FOLK TALES OF THE INDUS VALLEY: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

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By

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IN MEMORIAM

Prof. Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani (1920-2009)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation of Mr. Hafeez-ur-Rehman is accepted in its present form by Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan as satisfying dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DECLARATION

ereby declare that this thesis is the result of my individual research and that it has not been mitted concurrently to any other university for any further degree.

Hafeez-ur-Rehman

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Abstract

The question behind this dissertation is to find historical and archaeological evidences of the Indus Valley Civilization with reference to the theory of the unity in diversity and diversity in unity. This is a deliberation whether the idea of oneness and unity existed on social, cultural and political basis in the provinces of the present Pakistan or not?

The rich culture of the Sub-continent in South Asia, generally referred to as Indus Valley Civilization, has very deep roots and traditions. It has been coming up from the organized cultures of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, and passing through a process of continuous interaction and assimilation, resulting in the development of a very fine and unique cultural pattern. This cultural set up has also met and seen various political alterations and transformations along with the introduction of new religious and social values. These religious and social values structures confronted each other but at the same time could not resist the process of synthesis.

One of the sources to know about the rich cultural configurations of a civilization is through the literature, poetry, and forms of imaginative and creative art. The Indus Valley Civilization, although part of an urban culture, had never formed an inquisitive trend of writing and preserving the history. Whatever sources have been written and preserved of the civilization existing in the times of B.C. have not yet been deciphered. The late period of Aryans is the era of the dominance of Hindu mythology and religious scriptures have been the only source of information about that period.

In the circumstance very fine tuned tradition of oral folk stories developed in the Subcontinent. This tradition has covered almost all aspects of the human life that were prevalent in this part of the world. The stories of the Rāmāya□a are the famous epics that

have been the part of mythology but transfer valuable information about the thinking pattern, the mental development and the subsequent process of progress within the society. It also gives an insight about the role of religion over the lives of people.

Similarly there have been the stories about the warfare of the tribes or clans. The feats of bravery of ones own clan must have been the themes of these oral traditions. This thesis has made a thorough study into the themes of resistance. These resistance movements have been an effort to fight the foreign invaders by the local population

These folk stories depict a strong trend prevailing in the sub continent of ascetic practices and their importance. There are many stoires about sādhus, priests and ascetics who have been treated as heroes and delivers for the poor masses. There are many stories regarding the moral conduct and good values attributed to the gods. Finally, the emotional life of this unique culture has been covered up by the romantic tales born and grown up on this land. The stories of Hīr Rāñjhā in the Punjab, Sassi Punhū and Mirzā-Sāhibān are the examples of beautiful narration on the part of story tellers. Folk romance focuses the individual experience which throws light on the imagination of generations.

The research work has covered all the above mentioned themes prevalent in the folk tales of the Indus Valley. These themes have certainly provided a better understanding of the social, cultural, religious and political structure of this area. Moreover, it has largely been a work of deciphering the social, religious and emotional life of the masses that laid a pertinent effect on the overall cultural setup. More importantly it is a study to explore the structures of unity and diversity patterns in the regions of Pakistan. The research study in hand also supports the theory of the unity in diversity and diversity in unity. It also exhibits the idea of oneness and unity on social,

cultural and political basis in the provinces of the present Pakistan.

The historical and archaeological evidences to prove the theory of the unity in diversity and diversity in unit y are abundant; h owever, the dissertation will lead to explore the very basis in latest and present literature.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Review of Literature

The Indus Valley was the cradle of one of the most ancient civilizations. About 3000 B.C. Harappan Culture flourished here with highly developed productive societal forces and a remarkable standard of urban life. The antecedents of this culture are the village sites of the Baluchistan Hills, the Nal Culture, and of the Makran coast to the west of the Indus Delta, the Kulli Culture, and village communities along the rivers in Rājasthān and the Punjab. It is the historical reality with archaeological evidences that Harappan Civilization coexisted with the Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations.

The Indus Civilization declined with the influx of the Aryans from Central Asia and a new era took root about 1500 B.C. However, this was a backward step, since Harappan Culture was far more advanced than the pre-urban Aryans. The Aryans were a cattle-breeding people. At first, wandering across the plains of the Punjab, they searched for pastures and finally settled in small village communities in forest clearings. Gradually, they took to agriculture, which had been the main economy of earlier Indus Valley peoples.

It was during this period (around 1400 B.C.) that the hymns of the *Ṛig Veda* were memorized and collected. It was followed by other Vedas namely the *Sāma, Yajur*, and *Atharva* veda. The *Ṛig Veda* is the earliest literary source and along with the other Vedas it formed the basis of the historical reconstruction of the Aryan life and institutions. Whereas, the two epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* are concerned with events

which took place between 1000 and 700 B.C., the existing versions could only be regarded as historically valid if supporting evidence is found to bear them out.

The early history of the Indus Valley has been enriched by the incorporation of evidence provided by the systematic study of society in its various facets, and the extensive use of contemporary evidence from archaeology. The importance of the former lies in the fact that it indicates the possibilities of new ways of approaching the Indian past; and of posing questions, in the answers to which may lie a more real comprehension of the history of India. The study of society has also stimulated an interest in comparative studies and analysis of cultures on new lines and not by declaring one culture to be standard and judging others by it. Thus, there are two separate sources of information on the past; the historical, which consists of the archaeological evidence and that derived from *Vedic* literature, and the oral and mythical, consisting of the stories in the *Purāṇas,* composed at a later date than the *Vedas*.

1.1. Geo-Cultural Boundaries of the Indus Valley

Ancient India was surrounded on the north and east by the Himalayan mountains, on the west by the Indus and on the south by the sea. It was crossed from east to west by the Vindhya chain of mountains, at the base of which, flowed the Narmada River. The country to the north of is river was generally designated as Hindūstān and that to the south as the Deccan. Hindūstān was composed of the basin of the Indus on one side, and of the Ganges on the other, with the Great Sandy Desert on the west and an elevated tract now called central India.

The region constituting the Indus Valley has been focal to the evolution of the whole Subcontinent and has also been home of the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China. It was not discovered until the 1920's. Most of its ruins, including major cities, remain to be excavated. Its script has not been deciphered. Basic questions about the people who created this highly complex culture are unanswered. The remnants of the Harappan Civilization have been discovered from as far as Mumbai, in Mahārāshtra State, India; the Himālayas and northern Afghānistān, and the Makrān coast in Baluchistān, Pakistan, adjacent to the Iranian border.

1.1.1. Archaeological Records of Indus Civilization

Archaeological surveys and excavations have provided tangible, three-dimensional evidence, and facts about the discovery of material remains. In addition to the corroboration of literary evidence and provision of statistical data, these facts help to fill in the gaps, particularly in the earliest period of Indian history. Evidence on Indian pre history obtained in the past fifteen years has been of considerable value in suggesting the origins of later patterns of culture. 'Even a superficial familiarity with the archaeological picture of the Sub-continent in the centuries preceding the historical period is helpful in understanding the early history of India.[1]

The earliest traces of any human activity in India, so far discovered, go back to the second Inter-Glacial period between 400,000 and 200,000 B.C. and these show evidence of the use of stone implements. The chipped stone instruments are discovered

from as far as the neighborhood of Madras and the Narmada and Godavari valleys which are possibly the remains of the oldest inhabitants of India. The skulls and bones of these Palaeolithic Men have not been found. Neither did they make pottery nor build tombs and might have used sticks, stones and bones in getting their food by hunting wild animals or by plucking fruits. Most probably they were unaware of the use of fire. The animals of that time are extinct.[2]

This was followed by a long period of slow evolution, which gathered momentum towards the end and resulted in the spectacular Indus Valley Civilization or the Harappa Culture. Implements of Neolithic Men are found not only on the Indus Plain (Punjab and Sindh) but also in the northern Rājasthān and the region of Kathiawār in western India. 'Remains of the polished implement factories have been found in Southern India. The enameled pottery found at Harappa takes us to the period of the Sumerian civilisation.[2]' The people at this stage used pottery, kept domestic animals, cultivated land, and made sufficient progress in civilization. They buried their dead and constructed tombs. Cremation was introduced later.

Archaeological resources suggest that the diversity of geography in ancient India was increasing in the amount and specialization of faunal remains around the era of 2,400 and 1,000 BC. This specialization suggests that the Indus valley civilizations was dependent upon the lush alluvial soil of the Indus River, which produced high yields of cereal grains, and cultivated plant materials. By 2,700 BC the presence of a state level society is evident, complete with hierarchical rule and large scale public works (irrigation, etc.). Such large scale growth in so small a period of time can be attributed only to an organized civilization taking direct control of its environment, and the unique

and rich environmental resources of India.

1.1.2. Latest Developments

Since 1986, for the first time in the period of 40 years, the joint Pakistani-American Harappa Archaeological Research Project (HARP) has been carrying out the first major excavations at the site. These excavations have broadened the scope of research and established Harappa to have been far larger, perhaps supporting a population of 50,000 at certain periods. These excavations, which continue till now, are redefining assumptions about the Indus Valley with the discoveries of new facts, objects and examples of writing.

1.1.3. Review of Indus Civilization: Oral and Mythical Records

The *Vedas*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* serve as the oral and mythical notices of the ancient Aryan eras. The four *Vedas*, basically a collection of poems and sacred hymns, describe the Aryan beliefs and daily life. Whereas, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* celebrate ten or twelve centuries of past events, and are of such a novel character that it is extremely difficult to extract a few grains of truth from a vast mass of fable. The period between the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Muslim rule is only to be traced through coins and inscriptions.

According to the *Purāṇas* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Svayambhu Manu* (the Self-Born *Manu*) was the first king of India. Manu was born directly of the god *Brahma*, and was a hermaphrodite. From the female half of his body he bore two sons and three daughters, from whom descended a series of *Manus*. One of them, called *Pṛithu*, became

the first consecrated king of the earth, and gave to the earth her name, *Pṛithvī*. He cleared the forests, cultivated the land, and introduced cattle-breeding, commerce, and other activities associated with settled life. The tenth *Manu* was the most famous of them all and it was when he ruled over the earth that the great flood occurred, everything was submerged and only he survived. He was warned by the god *Viṣṇu* of the flood. Thus, he built a boat to carry his family and the seven sages of antiquity. *Viṣṇu* took the form of a large fish, to which the boat was fastened, swam through the flood, and lodged the boat on a mountain peak. Here *Manu*, his family, and the seven sages remained, until the water had subsided and they could safely return. The human race sprang from *Manu* and his family, the survivors of the great flood. *Manu* had nine sons, the eldest of whom was a hermaphrodite - hence known by a dual name *Ila* and *Ilā*. From this son arose the two main lines of royal descent, the solar dynasty (*Sūryavaṃśa*) from Ila and the Lunar dynasty (*Chandravaṃsha*) from *Ilā*.

Hindu chronology consists of astronomical periods and is divided into four periods i.e. *Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga*, *Dvaparayuga* and *Kaliyuga*[3]. The periods of the first three *yugas* may be dismissed altogether as imaginary, while the commencement of the fourth, or present age, is entitled to greater consideration as it corresponds with the authenticated eras of other nations.

The Aryans, the ancestors of the present Hindu communities, are believed to have emigrated in a remote age from some undefined region in Central Asia. 'Some groups went to Europe and others came southward to the banks of the Oxus and the Hindu Kush region. In course of time they came into India in successive hordes. The immigration into India continued for a considerable length of time. They settled in the North-West Frontier

and the Punjab initially. 'A second wave of Aryan invaders established themselves in the plains of the Ganges and Yamuna. A third wave entered into Central India by Kathiāwār and Gujrat.[4]

But in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, 'the European scholars of Sanskrit realized with some surprise that Sanskrit was related in structure and possibly in sound to Greek and Latin, and that the relationship was a close one. This led to the theory of a common language originally spoken by the Indo-European people, the ancestors of the Aryan-speaking tribes... Vedic literature (that associated with the Aryans in India) came in for intensive study, and it appeared to prove that the beginning of Indian history was the coming of the 'Aryans', some time in the second millennium B.C.[5] But the archaeological records discovered in 1921, around Mohenjodaro and Harappa, revealed the existence of a pre-Aryan civilization in the Indus Valley. 'This discovery consigns the early part of the traditional account very firmly to the realms of mythology. The Harappa culture dates from c. 3000 B.C. to c. 1500 B.C. so that the physical coexistence of the Harappa culture with the family of Manus is difficult to imagine, since the cultural patterns of the two were totally different.[6] But the story of flood in the *Purāṇas* brings to mind the Babylonian legend, also borrowed by the Hebrews in the story of *Noah's Ark*. In the Indian sources it may have been a memory from the time when the Aryans were still on the Iranian plateau and in contact with the Babylonians, from whom they may have heard of the flood. Or else it was the same legend derived from the Indus Valley people, who in turn had heard of it from the Babylonians. A further possibility may be a vague memory of the Mesopotamian flood confused with the frequent flooding of the Indus River, and thus the adaptation of the Babylonian story on the Indus scene.

