the world
To alter love's virtue and change it to dross.
No one e'er eats
The flesh of mankind. In this world will be left
Only fragrant delight.
All the rest of mankind wear but friendship's false cloak:
Only one or two are
Who are one with our heart. O Giver, vouchsafe
That friends present be.
On the tongues of my friends there is mention once more
That we're reconciled.
My friends have this way that, break I with them,
They break not with me.

## XX. God's Mercy

The kettledrums are hollow: break them up.
Seek no door but the Holy Prophet's door.
He bears the loads of all who run for help
And is the stay of helpless folk and poor.

The Kindly Helper turns not face aside
When myriads seek his mercy, says Latīf.
His suppliants stand in dumbness, million massed,
And in his open smiling win relief.

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At sundry landing-places do not halt :
Look for the easy bank within the mere.
The Helper will you mint of money give.
Go thither, land of princely Rāhū near.

Watch for the turban of the Bounteous One,
Who made the luckless wealthy, who destroys
The rust of want for millions when he speaks
And lifts his head aloft to work such joys.

Serene He stands, The Friend and Comforter,
Who calls to His companions. Every one
By help of that dear Comforter will cross
In safety land wherein the passes run.

## XXI. The Guide

Live on, O Sweet One, live.
May mine ears never hear
An evil word of Thee.
Brought each to other near,
Mine eyes and heart combine
To speak of Thee and Thine.

Live on, O Sweet One, live.
May mine ears never hear
An evil word of Thee,
Of Thee who didst appear
But yesterday to grace
My soul's unworthiness.

Like Him who Arab was
No one, nowhere I see.
In full forefront He stands
Where the Apostles be :
And He hath pride of place
In majesty and grace.

'Near, nearer came to Him
The Angel of the Lord
Than two bows' distance is'
Thus saith the Holy Word
Lo : this is the abode
In Heaven on Him bestowed.

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Almighty God be praised
Who brought me such a Guide.
His like the world knows none,
Nor Sind, nor Surat side ;
Nor anywhere on earth
Hath knowledge of such worth.

O beggar, go and beg
Before the Giver's door.
Seek favour of none else.
Gifts he himself doth pour :
He sees men's state and gives
Them mercy in their lives.

My Lord and Master puts
The Mullas to their shame,
His horsemen set behind,
To head the host He came.
The Lion of the Lord
To us doth help afford.

And ever in His hand
He bears the mighty sword
That cleaves backbones of foes.
His bounty's rich accord
A thousand Hātims' store
Hath darkened and made poor.
Without Thee, Perfect One, who can
Help, succour give to helpless man ?

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# Part II

## The Daily Round

'The daily round, the common task
Will furnish all we ought to ask :
Room to deny ourselves, a road,
To bring us daily nearer God.'


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## I. The Song of The Rain (I)

See, saith Latīf, the sombre cloud
Hath lowered and the big-dropped rain
Is fallen. Take the cattle out
And make your way across the plain.
Desert your huts. Your panniers fill
Against the need of coming hours.
It is no time in God-despair
To sit and idle. Lo: it showers!

See, saith Latīf, hath Allāh brought
The clouds in ever thickening mass.
From brimming pools the waters flow
To make the footing green with grass.
God, One indeed, of gracious thought
Hath clad the paths in verdure; rain
Is come, blithe rain, for them who roam.
Wayfarers draw fresh breath again.

Today too in the northern sky
The clouds are gathered black as hair.
The lightning flashes bring the rain
And choose a crimson cloak to wear,
My friends that dwelt in far-off parts
Are by this rain-force drawn to me.
Today too in the northern sky
The clouds to peaks rise toweringly.

The lightning flash of timely rain
Doth not our simple souls bewray.
Come, friend of mine, return to me.
The sulking days are gone for aye.
Across the Holy Prophet's tomb
The lightning streaks did swiftly leap.
They smiled in kindness on the scene
And filled the stream with water deep.

O Guide, send now Thine orders forth
And fill this thirsty watering-place.
The Holy Prophet, best of friends,
Hath showed his abounding grace.

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O Lord of Rain, for Allāh's sake,
Forget not them whom thirst doth try.
The plains have flood of water. Make
The grain that groweth cheap to buy.

Upon the land pour shower on shower
That happy may the herdsmen be.
The lightnings came to bring the rain.
The black cloud's flash delighted me.
There in the sky the nimbus grew
Until its burbling drops did start.
My soul was sad. The humming rain
Hath cleared the blight from off my heart.

## I. The Song of The Rain (II)

Behind the tower the cloud today
Its form in lovely hues arrayed.
Violas, fiddles, violins
And drums the happy people played.

Last night out o'er the Padam Lake
The raingod emptied jar on jar.
But wives are gloomy seeing cloud
And thinking of men's plight afar.

They built them, spouseless, huts of reed,
But see them not. Should north wind rise
And blow them down, who will there be
To hear the wives' complaining cries ?

So may their guardian kin arrive
To give them shelter ! Women see
The rainclouds and they think of men
And lose their souls in misery.

They harken to the thunder's crash,
With heartstrings all a-quake with fear.
Poor creatures, from their men cut off,
They speak no word to reach the ear.

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## I. The Song of The Rain (III)

The season's here :
Glad converse and sweet music sound.
Shrills cuckoo clear :
The ploughmen fit their ploughshares for the ground.
Herdsmen are happy. Yea ! his fine array
For joyous rain my friend has donned today.

The season's here :
Glad converse and sweet music are.
Mass clouds appear :
The corn is cheap : there's butter in the jar.
I spake the Word of God and by its art
Cast out the rust that overlay my heart.

The season's here :
Glad converse runs : sweet music rings :
Rain's back to cheer.
Daylong I thought of friends (so Lakhmīr sings).
My friends for whom these eyes of love did shine
Have hither come and sought this house of mine.

## I. The Song of The Rain (IV)

O Love, O Friend, may Allāh bring thee near me :
My life remembers, yearning with a full deep sigh.
I need the shelter they have made to cheer me.
No hut availeth if a chill wind whistle by.
Love, tell to kindly helpmeet my poor tale of woes.
Come timely, oft : I may in shelter find repose.

I shall of night-time's early cold be dying,
O husband, perfect, if thy skirt enfold not me.
With cold I shiver neath the bedclothes lying,
Or cling to door-pin, hoping dawn will bring me thee.
Like clouds in Sāṅwan, friends have gathered : they are here.
They dwell with her who lifelong wished to have them near.

## I. The Song of The Rain (V)

I need the shelter built for me.
No crazy hut have entered I.
Yea : be she widowed who doth breathe
One breathing after loved friend die.

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Today indeed towards the north
Clouds form : and water rains upon
The earth to fill the hollow pits
That men scooped out in days agone.

O Master, build my shelter now.
Clouds I have seen athwart the sky.
' Make Sāṅwan plans ', saith Jūnējō.
The thunder made my sorrow fly.
The lightning filled my heart with joy.
The sky is cloudy nor the sun
Doth show his face with radiance clear.
The lightning bringeth kindly news
Such as mankind is lief to hear.

O heart of mine, be not cast down :
Soon wilt thou find thy friends again.
A second time has God arranged
The fashioning of the clouds of rain.
To bring the rain the lightnings came
To pour their water everywhere,
This place and that and all around
Will in such plenteous bounty share.

## I. The Song of The Rain (VI)

The lightnings sped themselves aloft and glittered in Stamboul.
To Western parts they took their way :
They flashed and flickered in Cathay.
On Samarkand they lighted of their kindly memory full.
They fared to Rūm and Kābul : and they reached to Kandahār :
O'er Delhi roared a thunder rain,
And boomed above the Deccan plain
And cast their living light-bolts out and over the Girnār.
They went aside and changed a course to verge on Jaisalmīr ;
On Bhuj a heavy drenching showered,
On Dhat a gentle rain they poured
And gladdened into happiness the folks of Bikanīr.
To Umarkōt they darted, there to flood the grassy meads.
On my Sind aye shed water, Lord,
And plenty, Mercy's Self, accord.
Make this whole world to burgeon with Thy grace of rainy deeds.



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## I. The Song of The Rain (VII)

The orders of the Orderer pass :
The rain god doth his function fill.
The lightnings come to bring the rain :
The pattering raindrops are not still.
The grain-amassers, mad on gain,
Do wring their hands : and fifteen grows
From five—a threefold quickening.
So speed life's pages to their close.

May all who trade in famine greed,
May all the misers disappear.
The cowherds tell of heavy rains,
' All hope to feel Thy mercy near.'
Within my heart the cloud-bank spins,
The outward sky is calm serene.
The lightnings rain for them who love
And in Friend-trust have eyesight keen.
In great and greater mass they form
The clouds that gathered from the north.
Far-off my friends were. God hath joined
Them with me on their journeying forth.

## II. The Martyrs (I)

Muhurram's holy month is come,
The Princes' day of woe.
And Allāh doth what pleaseth Him,
The One who all doth know.

Again is come Muhurram's month.
But no Imāms are here.
O God, in kindness let me be
Medīna's ruler near.

Medīna's lords did hie them forth :
But they did not come back.
O brother dyer, dye my clothes
In sober mourning black.

They wandered forth to cruel doom
When fate with bloodshed came.
Because of their untimely end
I put myself to shame.

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The hardness of their martyrdom
Is as mild summer's day.
No trace, no sign of Goddës love
Yazīd's heart did display.

With the Imāms that he'd be slain
Did fate a promise write.
The hardness of their martyrdom
Is unalloyed delight :
And God-moved men do meditate
On Kerbela's sad fight.

## II. The Martyrs (II)

Forget the feud with Alī's kin
That thou dost wage, Yazīd.
With Hassan and the Mīr Husain
Thou'lt see no happy Īd.

Ah ! luckless is the case of them
Beside Yazīd who stood,
And yesterday did fight against
The sons of Alī's blood.

Oh ! that within the ranks had been
Hassan at battle-tide.
As moth seeks flame, so had he sought
To reach his brother's side.

Who other Mīr Husain could help ?
Of life still hope hath he
In battle time who armour dons ;
He showeth bravery

Alone who enters on the field.
But Hassan is not by
To helpmate prove for Mīr Husain
Or aid in servantry.

The Princes' land is farther on :
And pours Yazīd amain
Blow upon blow. The world doth know
Of Hassan and Husain,

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And of the battle that they fought.
Black-feathered arrows flew.
The Holy Sayid showed himself,
A hero brave and true

To self and his forefathers' race.
In grief three gatherings cry :
Men in their homes, beasts in the wild
And angels in the sky.

Their friends are gone : the fowls of air
To earth dashed bodies frail.
O Allāh ! righteous Master, grant
The Princes may prevail.

If there be men within whose souls
No grief in sorrow flow,
On them Creation's Mighty Lord
No favour will bestow.

## II. The Martyrs (III)

Brave men love battle, from the field
Hold not themselves aloof.
The holy ones did yield their lives
In the Imāms' behoof.

' With God's name on their lips they fought ',
Their wisdom ran thuswise.
They garlanded and crowned were
By maids of Paradise.

To Kerbela as lions came
The perfect ones of God :
They plied Egyptian blades and heaped
The corses where they trod :

And brave men trembled at the charge
Of Lord Husain's array.
The Princes, perfect ones, are come
To Kerbela today.

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They flinched not but their arrows shot
In swiftly-moving shower.
Their fate foredoomed that they should be
With the Imāms this hour.

God killeth whom He loveth most :
Thus are His favourites slain.
The All-Best, Allāh, recking nought,
Doth as His heart is fain.

The wisdom in such actioning
Is veiled from mine eye.
Behind remaineth something deep
And wrapped in mystery.

## II. The Martyrs (IV)

Short are the days that horses live :
Short days the warriors eke.
Some time they man the forts, some time
The battleground they seek.

Their home is Heaven. Lo ! the brave
Are gone to Paradise.
From God they passed : to God they came.
Lord, fashion fate this wise.

Thankful for them Thy visage show.
The early doom of prime
Did plan the plan of Hur's emprise
And bring him at this time :

And set him with that side to join.
To the Imām he said
Whene'er he came, 'This life is thine,
This life, though I be dead.'

'God sends not woe without the power
To bear that burden well.
What I can bear, that will I do.'
There too that hero fell.

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With wound sore-stricken, yielding life,
A martyr Hur became.
He showed his brave courageous soul,
A lover of the flame

As moths are. 'May God's Messenger,
The Holy Prophet, He,
Thy Father's sire, e'en thus be pleased
With this thy bravery.'

'May I for such yield up my life'.
His lips did these words pour.
Blood dyed his beard red, red his teeth
As is pomegranate flower.

His turban shone upon the field
As shines full fortnight's moon.
Well may that mother smile who meets
Her Lord Muhammad, son.

All glory to that hero be
Upon the open plain
Who, hacked to pieces on the field,
With grievous blows was slain.

## II. THE MARTYRS (V)

The men of Kūfa wrote God's name
And thus their missive sent :
'Thy subjects we ; thou art our King.
Come hither : pitch thy tent.'

'The throne is thine'. They falsely spake
And sided with Yazīd ;
And brave men fell to unclean foes
Who by ignoble deed

Sold trust for gain, in martyrdom
The heroes' name to link ;
And Kūfa's host no water gave
In Kerbela to drink.

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The Princes' thoughts in Kerbela
Do with great Alī rest.
They venture forth and gaze around
And thus their faith attest :

Come, O Thou Lord Muhammad, come :
Causer of Causes, rise.
An early dove from Kerbela
Its weary journey flies.

Halting by God's apostle's tomb
It uttereth this doom :
' Muhammad, Causer of Causes, Lord,
Come, rise up in thy might.
The glitter of the flashing sword
Hath shone before my sight.'

## III. The King and The Minstrel

### *The Story*

Rai Diāch was king of Girnār. His sister had a son named Bījal about whom a fakīr had predicted that he was fated to kill Diāch. The horrified mother cast her son away in a box upon the river, wishing to be rid of so ill-omened a child. The box floated down the river and was found by a professional minstrel who took the child out and brought him up to be a musician. Bījal, ignorant of his noble birth, became a past-master of music and won fame for his singing. Sōrath was the daughter of a king Anerai and her beauty was such that Diāch was enamoured of her at first sight and married her. Later hostilities broke out between Diāch and Anerai. Anerai besieged Girnār but was unable to capture it. Anerai then proclaimed that he would reward with great wealth any one who brought him Diāch's head. When Bījal heard this he went to Diāch. He so charmed him with his music and singing that Diāch, captivated, said he would give him all the wealth he had. But Bījal wanted no wealth, only the head of the king. Infatuated by the music, the king at last consented to yield up his head to Bījal. The poems of ' The King and The Minstrel ' are concerned with the musician's visit to the palace of Diāch, the singing and the playing, the chaffering for the musician's reward and the grief of Sōrath when the minstrel won his way and obtained, as the fakīr had foretold, the head of the king.

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## III. The King and The Minstrel (I)

With hope set in Allāh he parted from here,
The Singer who decked with a stringing
Of tassels and rattles the fiddle he played.
He saw from afar the royal sedan
Of King Diāch and thus began
At that very moment with prayer humbly prayed
To Him who is One :
'O Merciful Master, by Thee be it made
That the King shall delight in my singing.'

'From a strange land I'm come, having travelled last month.
If the night take a long time in speeding,
E'en let me go now. 'But this ponder well,
O Sōrath's good spouse, in thy heart,
To this beggar thy favours impart :
For he midst his foes hath come hither to dwell,
At thy door, O King,
Others' doors left behind, while the prayers on prayers swell
In thy presence of suppliant pleading.'