All the way through the establishment of Aryans, there is no proper record of the aborigines of India. However they could be distinguished from their Aryan conquerors as Turanians, who came across the Indus. Hindu writers have referred to them as *rākṣasaḥs*, *piśācas*, hobgoblins and monsters in their accounts. The hymns of the *Ṛig Veda* contain copious allusions to them. A passage might suffice to give an idea of the attitude of the Aryans towards them:

> O Aśvins (Vedic twin gods)! Destroy those who are yelling hideously like dogs and are coming to destroy us! You know the way to destroy them. Let each word of those who extol you bring wealth in return. O you truthful ones! Accept our prayers. (1.182.4)

Therefore, it is natural to suppose that they must have offered a stern resistance to the invaders; whereas, those who submitted, supposedly formed the basis of the *Śūdra* or servile caste - which was also recruited from the issue of intercourse with the victors. But a great number retreated to the forests of Sons, the Narmadā, and the Mahanadi, and to the hills of Sirguja and Chota Nagpur. They are identified with the Bhils, the Minas, Kols, the Santals, the Gonds and other tribes.

1.2. Review of Indus Valley Folk Tales: Origin and Subsequent Ages

Stuart H. Blackburn and the late A. K. Ramanujan in *Another Harmony* (1986) worked to apply new methods of analysis drawn from folkloristic, anthropology and sociolinguistics to the folk traditions of India. *Another Harmony* is a rediscovery of the rich diversity of folk material in an interdisciplinary context:

> The study of Indian folklore has never been a sharply defined field. Research has been a cross-field between disciplines, over-shadowed by Indology, and dispersed among the languages of Europe and India. Nevertheless, it has a distinguished intellectual history.[7]

Folk tales impress the common reader because of their simple language. Besides, these tales are rich in mythological references and folklore. When the medieval Punjabi poets versified these tales, they deliberately avoided using the *Mathnavi Persian* metre and used the indigenous metre *Baint*, which because of its sprawling rhythmical pattern was less artificial and less literary than the *Mathnavi.* It was nearer the colloquial way of Panjābi speech.

It is interesting to note that a poet more often than not sticks to the metrical pattern but ignores the grammar of the language. He does so for the obvious purpose of appealing to the collective consciousness of his readers by being nearer to the current idiom of the colloquial lingo. The charm of the folk tale lies in its simple and archaic form. The folk tales of the Indus Valley refer to numerous customs and habits of the people which are peculiar to the freedom loving tribal people, e.g. the wild tribes living in the Doābs of Punjab before the canals were dug out.

The Indus Valley folk tales could be traced to the *Ṛig Veda, the Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata*, the ocean stream of the stories of ancient Greece and Rome and to the Buddhist *jātaka* tales. The ancient scriptures and other works referred to earlier were the creation of the elite classes and more often these folk tales were distorted in their

interests. However, the *Vedas, Epics* and *Purāṇas* are central to the evolution of these folk tales and the social unconsciousness of the region. While keeping in view their significance, the initial ages of the Aryan history in India are named as the Vedic Period and the Epic Period.

1.2.1. Vedic Period

The Aryan invaders changed the history of India. The original inhabitants accepted their language, customs and religion. These bold and hardy men from the north came down into India through the mountain passes. They fought with the people they found in the country and made many of them their servants... They worshipped the sun, the moon, the sky, the wind and the clouds as gods. The first tribes who came down were called Aryans and spoke a form of a very old language called Sanskrit[8]. The only information about their social and political conditions is derived from the Vedas, the most ancient and sacred of Hindu writings and more specifically from the Ṛig Veda. Veda means the book of knowledge or wisdom. The *Vedas* were composed in about 1500 BC. Thus the period from roughly 1500 BC to 1000 BC is called the Vedic Period. 'The ancient Aryans could compose poetry, and metrical compositions of various kinds were current among them. The hymns of the *Ṛig Veda*, and the *gāthās* in *Zend-avesta* are evidence of the development of the poetic genius of the Aryans.[9]

The perfect organization for the study of the Vedas and a deep-rooted oral tradition has kept the Vedas alive till the present day. "If all the manuscripts and all the printed copies were destroyed" says Prof. Rapson, "its text could now be recovered from, the mouths of living men, with absolute fidelity as to the form and accent of every single

word...[10]" In this regard, much of the credit goes to the systems-of *pada-patha* and *saṃhitā-patha*.

1.2.1.1. Vedic Literature: An Overview and Critique

Vedic literature is divided into two parts, the *śrutis* - the books of revelation, and the *smṛitis* - the books of tradition. The *śrutis* consist of *saṃhitās* and *brāhmaṇas* and the *smṛitis* of *sūtras*. The *saṃhitās* are four in number, i.e., *Ṛig, Sāma, Yajur*, and *Atharva*. *Atharva* was not at first recognized as a canonical book until 320 B. C.

The *Ṛig Veda* is a collection of archaic poetry mostly religious in character. It is considered the oldest literature of the world. It is a book of hymns and of greater historical value. *Ṛig Veda* consists of 1017 hymns called *sūktas* and 10500 verses. These are collected in 10 *maṇḍalas* or books of unequal length. Six of these *maṇḍalas* were composed by one *ṛishi* or a family of *ṛishis* each. The first, eighth and the tenth *maṇḍalas* were composed by a number of *ṛishis*. The ninth *maṇḍala* contains hymns addressed to *soma* alone. The tenth *Maṇḍala* is of a later date. It contains materials not found in the other *Maṇḍalas*. All the 10 Maṇḍalas were compiled by Kṛishṇa Dvaipayana Vyāsa who was hence called Veda Vyāsa.

The hymns in the *Ṛig Veda* are written in praise of Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, *Soma, Vāyū,* etc, while not directly historical, they yet contain valuable historical material and constitute one of the primary sources for the earliest period of Indian history. Of the hymns of the *Ṛig Veda* about 215 or 216 are addressed to Agni. Whereas, the *Sāma Veda* consists of songs linked to the *Ṛig Veda*. The *Sāma Veda* is of no historical value because

its verses are only for the benefit of the *Udgātari* (the singing priest).

The *Yajur Veda* contains *sūtras* of sacrifice. These *sūtras* are repeated by the *Adhvaryu* at the time of performing the ceremony. It describes a new order of things, and there is a great deal of information of historical value in this *Veda*. The *Atharva* is of a much later date and it contains accounts of the non-Aryans, which the other Vedas lack. Therefore, it is considered to have been composed when the Aryan had assimilated a great deal of the non-Aryan culture.[11] The *Brāhmaṇas* are in prose and were written much later than the last three Vedas. They are an explanation of the sacrifices in other Vedas and thus contain no direct historical information.

1.2.1.2. Salient Features of Vedic Society

The *Ṛig Veda* chiefly consists of hymns and invocations transmitted from generation to generation down to the present day. From them we gather that the original Aryans crossed the Hindu Kush and the Indus and settled in the North-West Frontier and the Punjab. They brought with them their own language, Sanskrit. They were devoted to pastoral and agricultural pursuits, worshipped Indra, the god of the firmament, as the sovereign of the gods, and inferior deities as the personification of the powers of nature. They do not appear to have had either idols or temples and there was no distinction of castes. The word *varṇa* was used to distinguish the Aryans from the Non-Aryans. The modern caste names *kshatriya* and *brāhmaṇa* have been used in a different sense altogether. *Kshatriya* means strong, *vipra* means wise, and *brāhmaṇ* means merely a composer of hymns.

The Saraswati River was their eastern boundary. The *Saraswati* seems to have

been another large river, which was parallel to and on the East of the Indus in the third and fourth millennium B.C. This was also called the ancient Ghāgra-Hākṛa River, but is called Saraswati in the *Ṛig Veda*. Its lost banks are slowly being laid out by researchers. Along its bed, a whole new set of ancient towns and cities have been discovered lately. Hymn 7, 3 of the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛig Veda*, refers to a number of rivers[12]. A few extracts from the hymn in this context are:

> 1. O ye streams! the bard celebrate, your excellent powers in the house of the worshipper. They flow in three systems, seven streams in each system, 'the prowess of the Indus is superior to that of all others.
> 2. O Indus! When you ran towards lands rich in food, Varūṇa opened out the way for you. You flow over a spacious path on the land. You shine above all flowing rivers.
> 3. O Gaṅgā! O Yamunā and Saraswati and Śutudrī (Sutlej) and Parushnī (Rāvi). Share this my praise among you! O river combined with the Asiknī (Chināb)! O Vitastā (Jhelum)! O Arjikīyā (Beās) combined with the (Indus) hear my word.[13]

The above narration reflects a picture of the river system of the Punjab while the extent of the geographical knowledge of the Aryans at the time of the *Ṛig Veda* can be ascertained by reference in the hymns to various rivers.[14] Aryans knew about Gaṅāgā and Yamunā, but their chief river was the Indus, to whom they gave most of their praises. The rivers on the western side of the Indus, the Kābul, the Swāt, the Kuram and the Gomal were then flowing rivers, all joining the Indus. The Saraswati was a tributary of the Śutudrī.

The following are a few references to rivers and streams in general:

> VIII. 103 – Whose waves, as in a cataract, are hard to pass."
>
> I. 72 - "Like streams let loose.
>
> I. 143. – The never-sleeping, never-ageing (rays) of Agni..... roll forward like streams.
>
> I. 65. - Like a refreshing stream.
>
> There are four important references to the relation between rivers and the Sindhu, and rivers and the samudra.
>
> V. II. - The prayers fill thee with power and strengthen thee like great river, the Sindhu.
>
> VIII. 44. - O Agni, to thee the loving songs speed as rivers to the sea.
>
> I. 71. - Every nourishment goes towards Agni, as the seven young rivers (flow) into the samudra.
>
> VI. 7. Like branches have grown the seven streams.

The word *samudra* means 'confluence' or collection of waters. The Indus where it receives the waters of the great rivers of the Punjab is like a sea in extent. All the conditions are fulfilled by identifying the *samudra* with the lower Indus. There is mention also of the seven 'rivers.' This may be a symbolical number covering all tributaries of the Sindhu, or it may definitely designate the well-known 'five rivers' of the Punjab plus two others, perhaps the Kubhā or Kābul River and the Saraswati near Ambāla.

These are references to rivers as boundaries between hostile tribes and to the crossing of these rivers by boats or by swimming,

> II. 7. May we dive with thee across all hostile powers as across streams of water.
>
> VIII. 19. — He has exceeded men, as if he had crossed the waters.
>
> I. 97. - Do thou carry us, as with a boat, across hostile powers.

I. 97. - As across the Sindhu (or a stream) with a boat.

Already in the *Ṛig Veda* the crossing of a river had become a metaphor for the escape from difficulties and dangers. This metaphor can be explained in two ways, as good, based either on the escape from a hostile shore (the opposite bank of the river being occupied by enemies), or as referring to the difficulties and perils involved in crossing such rivers. One or two passages support the latter alternative, e.g,

> VIII. 75. Let not the sinful tyranny of any fiercely-hating foe smite us, as billows smite a ship, and
> VIII. 103. Whose waves, as in a cataract, are hard to pass.

From the above-mentioned material we conclude that the *Vedic* settlements extended eastward probably from the Kābul valley to the Saraswati near Ambāla and southward along the banks of the Punjab rivers from the mountains to the junction of the 'five rivers' with the Indus. The rivers constituted natural defenses between hostile tribes. Between the rivers was the relatively elevated and waterless plateau frequented by wild animals such as lions.