'Nought else doth he beg :' give the jewel without price.
O Sōrath's good spouse, do me favour.
Others' doors I have left : I am come to thy door.
With a turn of thy palms
Give this beggar thine alms.
Fill his empty lap up.' There was wonder galore
That Bījal the Singer
Should sing till the dawn and the King (nay ! nay more !)
The Sultān, found joy of full flavour
As in his red swing he reclined and he cried :
'Come up, sacred bard, where clear space is.
At thy feet I would pour out in sacrifice
A mint of money. This head's my guest :
Come, here I yield it at thy request.'
In some men a deep perception lies.
To life's great mystery
They reached. In that Secret they made them wise
Of things hidden whereof this the trace is :

'Man is My secret : I am his.'
Here lies the key to mysteries.
This phrase the singer took to sing
The song he sang before the King :
And when he sang, where there were Two,
The pair to single One-ness grew.

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## III. The King and The Minstrel (II)

The first night came.
Beside the fort the man of music sang
And in Girnār a loud commotion rang :
'Some holy mendicant is here.' The sage
Worked wonders with his lute and zither string.
'Thy head I ask for, King', did Bījal sing.

There came the second night.
The Sultān summoned Bījal, told him 'Ne'er
Hath such as thou, Musician, ere come here.
At thy pipe's tune, stands life from soul apart.
Much wealth have I in goods, there's nought I lack.
I'll give thee gifts that will delight thy heart.
Come, worthy Sir, tune up : let music start.'

The third night came
When Bījal told the King this tale of song :
'While generous men on earth are hundreds strong
Indeed, by some mind-fancy I was led
To thee, and to thy house am come instead.'

The fourth night came.
'Welcome, O welcome, Bard' the king did say,
'Not with uncounted wealth thy footsteps' way
Would I compare, if thou but happy be.
Of rich abundant gifts take thou thy fill.
These presents now I give thee : there are more
Tomorrow I shall add to swell the store.'

The fifth night came.
Great wealth of silver did on Bījal pour :
Came couches, cushions, palanquins and more,
Nine lakhs of money and nonillions o'er.
But Bījal said 'The gifts are not for me,
O generous one. The elephants take back.
What first I asked for, give to me, thy head,
That thou to happiness itself be wed.'

The sixth night came.
The sage plucked strings and folk's attention drew.
Within Girnār he sang : the strong notes flew.
Tomorrow (saith the Sayid) thou'lt please the King,
Who will, Musician, thee to honour bring.

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## III. The King and The Minstrel (III)

*King.*

'If on the scales an hundred heads I place
To weigh the whole against thy music,
The weight to that scale fails where Bījal sings.
Mine head's but empty bone-space:
There's no strength within it.'

*Minstrel.*

'Put in my robe what's tuned to music's strings:
Send me not back. I came at earliest minute.'

*King.*

'Mine head, o'er thine, for thee I'd sacrifice.
O man of music, what thy worth convinces
Thou get'st not from mine hands.'

*Minstrel.*

'This way, that way I searched and with mine eyes
I looked on other princes.
Within my mind I fixed of other lands
The princely givers, none within my reck
Save thee endowed with will to yield his head.'

*King.*

'Welcome thou art, O man of music.
Thy meaning's drift I knew. What thy tongue sped
I comprehend completely, all thy words.
What falleth to the ground
Be pleased to take.'

*Sayid.*

All three in tune were wed,
The music's chords, the dagger and the neck.

*King.*

'For no such prize, O man of music,
Hast thou, ere this, made journey. God be praised.
O man of music, that thou sought'st the head.'

*Sayid.*

Fine instruments he took of cunning sound,
The skilful master of music,
And from the start in motion set the chords
Before the kingly presence. When he gazed
Diāch at once saw clear
And manifest the meaning's power.

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The singer drew the knife and plunged it deep
Within Diāch's skull. The flower
Of Girnār's plucked : and weep
The wailing women. Hundreds like Sōrath
Stand up and moan. The head, with crowning lock
Arranged, they give the man of music :
And bitter is the wailing women's cry :
'Last night the King did die.'

## III. The King and The Minstrel (IV)

Diāch the King hath yielded up his head :
(To God, to God a sacrifice.)
And left his kingdom and the queens he wed :
(To God, to Gód a sacrifice)
He found acceptance under Allāh's door ;
(To God, to God a sacrifice.)
His million-numbered needs fulfilled, told o'er.
(To God, to God a sacrifice.)
With bowstring-song his head the Singer sought ;
(To God, to God a sacrifice.)
His works, O sisters, to good endings wrought.
(To God, to God a sacrifice.)
Abdul Latīf it is
Who makes these harmonies.

## IV. The Wanderers

O mother, I saw the folk who saw
The man I love. Nowise, no way
Can I describe them. 'Tis their law
In rags and dust to pass along.
They do not midst the foolish throng
Talk openly. Perfection's spell
Binds them my lover's tale to tell.

Their loins betimes Khāhōrīs girt,
And wandering off amongst the hills
One made themselves with earthy dirt.
To torture they their bodies gave :
Amidst the rocks they found their grave.
On barren hill there stands a town
Of which to them the trace was known.

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They thither went and left tilled land
And store of grain, upon their quest
To be of Lāhut. Dust of sand
Descended on them of the town
That stands upon the barren down.
Behind them much of sleep they put
And made them townsmen of Lāhut.

For they that certain knowledge won
Where stands on barren hill the town.
Behind them empty thoughts they put
And made them townsmen of Lāhut.

## V. The Holy Men (I)

In the world are Jōgīs who worship light :
In the world are Jōgīs who worship fire.
Without the holy men who lit the fire, the holy men,
I cannot live.

I was asleep on my couch : a deep sigh woke me.
Without the holy men who woke me up, the holy men,
I cannot live.

I look for them and fain would join them.
The Bairāgīs went and took themselves away.
Without the solace of their company, the holy men,
I cannot live.

I die : I beat my head : I search with eyes.
Without the Holy Words they speak, the holy men,
I cannot live.

The footprints of the holy men are in Lāhut.
Without the ruby that they hold, the holy men,
I cannot live.

Those who are great took horns at morn and blew them.
I search and search for the Bairāgīs line.
In their holy seat they keep the sacred ambergris.
Without the holy men who have it, holy men,
I cannot live.

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I saw their holy seat and am not pacified.
The music of the holy men hath slain me quite.
Sad weariness of heart is come upon me.
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live.

I saw their holy seat : my spirit leapt in fervour.
The music of the holy men at morning is not heard.
The holy men who creep and crawl upon the sand,
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live.

I saw their holy seat and put mine arm in mouth.
Without the holy men who trudged Kelātwards,
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live.

I sit with them. I look but do not see :
There is no beauty like the beauty that is theirs.
With all my looking there is nought I see.
Without the holy men, the holy men,
I cannot live.

## V. The Holy Men (II)

The first day brought me wisdom's gain
That not for one brief moment's spell
Do holy men with health feel well.
No ! daytime's four long watches tell
For them a tale of crushing pain.
So sings the Sayid, Jōgīs roam
Amongst the people quietly.

Next day I sat and did behold
The form of life Bairāgīs keep :
How o'er their threads the dustclouds heap,
And ruin of their lives is cheap.
Their knowing hands the strings unrolled
And fashioned topknots skilfully.
But they of their own agency,
Unhappy men, with none make speech.
For Nāngas thus to gladness reach
And roam midst people quietly.

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The third day on their sacred seats
They let the fire's dull smoulder glow.
The Jōgīs gathered sticks and so
Made firebrands on the fire to throw.
Adēsīs know the fire that eats
With burning pain. No secret's heart
By spoken word do they impart :
They roam midst people quietly.

The fourth day came : in open place
A firm resolve they somehow made.
Within their hearts strong urgings played.
The Swāmīs in full worth arrayed
Are merged in a golden grace
And roam midst people quietly.

The fifth day came and found them fancy-tied.
Within th' Adēsīs burgeoned sprouting pain.
Yet, willing, they descended to love's plain.
Night passed in torture (thus the Sayid's refrain)
Its whole night's passing. But their sense descried
The friends who wish them well. They roam
Amongst the people quietly.

The sixth day came. Some reverie held them fast.
Within th' Adēsīs God's prime urging rolls.
What cheers the One that too doth cheer their souls.
They beg in alms what five poor fingers seize
And roam midst people quietly.

They washed their threads upon the seventh day,
The Sayid says, and stood with folded hands
Before God Indescribable. To strands
Of Rāma somewise secretly the bands
Of their own lives they bound. Great, far away
And distant was the country whence they brought
The signs they brought. They lift their blanket-rugs
And roam midst people quietly.

The eighth day came. The Jōgīs rose and went
From place to place. The Swāmīs learnt the way
That fits for Union. Ever Rām doth stay
Within their being's self. For holy pay
They roam midst people quietly.

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The ninth day came and vigils lit their eyes.
He-who-is-Mercy all his mercy showed.
The Giver earning's gifts on them bestowed.
Where eyes see nothing there they make abode.
These are ascetics' holy signs. They roam
Amidst the people quietly.

Tenth day's anointing came with holy oil.
And lo! our friends are happy. Of their power
They turned the page of God's own union o'er,
And found the Path, Latīf says, gūrū's dower.
The Jōgīs won the worth of holy toil
And roam midst people quietly.

There was fulfilment on th' eleventh day
Of all Bairāgīs practised. Holy shrines
The Jōgīs visited and where there shines
The seat of worship. Holding breath alway
They roam midst people quietly.

The twelfth day brought achievement's double gain.
All on the pilgrimage had wishes set.
The Jōgīs won full honour, these who met
Their gūrū-master and are back again.

## V. The Holy Men (III)

The Swāmīs' panniers are of sorrows full.
Within their bedding grief is packed and rolled.
They bound their lives to reverie's deep lore.
The Adēsīs blew their horns at early morn
And went away. Some kind of sorrow's lot
Sanyāsīs have, that they go strickenly;
And smitten of the wound of God, Who is
Beyond description's power, Bairāgīs reel
The whole day's space and eight long watches through.
The holy men aye tremble at the Lord.
Come, let us look on the abodes of them
Who pass the day and night in wandering.
Some kind of sorrow's lot Sanyāsīs have
That they go stricken. Yet no breath escapes
Outside to show their inward wound of thought.

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Come, let us look on the abodes of them
Whose minds are crushed and broken. Let us see
Th' abodes of them who live in such a plight.
The people of Lāhut, thus saith Latīf,
Are not misled by any worldly gear.
The Swāmīs' care hath made my thoughts worth while.

## V. The Holy Men (IV)

If thou dost think 'I will a Jōgī be',
Break off all ties that link thee with thy kind.
Unite thy life to them who ne'er were born
Nor e'er will be, that thou thine end may find
Upon the plain of Love.

If thou dost think 'I will a Jōgī be',
Kill all ambition's hope. Become the slave
Of them who're slaves of slaves. With patience-sword
Destroy all malice utterly, that so
Thy name in Lāhut thou may'st then engrave,
O Nānga's naked soul.

If thou dost think 'I will a Jōgī be',
Kill worldly thought and hide it in the soil.
Light in thine heart the dully-glowing fire.
In mind count rosary's beads: with humble toil
Bear all God's little ways.

If thou dost think 'I will a Jōgī be',
Drain cup of Nothingness and, sitting, gaze
On Nothingness itself. Lay hold of it.
('Where there is I: that Nothingness displays')
So, Seeker, full thy joy of pasture be
With God, One, perfect One.

Jōgīs have no hold on life.
Put on Jōga: cease to live.
O hark! With these ears hear
The message that I give.

Self-ness destroy and from the self
Lay self aside. No life hath 'This',
No Life at all. 'Tis fools
Whose 'I' in talking is.

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Be Jōgī whilst thou hast the power
Else, shameless one, avaunt from here!
Why dost thou bore thine ears
If cold thou canst not bear?

Flee hence! go thither! far away!
Lest others thou do bring to shame.
Men who are slaves to food
Are Jōgīs false in name.

Immersed in belly-needs the throng
Is worthless scum. No sound comes clear
To skull-placed ears: then list
To sounds with inward ear.

## V. The Holy Men (V)

Like to the pilgrimage to Sinai's mount
Are the Sanyāsīs' flexed knees.
Within their ears they laid this holy word
'The Seeker after God is male.'
They cast aside, of full intent each wise,
Whate'er there may in learning be.
Only the letter 'Alif' the Adēsīs bore
In mind for constant utterance.
They who have passed Lāhut reached Ulwahēt:
And not one word from them escapes.
Where lives despair, there is the place they live.
The huts they have are nothingness.
The will of God their order is: they beg
For not one single morsel else.
Filled with a vain conceit, folk seek their homes:
But such are muddled, saith Latīf.
They do not find them and they lose their way.

## V. The Holy Men (VI)

By knife of some kind are the Swāmīs slain
So that they know no happy life at all.
By day their bodies ache and all night long
They suffer pain. Hard is the life, my dear,



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Lived by the Jōgī's kind. They go to sleep
At evening time. But they are sitting up
For mid-time's prayer and they who worship Shiv
Wash not their faces, save it be with dust.
By dawn they're settled by the road-way's side.
To none this speech they utter : 'We Adēsīs are.'
Within Adēsīs' eyes dwells humbleness.
They have no pedigree, no list of kin.
In every way the Lord abides in Swāmīs' souls.
Except a loin cloth, nought for self they keep.
For worship's sake they practise heresy,
Know lore of demons and the things of ill.
But of the Lord alone true worship is.
There's none of pīr or prophet. They do sin
Who worship pīrs, and worse than these are they
Who worship idols, those poor luckless folk
From path misled who grasped untruthfulness.
Self worship not, thou faithful, pure of heart.
They who do this believe not. Let disgrace
Their faces blacken ! For they are accurst.
They're sinners, dogs to belly tied, and foul
In evil-doing with no bounds. On them
Affliction's curse falls, and the wrath of God.
Of none but God is any worship meet.
O soul accurst, how brought'st upon thyself
So great a sin, of self the worship made ?
To get thyself extolled ? In part thou dost
Thyself extol, in part thy sire extol.
Keep fear of God lest curse be thy reward.

## V. The Holy Men (VII)

Their wallets with hunger they filled.
For this is the way of their feast ;
And thirst is their drinking. For food
Jōgīs have not a care in the least.
The men of Lāhut, saith Latīf,
Have twisted their minds like munj-grass.
The Swāmīs who wandered through wastes
Leave the wastes and to clustered huts pass.
They measured the loin cloth of Love
And girdled themselves with it round.
As naked they entered this world
So naked they go from its bound,

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And the signs of the Swāmīs are clear
Where the sun's eastern rising is found.
Those Swāmīs who first thing at morn,
Saith the Sayid, made question for food,
Such Swāmīs are shameless : in vain
Can such men as Swāmīs be good.
Thou art asking for things that are past.
Make ready, go now, *now* instead.
Die today, die, Adēsī, today :
Tomorrow will all men be dead.
All men who to death are resigned
The One God can never forget,
As they go on their path, the ungirt,
No sleep for ascetics is set
And a vigil keeps brightening the eyes
Of them who with waking are met.
From Sanyāsīs who thought them of clothes,
And of morsels of food to be fed,
Stands Allāh still farther away.
What is past hath vanished and fled.
Ascetic, take Nothing's own self.
For Sanyāsīs the path's Alī's field.
They are seated with dust on their heads
Where the plain of Lord Alī's revealed.
When they heard that the distance was great
They left habitations and haunts.
And how wilt thou deal with the folk
Whom thou kill'st with reproaches and taunts ?
Those who find alms in hunger are they
Who take for their incense the dust :
Having clothed themselves with a shape
That the throng sees with shame and disgust.
For as long as they look, but see not
Why Jōgīs to Jōgīdom grew,
So long separation-sprung pain
Racks Sanyāsīs the weary night through.
Not a smile, without eating or speech,
Of such state or such trance they are part,
That its meaning is hard to divine.
Throw the mendicant's dress o'er thine heart.
Deck thyself out in no showy garb :
Close the innermost port of thy soul.
Eat thy flesh, O Bairāgī. Its scent
Let thine incense o'er desert-land roll.

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## VI. The Spinner (I)

You're not keen on spinning! But sleeping and rest
You must have for your bones? All at once Īd will come
And the folk without clothes wanting holiday best.
You'll be wanting yourself fine clothes to display
Where your girl friends are calling you out for the day.

You don't spin, you jade, or in wheel thread insert.
But you're always at hand for the weddings and throngs.
Can a girl with a load on her head sit inert
Doing nothing at all? While today, I daresay,
You are dying for clothes, you spun none yesterday.

Stupid fool, will your husband his favours bestow
Upon you, how many? You idled away
The days meant for spinning, a fool not to go
Near the wheel with the ball to be spun in your hand!
Now you're big, will you see any thread on the stand?

Even though you're grown big, rise, and come to the seat.
Take a spell with the rest of the women who spin.
Don't do anything else, so the merchant can treat
With you too to-morrow when spinners he calls:
Like as gold are your hands for the spinning of balls.

Why don't you spin then, you poor stupid fool?
Take your seat in the corner and spin. Put a stop
To the chattering talk. When the merchant comes, you'll
Change your goods with a smile for a price that is fair.
Use that old broken wheel, till the red one is there.

Fool, don't make a way of enduring bugbears
Of idleness. Spin! For God alone knows
Who will spin with the new wheel. You give yourself airs
When you turn the wheel round. So your husband's annoyed.
Wrap the cloth round your neck. At the wheel sit employed.
Lest your toil, sorry fool, at the wheel to waste goes.

## VI. The Spinner (II)

Spin, tremble and spin,
Lest good luck you spurn.
Those who spin, mother, meet
And forgather each turn.

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With conceit in their hearts
If fine yarn they spun,
Not an ounce would the merchants
Accept of the run.
With love in their hearts
If they spun but poor stuff,
The merchants would take it
Unweighed as enough.
What a wonderful thought
These spinners conceive :
They tremble and spin.
For their gain they believe
It is best to come early
At morn to their seats.
' Merchants dote on their beauty '.
(The Sayid repeats),
Their yarn was accepted
And put on the scales :
The merchants then weighed it
To add to their bales.
Their yarn is of use
Who card it in quiet,
Who breathe not a breath
Of the spinning wheel's riot.
Without show they tremble,
Latīf says, and spin.
If your yarn in exchange
Wealth of rubies won't win.
Still its value will rise
To a very good price.

## VI. The Spinner (III)

' O smooth is the yarn that comes from the hands
That teased cotton carefully carding the strands.
O mother, those girls who from muslin were taught
The toil of their hands to a golden wealth brought.'
But she in her dress tucks the cotton away
And wanders from doorway to doorway to say :
' This cotton who wants spun by me ? For I spin.
The spindle is crooked. Without and within
The yarn is twisted. Can spinning be done ?
How much shall I gain from the cotton I spun ?

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By the favour of luck midst my friends I'll be glad.'
In spinning fine yarn no learning she had.
Well ! let her spin coarse thread : the merchants will take
Even that on their scales, be it thick, and poor weight,
And grace with their bounty the girl of ill fate.
Other girls turned their wheels while fear in heart stood :
Whatever their work was, their husbands found good.
When her cotton was weighed came the old flaws to view.
They called up the spinner and questioned her too,
Apart, and she said ' I'm a poor lazy drudge ;
The hard bits of cotton I could not dislodge.
The spinners, O mother, have teased out their stuff
And gone to the quay for some reason enough.
I came up to meet them, from spinning seat rose.
Not one of them all in her body pain knows.
The wheels are dismantled. The spinners where flown ?
The clews of the worthies on floor have been thrown.
Yesterday all day long they spun and they spun.
Today at the seats there is present not one.
From their wheels they removed the cord of the cuts :
And now they have gone and closed up their huts.
In the midst of the trees no cotton plants are :
So here are no spinners. The empty bàzaar
Has ensalted my heart.' Foolish girl, in your brain
This truth ponder well and ponder again.
There were spinners who teased out the cotton with care.
By their hands (let it be but an ounce in the tare)
Fine yarn was produced. But your clews went astray :
By sparrows they're ruined : by wind blown away.
You doze by your wheel held in sleep's pleasant sway.
The work of her spinning was scanty and rough.
Let the thread of the duffer be counted enough,
(In the words of Inãyat), nor in need let her fail
When her bundles of cotton are weighed in the scale.

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# Part III

## Love

'Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n, to earth come down.'

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# I. Sasuī and Punhūn

## *The Story*

Sasuī, the daughter of a rich Hindu, a Brahman, was later because of her beauty adopted as his daughter by the chief of Bhambhōr. In due course she became herself the ruler of Bhambhōr. Owing to famine in Kēch the people of that land had sent a deputation to Bhambhōr to purchase corn. The leader of the caravan from Kēch succeeded in obtaining a remission in the price of the grain from Sasuī by promising to bring Punhūṅ, the son of Ārī Jām, the Chief of Kēch, to Bhambhōr. This young man was famed for the handsomeness of his features, and Sasuī was anxious to meet him. The caravan-leader, leaving the camel train at Bhambhōr, returned to Kēch and succeeded in getting Punhūṅ to visit Bhambhōr. There Sasuī and Punhūṅ fell violently in love with each other. Punhūn stayed behind when the caravan of camels loaded with grain returned to Kēch. Ārī Jām was angry that his son had not returned and sent the leader of the caravan accompanied by Punhūṅ's two brothers back to Bhambhōr to bring him home. This was done by the pretence of a friendly visit and then secretly one night Punhūṅ was taken away by his brothers. In the morning Sasuī discovered that the camels were gone and that her lover had departed. In a paroxysm of grief she set out on foot to track the camels and endured great hardships in her bewildered wanderings over the barren country that lay between Bhambhōr and Kēch, with its sandy deserts and its bare, gaunt mountain ranges. She perished upon the way in her search for her lover.

The poems of 'Sasuī and Punhūṅ' deal only with the events that happened when Sasuī realized that the camels had gone and that Punhūṅ had departed from Bhambhōr. The allusions to Sasuī passing her time with washermen relate to a version of the story that Sasuī spent some time washing clothes and that in Punhūṅ's courting of her he also had helped to wash clothes by her side amongst the washermen. People of Kēch are called Kēchīs and as Kēch is in Balūchistān they are referred to as Balūchī or Barōch in the poems. As Punhūṅ was the son of Ārī he is said to belong to the Āriyānī family or tribe. The poet calls the Āriyānīs by their name of Ārīchas also.



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## I

It is not right to tell one's woe
And yet it is not easy
To keep one's sorrow. Even so
Within my heart with twisting pain
Unfittingness now comes again.

Somehow or other in the kiln
The vessel's nether rim is baking.
A sip of wine from love's own still
I had from friends ; but better far
Low fevers than non-union are.

I slept and there within me grew
The branching of my loved one's vine
For food pain, sorrow's pain, I knew.
I writhe and struggle in my grief
Which stoppeth not to bring relief.

All day my heart is out of place
As strays the herd of camels far.
I loved no love to love displace.
My head is cloudy : from mine eyes
The misty fogbanks do not rise.

Within my heart hath rained today
The plenteous showering of my love.
Beloved, come, and carefully
Look after me. For I am wrapped
In separation and entrapped.

Some virtue had Balūchīs yet,
Thus I remembered in my sleep.
The pillow at my head is wet,
Is damp with weeping. Grief is green :
Upon my hand the tears are seen.

Beloved, bring me to thy mind.
O girls, my life is passed in vain.
Mine eyes sleep not : they do not find
Within them idle ways ! They blaze
Extinguished. Friend, thy memory stays.

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## II

The wind from the north
In its might hath gone forth.
I have neither blanket nor sheet.
Parching cold will unnerve them
Whose huts cannot serve them
Which totter when wintry winds beat.

The wind from the north
In its might hath gone forth.
I have neither blanket nor sheet.
And all the night through
The sheet I pulled to
In the hope that its four ends would meet.

Like the kiln potters shut,
Thy love dost thou not
Cover up? If the heat from kiln go,
Can the pots hardened be?
Keep the heat within thee
As potters preserve the fierce glow.

Learn love's test of skill,
O my love, from the kiln.
Though it burneth by night and by day,
From within its hot heart
Not a vapour doth start
The heat that's within to betray.

## III

O may the Lord cause wind to blow
That joineth friends together.
Go: that way choose, lest heart may lose
All hope of kindly weather.

Mine eyes I lifted yesterday
To search for Kēchīs faring.
Grant I may see the camelmen
Of Ārī Lord appearing.

My gazing eyes were filled with blood.
O Punhūṅ, this beseemeth,
To take with thee thine handmaid, me.
Today with hope that teemeth

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I cleanse the courtyard for their sake,
So long ago they parted
As mountain's age is. May my friends
Come hither whence they started.

O Allāh, like Thy Name, as great
My hope is. Vast, unbounded
Thy patience reigns, Creator, Lord
Within my soul is founded

The Name of Thee: as sweet it be,
So lives my great hope sweetly.
No door like Thine is. I have seen
Of doors my round completely.

O loose not, Thou, the bond of her
Who humble is and lonely.
Thy Name my one sole shelter is:
Thy Name I cling to only.

## IV

Rise, sleeping one, awake.
So much thou should'st not sleep.
Thou mayst not savour the Sultān's favour
If sleep thy senses steep.

Part sleep, part vigil make:
To sleep o'er much is fault.
Thou thought'st this home where thou art come.
Nay! 'tis but traveller's halt.

Sleep will not serve thee well.
'Where is Beloved?' say.
Thy time will go: wrung hands will know
The sad repentant's way.

Fools saw the froth and passed:
The milk they did not taste.
For worldly greed they sank their creed
And laid their souls awaste.

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V

O little crane, the flocking cranes
But yesterday did wing their way.
Within the marsh without thy friends
What wilt thou gain by longer stay ?
The cranes fly off in gathered flight :
Their bonds of love they do not sever.
For lo ! within the gathered wisp
For them aboundeth sweetness ever.
The little crane is wont to be
Where'er of cranes the flocking throng is :
From her own kind to feed apart
Against the crane-clan's law a wrong is.
O little crane, send forth thy call.
The night hath sped : the night is speeded.
Fate hither brought the wandering cranes :
It was their mountain land they needed.
No blame to any ! Food will be
In the Provider's hand for thee.
O little crane, within the wisp
There was a talking yesterday.
In swamp thy brethren, sistern keep
Of thee a goodly memory.
Alas ! thou dost not see the net
That in the fowler's hand is set.

VI

Lax one, from laxness cease.
Thou sleepest ? Shame thy soul !
The drivers quickly off
Ere now have reached their goal.
Go, sleep, lest winding ways
In crying take thy toll.

Neglectful, thou at eve
Didst sleep thy house within.
Thine ears indeed were deaf
To hear no camels' din.
Can they who sleep at eve
Beloved's union win ?

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When sleeping girls their limbs
Stretched on the couch had laid
And they were sunk in sleep,
Off went the camelcade.
By stretching limbs in sleep
A great mistake was made.

Wouldst thou by Friend's door stand,
A whisper there would be.
From every bond and tie
Of Ārī thou art free;
And what can 'Punhūṅ' mean,
If sleep befalleth thee?

Thou didst, asleep at eve,
Wrap up thy face as dead.
Thou couldst not tell thine eyes
How sleep is banished.
Thine own hand's work! Why blame
The men of Kēch instead?

## VII

*Sasuī.*

O mountain, you brought me grief.
I shall tell my friend when we greet.
There was terror at morning time:
In your twists and turns deceit.
No boon did you work for me
Losing tracks of my loved one's feet.

O mountain, first to my friend
Shall I heap up your name with scorn:
How my feet were crushed by the stones,
How my soles to ribbons were torn.
Not a thought for me, not a jot
Of rue in your heart was borne.

'Tis the mountain that brings me woe',
This my cry to heaven will soar.
O mountain, torture me not,
I have suffered much before.
No joy do I call to mind:
I remember of grief full store.

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O mountain, on suffering ones
Should solace and help descend,
And largesse of sympathy come
To them who have lost their friend.
Then why, O stone, to their feet
Is it torture you extend ?

O mountain, stricken forlorn
Folk come to tell you their woe.
To them who are broken and bruised
Should heartening solace flow.

*Sayid.*

They sit together, together they weep,
Afflicted woman and mountain-steep,
To none telling aught of the flames
That within their hearts are aglow.

## VIII

*Sasuī.*

Mid the crags leave me not in the country of Hōt ;
With thee, on my feet I shall trudge,
Setting Bhambhōr in flames, so little I'd care,
The Balūchīs' miserable drudge.

Mean as I am, how can I address
Punhūṅ, my love and my friend ?
Completely sunk under Ārī's spell
Clutching his garment-end.

I am less, much less, than Balūchīs' shoes
That they wear upon their feet.
Forgetting the Kēchīs how can I stay
Resting upon the seat ?

*Sayid.*

A poor, poor thing of little worth,
The Balūchīs' veriest slave.
By the tie of the bond that was held to them
Her liberty Sasuī gave.

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Like reapers they cut all shame away :
And for her was the journey to Hōt,
A chattel, a servant, a slave, and a thing
With the gold of the camelmen bought.

' Her liberty lies in Ārī's hand '
(Let Poet Ināyat tell).

*Sasuī.*

If out of their mercy they called me slave
'Twas a name that fitted me well.

## IX

Like a cloud the rays of Punhūṅ shine :
But waiting for Ārī I weep
Many tears. In surfeit of purest joy
His rays my senses steep.

I think of this awesome land as health
Because of my loved one there.
From Ārī lord let calamity come,
Still sweetness is everywhere.

## X

Many are the faults within me : thus my reckoning, Noble Lord.
Ārī, do not leave me. Meet me. In my sorrow hope afford.
Come beside me, Guide, and guide me wandering upon the way.
Girl friends come and coming plague me : ' Rest : for they are lost ' they say,
' Who set out upon their journey.' Bound to kin by joyful ties
They, unlike me, are not weeping tears of blood from weeping eyes.
Haply they may rest themselves then. I am wed to wealth of woe.
Why do they on mat of mourning for sad folk prostrate them so ?
They are not by wounds afflicted such as touch the inmost heart.
But they make pretence of grieving. With a self-regarding art
Not an anguished cry they utter for my love. O tell, friends, tell.
Can the girl whose soul's encompassed by the darts of love be well ?
Or whose mind is crushed with sorrows sunken in a sorry plight ?
Sisters, love without, I'm sickly. Did I but a jot recite
What my state is, beasts were tongueless, mountains would asunder go,
Trees would perish in their burning, not a blade of grass would grow.

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## XI

How shall I weep for my love when I know not the way to weep,
Lifting and lifting aloft the hands that are soiled with tears?
Deserts are smiling land to them who are burnt with love.
Carry thou love to them who are searchers after the truth.
Where there is only One, the squint-eyed woman sees three.
Away with things that are Two: go to the side of the One.
Thou revellest in deceit, O squint-eyed woman: thy spouse
Sundering cannot abide. With them who would break with thee
Break not but join thyself, like the fold of a garment's hem.
Sasuī, harsh though they treat thee, win them with merciful heart.
This bond that is noble and good beg for and, begging, pursue.