About the life-style of Aryans, we get much detail in the *Ṛig Veda*. They lived in the form of many tribes. The Aryans have also been called the "five tribes," to include *Pūrus, Turvaśas, Yadus, Anus* and *Druhyus*. They lived in the valleys of the five rivers between the Saraswati and the Indus and often remained at war with each other. The battle of Sudās, the king of the Tritsus against a combination of kings is one of the most important battles among the tribes. He came out as a victor. Another tribe amongst the

enemies of Sudās, were the Bharatas, who settled on the banks of Dṛishadvati and Saraswati. The whole country was afterwards named after them as Bhāratvarsha or land of the Bharatas.

Vedic mythology of the gods, specially the one described in the *Ṛig Veda*, gives an idea of the poetic and imaginative religious conception of the ancient Aryans. Nature held a supreme position for the Aryans and stimulated their intellect and inspired their poetic genius. To the *Vedic ṛishis* the natural phenomena appeared as mixed up with a divine influence. Matter and energy were besmeared with a divine glory. They, therefore, gradually rose from the conception of many to the realization of one in many. Towards the end of entire *Ṛig Veda* the ṛishis attained the highest spiritual ideal. Thus, we find: "He "who has given us life, He who is the creator, He who knows all the places in this universe, He is one although He bears the name of many gods - other beings wish to know of him." (*X 22, 3*)

The Vedic gods are numerous, and are stated to be 'thrice-eleven' - eleven being in heaven, eleven on earth, and eleven in the waters. But more names are found in the Vedas. These gods have no individuality or definite outline. They have very few specific characteristics. In many cases they possess the same characteristics in part or in whole. Dawn, sun, fire have the common features of being luminous, dispelling darkness, appearing in the morning. Several deities have sprung from different aspects of one and the same phenomenon such as Sūrya, Savitṛ, Pūshana.

The most important gods are Indra, Agni, Soma, Parjanya and Yama. Dyaus is the oldest among the gods of heaven. He is generally coupled with Pṛithvī, the mother. So

Dyaus- Pṛithvī is the universal parents. Varuṇa is the highest of the gods. He is the great upholder of physical and moral order. The hymns addressed to him, though few in number, form the most exalted portion of the *Ṛig Veda*. His pre-eminent position was afterwards taken by Indra.

There are five solar deities i.e., Mitra, Sūrya, Savitṛi, Pūshana and Viṣṇu. Mitra is the personification of sun's beneficent agency. Sūrya is the eye of the gods, watching the deeds of mortals. Savitṛi represents the quickening activity of the sun. Pūshana exhibited in the genial aspect of the sun is chiefly a pastoral deity. Of the solar deities, Viṣhṇu is historically the most important. He takes three strides .through the three divisions of the universe, earth, space and heaven. The *Gāyatrī mantra* is addressed to Savitṛi, and forms the chief vehicle of the spiritual culture of the Hindus. In the Vedic Age it was not the exclusive property of the Brāhmaṇs as such a class did not then exist.[15]

Among gods, Indra, Agni, and Soma are very important. Majority of the hymns in the *Ṛig Veda* have been addressed to them. Soma has an entire *maṇḍala* to himself. Goddesses occupy a very subordinate position. The only one of any consequence is *Usha*. "She, the young, the white-robed daughter of the sky, the mistress of all earthly treasure, dawns upon us dispelling darkness! Auspicious Ushas! Shine upon us today in this spot." (I, 113, 7)

There are hymns addressed to the river Saraswati. Gradually, she assumed the position of the goddess of speech and in that character she is worshipped even now.

In addition to gods there are numerous semi-gods, such as *ribbus, apsaras* and *gandharvas* etc. *Ṛibhus* are terrestrial elves' acquiring the rank of deities. *Apsaras* are

water nymphs of great beauty, devoted to dance, song and play. Later on, they became the courtesans of Indra's heaven. The story of the *apsara* Urvāśī and Purūrava is the oldest Aryan love-story to be found in the *Ṛig Veda. Gandharvas* are the corresponding male order of the *Apsara*, and they appear in the post-*Vedic*-Age as celestial singers and musicians.

Manu is the most important hero of the *Ṛig Veda.* He is described as the first sacrificer and ancestor of the human race.

There were five Vedic tribes living on the banks of seven rivers. The mention of the 'five tribes' seems to indicate that they were mixed in blood and probably leagued together against their foes. The territory occupied extended southward from the mountains on the: north, at least, to the junction of the Punjab rivers with the Indus and possibly farther. The tribes were governed by *rājās* or 'kings' who were some times apparently chosen by the people. The ideal of a king was to be the 'shepherd' of his people, but he sometimes devoured the rich as fire devours the forest. There is a distinction drawn between desert land and inhabited land. The probable inference is that the Aryan settlements occupied as a rule the fertile soil along the banks of the rivers and streams of the Punjab. The relatively high and waterless land between the rivers was a jungle given up to lions and cattle thieves (probably aborigines). Some land was under cultivation, sown with grain, perhaps barley. But, on the whole, the supreme source of wealth was cattle herding. Vedic India was in the pastoral stage, but to some extent had also entered the agricultural stage. The bucolic descriptions in the *Ṛig Veda* are numerous and beautiful. *Ghee* was as much prized in Vedic times as it is today. Among metals gold and *ayas*, bronze or iron, are mentioned. Perhaps *ayas* included more than one metal as

yava probably covered more than one kind of grain.

Family ties were close in Vedic Indus land even as they are today in the region. The blood relationships emphasized are those of husband and wife, father and son. The blessedness of a Vedic home consisted in plenty of cows and plenty of sons.

Certain crafts are mentioned, such as those of the worker in wood, the worker in metal, the herdsman, and the barber. There was evidently a good deal of warfare. The war chariot drawn by war-horses constituted the artillery of Vedic India. Forts, or fortified posts, are mentioned. The chief weapon was the bow. Armour was used both of woven material and apparently also of metal. Armies moved forward in assault like the onward rush of rivers. The rivers were apparently natural boundaries between hostile tribes. These were crossed by boats. The favorite booty was the cow. Among martial peoples there is a close affinity between warfare and amusement. Quite likely the same horse and chariot which were used for warfare were in times of peace used for racing. In both *"ojhas"* – divine power, was manifested. The horse and the cow were the expressly important domesticated animals of the Vedic age. Vedic houses had doors and posts. There were *ṛishis,* priests and singers in Vedic settlements. The two supreme artistic products were the skillfully composed hymn and the skillfully constructed chariot. Crimes like theft are mentioned sins against home-life, particularly cattle-lifting. Such crimes are denounced. Monogamy was apparently the rule, polygamy being probably practiced in exceptional cases. The constituents or 'estates' of a Vedic tribe consisted of

-The king and the army of nobles and warriors;

-The various priests, ṛishis and singers; and

-The pastoral, agricultural and artisan classes.

1.2.1.3. Review of the Later Vedas and the Indus Valley Civilization

The *Yajur Veda* marks a change in the social and religious setup of Aryan civilization. The centre moves from the Punjab to the Kuru Panchāla country lying between the Saraswati and the Dṛishadvati. This land was the cradle of the Brāhmans' social system, and from there it spread to other parts. The adherents of the *Yajur Veda* were split into several groups. One comes across the first prose literature in the *Yajur Veda* with its one half written in prose.

Basically, there is no significant change in the mythology of the *Yajur Veda* as compared to the *Ṛig Veda* but the sacrifice assumes greater importance. Its power becomes so overwhelming as to compel the gods to do the will of the priests and religion is now nothing but a mechanical device. Caste system with four chief castes and the principal mixed castes is now firmly established[16]

The hymns of the *Atharva Veda* are applied to domestic rites, such as the ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death etc, and to the coronation ceremony of the kings. It contains a variety of spells, amongst which, some are of pre-historic antiquity and in some cases more ancient than the *Ṛig Veda*.

Notes

[1] Romila Thapar, *A History of India 1* (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 23

[2] UpendraNath Ball, *Ancient India* (Patna 1921), p. 20.

[3] Each mahāyuga is in turn divided into four yugas or ages called *Kṛta., Tretā, Dvāpara* and *Kali*. Their lengths are respectively 4,800 3,600 2,400 and 1,200 years of the gods, each of which equals 360 human years. The Kaliyuga began in 3102 BC (Basham: 321). *Kulpa a day of Barahma* =4320 millions years.

One kalpa = 14 manvantra

One manvantra = 360, 920, 000 years

One manvantra = 71 mahayugas.

[4] Op.cit., pp. 23, 24.

[5] Thapar, R. op.cit., p. 29.

[6] Op.cit., p. 29.

[7] Blackburn, Stuart H. and A. K Ramanujan. *Another Harmony: New Essays on the Folklore of India.* Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986. P. 1, 133.

[8] Marsden, E, *Easy Stories from Indian History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1921), p.4.

[9] Ball, op.cit., p. 26.

[10] Op.cit., pp. 31F.

[11] Op.cit., p. 32.

[12] The following rivers are mentioned in *the Ṛig veda*: Sindhu /Sushomā (Indus), Vitastā (Jhelum), Asiknī (Chenāb), Parushnī (Rāvi), Śutudrī (Sutlej) and Vipās/Arjikīyā (Beās). *Sindhu* was said to flow united with Tristama and then with Susartu, Rāsa, and Śveya, later uniting with Krumu, Gomatī, Kubhā (Kābul) and Mahatru. Gaṅgā and Yamunā are mentioned as the eastern boundaries of the Aryan settlement.

[13] Op.cit., p. 34.

[14] Thapar, op.cit., p. 33.

[15] Ball, op.cit, p. 37.

[16] Op.cit.,p21.

Chapter 2

The Indus Valley and the Epic Period

After the age of Vedas, the Aryans extended their conquests beyond the limits of the Punjab. During this age, the Aryans expanded to south and east and established their kingdoms at Hastinapur, Oud and Mithilā under two dynasties, i.e. solar and lunar races. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* celebrate events of this age. These epics are stories about Aryan life, wars, and accomplishments. The former, talks of Aryan wars amongst themselves, where two clans, the *Pāṇḍavas* and the *Kauravas,* battle it out, and the *Pāṇḍavas* emerge victorious. Therefore, the period from roughly 1000 B.C. to 500 B.C. is named after the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* and called the Epics Period.[1]

The Aryan conquerors were of the military caste of *kshatriya,* and the *brāhmaṇs* served them as sacrificial priests. It is said that this age of progression was favourable to the growth of *Brahmanism*, where they advanced their pretensions to a divine origin and divine authority and at length brought the *kshatriyas* under their yoke. This age brought the following changes:

A large pantheon of gods came into vogue.

The institution of caste established.

Animal sacrifices were introduced.

2.1. An overview of Great Epics

Sanskṛit epic poetry is divided into two main classes: 1. *Itihāsa,* and *Purāṇa* and, 2. *Kāvya.* The *Mahābhārata* is an *itihāsa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a *Kāvya.* Stuart H. Blackburn and A. K. Rāmanujan in *Another Harmony* described *Mahābhārata* as a tragedy.

> Modern Indian critics have seen "tragedy" in various stories of the *Mahābhārata*, especially those of Karṇa and Aśvatthāman.[2]

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the work of a single poet and homogeneous in plan and execution. It was composed in the east of India. But the *Mahābhārata* is a congeries of parts. Its main story is the struggle between the *Kurus* and the *Pāṇḍavas* in the field of *Kurukshetra.* A number of anecdotes and a large quantity of didactic matter have been added to the main story and the book is now considered an encyclopedia of moral teaching.

A controversy about the age and character of the *Mahābhārata* exists between the Hindus and the Western scholars. The former consider it as belonging to 1000 years B.C. and dealing with events which actually did take place; whereas, the latter do not recognize their claims. They think that the main story may have been composed shortly before 1000 B.C., but the book took its final shape much later.