## XII

Be it soon: or late let it be.
I must go to my Friend, I must go.
A heavy work thy handmaiden wrought:
O Master, bring it not thus to nought
But grant this favour to me.
I am weary: let me the camelman see
While the blood in my veins doth flow.

Slow melting is yearning's bane;
And verily Sasuī yearned.
She was steeped in the depth of Punhūṅ's love.
But her thirsting desire she could not move.
Love's water in gulps she did drain
To bring to her only the greater pain
Of the thirst that within her burned.

The huts by the water stand;
But fools for the want of it die.
My friends are nearer than life to me
But they find me not nor this truth can see,
And complain like a stricken band.
Let Sasuī roam through the desert land.
Water hath made them thirstier yet
Whose thirst within them doth lie.



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## XIII

*Sasuī*

I have no knowledge of the waste of scrub. Men speak
Of deserts stretching far. Come back, my hope, my love,
I weary wandering o'er the waste. Thou spouse of mine,
Make me not desolate, nor leave me thus upon the way.
I have no knowledge of the waste of scrub. I drink
No drop of water. How the hills assail me and the heat
Pours forth its fierceness. (Hot winds blow amain,
The poet says, upon a hapless soul.) Come hither, come,
O friend of mine, be with me for I am alone.
The waste of scrub hath lofty trees. Folk say therein
The black snakes dwell. Come near me, O thou Guide, come
near.
Upon the way no family and no kin can comfort me.

*Sayid.*

The wretched girl had ne'er before beheld that waste of scrub
No pitying eye of man could see her and the skies were dark.
O sisters, to her own great woe she made the camelman her friend.

## XIV

From women folk who sit and rest,
Go, ask thou now of Punhūṅ's ways.
O wretched girl, within thyself
Look for thy loved one all thy days.

He is not where thou thought'st he was,
Fond girl, thy lover from the hills.
Hillward then fare not. Thine own self
The place of barren Wankār fills.

All strangers think as folk apart.
Ask of thyself where are thy friends.
O Sasuī, make careful search
Of all thy house's corner-ends.

However far thou journey'st forth
Lo! is thy friend still at thy door!
Return and ask thyself again:
Thy friend is on thy very floor.

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'Tis bootless wandering far afield
And crying out thy lord to find.
Avoid the doors of stranger-folk ;
But search instead within thy mind.

The loved one that thou sufferest for
Of very sooth resides in thee.
Why go to Wankār, if not here
Thou searchest thy beloved to see ?

' Not hidden yonder,' says Latīf,
' Is thy Balūch.' Thy merit prove :
Gird up thy loins and so fulfil
The promise of thy Punhūṅ's love.

With closed eyes search and see within
Thyself how doth thy love appear.
False are the womenfolk who ask
For Kēch, but not for Punhūṅ here.

But womenfolk whose hearts in his
With bonds of love are intertwined,
Have banished their journeyings
And cast foot-wanderings from their mind.

Go with thine heart towards thy love :
Forget foot-wanderings thou didst wend.
It is not like a messenger
That thou wilt reach thy journey's end.

Go with thine heart towards thy love.
Cease, Sasuī, wanderings of thy feet.
Ask not the sand how lies the path.
To travel soul-fully is meet.

Go with thine heart towards thy love
And roam not where the mountains stand.
' Within my heart I found my Lord,
The man of Kēch's hilly land.'

Go with thine heart towards thy love ;
Discard the body's weakly aid.
They who their worth of soul did know
By side of loved Āriyānī stayed.

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## XV

Can girls who yearn not reach the desert scrub ?
Nay ! they will falter on the way o'ercome
By thousand-fold desire, themselves desire's own soul.
Not one will suffer hunger. Such poor folk
Are stopped of progress. But let her proceed
Who doth not reck of putting life to risk.
No lover of soft ease may come with me.
But those whose inward souls are racked with pain
May search with me throughout the mountain land.
Ye who have husbands, turn ye back. Return
I shall not, if my spouse be not with me.
I'll drain the dregs of searching fearsome hills.
I'd little loving with the camelmen.
Return, all ye with husbands. Parting's rift
Is said to frighten. If love's fire within
Heart's portal burns for women, women will
O'er hillside wander and o'er mountain roam.
That promise thou didst make on Windar once
Fulfil for me, Barōch, my friend, who am
Dead, helpless. Yet must Sasuī herself
First keep her promise, then must Punhūn his.
Forget not then the trysting made with Hōt.
The words they spoke thou heardest. Slumber not.
How wilt thou treat the hills the wanderers passed ?
In Bhambhōr townsmen held much argument.
Can she come back, the lifeless one whose love
The camelmen abducted ? Mother mine,
Oh may I not return and die, but die
Before returning. Suffering torment for my love
I may perchance then stumble on his footsteps there.

## XVI

O girls, my friends, within my days I've suffered from my husband's kin.
But when I fled from Bhambhōr, lo ! my grief was changed into joy.
From me was woe's dark curtain drawn and I mine own loved one became.
Sasuī's female grace is fled : and she herself is Punhūn now.

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In such like oneness, saith the Sayid, protection is for lovers found.
The shelter of Bhambhōr's abode for loving hearts is near at hand.
I'll struggle on across the hills. If I return, 'twill be my shame.
I am but the Balūch's slave. I shall not claim the marriage tie.
To separate is worse than death. I shall not here myself remain.
Hope I'll not yield. Alive may I behold the camelman and die.
'Tis not in things that I, poor wretch, without the camelman should live :
And his companions are gone, they climbed on camels, rode away.
Where Punhūṅ halted on his road, mine eyes weep tears to see the place.
' Thy love is in thy lap ' : then why from travellers dost thou make thy quest ?
' Thy love's within thee ! Seest thou not ? ' This saying ponder well and know.
She never sought the public place to ask where her loved one might be.
' Thy love is in thy lap ' : why askest thou like this for sign of him ?
' Nearer than vein of neck is he.' Thine own is with thy very self.
For self is bound with self indeed : to those in love true self is near.
O sisters, such I did not know. Unwitting marriage-tie I bound ;
Else less, assuredly, had been the suffering that the hillman caused.
For tawdry pleasure I entwined my life within the camelman's.

## XVII

*Sasuī.*

O tyrant Mountain, heap no dread on hapless girls.

*Sayid.*

The world respects thee, Sasuī, saith Latīf.

*Sasuī.*

My powerful lord, kill not thy wretch with holy words.
For God, All-Knower, be at peace with wanderers.
Leave her not lonely, Hōt, who through thee won a boon.
O tyrant Mountain, 'gainst thine equals work thy dread.
Why dost thou deal thus harshly with thine hamlet's slave ?
Come back, my hero, for in me no strength resides.
Set foot on mountain ; softer be thy foot than silk.

*Sayid.*

Sad though her plight, towards her Punhūṅ went the slave.
So go she : and return with him with whom she's bound.

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## XVIII

Who go to Windar, let them gird their loins.
But why should they, their girdles who unbind ?
It is not while we sit, our loved ones come.
Well may they weep whose loved ones wander far.
Sasuī suffers torture, gnawed with grief
No word she uttereth : but secretly
She seeks for traces of her well-beloved.
If love's fire is a-kindling, kindle it
And fan it till its flames shall reach the skies.
Forget the very stuff existence is ;
In non-existence place it all away.

## XIX

*Sasuī.*

Strengthless, feeble, weak, without a guide,
I shed tears for my husband. From mine heart
I pour love's tears forth. Yet though weak I be
I strive to make my peace with Punhūṅ. Love,
I'll grind the corn and bake it : only thou
But take me with thee so I be with thee.

*Sayid.*

When Azrad came and woke the sleeping girl,
Sasuī fancied ' Punhūṅ sent this man '.
When Munkar and Nakīr she saw, she asked
For news of Punhūṅ thus : ' Oh brothers, say,
Did any party of my friends pass by from here ? '

## XX

She sate her down : no step could she advance ;
She cried ' Come, Āriyānī : worn am I
And deep in love with thee. Towards thy side
I creep. Where Punhūṅ is, I'll go alone,
Glad in my hillsman I'll delight my heart.
O'er mountain wandering, wandering, somehow thus
I'll find my need assuaged. Oh, fool am I !
With me abides the pain that comes of friends.'
Her heart discerned her lov'd one. Overborne
Not thus she rested. Nay, so saith Latīf,
She scorns the pass and enters stony gorge.
The lovestruck Sasuī to honour rose.

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## XXI

'Come near, Beloved, go not far away.'
Outworn she raised aloft her arms and cried
Amidst the desert waste : 'My cries of grief,
Will kill me, Loved One, come thou back to me.
Come near, Beloved, go not far away.
Return. Mid mountains, Giver of Life, I die.
O Punhūṅ, Friend of mine, desert me not
While forward on my feet I make my way.
O Ārī, Husband, for the sake of God
Forget not me. My living core remembers
In heaving sighs. My joints are paining and
My bones a-boil for my beloved Friend.
In very sleep indeed love's pain no rest
Vouchsafes. I summon pains that murder men.'
Not such is Sasuī as tremble they
Who see the pass. For she hath learnt the way
That is betrodden of Khāhōrīs' feet.

## XXII

Misfortune slays me. Seize the reins. Alack !
Drive not the camel off. Come, visit me
Lowly within mine hut, O Husband, Friend.
Without thee I have seen the judgement day.
Bad hap they brought me, camels, spouse's kin
And hills. Yet joy I counted them in hope
I'd join my love. When, Sasuī, during day
Thou sawest alien beasts within the yard
Thou should'st have held them till the evening time.
With chains of thy head's hair hadst thou them bound,
They had not filched Punhūṅ thy love away.
Thou sawest alien beasts within the yard :
With thy head's hair thou didst not fasten them,
Oh why ? Thou wouldst not then have undergone
The grievous torture of the mountain-pass.
The camels used to grunt. But this one time
For me was nought but silence : not a word
The drivers uttered saddling up the beasts
To drive them off, some secret bargain made,
This man with that. No ! No ! not wicked were

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My husband's kin. But only let my fate
Be fair. What evil lies in camelkind
And keepers? O what luckless girl is she
Who finds herself athwart the will of God?
The camelmen were strangers from the start,
No friends of wretched me. My husband's kin
Bore me ill-will. I smiled and welcomed them.
By morning's tally camels none I found
Where camels rest. 'Ware camelmen: they're come
Or coming. Punhūṅ they will take away,
Breathing no breath, and set their course for home.

## XXIII

*Sasuī.*

Drive not the camels off for Allāh's sake,
O camelmen. Ye friends adored, sustain
This bruised heart. Burst not my loved one's bond.
Drive not the camels off for Allāh's sake
In haste, O drivers. Take thy slave beside.
Let her clutch the camel's hair. Love's memory
Effects the ruin of my soul within.
In deep dishonour shall I plunge my race
If from the men of Kēch I turn aside.

*Sayid.*

Love set her wandering o'er the desert waste.
What else fills happy girl with such desires?
In grief for husband's kindred midst the hills
She did much journeying. Had her spouse returned,
Her luckless journeyings would have found her grace.

## XXIV

Ah womenfolk! beside the washerman in vain
My time I spent, which hap hath me undone,
Burning me up with griefs. Heaven willed that I
Contract a marriage bond with passing folk,
A woman luckless, left without her kin!
In hundreds with the caravans there go
Workmen and weavers: yet this beggar me,
Creature of little worth, (so sings Latīf),
God, bring me past the Thōrīs' watering place.
I have no strength: on thv bark let me cross.

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## XXV

*Sayid.*

The Friend helps them whose panniers are not full.
In happy throng hillmidst will Punhūṅ come
And in a twinkling gladdened the soul will be.
Thus saith Latīf.

*Sasuī.*

Full many hills, men say,
Stand where Ārīchas are. T'wards Hārhō's hill
Lifting my hands, let me the mountains join.
'Twas yesterday the Kēchīs went. Today
I roam the hills counting, as they were clouds,
Kāmbhō and Kārō hills. The hill of Pubb
By early morning I shall leave behind.
Now must I go : nor shall I rest between.

## XXVI

*Sayid.*

The hills are harsh, the dust is great ;
The paths are all o'erlaid with sand.
The passes hinder, saith Latīf,
And fierce, they say, the deserts stand.
Her, worn by journey stages, Lord,
Bring safe within the Kēchīs' land.

*Sasuī.*

By love o'ercome I fell asleep.
Love brought no respite to my fraine.
I sank to slumber keeping watch
For those I loved. But when they came
I woke not, sisters. I was wrong
To make of love and sleep the same.

He is a jewel, this my kin :
In darkness he is as the light.
When on the reckoning day they count
He will not let me from his sight.
He'll call me and remember me,
My hills man, Lord of Kēch-land's right.

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## XXVII

So much with Punhūṅ is my love entwined,
To live in beauteous Bhambhōr is for me
As poison. Urge no coming back, mine aunts.
My life, O friends, is given in trust to Hōt.
The stricken one some indication had.
The wretched girl is strengthless ; nor can slave
Without thy hand, Hōt, follow any path.
Show her some sign her muddled sense may grasp.
Sometime in mercy speak me fair, Belov'd.
My love for me my body hath undone.
Hands' work is poison, sleep to eyes forbid.
I cannot wait an instant, Friend, whilst thou
In Windar taste the joys of happiness.
When to the hills there Punhūṅ's fragrance came
The trees breathed forth Ārīchas' redolence.
The wishes, mother, of my heart come true.
There hath arrived in Kēch the Perfect One.

## XXVIII

*Sayid.*

Those girls are false who tired while journeying
Towards the Friend, the Punhūṅ whom they loved.
But they who suffered trouble for their love
Find stone as soft as silk : and happy are
All they who're bruised and broken in the quest.
O Brahman girl, let flesh be cut as meat
The Kēch dogs raven and devour what's cut.
All girls, go naked : put no clothing on.
Lo : first of all the throng is she who ploughs
Her way lighthanded. Who bedecked yourself
With neat hair-parting ruined union's joy.
She who like Līlaṅ loved the jewel's appeal
Was scorched with burning. They who nothing bore
Crossed Hārhō's hill, and seeking love they came
Beside the village of their heart's desire.
Kēch sent its summoning call to them who went
But carried nothing underneath their arms.

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## XXIX

My bosom friends have gone away :
To whom shall I my sorrow tell ?
With shame as burden (saith Latīf)
I roam amongst the passes. Who
A traveller is for me to ask ?
Let me sit down that there may come
Into mine hand what I desire.
Let thorns in thousands pierce my feet :
Let big with little toe not join :
Let feet be torn upon the rocks.
Nay : when I go towards my love
I'll put on no such thing as shoe.
They'll put on shoes who count their feet
As they would friends. For her love's sake
Sasuī put her shoes away.

## XXX

By dying live that thou mayst feel
The beauty of Beloved. Thou
Wilt surely do the righteous thing
If thou wilt follow this advice.
Die, that thou prosper. Sit not down,
O woman, live and after death
Thou wilt unto thy Punhūṅ come.
They who so died before their death
By death are not in death subdued.
Assuredly they live who lived
Before their life of living was.
Who lived before their living was
From age to age will live for aye.
They will not die again who died
Before the dying came to them.
Thou didst not know thy death was there,
In quiet questing for thy love.
Thou didst not hear, O woman, this :
'Die : why dost thou behead thyself ?'

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## XXXI

*Sayid.*

Use feet and hands and knees, go on :
Go forward earnestly that thou
Bring to its crown Lord Ārī's love.
As long as life lasts, let none else
The equal of thy Punhūṅ be.
Use feet and hands and knees, trudge on
With all the strength thine head command.
Fond girl to give up news of him
Thou lovest ! For the spark of love,
O Sasuī, is thy passport's aid.
Let there be Hōts in thousands, yet
Make none of them thy Punhūṅ's peer.
The wretched girl laid on herself
The task of searching for her love.
Her body which with anguish sore
Was tortured, suffered pains of fire.
Her fate, foredoomed ere that, was writ.
So later came the trudgings-on.
Great was the distance : could a shriek
Be heard across it ?

*Sasuī*

If I cry
The folk will say that I am mad.
Well, let them say it ; if they hear,
They only hear the cry I raise.
Yes, let them come and give reproach.
What will reproaches do to me ?
If I speed onwards I shall be
In pieces broken when I fare
Upon the tracks my love has made.

## XXXII

*Sasuī.*

Restrain myself howe'er I try,
I cannot stay unless I see
Beloved's face. Unbounded grief
Without my love assaileth me.
Avaunt, tomorrow : I'll not bide
By promise that tomorrow tells.
I cannot wait tomorrow's day :
Or meet me, love, or kill me, else.
Bring union to a wretched girl,

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Or kill her : only show her eyes
The Friend she loves.

*Sayid.*

Sad soul, dismiss
Thy sorrow from thy memories.
Away with thy luxurious couch,
O Sasuī girl. Out o'er the ground
Seek, to the finding, Ārī's feet.
Lo ! curses fall on hills around,
The curses of the hapless one.
When she is dead, the deserts through,
The deer with constant wailing say :
'She who is dead hath killed us too.'
Afflicted one, thy famine stays
Though there may fall the showering rain.
The Lord hath plenty in his hands.
In raising hands to Him there's gain.

## XXXIII

*Sasuī.*

I did not meet my love although
An hundred suns to setting sped.
O let me yield my life when I
Have seen him, hence my journey made.
I have not met my love but thou
Art sinking to thy rest, O Sun.
The messages I give thee, take
And tell to my beloved one.
To Kēch go, say : 'The sad one died
Upon the path.' 'Twas not for me
To meet my love : death supervened.
I'll die, be nothing utterly
In separation from my love.

*Sayid.*

She will become the vultures' food,
Upon the trees, for all her speed.
For her love's sake Sasuī stood
Her life upon the gallows tree.
There wild beasts are : her flesh is here.
She kept back nought, the wretched one.
Within the wastes a cry comes sheer ;
And mournful sound of wailing crane.
A shriek within the eddy rings :
It is the cry of lover's pain.

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## XXXIV

*Sayid.*

With set of sun the lateness came :
On mountain fell her gaze.
With sorrows she was furnished ;
On Wankār's block she laid her head,
Victim of evil days.

*Sasuī.*

Sink not, O sun, nor make it late
For those o'ercome with woe.
Hill, if I see Balūchī tracks,
No matter if life go.

Out and away Balūch hath sped.
By me can aught be done
Now ? I shall haste across the waste
As soon as sets the sun.

Across the stones how many steps
Must I take roaming on ?
Girl friends, it was with griefs alone
Relationship I won.
Let none come with me ; only waste,
They say, lies on and on.

No water there, the distance great :
Before me, desert, sand.
Cursing Punhūṅ's name let none
Of thirst die in that land.

## XXXV

*Sasuī.*

O mother, love's consuming fire assails me from my love :
In part 'tis love's internal flame, part heat of day above.
I go and going hesitate amidst the double burning-fire.
High o'er my head for the Balūch the flames of conflagration rise.
And yet thou tauntest me because the truth is hidden from thine eyes.
Return, my mother, that I may tell thee the language of my woe.
My love forgotten, verily for me the parching winds may blow
And I may perish in the waste as doth the desert lark expire.

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O mother, from the spinning seat remove the spinning wheel
away.
That man of hills for whom I spun went home to Kēch nor did
he stay.
Card not the ball of cotton now if, mother, thou for me dost
care.
Kick down the wheel and cast the cotton-ends upon the water's
face.
That man of hills for whom I spun went home to Kēch, which is
his place.
Card not the ball of cotton now if, mother, thou dost care for
me.
Love struck me down. Get cotton spun and pay for it the
spinning fee.
The wheel and cotton, spinning seat, O girls, banish anywhere.

The man I loved, who is my life, has gone and brought me
sorrow's pain.
In spinning-place they say to me: 'Spin.' Though the strands
I pull and strain,
No thread emergeth. But the wheel to stain with tears hath
been my lot,
With tears of blood.

*Sayid.*

The Brahman girl pulled forth the thread of
faring long.
Some ancient love she must have had to bind her to Balūchī
throng.
As night to dripping fullness swelled, she pulled and gathered
journey's thread.
Poor one, whate'er her thinking was, to camelmen for her 'twas
wed.
She sallied forth and paid no scot, nor had the day become then
hot.

Ere that could be, she burst the ties that bound her to the
spinning girls.
Burn while thou livest, there's no place except for fire that in
thee swirls.
In cold, in heat go on, go on: there is no time to stay and rest.
Drive on the camel while 'tis light,
Lest darkness fall and thou not sight
The tracks of them thou lovest best.

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## XXXVI

While I went wandering on this thought of the Balūchīs came to me :
Bhambhōr I'll leave ? My mind knows no enjoyment here. If only Hōt
Had heard the cries I raised outside Bhambhōr, not then mayhap indeed
Would he have slipped away from me. Flee Bhambhōr, sisters, and you will
Be saved. Ere this, my sisters, I have suffered sorrow in this place.
In this Bhambhōr it is, O friends, a wounded life I spend. To them
Who went upon their journey memory clings. And how can I forget
Them who set off away from me ? My bodice on my shoulder's torn :
My head is bare. What is my business, sisters, in this Bhambhōr town ?
All Bhambhōr was mistaken. No one went from it to follow Hōt.
The town had not the sense to know the matchless lord's, mine Ārī's worth.
For them who saw with inward heart the bridegroom donned the marriage-crown.
'Twas they who saw with inward heart who after him went on their way.
They too were toiling after him who Punhūṅ did not take with them.

## XXXVII

*Sasuī.*

Had I been the Balūchīs' slave, they had not left me the prey
Of sorrow a sorrowful one, of that there is not a doubt.
O sisters, had I but been bone of Ārīchas' bone,
The men of the hills would have called me at loading of caravan.
Had I had true marriage bond, reproaches I could have poured
On the heads of my husband's kin. But out of my humble state
I uttered never a word. Mother, my caste is a slur
In the minds of the men of Kēch.

*Sayid.*

If she keep not her eyes awake
With the caravans, what then ? Is it after that she should weep ?
This way of thine was a pitiful way ; when the travellers went
Thou didst sleep.

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*Sasuī.*

I call to my friends. But they do not answer my cries.
Ah luckless me! at my place the tongues of the camels were dumb.
So great misfortunes occurred to me in this evil Bhambhōr.

## XXXVIII

O mother, by travellers' fault I suffered such pang of love.
All unexpectedly came my knowledge of them to me.
Mother, don't hold me back. My friends have wounded my heart.
How with the alien folk wast thou tangled, kirtle and hem ?
Thy sense went all awry when thou made'st of the man of the hills
Thy spouse, O Sasuī. Play didst thou think the Balūchī's love,
Vagabond Brahman girl ? By love I am looted and robbed.
Distance hath fallen between me and the union of love.
My friends when they met me healed the wounds that wounded
my soul.

## XXXIX

*Sasuī.*

Mother, my hopes have found their crown.
The Balūch are come to Bhambhōr town.
Some one from Punhūṅ I saw : mine eyes
Grew cool to their veriest uttermost ends,
As the nail to finger tip extends.
My griefs I forgot to see joys' tree
In a branching fullness rise.

*Sayid.*

A child of woe, she was shown by woe
Love's pitiful path : and how to go
For union with Hōt. For such journeying
Sorrows pointed the way. For some folk see
That in sorrows there can an immense thing be.
Tie up thy cash in thy garment. With grief
Do thy bargain and trafficking.

*Sasuī.*

Grief, shake me not : for my strength is frail.
As salt in water, my life doth fail.
Sorrows' flood abateth nought, never at all.
Today flow the Persian wheels full course
With more than yesterday's water-force.
Sorrows know no rule. With a shattering power
Their sudden terrors fall.



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Deeper than depth are my love-sprung woes.
Friends who honoured me stand and oppose.
Fine scope had my sorrows. Of their own move
They came and settled. To whom impart
The inmost promptings of my heart?
Lo! Lo! In my mind I am pierced through
With the pointed arrow of love.

Mother, restrain me not: for the dart
The Balūch cast forth hath smitten my heart.
Weeping, the Kēchward land I'll stain
With blood. For me will the crow ever sing,
Mother, glad notes of welcoming?
Those women have verily gone from the land
Who were o'erborne with pain.

Whom now shall I ask of Beloved's sojourn?
While afflicted ones meet not, 'tis futile to mourn.
Some wring their hands aimlessly: true mourners wail.
How shall I share out, friends, the woe
That can be shared? Do others know?
They have their loved ones in front of them,
And grief cannot assail.

*Sayid.*

Gird up thy loins, O suffering one,
This time, all times. For Kēch is far.
Let death not find thee journeygone
And held where mountain-passes are.

## XL

Who after their Beloved ask, will always their Beloved see
And they who search are who behold the courtyard of Beloved's home.
Enquire, go on: else hadst thou not for thy Beloved query made.
The girls who search are from their Friend assuredly not far away.
May I in searching find thee not: nor may thy body meet with mine,
That go there not from me the urge that moveth every single hair.
Whoso like me with the Balūch made kindred bond, hath set her flesh.

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On beds of spikes and from her eyes the tears that are of blood spurt forth.
Whoso like me tells the Balūch the secret promptings of her heart
Will never cease to lave her cheeks with falling, ever falling, tears.

## XLI

The spinning-seat they passed and went. What is an humble one to do?
Now this must be her task, with fire to set this Bhambhōr town alight.
The spinning-seat they passed and went. Speed o'er the tracks the camels sped.
Rest not in Bhambhōr, lady, thou wilt thus thyself then catch him up.
In sand delight lives. Fare thou forth that thou mayst be with Hōt, thy love.
Of knowledge and of full intent deserting me they went away.
O sister, how can I give up that Āriyānī man I love?
I filled the jars with water: gain was none therefrom to men of Kēch.

## XLII

*Sayid.*

What wilt thou do by weeping? Comes now any Friend back here to thee?

*Sasuī.*

How great the cruel deeds, O girls, that kindred folk have wreaked on me.
I do adjure you thus let none towards me act with treachery.
If wretched girl is killed, then fear from her will vanish utterly.
O friends from Kēch, with you-sprung woes how comes it still that life I see?
I do not live. I am not dead: but, Love, yield life remembering thee.
Or soon or late I'll die: but grant upon the way that my death be.
O girls, I hope that there may fall on my Beloved blood of me.

*Sayid.*

Yielding her life to camelmen, to Punhūṅ's hinds called Sasuī,
Lest any man in Kēch should treat her Bhambhōr town ungratefully.

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## XLIII

Cease not calling. Utter cries on cries
Lest memory of thee fade
Amongst the camelcade.
Thou sittest idling! Dost thou ask thus wise;
'What of the travellers? whither journey made?'
Oh! By what way aright wilt thou with Hōt unite?

Thou sittest idling? Such is not love's way.
Break all the bonds that tied
Thee fast to Bhambhōr side.
The neighbours know not sad night turned to day.
By thought of the Balūchīs' tried
The Brahman girl a wound of grievous sorrow found.

Here Sasuī was: there sorrows were. The two
Went off together mourning.
'O men of Kēch, returning
Come somehow to this wretch whom woes subdue.
I am your slave without the food of earning.
To me sad stricken, come, hillsman, bring comfort home.'

## XLIV

*Sayid.*
The eaters of the wild grass seed
Said to her 'Kēch is far away.'
The more she thought of it, the more
Her hastening pace she hurried on.

*Sasuī.*
Thou didst not treat the men of Kēch
As it was meet to treat them. Short
Thy paces were: no lengthening
Of strides thou madest after them.

*Sayid.*
Some rain it rained of Ārī's love
That fell on her. Nor would that love
Pass dumbly from her countenance.
The lord of Kēch pallbearer is

Of Sasuī's head. To see her love
She fell o'ercome with weariness.
Across the passes, saith Latīf,
Her Āriyānī carried her.

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By feet of humble one to lie,
Such was the luck that Punhūn won.

*Sasuī.*

No kindred bond, nor any tie
Binds me to the Balūch. In caste
I am not suited, base and mean.
Let news of this not come to Kēch,
Lest publicly be Punhūn shamed.
Their business done the Kēchīs went,
Deserting me. Thou, God, art there.
I had ill-treatment from my friends.

## XLV

If ye with your eyes had seen the Balūch
As I did behold my friend,
Ye would have said to me 'Search' and gone
Yourselves amongst the hills.
If women had met, as I have met,
Punhūn, the Friend Beloved,
They had put their mouths to their arms and cried
Of a sooth in the desert waste.
Cease not from wailing 'Ah woe! Ah woe!'
Lest thou lose the memory of woe.
No open-shed tears of water weep:
On the path weep tears of blood.
Patience, a mighty virtue thou art:
Cause me to join my Friend.
The more that the world restraineth, the more
Is there lesson of meaning to me.
The rout of mankind in pleasure is sunk
And talketh with gay unconcern.
Cross o'er the people while they are asleep:
Press, press on behind thy love.
Search for thine Āriyānī and go
The bounds of Bhambhōr outside.
I am lost on my wandering path: but the rest
Are safe in the company.
Like me, she will meet with a tragedy
Who mentions the name of love.
No women are there to weep, nor folk
To chant responses of woe.
The sorrows I have are my sorrows alone:
They are bringing me to my death.

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## XLVI

*Sasuī.*

Love's pains, mid wastes where friends abode,
To me the Perfect Hillsman showed.
Balūch are many, others : but
Āriyānī is my sheltering hut.
Within my mind I chose my love
With all the means that senses move.
Of girl who is to Windar sold
Shall her returning scarce be told.
The girl who Bridegroom seeking is,
Folk call her lost in lunacies.
They who ungirt to meeting-place
Without their love went, found the trace
Of him and saw him with their eyes.
Before my gaze did camels rise :
O ! that there be Balūchīs too ;
Let cataract else mine eyes subdue.
They saw their love ? Then may they not
Return. Returning is a blot.
The helpless creatures' pride is meet
To die by tracks of loved one's feet.
Within the passes to be tossed
Were better : Bhambhōr's joys be lost !
The cowries which you offered me
Have, mother, useless proved to be.
To the Balūch mine heart afire
Hath bound with bonds my hot desire.
She hath towards Balūchī tribe
Such hot desire that should they jibe
And say ' Avaunt and perish ', she
Doth answer people, ' willingly '.
A welcome thing it was for me
That my relationship should be
With the Balūch, whom I pursued
And Kēch's land thus, seeking, viewed.
Will any woman, sister, come ?
I count the hills my kindred-home.
The henna of Malīr shall I
Unto this body, mine, apply.
I'll go to Windar : there shall be
Lord Ārī's shelter found for me.

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Once such was I, at my command
My clothes were washed by Punhūṅ's hand :
Now am I such that camel men
Take me not with them. Sorrow's pain
Hath fostered me and futile thought
To me life's nourishment hath brought.

*Sayid.*

Her lot was not, the Sayid says,
In happy joys to pass her days.