Stuart H. Blackburn and A. K. Rāmanujan in *Another Harmony* described about the historical validity of the epics as follows:

> Whereas investing a narrative with truth value is significant in the making of an epic, the converse also appears to be true: to

> unmake an epic one must deny its historical validity. A question constantly debated in India is whether the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* have any historical truth. From the point of view of English-educated scholars, history is based on evidence from archaeological, numismatic, inscriptional, or other recorded sources. With this bias, scholars of ancient history argue for or against the date of the Battle of Kurukshetra in the *Mahābhārata* or the geographical location of Laṅka in the Rāmāyaṇa. Such efforts are not always seen in the context of historical research, however. The new research in archaeology is perceived as crucial because it could preserve or destroy the stature of an epic by confirming or destroying its factual basis.[3]

Originally, the epic was celebrated in songs and ballads, and they may have been collected by some poet into one whole in the form of a short epic. The early portions of the book are marked by a heroic spirit, and the manners and customs described in these parts are different from the state of things in the later additions, which have changed the character of the book as a whole. In the early parts, the heroes are more frank and bold, but in the later parts they are controlled by moral reasons and prudence.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is attributed to *Vālmīki* whose hermitage was said to have been situated on the south bank of the Ganges. The place of origin of the poem was *Kośala* ruled by the *Ikshvākus*, and it was composed prior to 500 B.C., before the rise of Buddhism or the foreign invasion of India. The name *Ikshvāku, Daśaratha* and *Rāma* are found in the *Ṛigveda* and the main story is based upon Indian mythology.[4]

In the immortal epics of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, only two events of the heroic age have been rescued from oblivion. These are the great war of the two branches of the lunar race - *Kurus* and the *Pāṇḍavas*, who finally coalesced into a single people; and the expedition of *Rāma*, a sovereign of the solar race to the Deccan and Ceylon.[5]

The scene of warfare in the *Mahābhārata* lies in the neighborhood of Delhi, while the kingdom of Rāma lay farther south, and it is natural to conclude that the one preceded the other in point of time.

2.2. Historical Significance of *Mahābhārata*

For the reconstruction of the ancient history of India, the *Mahābhārata* does help us very much. It is difficult to find out the authenticity of the stories which have been mixed up with fables and in many cases have been presented in an exaggerated form. But there is no doubt that most of these stories are based upon historical incidents. The main story refers to a conflict between the *Kurus* and the *Pāṇḍavas*.

From the names of the different kings and peoples coming to the field of Kurukshetra, we gather some historical information. The Aryan influence had then spread from Balk to Assam, Kathiawar; the territory of the Yādavas, on the one side, and Kāliṅga on the other, marked the southern limits. The Madhya-desa, or the country between Meerut and Delhi, was the centre of culture.

The picture of society is more interesting than any other information. Brahmanism had already made sufficient progress but still the *kshatriyas* held the supreme position in society. The *Suayaṃvara* ceremony of Draupadi is a beautiful illustration of the social

condition of the time. The caste system had not yet acquired its rigidity. Draupadi was a *kshatriya* girl and anybody could win her hands that would succeed in the contest irrespective of caste. The girl choosing her husband according to some test is possible only in a society where men and women enjoy equal liberty. The marriage of one girl to a number of husbands at the same time is rather irregular in an Aryan family, but that the husbands had also other wives in addition to their common wife shows that marriage relations were of a comparatively loose type. The system of fixed relation was not fully established. Child-marriage was unknown. Kuntī, the mother of the *Pāṇḍavas*, also gave birth to a son before her marriage. Bidur, the issue of a slave girl, enjoyed equal rank with the other *kshatriya* princes in social matters. The Brāhmaṇs had no scruple in taking food from the *kshatriyas*.[6]

The political life of the people was sufficiently organized. Monarchy was the prevailing form of government and a system of justice was developed.

2.3. Review and Critique of *Rāmāyaṇa*

The epic is so intermingled at every turn with the grotesque fancies of mythology, and agency is constantly described as supernatural, that it is difficult to extract from it the germs of historical truth on which it was based. But it appears clear that it indicates the first expedition of the Aryans to the Deccan, that the southern division of it was still peopled with the aborigines, and that the island of Laṅka or Ceylon was the seat of a higher civilization, probably migrated from Egypt. It led to no permanent conquest, as the army of monkeys and bears which aided Rāma, after accompanying him in triumph to his capital, returned to their forests, and we hear no more of them on the page of history till

they had been transformed into orthodox Hindus. It must not be forgotten that the poem was composed ten centuries after the events it celebrates when Brahmanism was consolidated into a dominant system, which it was intended to support.[7]

The state of society as described in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is slightly different from that of the *Mahābhārata*. "We miss in the *Rāmāyaṇa*," says R.C. Dutt, "the fiery valour and the proud self-assertion of the *kshatriya* of the *Mahābhārata* and the subordination of the people to the priestly caste is more complete." He further says, "The real heroic age of India has passed and that centuries of residence in the Gangetic valley had produced an enervating effect on the Aryans. We miss the heroic, if somewhat rude and sturdy manners and incidents which mark the *Mahābhārata*... The heroes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are somewhat tame and common place personages, very respectful to priests, very anxious to conform to the rules of decorum and duty, doing a vast amount of fighting work mechanically, but without the determination, the persistence of real fighters.[8]

2.4. Indus Valley Civilization in the Epics

The epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, occupy a prominent position in the classical *Sanskṛit* literature and language as a veritable source of ancient Indian history and culture of India in general and that of the Punjab in particular. On the historic plane the Epics enjoy the same importance as the *Vedas*. Although having common cultural base, the Epics are different from the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*. The *Vedas* are mainly devoted to the priestly field. The *Purāṇas* take notice of India's cultural heritage in the guise of legends. Though the main theme of the epics revolves round the great heroes, historically they offer study of the specific periods and rulers.[9]

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are mentioned as *itihasa*. The terms are generally used identically in ancient Indian literature. The ancient Indian historical tradition as obtained from the great Epics is, however, different from the modern concept of history. In modern historiography the apt term used for the epics is not myth but theocratic history, in which 'humanity is not an agent, but partly an instrument and partly a patient, of the actions recorded.[10]

The history obtaining in the epics is thus quasi-historical. History is regarded as one weak spot in Indian literature. According to some historians, 'the total lack of the historical sense is so characteristic that the whole course of *Sanskṛit* literature is darkened by the shadow of this defect, suffering as it does from the entire absence of exact chronology.[11]

But the above evaluation of the Indian tradition of historiography purporting that ancient Indians had no historical sense or awareness, ignores the intrinsic merit of the epics. The contribution of the epics in the preservation of this extant material having bearing on India's past is not considered important. This quasi-historical data available from the epics has undoubtedly played a veritable role in the reconstruction of ancient history of India.

Strictly sectarian in character and purpose, the epics expound and propagate the concept of *bhakti,* i.e., the love, devotion, and self-surrender to a personal god or goddess, which is the kernel of the *Bhagvad-Gītā*,

The authorship of the *Mahābhārata* is ascribed to Vyāsa alias Veda Vyāsa, who is also credited with the authorship of the *Purāṇas.*[12] The honour of authorship of the other

great Epic *Rāmāyaṇa* is credited to Mahāṛsi *Vālmīki*. According to the *Mahābhārata* itself, the great epic was composed after the *Purāṇas*.[13] It even mentions the number of the *Purāṇas* as eighteen[14], whereas the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* recognized the priority of the *Mahābhārata*. If we scan the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*, we find that both have in fact intimate knowledge of each other.

The *Purāṇas* are copiously quoted in the *Rāmāyaṇa* even the contents of each other. The cosmological notions of the *Mahābhārata* are similar to those expressed in the *Purāṇas*. Besides the similarities in the geographical orientation the great epic breathes in unison with the *Purāṇas*. MacDonnell dates the *Mahābhārata* later than the *Purāṇas*.[15]

2.4.1. Historical Perspective

The account of the genealogical lists described in the *Mahābhārata* provides with fourteen Manu cycles or *Manavantras* spread over 95 dynasties to the time of Parīksit, the grandson of the Pāṇḍava king Dḥritrāshtra. The period of the *Manvantras* can further be divided into two main phases, viz., the Pre-Deluge period and the Post-Deluge period. To the pre-diluvian period belong six Manus, viz., Svāyambhuva, Svārochisha, Priyavrata, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata and Chākshusha. The capital of the first mythical king, Manu *Svāyambhuva* is said to have been located on the banks of the river Saraswati in the Punjab region. It can rightly be said that the civilization was born on this land.

The great deluge which submerged everything occurred during the time of the seventh Manu Vaivasvata. The seventh Manu, who survived the deluge, is said to have been the progenitor of the human race. Manu Vaivasvata had ten sons as follows[16]:

Ikshvāku, Nābhāga, Dḥrshta, Śaryāti, Narishyanta Prāṃśu, Nābhāgodiṣṭa, Karūsha,

Prishadhra.

The eldest son Ikshvāku founded the solar line at Ayodhỹa. The daughter of Manu Vaivasvata, Ila, who married Budha, gave birth to Purūravas, who established the lunar line at Pratishṭhāna, the present-day Paithan in Maharashtra.

Yayāti, son and successor of *Nahusha* of the lunar house of the *Purūravas,* conquered the region of the Punjab up to the Saraswati. As a result of the division of the Kingdom of Yayāti among his five sons, Druhyu inherited the western portions of his empire, which is the region west of Yamuna and north of Chambal rivers. According to the *Mahābhārata,*[17] Aiigara-Setu, the Druhyu king suffered a defeat at the hands of Māndhāṭri, son of Yavanasva of the Ikshvāku dynasty of the solar house of Ayodhỹa. The victor performed a sacrifice on the bank of river Yamunā. The Druhyus were also shocked by the Anavas of Pratishṭhāna during the time of Dhrta or Durdama, resulting in the loss of their territory in Punjab. Consequently they migrated to the Mleccha country in the northern direction where the sons of Precetas, Sucetas carved out kingdoms for themselves.

The next phase of the history of Punjab begins with the conquests in the region by the Anavas, which remained under their control till the *Mahābhārata* war. Ushīna, the son of Mahāmanas, the Anava conqueror of the Punjab, inherited this region after the death of his father. He was a pious king known for his generosity and welfare of his subjects. *The Mahābhārata*[18] ascribes the Hawk and Pigeon story to this king. Elsewhere it is applied to his son Śivi.[19] Ushīnara had five sons from his five queens, who became the founders of five kingdoms in region, viz., Subrata, Ambashṭha kingdom; Krsa, Vrsla or Krimila; Nava, Navarāshṭra, Nṛiga[20], the Yaudheyas and *Sivil*[21], the Sivis, Sivi-Ausinara further

divided his kingdom among his four valiant sons who became founders of Vṛshadarbhas by Vrsadarbha,[22] Sauvīras, Sauvīra, Kekayas, or Kaikeyas, Kekaya[23] and Madrakas or Madras, Madra.

The Anava house from time to time established matrimonial relations with leading kings of the different parts of India.

A princess of the Madras was married into the Kuril house of Hastinapura and the princess. *Kaikeyi* with the king of the solar dynasty of Ayodhyā, Daśaratha.[24] Thus during the *Dvāpara* age starting from the coronation of *Rāma* to the throne of Ayodhyā, the Punjab played an important role in the national life of India. In the post-Rāma period Bharata, son of Kaikeyi is said to have ascended to the throne of a Kekaya kingdom and also Sindhu. His two sons Taksha and Pushkara conquered Gandhāra and founded respectively Taksasila and Pushkalāvati,[25] which have been identified with Taxila and Charsadda, respectively.

The *Mahābhārata* period, which marks the end of the *Dvaparayuga* and the beginning of the *Tretā-Yuga*, is by far the most important and interesting period in the history of the Punjab, for the battle of the *Mahābhārata* was fought on the plains of the historic Kurukshetra in the eastern Punjab, engulfing the whole of India. The account of the *Mahābhārata* shows how all political forces in the country aligned themselves with either the Kauravas or the *Pāṇḍavas*. The allies of the Kauravas outnumbered those of the *Pāṇḍavas*. The overwhelming majority of the kingdom of the Punjab also joined hands with the *Kauravas*. Only the king of Abhisāra in the south-west of Kashmīr was an ally of the Pāṇḍavas, the rest viz., Jayadratha of Sindhu-Sauvīra, Śakuni of Gandhāra[26], Suśarma of Trigarta, Sudaksina of Kamboja, Śrutāyu of the Aṃbashṭhas, Śalya of the Madras and

the kings of the kingdoms of Śibi, Kekaya, Vāhtika, Kshudraka and Mālava, fought on the side of the Kauravas on the battlefield.