*Sasuī.*

I was, (perhaps 'twas fated so)
A joint upon the stem of woe.
All have their sorrows, hand, full hand :
But sorrows stay with me and stand.
I carry loads of sorrow on.
Joys have deserted me and gone.
The hillsman makes me cross the plains
With toilsome journey's racking pains.
He makes me other countries see
Which ne'er before were seen by me.
My dress on shoulder's torn, and bare
Mine head. O sister, what is there
In this Bhambhōr for me to do ?
O Mother, out of Bhambhōr go
And speed me kindly on my way.
No pleasure is there like to stay
When we twain meet next, I with thee.

*Sayid.*

O burnt-up soul, in death's own fee
Thou didst with Punhūṅ love contract.
Thine happy life, of joy compact,
Thou castest knowing on the flame.
The men who with Beloved came
Have done thee, Sasuī, great harm.
Oh ! shake thy heart not with alarm :
Midst happiness thy joy will fall.
Thine hillsman, as for battle's call,
Hath ranged himself and joyous come.
Without her lord Bhaṁbhōr's no home
For her, forgotten by the road
When cameldrivers laid the load
Upon the camels. Lord Most High,
Rein in towards her. Come Thou nigh.

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## II. Suhinī and Mēhār

### *The Story*

Suhinī was the daughter of a well-to-do potter who lived by the bank of the river. Izzat Bēg, the son of a rich Moghul merchant, chanced to come that way and was struck by the beauty of Suhinī. He fell in love with her at sight. Every day he came to purchase pots just for the hope of meeting Suhinī who returned his love. Spending all his money buying pots, Izzat Bēg became penniless and asked to be employed by Suhinī's father. He was engaged as a cattleman to look after the potter's buffaloes. He then changed his name from Izzat Bēg to Mēhār, or The Herdsman. The love of Suhinī and Mēhār continued to grow. But this did not please Suhini's parents, who forbade further meetings of the lovers. To clinch matters they married Suhinī to another potter's son named Dām. They drove Mēhār away. Mēhār however continued to herd buffaloes and used to graze them on the other side of the river. Every night Suhinī crossed the river on a baked earthenware pot. Her parents remonstrated with her and in order to dissuade her from further meetings with Mēhār they took away the baked pot and substituted for it an unbaked one. They thought by this device that she would never dare to trust herself to the water on so fragile a vessel. But when night came Suhinī launched herself upon the river on the pot and was drowned when the water caused it to disintegrate. The poems of 'Suhinī and Mēhār' describe the passionate longing of Suhinī to seek her lover across the water, and her death in the rushing current. Mēhār who had heard her screams when the pot collapsed, rushed into the river to rescue her, but was drowned like the girl he loved. Mēhār is called fondly "Sāhir" (The Helper) by Suhinī.

I

Upon the river's border women stand and cry,
'Oh, Sāhir, Sāhir.' While the thoughts of some of them
Are on a private grief concentred, others say
'We take no reck of life' and plunge within the flood.
Sāhir indeed is theirs who risked and entered in.

E'en such an one is Suhinī who did put her hand
Upon the pot of clay and let the water flow
All o'er her arms, and luckless midst the stream did cry
Aloud to Sāhir: 'Love my love, return to me
For I am envy's target for the envious ones.'



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The water-herons rested on the trees: the time
For Muslim's middle prayer had passed. Thereafter she
Did take the pot and enter on the flood whenas
She heard the cry that calls to evening prayer, and scanned
To find the place where Sāhir well-belov'd might bide.

Thus Suhinī spake: 'By earthen jar did I behold
My herdsman's visage. How shall I destroy the jar
On which my life doth hang? If it be broken, then,
Of sooth, 'tis vanished. Still, in hope not faithless be.'
'Of Allāh's mercy do thou not despair', thus runs
The saying. Make of it thy raft on which to float.
Then, with the joy that fills the hearts of those who love
The Lord, thou mayst behold the herdsman's countenance.

When jar was broken and when life was sped and means
Of life's safe-conduct vanished, Suhinī's ears did ring
With cries of the loved herdsman of the buffaloes.
'Come not across of thy self-ferrying: forget
The ways of safety, Suhinī. Love himself will take
Thee o'er the rough and tumble of the troubled waves.
They quickly cross deep waters who have love to do
The piloting. Come not across self-ferrying.
Set forth without conveyance; dash the unbaked jar
To earth in fragments. Take love's yearning on the deep.
The herdsman seeks for news of them who seek for him.
For them a raft's a burden who have boundless love.'

## II

The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
Where powerful crocodiles do congregate themselves
By thousands numbered, dreadful, and beyond all tale.
My body, Sāhir, is too frail to counter them
Without thou help me. Come to me within the stream,
O thou, who art for me the lord most merciful.

The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
Where eddies gurgle. This too feeble heart of mine
Is weak to face the threatening wavelash. Sāhir, hear,
O master mine, the plaint of her who begs of thee.

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The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
Where din resoundeth. May the herdsman hear my cries.
If Sāhir hear, I shall not die from buffeting of waves.

The terror and the tumult rage within the flood
Where monsters shelter and where brutes of prey do cry
And turn them hither thither. Ships in the abyss
Have been engulfed whole till not a trace of wreck
Nor any timber showeth the catastrophe.
The whirling waters hold some power of dread : for ships
Depart thence and return not. Sāhir, take thou them
Who have no skill of swimming, to that farther shore.

## III

*Sayid.*

The sloping bank, whence Suhinī sought the water's way,
Gave not good entrance ; yet proved good to her who went
In safety where the whirlpools harmed her not at all,
While love of her beloved shone within her eyes.
Of right her rights she won who went in search of them.

She sought, e'en beauty's self, her rights till fate's sad end.
She had no help of sailor nor of boat ; no rope
She tied, but crossed the current on an earthen jar
Whereon she sate with water reaching to the calf full high.

Learn well the lesson, Suhinī, of the hidden Law,
How by the mystic way the Truth of Justice speeds.
True knowledge is in sooth the joy to them who love.

Her eager spirit daily Dām would seek to quell
With constant chiding. Yet amidst the torrent's flow
She turned not shorewards, keeping true her promise made.

No flood of waters might hold Suhinī back. For her
An ocean's crossing was no weightier than a step that's ta'en.
Well may that mother smile who bore to life a girl
So sadly fated, saying : 'Suhinī, if thou seest
Love's longing, surely thou wilt bring that love to thee.'

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*Suhinī.*

O log that floatest, be my friend, and I'll unfold
My inmost thoughts, e'en how without there water be
The rainy Sāṅwan like dry winter I would count ;
And hold Beloved's river but as meadow-land.
For it is right that they should cross the water flood,
If those they love are standing on the farther shore.
O channel, would thou flowed not, with the land between
The runnels dried to firmness. In thy bed I'd see
The saltwort flourish and the lūt and liār grow.
Yea ! In the bed of thee who all thy life hast drowned
The women who have hoped to reach thy farther bank.

## IV

O sisters ! how the tinkling bell
Has set my limbs to sprightly dance.
To stranger-folk how may I tell
The love that doth my heart entrance ?

With arrow that hath pierced my heart
My herdsman lover sends me joy.
The bells that make my senses start
In gladness do my soul employ.

At midnight's hour I did uprise
That I might my beloved see.
I slept, but shook sleep from mine eyes
When the bell tinklings came to me.

My quickened pulses livelier beat
As on his memory mind did rest.
' How will he treat me when we meet ? '
So sought the heart within my breast.

My thoughts are always with my love
While life still holds me : and may they
Whose molten hearts in mine do move
Be sundered from me ne'er away.

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I slept and heard the sounds of bells
That tinkled on the farther strand.
They moved my heart. Delight now dwells
Within me for this gladsome land.

By Allāh's favour came to me
Beloved's fragrance in this place.
Lo ! I will go that I may see
The much loved herdsman face to face.

I slept and heard the sound of bells
Vibrating on the farther shore.
My heart the herdsman's message tells
And sets my nerves a-tingle more.

Oh ! It is right that I should go
Where my beloved rests his head.
That herdsman die ? Ah, no ! Ah, no !
Nor empty be his cattle stead.

Young buffaloes he guardeth, oh !
May harm reach not one hair of his.
He is mine ornament, although
Men may revile with calumnies.

## V

*Sayid.*

All, all is water and the distant bank afar.
With love's deep thrill did Suhinī risk her life
To enter in. Her heart had cognizance of sin
To set her trembling there amidst the watery waste.
If mercy meet thee, eddies matter not at all.
Have others entered and have won their way across ?
So wilt thou likewise. Leap within the raging flood ;
Prepare thy goatskin that the herdsman thou mayst meet.
Where will and heart surge, currents run in strict accord
And pour by swiftly in a roaring rushing stream.
'O mayst thou compass midst the waves that herdsman's tryst.'
Thus hath Latif the Poet spoken in his verse.

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*Suhinī.*

'I try to check the noble urgings of my love
But stay they will not. Sacrificing then my life
I'll enter and I'll make the passage of the flood.
Whose thoughts are on the herdsman they are right to go.'

*Sayid.*

Could fame of Suhinī e'er been heard, if in the stream
She had not entered? Here perchance but short her span
Of days had been. The herdsman milked the buffalo
And with the sip of milk he gave her made her fey.
Love, thus the Sayid says, undid her utterly.
Death was her mankind's fate. But she who drowned in death
Did by her drowning win a twofold recompense.

*Suhinī.*

'There looms the whirlpool. Here stand I. The wrath of Dām,
My husband, can I suffer? Who would place her foot
Upon the waters did not Heaven decree the act?
At time of early morning dawn my weird I dree.
Sāhir bound the knot that binds my life to me.
May not that knot of Sāhir's that is life be loosed.
O God who Hearest, make me Sāhir meet, that then
The knot of life may in fulfilment loosened be.'

## VI

Time was when God, the One and the Eternal, spake
Unto the souls and thundered: 'Am I not your Lord?'
Then, even then, to Suhinī had there come a love
And longing for the neatherd. 'Twas of God's own will
That might of waters broke her earthen pot in twain.
What fate God's will had fashioned for her there indeed
She brought to due fulfilment in this world below.

## VII

*Suhinī.*

'My body burns. With roasting fire
I am consumed but make my quest.
Parched am I with Beloved's thirst,
Yet drinking find in drink no rest.
Nay, did I drain the ocean wide
'Twould grant in not one sip a zest.'

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*Sayid.*

The night is black : the pot unbaked.
Month's days in final dark are shed.
No beam of moon ; the waters roar.
For Sāhir's sake has Suhinī sped
At midnight there. Through God alone
Could thus the stream be enteréd.

*Suhinī.*

'The night is black ; the jar unbaked,
And (horror !) comes the falling rain.
Here trackless water : lions there
Are prowling, to safe life a bane.
Oh be my love not shattered when
I enter counting life as vain.'

## VIII

*Suhinī.*

Folk stand upon the distant bank and hail me, 'Come !'
But two-fold peril holds mine humble heart in check,
The swift deep current and the jar unfired in kiln.
With whom the truth is, they, I know, will never drown :
For see the women who thus cross from shore to shore.

*Sayid.*

With help of Allāh then make thou of faith thy raft.
These women ne'er will perish who take Sāhir's word.
Wise men do clutch at bushes when they're like to drown.
See (saith Latīf) the virtue that resides in reeds :
Perchance they bring thee safely to the bank : perchance
They break and take thee with them down amidst the flood.

## IX

My heart of its hopes is shorn ;
No strength within me lies.
Come back to me now, my love,
O Sāhir, lordly and wise.

Return to me, love most kind,
I am foolish, ignorant, vain.
Of the peril that was with the jar
Not an inkling stirred my brain.

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From the doom of the Merciful One
May man hope to free his head ?
Ensnared by my fate and love
I am caught in the toils and led.

The women have mocked me all ;
' Where wilt thou, pray, alight ? '
Ocean, roaring in madness hear
The storying of my plight.

Because of the taunts I swim,
I swim in the surge and cry.
' Love holdeth thee ', (saith the Sayid)
Of a sooth in love let me die.

From the water's midst can I turn ?
O'er there is my lord, my love.
I die if I swim. If I turn
Too strong will the current prove.

Of Beloved within my heart
Full riches of thought appear.
The women around me I see
And I see my sin and I fear.

From the water's midst can I turn
With my lord on that farther brink ?
Beloved, I love thee so well,
As I swim, that the deeper I sink.

Outside art thou of mine eyes,
Yet dwellest within my soul.
While I yearned for thee, love, my love,
The tide of the years did roll.

Beloved, my love for thee,
Chafeth and cutteth my heart.
Strong bonds that thy love hath bound
I cannot sunder apart.

Beloved, I yearn for thee.
From that love doth my weakness cower.
From the kiln of my worthless skin
Love mounteth in blazing power.

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The friends who have pierced me through
Needed not the gimlet's bite.
From yearners the yearning take, O love,
And the severed souls unite.

For such is that strength of thine
Who art both true and lord.
To her who maketh the body's quest
Do thou thy mercy afford.

Of the trysting when will the crow,
Mother, glad notes give forth ?
Time is old since I saw my friends.
How shall I judge their worth ?

I yearned. Set a thousand suns.
Bereft the years did I spend
(Though I cannot suffer a moment's loss)
Of folk that I count as friend.

I think not of home nor spouse.
Nought else my senses thrills.
But the herdsman alone for me
The living moment fills.

I deck my beauty betimes
Hoping Beloved to see.
He dwelleth across the stream
May he somehow appear to me !

## X

*Sayid.*

Away from Sāhir Suhinī is a thing unclean.
But by the side of him who drives the horned kine
To purity she riseth. She doth droop and fade
From Sāhir severed. Fever hath set in upon
Her girlish beauty. Pity for her wretched state !
She, maiméd and unlovely in her illness now,
Passeth time sighing, by affliction held away
From Sāhir. By the neatherd health abides. Near Dām,
Her husband, she doth nought but illness know.

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A sight of Sāhir's physic for the beauteous girl.
His face if she but see, she surely will get well.
The current, Suhinī, hath a wicked power today.
O enter not. What business in the black of night
Hast thou within the eddies ?

*Suhinī.*

May not Dām awake
And make his inquisition of the neighbouring folk !
No matter ; let him ask them ' What is Dāmṇ to do ? '
(Thus Suhinī speaketh.) They who are in need have work
Within the eddies. For my herdsman's sake I give
These bones, this skin of mine, in willing sacrifice.

*Sayid.*

While she did live she would not wearied take her rest ;
But entered earth's bosom longing for her friends.
She sat not silent while life pulsed her limbs, but dead
She drifted on the waves towards the herdsman, dead.

*Suhinī.*

' The black of night is better. Banish moonlight's moon.'
(Thus cried she) ' May I never face of other see
Beside the neatherd's face.'

*Sayid.*

It was the ocean deep,
No shallow creeklet drowned her, nor the swampy marsh.
Love for the neatherd filled her eyes in death indeed.
O listen to the message that in death she gave :
' I gained no profit from the house of my sire's sire,
Nor from the house of mother's sire. But from my friends
Great were the kindnesses that showered thence on me.'