The defeat of the *Kauravas* put a devastating effect on the political arena of the Punjab, because most of the rulers of this region were the allies of the Kauravas and as such suffered heavily resulting in its political dismemberment. The newly crowned Pāṇḍava king Parīkshita acknowledged suzerainty virtually over the whole of north India?[27]

But Parīkshita, who was young and inexperienced failed to rise to the occasion and the newly acquired political unity crumbled very soon. The invasion of Takshaka, King of Taxila, plunged this region into confusion and turmoil once again killing the Pāṇḍava king Parīkshita though Janamejaya, son and successor of Parīkshita, did retrieve the fortunes of the Pāṇḍava house by defeating the army of the king of Taxila and extending the dominions of their empire up to the Gandhāra region,[28] yet his supremacy was short lived.

In the reign of the fourth successor of Janamejaya, the Pāṇḍavas shifted their capital from Hastināpura to Kauśāmbhī. *The Mahābhārata* attributes the flood as the cause of abandonment. The political reasons cannot be ruled out.[29] But what is more intriguing is the fact that with the close of the *Mahābhārata* period, not only the historical references to the Punjab cease in the *Purāṇas*, but the social status of the people of this region also deteriorates,[30] as the people of this region were looked down upon as wicked and *mlecchas*.[31]

2.5. *Ḅrihat Kathā and Jātaka* Tales: The Later Age of Buddhism and Jainism

The Indus valley tradition of literature, unique for its content as well as chronological development, ran in two lines:

-Mythological or legendary

-Pragmatic or realistic

Beginning with the *Vedas* approximately 1750 BC, the first line branched out into the *Upanishads,* gave way to the epics and *the Mahāpurāṇas*, followed by *Upapurāṇas* and the ancillary *Vedic* literature.

The second line consisted of the *Brihat Kathā* (the precursor of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*), the *Jātakas* and the *Panchatantra*, etc. They shed light on different aspects of life and other worldly complexities, sometimes didactic (as in the *Jātakas*) but more often simple expository of the various possibilities of life.

Before going into detail about the *Ḅrihat Kathā* and *Jātaka* Tales, it is necessary to develop an understanding of Buddhism and Jainism.

2.6. Jainism and the Indus Valley

The followers of Jainism believe that its roots within India are even older than the Hinduism, which they believe came with the Aryans into the Indus Valley. The naked statues resembling the Jain monks amongst the remains of the Indus Valley Civilization do substantiate some of the claims.

> ...The advent of the Indus Civilization seems to have thrown a new light on the antiquity of Jainism. The time assigned by the Scholars to this culture is 3000 B.C. on the archaeological evidence and on the evidence of the relations with the cultures of the other countries.

> The religion of the Indus culture seems to be quite different from the religion of the Aryans in the Vedic period. At Mohenjodaro and Harappa, iconism is everywhere apparent. But it is extremely doubtful whether images were generally worshipped in the ancient Vedic times... It is possible to suggest from the evidence of articles discovered that Jainism was not unknown among the people of the Indus Valley. Some nude images and the nude figures on the seals have been discovered at Mohenjodaro and Harrappa. Nudity has been the special characteristic of Jainism. Even Ṛishabha, the first Tīrthankara observed the vow of nudity...[32]

However, there is no conclusive evidence that most of the concepts in Hinduism came from outside India. In fact, even the Aryan invasion theory has not yet been proven. However, the Hindus believe Jainism to be an offshoot of Hinduism.

> ...Jainism maintains a close connection with Hinduism. It does not go against the caste system, and Brāhmaṇsare very often employed in their religious ceremonies. The Jains also believe in the Hindu gods, and some of them do not object to be called Hindus. They, however, do not accept the authority of the Vedas, and they oppose the practice of animal sacrifice. Their doctrine of the duality of man's personality is their principal feature. Human personality comprises both material and spiritual natures, and they do not believe in the existence of a universal soul or a supreme deity. God, according to them, is the 'highest, the noblest, and the

> fullest manifestation of all the powers which lie latent in the soul of man.' Their highest virtue is Ahiṃsā, i.e., not to hurt any sentient object...Jainism has not gone beyond the borders of India on account of its close connection with Hinduism...[33]

Jainism highly emphasizes on non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) and the followers of this religion, whether a monk or a householder, follow a very strict, well disciplined life. In fact, the householders are supposed to evolve to the monk hood in the later stages of life.

The first *Tīrthankara, Ṛishabhdev* flourished prior to the Indus Valley Civilization and has been referred to as Lord Vishṇu in *the Purāṇas*. This name is also mentioned in the *Vedas*. This shows the inseparability of the two religions in earlier times. His sons, *Bharat* and *Bahubali* (his 57 feet high statue at *Śrāvaṇa-beḷagolā* in Karnātaka is quite famous) are well known in the Indian history.

The ancient Indian script, *Brāhmī,* is believed to be named after his (*Rishabhdev's*) daughter. He was followed by 23 other *tīrthankaras*. Jains believe that the Indus Valley Civilization flourished during the times between the third and the ninth *Tīrthankaras.* Magadha was the centre of Jainism in the written history of India. Starting with Bimbisār, the kings of the Nanda dynasty and the early Maurya dynasty were believers in Jainism, according to the Jain literature. The Hindus consider them to be believers in Hinduism. Lord Māhavīra gave his first sermon on the Vipula Peak at Rājgīr. He was born at Vaishāli in a noble family. They practiced democracy in Vaiśhālī, and some of the remains of the glories of those days, are still preserved in a museum there including potteries, coins, and other pieces of art. The 23rd and the 24th *tīrthankaras* had tremendous impact on Hinduism that had degenerated because of

(a) The practice of untouchability of the Śhudras,

(b) Animal sacrifices in the yajnas, and

(c) The dominance by the Brāhmaṇ caste in religious matters.

Both these *tīrthankaras* were *kshatrias* and were princes.[34] Lord Mahāvīra was given a name - Vardhamāṇa, which means rising or growing, by his parents because the family saw its prosperity after his birth. They were strict followers of the 23rd *tīrthankara* who had lived around 250 years before Lord Mahāvīra. Vardhamāna renounced the world at the age of 30, became an ascetic and then spiritually advanced through the stages of *arhat* to *kevalin* or *Jina* (conqueror of the self). In the Pāli Buddhist texts, he is referred to as the Niggantha Nataputta. After leaving home, for twelve years, he devoted himself to self-discipline and practiced severest penance and austerities. He preached for the next 30 years, i.e. until the age of 72 when he obtained *nirvāṇa*. His first sermon was at Mount Vipula, one of the five hills surrounding Rājgīr. His first disciple was Indrabhūti Gautama. The female ascetics of the order were headed by Chandana and the male laiety, by Shreṇika also called Bimbisāra, the emperor of Magadha. In his teachings, women had equal roles to play and were not looked down upon.

2.7. Buddhism

Archaeological discoveries including an abundance of sculptured images and architectural remains furnish us with the demonstration that Buddhism was once an established religion in the Indus Valley and a prevailing religion at Taxila in the Parthian period. Additionally we find sufficient references to Taxila in the ancient Buddhist literature. For instance:

> When the prince turned sixteen, the king decided to send him to college. He said, 'Go, my son, to the city of Takkasila (Taxila). There you will find a world famous teacher. Learn all you can from him. Give him this money as payment.' He gave him a thousand gold coins and sent him on his way.[35]

There is another reference to Taxila as a great learning place in another *jātaka* Tale:

> Once upon a time there was a very well-known teacher in the city of Takkasila (Taxila), in northern India. He taught religion, as well as all other subjects. His knowledge was enormous and his teaching ability made him world famous.[36]

2.7.1. Gandhāra Civilization: Archaeological Evidences at Taxila

In the early centuries of Christian era, there flowered in the North-western region of present-day Pakistan, remarkable and unique Buddhist civilization in all its glory and shine. It is now known the world over as the *Gandhāra Civilization*. Originally, however, the name stood for a country, an ancient kingdom located in this part of Pakistan.

What exact areas its borders encompassed cannot be determined with any great accuracy today. However, according to Xuan Zang, the famous Chinese pilgrim,

> ...Empire of Gandhāra extends about 1000 li from East to West and about 800 li from North to South. It is bounded on East by *Sin* (*Sindhu*-Indus) river. Its capital is *Po-lu-sha-pu-lo* (*Purushapura* = Peshawar)...

This testimony, along with other available evidence, indicates that the kingdom of

Gandhāra was confined to the territories west of the Indus, now comprising the valley of Peshawar, the hilly districts of Swāt, Bunner and Bajaur. But the art for which it is so famous extended far beyond its geographical borders.

Although separated by the waters of the mighty Indus and the lofty ranges of Himālayas and Hindukush, Gandhāra remains have been discovered as far South as Mankiyāla near Rāwalpindi and as far North as Oxus river. This was evidently no isolated culture, but formed part of one and the same Buddhist civilization; its art was distinguished everywhere by the same general characteristic, with only minor local variations.

Therefore, the foundation of Taxila goes back to a very remote age, but of the epoch before Alexander the Great we know practically nothing beyond the fact that it was probably included in the Achaemenian Empire of Persia, and that it enjoyed a great reputation as a University town famous for the arts and sciences of the day. Alexander descended on the Punjab and received the submission of Taxila in 326 B.C., but four years later the Macedonian garrisons were driven out by Chandra gupta, and Taxila then passed under the dominion of the Mauryan Emperors, to whom it remained in subjection until the death of Aśoka. Then, in 190 B.C., Demetrios, the son-in-law of Antiochos the Great, extended Bactrian power over the north-west of the Punjab and paved the way for the establishment of a line of Greek princes who were ruling at Taxila for the greater part of the second century before our era. After them came a dynasty of Parthians and Scythian kings - Maues, Azes, Azilises and others — who carry us down to about AD 75 and these, in turn, are succeeded by the Kushāna Emperors, among whom the name of Kanishka is the most celebrated. Thus, within four centuries Taxila became subject to five separate empires i.e.,

the Macedonian, the Mauryan, the Bactrian, the Parthian and the Kushāna, and from these widely different civilizations extending from Greece to western China and from the steppes of Russia to the Bay of Bengal, must have inherited much of the culture and of the arts peculiar to each. With the decline of the *Kushāna* power and the rise of the Imperial Guptas in the fourth century, the history of Taxila, so far as we are concerned, comes to an end. Her power and importance gradually waned and when the Chinese pilgrim, Xuan Zang, visited the city in the seventh century, he found that the state had become a dependency of Kashmir and that the monuments of her former greatness were in ruins.

The remains of Taxila are situated about 20 miles to the north-west of Rawalpindi, in a particularly pleasant and well-watered valley, with the snow ranges of Kashmir to the north and east, and lower hills, including the Mārgalla Range, completing the circle on the south and west. This position on the Great Trade Route, which used to connect Hindustan with Central and Western Asia, coupled with the strength of its natural defenses, and a constant supply of water, sufficiently explain the growth of the city in early times. There were three chief settlements - the Bir Mound to the south, Sirkap in the middle, and Sirsukh to the north with clusters of smaller remains grouped around each. These three areas appear to represent three separate cities, built, like the seven cities of Delhi, by successive dynasties or despots, the parallel between the two cities being the closer for the reason that in each case the new capitals were shifted further and further north. The three cities at Taxila with the remains round about them cover an area of a dozen square miles or more, and examination of such a vast site is likely to occupy a good many years.

The chīṛ or 'Split Tope' as it is called from the great cleft through its centre, stands on a lofty plateau high above the Tamra nullah, which is manifestly identical with the

stream called *Tiberonalo or Tiberopotamos* by classical authors. The plateau is not a natural formation, but is composed mainly of the mud walls of village habitations, which must have existed here from time immemorial. In the climate of the Indus country such habitations crumble quickly the moment they lose the protection of their roofs; then other houses are erected on their ruins, and so the process goes on, every century witnessing the addition of half a dozen feet or more to the height of the mound. In this case, the last habitations (prior to the plateau being occupied by a *Buddhist* establishment) appear to have belonged to the period of Greek rule; for immediately below the foundations of one of the Buddhist buildings, there a collection of 28 coins of the Greek king Zoilos was found by Dr. J.H. Marshall in AD 1913. He also discovered the *stupa* so much ruined that fifty years before Sir Alexander Cunningham had affirmed that nothing was left of its outer casing. However, on excavation towards the north and south sides Marshall found that the base of the *stupa* was relatively well preserved, and brought to surface a number of other interesting structures including *stupas*, chapels and monastic buildings, which, furnish us with important data for the history of local architecture. It is the coins and other minor antiquities found in association with these, which lead to settle several chronological problems.

As it is against the Buddhist principles, ever to destroy a stupa or any other work of merit, and, accordingly, when these chapels were built, their walls were carried over the tops of the small stupas. These chapels, as well as the walls flanking the gateways, were built in a very distinctive style of masonry, commonly called diaper patterned.

2.7.2. The Teachings of Buddha: *Jātaka* Tales and Historiography

Gautama Buddha, born in about 567 B.C.[37] is acknowledged and followed by vast populations outside Indo-Pakistan.

> ...No one really knows about the millions of lives lived by this great hero. But many stories have been told - including this one about a pregnant queen who was about to give birth to him. After many more rebirths, he became the Buddha who is remembered and loved in the entire world today.[38]

Being a world teacher, Gautama Buddha, called humans from the troubles of their life to the enjoyment of eternal peace. He belonged to a Śākya clan ruling at Kapilavastu on the borders of Nepāl. His father Śuddhodana was the chief of the clan. His mother was a daughter of the *Rājā* of the Koliyas to the east. He was the only child of his father and was brought up in luxury and pleasure.

Gautama was married at an early age. At the age of 29 a son was born to him and at this time he became contemplative. He was preoccupied with thoughts of age, sickness, death and misery and became anxious for a release from the troubles of the world. He made up his mind to renounce his position, his wife and his child, and went to Rājgṛiha to spend his days as an ascetic. Therefore, he went to the caves and hills, where certain hermits were living. Gautama first attached himself to Ārāda Kālāma and then to Rudraka. He learned the Hindu philosophy from them. But this did not satisfy him. He then retired into the jungles of Uruvelā near Bodh Gaya and spent six years in austerity. By fasting and mortification his body was emaciated, and yet he did not receive the peace of mind, which

he was seeking. He then gave up the practice of self-torture. His disciples left him and went to Benares. In this state of struggle, while he was wandering about along the banks of the Nairañjanā he received unexpected sympathy at the hands of Sujātā, a village girl. He sat under a large tree throughout the day and towards the evening his doubts cleared away, and he became the Buddha or the Enlightened. The great mystery of sorrow was solved, and he received the peace of mind. After receiving enlightenment he was filled with love for humanity and began to preach his new doctrines.

First, he went to Benares, and there he turned the wheel of Law in the Deer Park. The site has been recently excavated. The emperor Aśoka erected a pillar at the place, which has been recently found at Sārnāth, three miles from Benares. From that time he set rolling the chariot-wheel of a universal empire of truth and righteousness. Up to his death Buddha preached his Law. He moved about from place to place in the kingdoms of Magadha, Kosala, and in the territories of the Śākyas, the Koliyas and the Lichchavis. He visited Kapilavastu more than once and received into the order his son, his wife and his stepmother, besides a large number of friends and relatives. Throughout the year he used to wander about teaching his new gospel to the people and during the four months, June to October, he used to observe the *Vas*, where all his disciples met him and received instructions from him. This custom still exists among the Buddhists in Ceylon where people sit together at night to listen to religious discourses by the monks. Whenever Buddha visited any place he lived outside the city in some jungles, and if no food was supplied by the people he went about with a begging bowl from door to door till sufficient quantity of food was collected.

Buddha explained his teaching at his first sermon at Benares. The virtue lies in

following the Middle Path, that is, on the one hand not to be addicted to the pleasures of sense, and on the other not to practice self-torture and mortification, which the ascetics advise. As we get a glimpse of some social evils in one of the *Jātaka* tales:

> ...the five unwholesome actions are destroying life; taking what is not given; doing wrong in sexual ways; speaking falsely; and losing one's mind from alcohol.[39]

There are four Noble Truths, which everyone has to realize, i.e.

-Suffering;

-The cause of suffering;

-The cessation of suffering; and

-The Path, which leads to the cessation of suffering."

> The highest qualities, of a good individual whether ruler or subject, are loving-kindness and compassion. Filled with these qualities, one cannot harm another - no matter what the reason or the cost. No matter how dangerous the threat, one must persevere until the greatness of the good heart wins in the end.[40]

The substance of Buddha's teaching is that the life is full of sorrow; we are always guided by our senses, this is the cause of suffering, and where we can conquer our passions there is an end of our sorrow; and the Eight-Fold Path leads to the attainment of this state of mind.

> Poor Mittavinda! So very long ago he had not known how lucky he was. He was contented as a humble village monk. But he allowed the poison of jealousy to enter his mind - the fear of losing his easy

> daily food. This led to the self-torture of resentment against a perfect monk, and to trickery in denying him one wholesome gift of alms food. And it took a thousand and one lives for the loss of his comfort and daily food to be completed. What he had feared, his own actions had brought to pass![41]

He thought neither ceremonialism nor penance was sufficient for the attainment of virtue. He presented a scheme of life which appealed to every reasonable man. His code of morality was sure to elevate people from narrow selfishness and baser elements of life, and purge and refine people of violence and cruelty. The passage below is about the Prince Five Weapons and the Sticky Demon, the characters of a *Jātaka* tale:

> ...He had learned the only worthwhile weapon is the intelligence inside, not the weapons of the world outside. And with this diamond weapon he also knew that destroying life brings only suffering to the killer...

In gratitude he taught the unfortunate demon. He said,

> Oh Sticky-Hair, you have been born as a murderous blood sucking flesh eating demon because of unwholesome deeds in your past. If you continue killing in this way, it will lead only to suffering for you - both in this life and beyond. You can only go from darkness to darkness.
>
> Now that you have spared me, you won't be able to kill so easily. Hear this: Destroying life leads to misery in this world, and

> then rebirth in a hell world, or as animal or a hungry ghost. Even if you were lucky enough to be reborn as a human being, you would have only a short life![42]

Ahiṃsā formed an important part of his creed. He did not discuss about the next world or a Supreme Being but about rebirth, penance and suffering and certain gods do exist in his teachings. For instance we find mention of god Śakra in the perspective of Buddha rebirth in a royal family:

> So the glory of his coming birth caused a trembling in all the heaven worlds, including the Heaven of 33 ruled by King Śakra. When he felt the trembling, being a god he knew it was caused by the unborn baby inside the disguised Queen of Mithilā. And he knew this must be a being of great merit. So he decided to go and help out.[43]

Self-culture and meditation is the key of his entire teaching. He created an order of disciples who carried his teachings from place to place. But the progress of the movement was not much till the time of Aśoka, the great Maurya emperor, who sent missionaries to various parts of India and outside. Buddhism has made considerable progress since then, although its hold upon the land of its birth is almost nothing.

Gautama Buddha died at the age of eighty at Kuśinagara near the Nepal Terai in 487 B.C. He created ferment in the country by inviting men and women of all classes to follow his teachings. His teachings have been compiled in the three baskets (*Tripiṭakas*), i.e. *Vinaya Piṭaka, Sutta Piṭaka*, and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The social upheaval which

Buddhism brought about in the region of its birth lasted for several centuries. His teachings were afterwards absorbed by the Hindu teachers. A new philosophy embodying his doctrines but at the same time dealing with the ultimate problems of soul, reality and God extinguished Buddhism in India in about the eighth century after the birth of Christ.

2.7.3. The Buddhist Order

Buddha gave a new interpretation to this ancient *Aryan* culture and tradition. The Saṅgha that he organized was an institution of great political importance. It trained the members of the brotherhood in conducting their business on a purely democratic basis. The Great Councils which were held at the death of the Buddha at *Rājagṛiha*, or at Vaiśālī hundred years afterwards or at the time of *Aśoka,* or of *Kanishka*, prove incontestably how Indians could manage their affairs in a constitutional manner. These Buddhist Councils were not singular. Almost all religious movements had their own assemblies. Even now such meetings are not rare. The Buddhist order admitted men and women who renounced the world and devoted themselves entirely to the propagation of truth. The Jain order included the lay members as well. A candidate for admission into the Buddhist order after the preliminary ceremonies had to repeat the two formulas, kneeling before the President. The first of these was as follows:

I go for refuge to the Buddha,

I go for refuge to the Law,

And go for refuge to the order.

Then he had to repeat the ten precepts:

1. I take the vow not to destroy life.

2. I take the vow' not to steal.

3. I take the vow to abstain from impurity.

4. I take the vow not to lie.

5. I take the vow to abstain from intoxicating drinks, which hinder progress and virtue.

6. I take the vow not to eat at forbidden times.

7. I take the vow to abstain from dancing, singing, music and stage plays.

8. I take the vow not to use garlands, scents, unguents, or ornaments.

9. I take the vow not to use a high or broad bed.

10. I take the vow not to receive gold or silver.

The senior members of the order are called *Śramaṇa*, and *Bhikshu* and the novices *Śramanera*. All of them were mendicants. They had to follow the injunctions of the *Buddha,* which are summed up in the four earnest meditations, the four great efforts, the four roads to *Iddhi or* Sainthood, the five moral powers, the seven kinds of wisdom and the Noble Eight-Fold Paths.

The Buddhist movement was a protestant movement, which undermined the position of the Brāhmaṇs, reorganized Indian society on a wider basis, and readapted the religious thoughts to the actual needs of the people. Its philosophy was not entirely new as it had home kinship with the Sāṅkhya philisophy of Kapila. But its social doctrines gave the people a practical code for the guidance of their daily life.

2.7.4. Buddha and the Political Circumstances of India

The Aryan settlers lived in clans and their form of government was more or less republican. Generally a single chief was elected as the chief executive officer with the title of Rājā, and whenever the supreme power became hereditary the result was the establishment of a monarch with unlimited authority. The reverse process of a monarchy being converted into a republic is scarcely found. *Videha* is the only one instance in the Buddhist records of a tribe, once under a monarchy, going back to the republican form. At the time of Gautama Buddha, we find powerful monarchies existing side by side with republics with absolute or modified freedom. There were four kingdoms of great importance, i.e., Magadha, Kosala, Kośāmbi and Avanti. The small kingdoms were about a dozen in number but they had very little political importance and they were gradually absorbed in the powerful neighboring states. The number of aristocratic republics existing at the time is not easy to ascertain. The most important republics were those of the *Śākyas* and the Vajjians. The Koliyans were a sub-clan of the *Śākya* race. The Vajjians consisted of eight confederate clans of whom the Lichchavis and the Videhas were most important. The other independent clans were the Mallas of Kuśinagra and Pāvā.

Professor Rhys Davids says the Buddhist books mention sixteen important states, all called after the peoples dwelling therein. However, these do not include the names of some important states of the South or of the countries to the east of the Ganges.

The Buddhist books also mention *Dakshina Patha*, but it means only a settlement on the *Godāvari*. The other southern places mentioned are Pratishṭhāna or Paiṭhan, and probably *Tagara*. The names of Kaliṅga and of Dantapura are found in the *Nikāyas* – the

five sections of the Sutta Piṭaka of the Pāli canon. Also references to sea voyages out of sight of land are found. The names of Barukcachha and Supparaka are found in other books.

2.7.5. Indus Valley Civilization and Buddhism

In Buddhism certain norms and traditions of the Indus Valley Civilization reflect in one or the other form like the ideas of renunciation, meditation, *karma* and rebirth, ultimate liberation - ideas that were important to the Indus Valley Civilization. The Buddha himself indicated the Indus Valley origins of his traditions when he said that *path* was an ancient *path* and the goal to which he pointed to be an ancient goal. We also have a Buddhist belief in six Buddhas prior to the Buddha Śākyamūni. All these point to continuity between the tradition of the Indus Valley Civilization and the teachings of the Buddha. If we look at Buddhism and Hinduism we will find a greater or lesser proportion of elements taken from either of the two traditions of the Indus Valley Civilization and Aryan Civilization. For instance, if we look at Buddhism, the greater proportion was taken from the Indus Valley Civilization religion, a lesser proportion from the Aryan tradition. That is why we find mention of the Aryan gods in Buddhist scripture, though their role is peripheral, an example of an Aryan element in the Buddhism tradition. On the other hand, if we look at some schools of Hinduism, we find a greater proportion of elements taken from the Aryan tradition and a lesser proportion from the Indus Valley Civilization. We find caste emphasized, the authority of the revealed scripture of the Aryans - the Vedas - emphasized and sacrifices emphasized. Alongside, we find a place made for renunciation, meditation, *karma* and rebirth.