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## III. Mōmul and Rānō

### *The Story*

Mōmul was the eldest daughter of a rich merchant living in a palace near the lake of Kāk. Her fame and wealth had won her many suitors. But most of these came to untimely ends. Undeterred by this, Rānō, a Sōdha Rājpūt who lived at Ludhō fifty miles from the lake of Kāk, made up his mind to win Mōmul. He was the vazīr of Umar Sūmrō, the ruler of Umarkōt. Mōmul and Rānō found themselves in love with each other and were married. Rānō, however, had already a wife of his own and to keep the matter secret from his family he said nothing about his marriage to Mōmul. But every night he made the fifty mile journey from Ludhō to near Kāk to be with Mōmul, using for his journeying a very speedy camel which covered the distance easily. One night, however, he failed to arrive at Mōmul's palace at the regular time. Mōmul was very disconsolate and imagined that Rānō was proving unfaithful to her. To play a trick on her lover she dressed up one of her sisters in clothes like Rānō's and made her sleep with her on the same couch. Rānō arrived later that night and seeing the two figures on the couch together imagined that Mōmul had another lover. Rānō in utter disgust went away at once leaving his stick by the side of the couch so that Mōmul would recognize it. In the morning Mōmul saw the stick and realized the truth. She knew that her stratagem had recoiled on herself and that she had lost Rānō by her own foolishness. She besought him to listen to her explanation but Rānō refused to hear her. The poems of ' Mōmul and Rānō ' describe her disillusionment, and her failure to obtain reconciliation with her lover. In the poem Rānō is called a Mindhro as well as a Sōdha. The Mindhros are a Sindhi tribe living in Lower Sind. Rānō is called Dhōliō (darling) by Mōmul in Shāh Abdul Latīf's verses and lives in Dhat, which appears to be another name for Ludhō.

#### I

Lo ! dawn has burnt the lamp of night
And set day's first streaks in the sky.
Come back, O Mindhro prince, I pray
For Allāh's sake, come back. I die.
In search of you I sent the crows
Of Kāk upon their way to fly.



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I stood : the constellations rose,
And all the constellations set.
The camel and the Mindhro prince
Did all night long my memory fret.
Adown my cheeks the tears I shed
Till branch in branch of sunlight met.

There waned the Pleiades and waxed
The three stars in Orion's belt.
The prince at night-time did not come.
Time passed away for night to melt
In fiery pit without my love.
In Dhat stayed Dhōliō. Grief I felt.

Don't sulk. Away with sulking. Come,
Make up our quarrel, nor go far.
The wound of separation smarts
And brings some little pang to mar.
May my love guide me. I'm come near
You. Find I gladness where you are.

Kāk's waters boil. The trees are gone,
The painted halls with fire waste laid.
Without you, love, my heart has dread.
Forthwith make good your promise made.
If you came back, O Mindhro love,
A monstrous folly you displayed.

Had you not been my husband, Spouse,
Perhaps you'd roused me while I slept
A little, and by morning known
The truth the sleeping woman kept.

## II

I have no guardian, nor have I a spouse,
No marriage bond, nor kin in marriage linked.
Without thee, loved one, dread hath come to me.
O travellers, blame the darling man of Dhat.
Come to the courtyard of the longing girls.
Be reconciled, beloved. Thee away,
One moment's time I cannot tolerate.

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Join me, O life of life, O sight of love,
That pain may vanish. Would that he come back,
My darling Mindhro prince, from Ludhō town.
I'd sacrifice mine house and everything,
Nay more, my life's existence, just for him.
Unless my Rānō in the kingdom is,
I want no wealth. I beg the Sōdha's love
From him. If he but come within mine house
To be my guest, I'd take whate'er I know
And cast it out upon the fire to burn.
I'd take my pride and throw it in the oven.
I'd sacrifice myself, with parents too,
And house and all within it for my love.
The follies of mine action, love, I did
Not realize. My follies have come back
To me, O Sōdha prince, to shame my face.
Thy patience hath a lesson been to me,
To Mōmul. For thine action yesterday
Hath blotted out my vain stupidities.
Ungirt I was and Dhōliō covered me.
His little gift of silk he made as cloud
Of Kāk to hide my nakedness. Now he
Hath raised me up to be anointed bride,
And I am happy in my happiness.
Thy patience, Sōdha prince, an honour is
To modest girls. The nose of my disgrace
Without a word, without a knife he cut.
Thy patience, Sōdha prince, a lesson is
To everyone and now 'tis Mōmul's turn.
How do I know the things that came to pass ?
O Sōdha prince, the girls were shamed who saw
Their former shamelessness. Within my fate
Disgraces live. Like blooms they blossomed and
To bigness grew. Their noses though I cut,
Disgraced they go not. What am I to do,
O sisters, with these noseless, hideous things ?

## III

Beloved, go not off to Dhat
To leave me now in helplessness.
I'm bound by that once-word of thine.
I wept upon my swinging bed
With memory in my heart for thee.

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Believe me, love, all places, things
To me are like as poison made.
O Rānō, husband, know I not
The reason why thine anger rose.
Upon the cots hath fallen dust.
The couches have become outworn.
The place is faded : of Jabāt
The flowers are withered, thee, love, gone.
The pillows that were kept are gray
With cream-hued dust. To whom shall I
Without thee, gentle coaxings urge ?
Mindhro, come back : forgive my sins.
Thou bridegroom art of many girls :
But art to me the only spouse.
See, Rānō's cord within my soul
Is fastened. As a boat is tied,
The Sōdha bound this life of mine.
To poison idleness is turned.
Awake I pour out flooding tears.
Thy coming ever I await.
O Rānō, thee may Allāh bring
Back to mine house. My life's with thee,
O Sōdha, else within the land
Would many other princes be.

## IV

There came fresh message yester night
From Rānō. Won is our behest.
The Giver gave it, says Latīf.
Of comer's caste why make inquest ?
Who came in coming welcomed were.
Your master kept you just for this,
O camel, to be driven on,
Be not, the Sayid says, remiss
Descending Ludhō's sandy hills.
You'll Mōmul meet. Come night, day pass.
Dear camel, with the Sōdha's help,
You'll feed on Kāk's rich verdant grass.
So take the road. Don't twist your neck
At any time from side to side.
With turn of cheek, the Sayid says,
You'll feel a slap to cheek applied.

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Don't twist your neck from side to side.
But take the road. Today, next day,
Or soon or late, they'll lead you out,
Your coat with journey's dust o'erlay.
The earth that stretches at my feet
Is that same earth where friends' feet stand.
The brave are covered with the dust.
We stood and saw this mid the sand.
Man's life has but two days to tell :
Rise, says Latīf, search, use them well.

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## IV. Līlaṅ and Chanēsar

### *The Story*

Kauṅru was the daughter of a Hindu king and was very proud and domineering. Taunted by her friends that she could not win the heart of Chanēsar Dāsrō, a man of great royalty and distinction, she determined to prove that the taunt was undeserved. Gaining access to Chanēsar's palace she enlisted the help of his vazīr who, however, privily informed Chanēsar that Kauṅru, merely to prove her power, wished to make a conquest of him. Chanēsar, thus warned by the vazīr, indignantly repelled Kauṅru's advances. But the determined woman was not discouraged by the rebuff. She disguised herself as a servant girl, got herself employed in Chanēsar's palace and struck up acquaintance with Līlaṅ, Chanēsar's wife. She then tempted Līlaṅ by the offer of a magnificent diamond necklace worth nine lakhs of rupees. This she promised to give Līlaṅ if Līlaṅ would contrive to let her pass one night with Chanēsar. By a piece of cunning Līlaṅ that night got Chanēsar driven to Kauṅru's house. Being under the influence of liquor Chanēsar succumbed to Kauṅru's charms. Kauṅru's mother, who had helped her daughter in her duplicity, told Chanēsar next day that he would now have to treat Kauṅru as his wife as Līlaṅ had sold him to Kauṅru for a diamond necklace. Chanēsar taxed Līlaṅ with her disingenuous conduct and learnt from her of the trick she had played upon him. In anger he dismissed her from his sight and spurned her as a false wife. Despite her protestations Chanēsar refused to listen to her. The poems of 'Līlaṅ and Chanēsar' are concerned with the disillusionment of Līlaṅ when she finds that her trickery has recoiled on her own head and that she has lost her husband's love through her own folly.

### I

*Līlaṅ.*

How comes it thus that thou dost spurn
The thought, Chanēsar, from thy mind
Of them whose vitals thou hast pierced,
O Dāsrō prince? Speak comfort kind.
Thou art my lord and I have need
Of thee. O friend, expose me not
To people's scorn. My husband, love,
Drive me not off. I humble am.



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Thy love, O love, with blows it gives
Hath felled me to the ground. Thou art
My one spouse ! thou hast many wives.

O love, when thou hast made me speak
Thou speak'st me in insulting strain.
Why is this so ? Beside thy feet
I sit, I fidget, stand again.

*Sayid.*

O fool, the trinket tricked thy sense
To set thee boasting over there.
Thy promise made, Chanēsar's love,
Thy lord's, thou didst asunder tear.

The page once more is turned o'er.
Disgrace's brand on thee is pressed.
The trinket's tracery indeed
Thy foolish mind hath quite obsessed.

*Līlaṅ.*

The necklace I'll make sure to win,
I told myself, and it will be
A keepsake for me all my life.
But Kauṅru's craft outwitted me.

*Sayid.*

O Līlan, stop thy tricks, good girl.
Wrap round thy neck thy garment : so
Thyself enhumble. Then thy spouse
On thy complaints will not say, ' Go '.
O Līlaṅ, if on thy behest
Thou gettest nothing, still beseech.
Cease not from hoping, for thy friend
Hath plenteous mercy in his reach.

Weep, make complaint before thy lord
And try to please him. Beg, request.
Entreaty's place is there for thee.

*Līlaṅ.*

Count no great virtues in my test :
It is as if I none such had.
Show favour, spouse. Now comes my lot.
Let not another girl coquet
With Lord Chanēsar. When I thought,

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With heart full deeply later on,
I knew the place for humble lives
Is here. His anger quickly turns
The lucky into luckless wives.

## II

*Līlaṅ.*

With sins committed past all count,
O Dāsrō, to thy door I'm come.
If thou to sulking art inclined,
My place is not within thy home.
O Coverer, for the Lord, erase
The evil doing of my days.
Perhaps these evil deeds of mine
The girls of mine own age did see.
For all my friends of equal age,
Are making laughing-sport of me.
On arm I did no armlet wear :
My neck of necklaces was bare.
Mine hair I did not comb : nor put
Upon mine eyes antimony,
Nor deck myself. For this alone
Mine husband sought me verily.
The golden rings from mine ears hung :
The necklace round my neck was strung :
Mine arms a weight of armlets bore :
My hair was done up beautifully.
For this alone it was my lord
Relinquished all his thought of me.

*Sayid.*

O'erwhelmed in a vain conceit
The jewel she saw and was beguiled.
Folk come and go and comment make,
That Līlaṅ is a stupid child.
As grass that withers, she was scorched
And parched by taunts when folk reviled.
The beauty of her childhood's day
From her, the luckless one, resiled.

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III

*Sayid.*

How smart you were indeed, I'm thinking !
And to know so well a husband's wiles !
You thought : ' Oh ! I'll make myself look nicer
If I put the necklace round my neck.'
When a faithless wife sets herself to deck,
Let her use a hundred tricks and guiles.
She'll not please her lord for all her prinking.

It's the wise man's job to read thoughts' meaning.
Dāsrō's craft has her whims outread.

*Līlaṅ.*

' I was clever enough amongst my people,
And full of tricks in the midst of my friends.
But a need has come that compels and bends
Me, so that I cannot lift my head.
It is something that goes beyond my weening.

When I climb on the couch I shall do my charming.
God is such : the handmaidens please.'

*Sayid.*

To Chanēsar's mind there had come some inkling
Already before the jewel-affair.
Līlaṅ, in all your acts take care.
To your husband you're always a quarrel and tease
That brings reproaches with bicker and harming.

*Līlaṅ.*

How can I know what Chanēsar is thinking ?

*Sayid.*

Don't fidget, O Līlaṅ, so much but rise
And put your courtyard to rights for your love.
Of sire, sire's sire make a sacrifice,
Yourself in the selfsame offering linking.

IV

*Līlaṅ.*

I was the senior of them all :
And girl friends in their throng would come
And visit me within my house.

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But when I touched the ornament
I lost the favour that I had.
I was cast out by my belov'd
And branded with the failure's brand.
I used to lie on swinging cots
And did not realize my luck.
To sheer destruction was I brought
By necklace's catastrophe.
Sorrows met me face to face.
My husband took himself away.

*Sayid.*

A string of sorrows was the thing
That thou didst for a necklace take.
Chanēsar looked the other way
And made the serving-girl his friend.

*Līlaṅ.*

O that my lord with none would bring
The discord of dissension here!

## V

Look on all the lucky wives.
All have necklets round their necks.
They preen themselves a hundred ways
That love's beloved they may see.
Beloved the protector is
Of wives who show humility.

Look on all the lucky wives.
All have collars round their throats.
Beloved, whom they love, to see
They strove with earnest effort's aim.
Beloved walks upon the path
Of wives who show humility.

Look on all the lucky wives.
All have jewels on their heads.
To hearts of all this thought has sped,
'Love will come inside my home.'
Love came within the homes of them
Who, seeing self, with sight blushed red.

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## VI

*Sayid.*

O Līlaṅ, don't expose your faults
By quarrelling with Chanēsar.
You're always bickering with him,
And, fool, yourself you've ruined.
Before that knowing husband, don't
Expose your faults, my beauty :
Fool in your folly, there can be
In wife no match for husband.
O Līlaṅ, don't expose your faults
By quarrels with lord Chanēsar.

*Līlaṅ.*

He is no woman's husband, none,
Not mine, nor your one either.
The darlings that he likes I've seen
Lamenting at his doorway.
If I am muddled in my sense,
Look to yourself, my friend, too.
Your way's to hide the many faults
Of those who have astray gone.
Your merit, husband, love, is this :
You hide your wretches' failings.

*Sayid.*

O Līlaṅ, don't expose your faults
By quarrels with lord Chanēsar.
You thought him yours. You didn't know
The subtlety his mind has.
The woman Kauṅru had her way,
Possessed your Dāsrō husband.

*Līlaṅ.*

O friend, I cannot bear the taunts
You flung at me obliquely.
You've many wives, but as for me
You are my only husband.
Come back. Be kind and show your grace
To them who're poor and wretched.
You've crowds and crowds of charming girls
To fascinate you, husband.
Don't leave me, Dāsrō, else I lose
My way and wander helpless.
I've wrapped my garment round my neck.
My fate's with you, Chanēsar.

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## V. MĀRUĪ AND UMAR

### *The Story*

Māruī was the daughter of a poor goatherd who lived in a brushwood village called Malīr. She was betrothed to a man of her own tribe of Mārūs, but a servant of her father's had fallen in love with her and was overcome with jealousy when he learnt that she had been betrothed to another. In a mad desire to revenge himself upon the Mārūs he went to Umar Sūmrō, the Chief of Umarkōt, and painted in glowing terms the beauty of Māruī. He suggested to him that Umar should carry her off by force for himself. This outrage Umar committed. He took her away with him clad as she was in her rough country blanket and shut her up in a two-storeyed building in Umarkōt. But she refused to let Umar come near her and said that if he did she would kill herself. Eventually she was forced to promise that if her relatives did not rescue her within twelve months she would consent to become Umar's wife. So she remained for a year shut up in the upper storey pining for the coming of her people. The poems of 'Māruī and Umar', describe the feelings of Māruī locked in her prison rooms and longing to be released by her people, the rustic camelherds and goatherds of Malīr.

#### I

When there fell on mine ears the Word,
' Am I not then your Lord ? '
And with ' Yes ' my heart gave assent,
It was then that my promise I made
With the folk in the hedges pent.

'Twas my fate to be prisoned. It falls !
How else would one enter these walls ?
They were shown me by writ of the stone.
My life, body, life have no joy
If I be from the goatherd alone.

O Lord, by thy will this decree,
With her Mārūs that Māruī be.
Life engaoled was the fate that I took,
That I should live miserable here.
' Body here, soul with Thee ', saith the Book.