2.7.6. The Review and Critique of *Jātaka* Tales

The *Jātaka* stories (a large collection of folk-tales), over millennia, have been seminal to the cultivation of moral conduct and good behaviour, the growth of a rich and varied literature in diverse parts of the world, and the inspiration for painting, sculpture and architecture of enduring aesthetic value. The Buddha himself used *Jātaka* stories to explain concepts like *Karma* and Rebirth and to emphasize the importance of certain moral values. A *Jātaka bhanaka* (*Jātaka* storyteller) is mentioned to have been appointed even as early as the time of the *Buddha.*

Stories similar to *Jātaka* stories occur in the *Vedas*. Some of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Purāṇas* are simply narrative stories. In many places, the context, the style or the core stories are altered. The same story is often told by different authors in different places, for example, *Kausilumina* and *Kasadavata* as poetry and *Kabavati* as drama are based on *Kūṣajātaka* .

In Mahāyāna literature *Asvaghosa's Sūtrālaṅkara*, Aryashura's *Jātakamālā* and Kshemendra's *Avadāna Kalpalatā* are well known as *Jātaka* stories. Indian Sanskṛit works such as *Kathā Sarit Sāgara, Daśa Kumāra Charita, Pañcha Tantra* and *Hitopadeśa* (of Nārāyaṇa) contain similar stories. These stories contributed to the later incomparable works of Kālidāsa and Aśvaghosha.

There are also Mahāyāṇa *Jātaka* stories such as *Vyāghri, Dhammasondaka* and *Seta Gandha Hasti,* which do not appear in Pāli at all. Some Jātaka stories can be found in Jain literature, such as the story of Isisinga in *Suyakadaṅga*, which is the *Nalini Jātaka* . They are found in even the *Mahābhārata*, for example *Rishi Shriṅga Upakhyana.*

Jātaka and similar other stories travelled far and wide by word of mouth along caravan routes and contributed to the literature in Persia, China, Arabia (Arabian Nights) Italy (Boccaccio's tales), Greece (Aesop's Fables), Britain (Chaucer's Canterbury Tales) and Japan (Zen stories).[44]

For developing moral conduct and good behavior, there are few more instructive foundations than the *Jātaka* stories. All *Jātaka* stories hold out advice on how to correct our ways. They played and continue to play in some societies an enormous role in the cultivation of peace and generosity. When Buddhist monks taught children in *vihāras*, *Jātaka* stories took a prominent place in primary education. Young *Sāmaneras* (novice monks) were required to read and preach effectively. In India these and similar other stories were a principal instrument in the socialization of children, discouraging them from selfishness and laying foundations for family and community solidarity. *Jātaka* stories speak eloquently of those human values which contribute to harmony, pleasure and progress.

Besides literature, painting, sculpture and architecture in many parts of the world carried the message of the *Jātaka* stories. King Duṭugāmuṇu (Pāli: Duṭṭhugāmaṇi) of Anurādhapura (second Century B.C.) had the inside shrine room of the *Ruvanvāli Dāgaba* embellished with murals depicting scenes from Jātaka stories.

This practice is still carried on today in Buddhist *vihāras* in Sri Laṅka as well as in Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam. Faxian (Fa Hian), who visited Sri Laṅka in the fifth century A.D. recorded that festival times the city of Anurādhapura was festooned with paintings from Jātaka stories. This practice continues today in major cities in Sri Laṅka during Buddhist days of celebration. *Jātaka* stories are

well depicted in Amarāvatī, Nālandā, Ajantā, Ellorā, Bhārhut, Nāgārjunīkonda, Borobudūr and Angkor Vat. The late historian Mackensey in "*Buddhism in Pre-Christian Britian*" (1928) demonstrated that there were artistic works based on Jātaka stories in pre-Christian Britain.

At this point, three stories in this collection would be of interest. The first when the Buddha had been born as a quail. In the forest where he lived he befriended a monkey and an elephant. They raised a question among themselves: who was the most experienced and most worthy of respect?[45]

After a discussion, they came to a conclusion: whoever was the oldest would be the most experienced and the most knowledgeable. Then they had to decide which among them, was the eldest and the most respected. Pointing to a very large and well-grown banyan tree the elephant said, "Can you remember that banyan tree in whose shade we used to rest sometimes? I used to scratch my tummy rubbing on it when I was very little." Then the monkey responded, "Oh, I ate its tender leaves while sitting next to it when I was very young." Finally, the quail chirped in, "When I was young, I ate fruit from an old banyan tree. Afterwards I left droppings that held a seed that grew into this banyan tree." They concluded that the oldest of them was the smallest, the quail. So, they began to respect each other according to their age – first, the quail, second, the monkey, and last, the elephant.

This story teaches respect for elders. It is an essential part of the Buddhist tradition to respect seniority. Amongst Buddhist monks this is strictly observed and it is an offence to violate this seemingly minor rule. It also points to the need to gain control over conceit, a minor defilement.

The second story, that of a half-blind fox teaches the value of being grateful. The half-blind fox was caught by a python in his coils and was fighting for his life. A poor peasant who was collecting wood in the forest helped the fox escape from his predator. Later, the same poor peasant was the victim of a python. The half-blind fox who heard the screams of the peasant ran in to a village field where a group of men were ploughing field and ran away with their clothing. The villagers chased after the fox, heard the screams of the helpless man, and released him from the coils of the python.

The third story relates the fate of two parrots that were carried from their nest in a storm and one dropped in a hermitage and the other in a den of thieves. The one who fell among the hermits learned and eventually practiced generosity and became quite gentle. The one who fell among thieves grew up like them - cruel, rough, and wicked. This story teaches the ill of associating with bad people and helps to cultivate the mind in many ways. Generosity, the use of gentle language, the nobility of the ways of wise people, the value of morality and the evils of unwholesome associations are all thrown into high relief. In this and many other respects, Jātaka stories contributed to happiness and the development of the minds of the young. The happiness they engendered went well beyond the mundane to reach the supra mundane. They led mankind to all that is good in this world and to the ultimate happiness taught by the Buddha.

2.8. *Bṛihat Kathā* (Great Story)

These stories, told and retold in local dialects, were first compiled by Guṇāḍhya in Punjabi titled "*Vaḍahā*", in the first century B.C. The book did not survive the times. But later attempts were made in the 11th century to revive the treasure (see below):

> The most important book written in Punjabi is called 'Vaḍkahā'. Vaḍkahā is a word of Paiśāchi language, meaning Vaḍī kahāni (Long Story). Guṇāḍhya, the author of this book, belonged to district Jhelum. This book is now obsolete in Paiśāchi language but translations in various languages including Sanskṛit do exist.[46]

Kashmiri Pandit Somdeva produced a large compilation in 1070 A.D. called the *Kathā Sarit Sāgar* (Ocean of Story). It consisted of 22,000 stanzas and 124 chapters. These stories spread in different languages. C. H. Tawney translated this Sanskṛit text into English during 1880-84. Later, in 1927, these tales inspired another English work. N. M. Penzer came out with the gigantic ten volumes titled "*Ocean of Stories*".

> Bṛihat-Kathā by Guṇādhya is the earliest collection of stories. Although in Pāli, it is considered part of Sanskṛit literature. The original work of Guṇādhya has been retold by Kshemendra in *Bṛihat-kathā-mañjari* and by Somadeva in *Kathā-sarit-sāgara.*

Even though *Brāhmaṇs* and their *Sanskṛit* were respected during and after the Sātavāhana Dynasty, Sanskṛit and the *Brāhmaṇ* traditions remained limited to *Brāhmaṇs*, temples and king's court because they were not imposed and were alien to the common man. When the Sātavāhanas commenced their rule, the official language was Prakrit. Gautamīputra Sātakarṇin (AD 78-102), one of the outstanding rulers of the Sātavāhanas Dynasty, was hailed as a 'Unique *Brāhmaṇ*.' Though they were of *Brāhmaṇ* origins they continued to patronize Prakrit and Paiśāchi. Sātavāhana queens patronized Buddhism and Jainism. Śrimukha Sātakaṛni (221-198 B.C.) the founder of the Sātavāhana Empire patronized Jainism, the dominant religion of the time. Guṇāḍhya wrote *Bṛihat Kathā* in

Paisāchi during the period of Kuntala Sātakaṛni (38-30 B.C). Hāla (19-24 A.D.), the eighteenth king of Sātavāhaṇa dynasty, wrote *Gāthā Saptaśatī* in Prakrit.

Notes

[1] Upendra Nath Ball, *Ancient India*. Patna 1921, p. 64.

[2] Stuart H. Blackburn and Ramanujan A. K., *Another Harmony: New Essays on the Folklore of India*. University of California Press, 1986.

[3] Stuart, op.cit, p.24.

[4] Marsden, E, Easy *Stories from Indian History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1921), p.8.

[5] *Lunka* was also called *Ceylon*, *Taprobane* or the *Island of Ravana.*

[6] Festing, Gabrielle, *A picture Story -Book of Indian History*, Bombay 1917: K & J Cooper, p. 2.

[7] Thapar, R. op.cit., p. 33.

[8] *Mahābhārata*, 1. 2.648; 60. 2229, etc.

[9] Ball, op.cit., p. 66.

[10] Collingwood, R.G. '*The Idea of History*' (2nd ed.) New York 1992: Oxford University Press, p. 15. "*Myth*, on the contrary, is not concerned with human actions at all." Ibid.

[11] Macdonell, A.A. *A History of Sanskrit Literature,* Delhi 1990: Motilal Banarsidas, p. 81. See also Keith, *J R A S'*, 1914, pp.

739. 1031 note; F.E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*, Delhi, 1962, pp. 9, 12.

[12] *Vāyu*, 60. 12-16; *Vishṇu*, 4.7-10; *Brahmanda,* ii. 34. 12-16.

[13] *Mahābhārata*, 1.1, 54-64.

[14] Ibid. XV11,6, 304.

[15] Macdonell, op. cit, p. 209. See also R.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Costumes*, Delhi 1987: Motilal Banarsidas pp. 174-77.

[16] F.E. Pargiter, op. cit., p. 255.

[17] XII. 29. 981-82.

[18] Ibid. 10557 to 131. 10596.

[19] Op. cit., iii. 196.13275-300, 13808; xiii. 67, 3389; xiv. 902790.

[20] *Mahābhārata*, iii. 88,8329-32; 121, 10291-92, xii. 8.238; xiii. 2. 121; 76. 3688-91; 81.3806.

[21] Op. cit., i. 1.223-24; vii. 2170; xii. 29.910-1037; xiii, 76. 3688-91; 81. 3E06; iii. 196. 13274-300; 207. 13808; xii. 67. 3384; xiv. 90.2790; xii. 234. 8590-8610; xiii. 137.6247-71.

[22] Op. cit., iii. 197. 13321; xiii. 93. 4420. 4424. 16. Rāmāyaṇa, Kishindha, 41.8-10.

[23] Op. cit., ii. 68. 19-22; vii. Chs. 113-14.

[24] Kalidasa, *Raghuvaṃśa*, XV. 87.

[25] Visṇu Pūraṇa, IVA.47; Vāyu, LXXXVIII-189-90.

[26] *Mahābhārata*, i.i.95.

[27] Op. cit., XVII-1

[28] The story of the *Mahābhārata* was recited to Janamejaya at Taxila. (*Mahabharata*, xVii.5.34.).

[29] For details see Pargitar, *Historical Traditions of Ancient India*, p. 285.

[30] *Mahābhārata*, vii, 40. 1836-58; 44 2028 to 45. 2110.

[31] Ibid. vii. 93, 3379-80; XII.207. 7560-61.

[32] http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralsiTi/afFiliates/Jainism/article/antiquity.htm.

[33] Ball,op.cit, p. 71.

[34] http://wwvv.engr.mun.ca/~asharan/bihar/iainisin.htinl.

[35] Anderson, T., *Buddhist Tales for Young and Old,* "Prince Five-Weapons and Sticky-

Hair", [The Diamond Weapon], New York 1996: Buddhist Literature Society Inc, Story 55.

[36] Two Mothers, [Renunciation], Story 61.

[37] Ball,op.cit, p. 71.

[38] King Fruitfull and Queen Sivali, Chapter 1, *Rebirth of the Bodhisatta*, Story 52,

[39] Anderson, op.cit, King Goodness the Great, [Perseverance], Story 51.

[40] ibid.

[41] Anderson, op.cit, *The Curse ofMittavinda*, Chapter 1: Jealousy.

[42] Anderson, op.cit.