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Here's my heart ! Let the power of God move
That I join with the friends whom I love.
' Bound by fate ' is the saying that I
Keep in fold of my garment. ' Fate's pen
With what came to pass is gone dry.'

By the flow of fate's pen so it passed
That the Mārūs should traverse the waste,
While I in the upper-rooms stay.
I'll burn all these places with fire
If the folk of my land are away.

' To their Prime go all things back again.'
For my people I suffer in pain,
My folk of the jungle, that, near
Mine abode come again, I may see
The land of mine own in Malīr.

## II

*Mārui.*

No one came : no one came : not a single soul came :
Not one of the camelherds came.
Of my brothers not one took the trouble to come.
Who will carry and tell me their news ?
O Allāh, I pray bring me here, bring me now
Some one from the camelherds there,
That the bounds of the fort and the roads may be glad.
His feet that are covered with dust
With mine eyes I shall wipe : for he'll not (saith Latīf)
Make any delay when he comes.
Who is she who spends her sad life in the rooms ?
Living here in the halls my mind reels.

*Sayid.*

Today with good tidings the camelherd's come !
Let thine husband not pass from thy thought :
Nor prove thyself mad. Thou wilt come here again :
But thou art in the fort for a space.
Thou art here in the fort for a space. Give not up
Thy rough rugged blanket at all.
O woman of charm, here's the pride of thy stock
From the prime. Worthy soul, till the end
Show thy grace of behaviour in all that thou dost.
At long last thou wilt come to Malīr.

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*Mārui.*

I shall fall at the feet of the man who has come
From my country, my father's own home.
I shall speak (Sayid saith) the true thoughts of mine heart :
I am not to blame for this thing
And I swear that alone I'd have never come here.

III

O Allāh ! May the Mārūs I adore,
The Mārū goatherds, find a joy in me.
All wicked full of evil though I be,
Still these my friends are merciful. Now o'er
Malīr the rains have fallen and the sound
Of warbling birds thrills all the deserts round.
With garment full of faults that have no end
I'm come, filled full of evil things galore.
O cover up my faults, Thou Coverer-Friend.

IV

My bodice is stitched hundred times :
My blanket is tattered and torn.
I spun not a yard in the hope
Help would come from my family-born.
Oh ! I pray kind protection I get
From the clothes that in Dhat I had worn.

My bodice is stitched hundred times :
My blanket is tattered and frayed.
Let my locks remain greasy : no scent
Do I put on my hair disarrayed.
One longing there lives in my heart
To see face of my Mārū displayed.
Let me go to my home in the hedge,
As I am now, a miserable maid.

My bodice is stitched hundred times :
My blanket is tattered and torn.
Let me go to the deserts like this
That the Mārūs may say : 'She was borne
By the hope we should speed for her aid.'
I am come from that place where no sign
Of the safflower is seen. If I went
Where the throngs of the marriages shine,
In rough blankets I'd find me arrayed.

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## V

Mārui doth not wash her hair.
Mārui doth not smile nor eat.
Mārui's praise for ever sings
The justice of her Umar's ways :
' This wrong that thou hast done to me
Will turn and look thee in the face.'

Mārui doth not wash her hair.
Her locks are sullied. High-souled lass,
Her memory for the goatherds stayed,
Goatherds who live among the grass.
Without them, Umar, she will not
Pent in the rooms a lifetime pass.

Mārui doth not wash her hair,
Imprisoned in the upper-rooms
Without her Mārūs. On her head
She puts no soap, nor to her hair
Incense applies. Within the fort
How will she stay, accustoméd
To company of folk from there ?

Mārui doth not wash her hair.
She hath no gladness. On her ears
Of Umar's justice echo falls.
Her constant cry is ' Allāh ! hear.
My people come not back for me.'

Mārui's wearied of the halls,
And sad with sadness is her face.
On oil-less hair she puts no oil.
By grief she's robbed of beauty's grace.
When hot wind touched her (saith Latīf)
Her camphor-scents of gladness fled.
How can the girls whose minds are crushed
Smile and put oil upon the head ?
She turns her face towards Malīr,
To weep for ever with the cry :
' I think thy joy like gallows-noose,
O Sūmrō. Mārū's stuff am I.
A wife by force I will not be.
My heart the men from yonder seized.
Fort-bound it never can be free.'

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She turns her face towards Malīr,
Outwearied standing : yet retains
The blanket that the Mārūs gave.
Beware, O Sūmrō, not with chains
Enshackle thou a virtuous slave.

' I turned my face towards Malīr.
I climbed the fort. For my land's sake
My tears welled forth. I shrieked aloud
With cry that from my soul did break.
And yet the people of the hedge
Heard nothing of my wretchedness.
O Umar, how can helpless girls
Bedeck themselves in cleanly dress
Whose hapless husbands in the wastes
Endure the insults of distress ?
Can they, O Sūmrō, good wives be
Who with their husbands break their vows ?
While I am sleeping on the quilts
My husband suffers : damp wind blows.
O do not that, mine Umar, no !
Nor laugh at me in my rough clothes.
How can I sleep upon the quilts
When husband suffers in the waste ?
That I should suffer thirst more meet
Midst father's kindred. Take away,
O Sūmrō, all thy sherbets sweet.'

VI

*Mārui.*

Kind sir, mine heart is linked with them
Who in hedged-hamlets live their day.
O let me there amidst my friends
Drink whey, the thin and washy whey.
While still I live I shall not cease
To follow my beloved's feet.
No blame it is to me that here
Alone I be. But friends to greet
In mine own country is my wish,
Those friends who wear the rugged sheet.
For two days' pleasure can I slough
My blanket that is coarse and rough ?



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VII

*Mārui.*

I have ruined my beauty, O Sūmrō,
And sullied my face.
Fate compelled me to go reft of beauty
Where in going's no grace.
I have ruined my beauty, O Sūmrō,
Hither journeying on
Can I make up, then, loss of what's fled me,
Its flavours all gone ?
I have ruined my beauty, O Sūmrō.
To my land can I come
Leaving beauty behind ? Can I see them,
The goatherds of home ?
As my coming was, so is my going
Back to them. ' Like the rain
Blushes poured ' (saith Latīf) ' oft and often '.
A reproach and a bane
Was my life passed in those upper-storeys
Till life die with the dead.
Come thus wise, I have need of my husband.
Can I lift up my head
In front of my Mārūs ? O Umar !
O Sūmrō ! Consign
My life to the pit. Way of goatherds
Was no way of mine.
With what face can I go to my country ?
Better had she ne'er been
Who, to Umarkōt come, her rough blanket
Disgraced : nor had seen
Light of birth, but had died. With her calling
Of goatherds in aid,
Could she smile within upper-storeys ?
O Allāh ! I prayed
That I die in my prison. My body
In chains, let me cry
Night and day : but first go I homewards
Ere, days ended, I die.
O Allāh, imprisoned I wash not
Clothes worn old and long.
O Master, insult hath no answer :
Umar Sūmrō is strong.
Make him kind to me, Merciful Master ;
I have hopes of my spouse.

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Let me see him in village enclosure.
Had the folks of mine house
Gathered news of my plight, then the captive
Had not thought of her jail.
The Mārūs mayhap had forgotten.
Home-longings prevail.
I am ready to die with their memory.
My corse, Lord, convey
To my home that in graveyard of Mārūs
In fixed peace I may stay.
Perchance in my death I'd be living,
Were my corse in Malīr.
At the times when rain falls I have trystings
With the friends that I love.
If I go with the villagers, somehow
My need I'll remove.

## VIII

*Māruī.*

O Sūmrō, how can I stop the thoughts
That dwell with my herding men ?
They are riveted into my life without
The aid of the blacksmith's skill.
The nails of love in my heart are fixed
To be counted in thousand's tale.
Since I saw the huts and herding-men
The days are passed and fled.
Not for the herdsmen's wives at all
Are clothes that are made of silk.
When they dye in lāc their coarse rough cloth
They're finer than clad in shawls.
Better than wool and fine striped cloth,
Better than velvet too,
Better than rich broadcloth do I think
My coarse rough blanket to be,
Better, O Sūmrō, than gorgeous clothes.
I should die of shame if I doffed
The blanket I had of my father's folk.
My wounds have started afresh that I got
At the well-to-do villagers' hands.
In my longing for union with them I feel
Separation that cuts to the quick.
My mind kept a place, O Sūmrō, for them
Whose huts in the desert stand.

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The dwelling place of the Mārū throng
I long for exceedingly.
Weep not, nor wail, nor let tears flow :
Such days as pass, endure.
Come sorrows first : then happy joys
Of pleasance, O man of flocks.

*Sayid.*

'Ease is with trouble' : this, herdsman, feel.
O virtuous girl, preserve
Thy virtuous way, (saith Latīf) : from thee
Will the iron shackles fall.

*Māruī*

Mine heart is Mārū's, his heart's mine.
My face, O Sūmrō, then
May sullied stay, lest he should say
'Thou didst go mid stranger men
To wash it clean.' And now I go,
From thee having trafficked the tears that flow.

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## GLOSSARY OF UNCOMMON WORDS FOUND IN THE POEMS

**Adēsīs** Type of wandering ascetics ; literally ' people without country '.
**Alif** First letter of the Arabic alphabet.
**Ārī** Name for Punhūṅ, lover of Sasuī.
**Āriyānī** Name of a Balūchī tribe.
**Ārīcha** Name of a Balūchī tribe.

**Bairāgī** or **Berāgī** Type of Hindu ascetic.
**Barōch** Another form of Balūch.
**Bhambhōr** Town in Lower Sind where Sasuī lived.
**Bhuj** Town in Cutch.
**Bījal** Name of the singer in the story of ' The King and the Minstrel '.
**Bikanīr** Town in Rājpūtāna.

**Chanēsar** Name of Līlaṅ's husband, a powerful man in Lower Sind.

**Dām** Name of Suhinī's husband.
**Dāsrō** Name of a Sindhi tribe living chiefly in Lower Sind.
**Dhat** A place in Lower Sind.
**Dhōliō** Term of endearment used by Mōmul of her lover Rānō. Literally means ' darling '.
**Diāch** Name of the King in the story of ' The King and the Minstrel '.

**Girnār** In Kāthiawār.
**Gūrū** Hindu religious Master and Instructor.

**Hārhō** Name of a hill in Lower Sind.
**Hātim** Hātim of Tai. Used in the sense of a very wealthy man or Croesus.
**Hōt** Literally means ' friend '. Used by Suhinī of Punhūṅ her lover.
**Hur** Used of Husain in the story of ' The Martyrs ' and means ' the enthusiastic ' or ' zealous ' one.

**Īd** Muhammadan holiday or festival.
**Imām** Refers to Hassan and Husain in the story of ' The Martyrs '.
**Ināyat** Name of a Sindhi poet.

**Jaisalmīr** A State in Rājpūtāna bordering on Sind.
**Jabāt** A place in Lower Sind.
**Jōga** Sindhi form of Yōga.
**Jūnējō** Name of a Sindhi poet.

**Kāk** A lake in Lower Sind.
**Kāmbhō** Name of a hill in Lower Sind.
**Kārō** Name of a hill.
**Kaunru** Name of the servant girl in the story of ' Līlaṅ and Chanēsar '.
**Kēchī** Native of Kēch, i.e. Kēch Mekrān in Balūchistān bordering on Sind.
**Kelāt** A State in Balūchistān bordering on Sind.
**Khāhōrīs** A kind of wandering religious ascetics.
**Kūfa** Town which played false in the battle which resulted in the death of Husain.



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**Lāc** Resinous exudation on the bark of trees used for making dyes.
**Lāhut** Name of a village in Balūchistān; metaphorically one of the stages in the Sūfī's search for his ideal; literally means 'non-existence'.
**Lakhmīr** Name of a Sindhi poet.
**Līār** Name of a shrub which grows in dry places.
**Līlaṅ** Wife of Chanēsar, whom she tried to deceive.
**Ludhō** Name of a place in Lower Sind.
**Lūt** Name of a shrub which grows in dry places.

**Malīr** Place in Lower Sind.
**Mārū** Hero of the tale of Māruī. Mārū is also the name of a Sindhi tribe living largely in Lower Sind and engaged in keeping camels and cattle.
**Māruī** Heroine of the tale of Māruī and means a woman of the Mārū tribe.
**Mēhār** Buffalo keeper. One of the names given to Punhūṅ.
**Mindhro** Name of a Sindhi tribe living in Lower Sind.
**Mīr** Lord or Ruler.
**Mōmul** Heroine of the tale of Mōmul and Rānō.
**Munkar** One of the angels of death.

**Nakīr** One of tne angels of death.
**Nāngas** Hindu ascetics who wear no clothing. Literally 'naked ones'.

**Padam** A lake in Lower Sind.
**Pubb** A mountain in Lower Sind.
**Punhūṅ** Name of Sasuī's lover.

**Rām** Rāma.
**Rāhū** Prince or a powerful person.
**Rānō** Name of Mōmul's lover.
**Rūm** Literally Turkey, but used of Central Islāmic Europe.

**Sāhir** Name of Suhinī's lover; 'Helper'.
**Sāṅwan** Rainy season in Sind—July and August.
**Sanyāsī** A type of Hindu ascetic.
**Sasuī** Hero of the tale of Sasuī, a Brāhman girl from Bhambhōr.
**Sōdha** Name of a tribe of Rājpūt origin living in Lower Sind.
**Sōrath** Wife of King Diāch.
**Suhinī** Heroine of the tale of Suhinī.
**Sūmrō** Sindhi tribe. At one time rulers of Sind.
**Swāmī** Hindu religious teacher.

**Thōrī** Name of a wandering tribe.

**Ulwahēt** One of the stages in the Sūfī's progress.
**Umar** Name of the Chief in the tale of Māruī.
**Umarkōt** Town in Lower Sind.

**Wankār** Name of a barren hill.
**Windar** Name of a hill in Lower Sind.

**Yazīd** Enemy of Hassan and Husain in the story of 'The Martyrs'.

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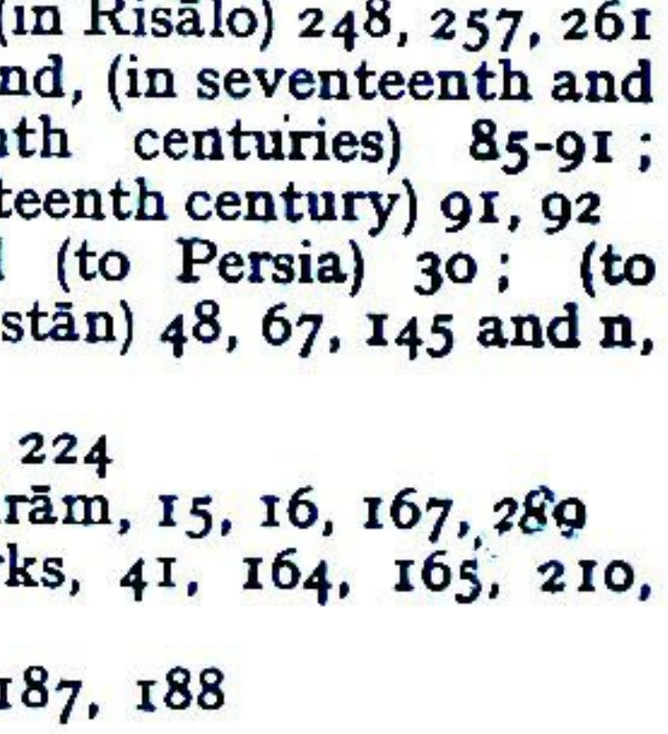

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