[43] Anderson, op.cit, *Rebirth of the Bodhisatta*, Story 52.

[44] Anderson, op.cit, *King Fruitful,* Story 51.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ahmad Salim, *Jadid Punjabi Adab, Aik Sawalia Nishaan* (Rakitab, Karachi 1986) p. 10.

Chapter 3

Earliest Legends of the Indus

In the epics of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the events of Great War of the two branches of the lunar race and the expedition of Rāma, are embodied in a number of stories. These stories depict the cream of the life of those distant times, of a high artistic order, that had enriched the main stream of national upheaval. But the canvas is too broad and the personnel too colossal for a folk romance. Whereas, in the folk romance, the centre of interest is some individual experience, which brings forth themes strong enough to get hold of the imagination of generations. The great epics embody social and moral codes and the courtesies of civilized behaviour. The ideal of a certain way of life is embodied in the heroes, who become the cultural symbols. However, many strands go to the making of a folk romance, generation after generation.

> Additions are made to it with some aspect emphasized and some angle dissipated, a sort of artistic mutation working at and moulding the primary theme, till a complete picture is offered to the public by a more persuasive tongue or a person of more graphic imagination;[1]

Like the story of *Pran Bhagat*, the oldest folk romance that belongs to Indus Valley. Its intriguing theme revolving around the father, son and mother have attracted the attention of many writers from ancient times.

This was first tackled by an anonymous writer of old times in

ancient Egypt. In a papyrus was found the "Story of two brothers". The characters were Anpu, Bata and Anpu's wife. Bata the younger brother was a good boy and was vigorous, steady, hardworking, obedient and reverent. He ploughed, sowed, reaped, herded and garnered for his elder brother whom he respected and obeyed as if he were his father. Anpu's wife cast longing looks at the handsome younger brother, trying to seduce him. He repulsed her advances. She tore her clothes, scratched her face and made out that she had been assaulted. Anpu on learning what Bata was alleged to have attempted, tried to knife him on his return from the fields. But Bata, the cow herd was warned by first one cow and then another, that Anpu was hiding behind the door with a knife. Bata fled. He swam across a river and was met by nine gods, who blessed him. Bata was rewarded for his goodness and became king and forgave his brother... This theme was next taken up by the Greek dramatist Euripides (480-406 B. C.) in his play Hippolytus (428 B. C.).[2]

The story of Kuṇāla, the elder son of Aśoka (213-232 B.C.) in ancient Indian history, also bears close resemblance to the tale of *Pūran Bhagat.* Kuṇāla's step-mother Tishyarakshita fell in love with him and on his rejecting her advances, she induced Aśoka to send Kuṇāla as viceroy to Taxila. Later she secretively forged a royal dispatch bringing accusations against Kuṇāla and ordering his eyes to be put out. In Pūran's tale his step-mother insists on his eyes to be torn from his head and brought to her; the executioner refuses to carry out this monstrous order and is punished. Pūran is mutilated and recovers by the prayers of a saint in the legend. In the case of Kuṇāla however,

according to another account, the ministers hesitated in carrying out the order, but the prince insisted it to be obeyed. Afterwards, the prince left Taxila with his wife and begged his way to the far off capital of his father, who recognized him by his voice and the strains of his lute, the vindictive queen was put to death and the prince's eye-sight was restored at Bodh-Gaya through the help of a Buddhist saint named Ghosha. The relation of this incident to Pūran Bhagat's legend is close enough to indicate it might be a multi-form of the story.

This sort of sex-triangle must have been a not uncommon phenomenon in all ages, though we cannot tell with surety whether this is a universal social abnormality or whether the story has travelled like a folktale from one region to another except, of course, the true life story of Aśoka's son Kuṇāla.

3.1. Technical Aspects of the Indus Folklore

3.1.1. Bards and Cycles

As the earlier Indus folklore has travelled from generation to generation owing chiefly to bards, the stories can be noticed running in cycles. They tend to connect all their heroes in some way or other. Stories are indiscriminately told of several heroes, and if one calls to mind the names of the most celebrated, they are sure to be found belonging to a group all genealogically connected with each other as is the case with the Greek and Roman classics. In the tales of Vikramaditya, Gopi Chand and Chandarbhān and in those of Sālbāhan, Rasālu, Pūran Bhagat, Sirkap and Hoḍi we have as it were, the stories of the chief heroes of both sides of what must have been at one time a life and death struggle

between people and dynasties in India.[3]

3.1.2. Various Trends

One can find on various occasions *faqīrs* taken across rivers on a grass mat and a mat of loose reeds and again on a gourd and staff. Rājā Ḍhol is taken to his mistress on the more ordinary conveyance of a talking camel. These carry us to the subject of enchantments, of which we have a curious instance in Pūran Bhagat's garden, where no birds can fly. Another most effectual way of clinching a tale is the device of telling a story to explain the situation, introduced here with much effect in the story of Gopi Chand. The notion of temporary death, being widely spread throughout Indian folklore, has so dramatic an effect in a story that is not likely to be absent from any collection; accordingly Gopi Chand's sister dies and is duly brought to life by a saint by the familiar device of being sprinkled with the blood of his little finger. Closely connected with this notion is that of miraculous cures in general, and people now have holy earth to cure leprosy, and a dip in water to cure blindness; and a noteworthy cure by proxy in the legend of Rājā Ḍhol. His camel breaks its leg and it is cured by firing a donkey's leg and applying the fired limb to the camel's wound. The same idea is found in Pūran Bhagat, where the hero cures his mother of blindness by making a companion cast his hand kerchief over her. A great aid towards investing the actors of folktales with a deeper interest than they would otherwise possess is the capacity for invisibility. This is often natural or inherent. The quality of invisibility is also used distinctly to help on the tale, as when Nala is made invisible to all but Damayanti on his being sent to her as their messenger by the gods, and as when a groom, and then a shepherd, miraculously help the hero across impassable rivers, and

then at once disappear.

Indian marriage by public choice of a husband occurs according to the ancient classical ideas, in the *swayamvara* of Damayanti, and so do the favourite punishments of setting the heroine to scare crows and of casting the hero into a well and covering the mouth with a stone, varied in the case of Pūran Bhagat by the addition of maiming. Gambling, which appears to the ordinary Indian mind the usual and proper occupation of the great and wealthy, takes various marvelous shapes in these pages and is actually upheld as one of Nala's virtues. A queen gambles with a king for her brother's head; and the hero gambles with his younger brother for his kingdom and wealth, and then for his body and jewels. Gambling for extraordinary stakes also appears as one of the 'impossible' conditions before marriage with the heroine on more than one occasion.

The common variant in India of the delicate heroine which makes her weight only one flower, or more commonly five flowers, is again seen in Princess Chand Karau, who is weighed daily against flowers and who, when she falls away from the paths of strict virtue, outweighs them and is so found out. The ordeals that occur are of the usual type: plunging the right hand into boiling oil to prove innocence, and being drawn up out of a well by a rope of a single strand by an unmarried virgin to prove holiness. Lastly, we are treated to one or two omens, though these, so very common in every-day Indian folklore, are somewhat conspicuous by their absence in the folktales. It is lucky, one finds, to meet a pregnant woman with her implements of trade and a horseman riding with a bridal procession when starting on an important errand, and unlucky for a partridge to call on the right and a crow on the left during a journey.

Aitzaz Ahsan, in his book, *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan*, writes,

> I have taken pains to trace the history of this region only to attempt to prove that the civilization that has been inherited by the Indus citizens (Pakistanis), is not the gift of Akbar or of any other emperor. Nor is it the legacy of any fundamentalist obscurantist. It is the land of the intense poetry of Khusrau, Ḥusain, Bāhu, Bullah, Wāris, Latif, Khushhal, Iqbal, and Faiz. It is the civilization that has been shaped by deeds and tales of resistance and valour of Rasālu, Jasrat, Sārang, Arjun, Dullah, Shāh Ināyat, Chākar, Khushhal, Aḥmad Khān Kharal, Bhagat Singh, and above all, by that incomparable, liberal, progressive, and enlightened Muslim: Muḥammad Ali Jinnah.

3.2. Review and Critique of "*Pūran Bhagat*"

Pūran Bhagat is a story of a man who was born pure and without any sexual impulses or who had smothered it very early. He saw the light of day after much praying of his parents. His father Rājā Sālbāhan was the ruler of upper Punjab in early eighth century. Sir Richard Temple, the famous antiquarian and author of *Legends of the Punjab* and other books, said in the introductory remarks to Legend No. 30 (Pūran Bhagat) and his article on Rājā Rasālu in the *Calcutta Review* of 1884 (p. 390)

> ...that it was Rājā Sālbāhn and later his second son Rājā Rasālu who stopped the advances of Muslim forces under Muḥammad bin

Qasim and his successors, early in the 8th century, from further conquests. That may have been the reason why Pūran's younger brother Rasālu became a legendary hero.

But at the birth of Pūran the astrologers and the Pundits prophesied that he would be the cause of great trouble and would hurt himself if he was brought up at the court. So he was sent away with nurses, attendants, teachers, priests and guards to a forest sanctuary, which had been the country seat and retreat of Rājā Sālbāhn's father when the deceased Raja was given to devotions and *yoga* practices.

Pūran grew up in peaceful surroundings and imbibed the tranquil qualities of nature. A very handsome boy, he was given to meditation and was fond of *yoga* exercises like his grandfather. Gradually, he got alienated from the bonds of flesh. When he was brought to the court at the age of sixteen, people were amazed at his fascinating face and figure, though he himself was unconscious of his attractions.

The Rājā and his councilors were overjoyed to see the prince, so was his mother Rāni Ichrān who had missed him so much. The second wife named Lūnān was a person given entirely to the demands of her ardent nature. When she heard of Pūran's beauty she desired to see him. Pūran was asked to go to her and pay her respects, as she was a second mother. But when Lūnān saw Pūran, she fell instantly, passionately and desperately in love with him and without any preliminaries wanted him to become her lover. Pūran was shocked and ran away from her side. Lūnān tried again to win his love but Pūran was horrified at her demands. Nothing now could abate her burning passion or vindictive hatred. She insisted on dire punishment for Pūran and succeeded in having him

mutilated and flung into a blind well.

Pūran escaped and became well again. He sought the famous yogi-saint Guru Gorakh Nāth and became his disciple. The saint put him through a rigorous ascetic regimen but Pūran won through. So the saint sent him to another beautiful and demanding queen, named Rāni Sundarān. Pūran was not tempted by either the riches or the love offered to him by this second beauty. The saint at last gave him *joag*, admitted him to his fraternity and invested him with spiritual powers.

One last task the Guru set him through. He sent Pūran to his birthplace, to right some wrongs. There with the help of four *sādhus* the Guru sent with him, Pūran took his abode in his old abandoned garden in whose blind well he had been flung years ago. The garden soon became green again and the well was drained. People heard of the new Guru who had come to the garden and made it blossom again. Soon suppliants began to come in flocks. The old gardener who had once tended the garden came and saw Pūran. He went to the Rājā and reported that a saintly person who resembled Pūran had come and settled in the old royal garden and that people said he performed miracles.

The Rājā also came and with him came a sobered and remorseful Lūnān. They touched the Guru's feet and stood before him with folded hands. The Raja ventured to ask the Guru if he was indeed Pūran. Pūran did not answer but asked to see the old Rāni. Rāni Ichrān who had taken to wandering after her bereavement was sought for, found and brought before Pūran. Rāni Ichrān had become half-blind from weeping constantly for a long time. Pūran and his associates restored her eyesight and she recognized Pūran. Everybody begged Pūran's forgiveness. He advised that people who had befriended him

should be awarded, and prophesied that Lūnān who was now genuinely repentant would bear a son who would become a famous warrior and ultimately a legendary hero. His name would be Rasālu. After this, Pūran went back to the hermitage of the great saint and spent the rest of his life in praying and meditation.

The story is obviously based on a true incident, of which to this day many instances could be found, but the miraculous element added to it by one bard or another has made it a popular folk -romance.

3.3. Rājā Rasālu: Story and Analysis of the Character

The first volume of the folk tales of the Punjab begins with the adventures of Rājā Rasālu, giving a disconnected series of stories fastened on to the name of this popular hero. Since then the stories of Princess Adhik Anup Dai of Sila Dai and of Pūran Bhagat have appeared, showing that these are really stories, or a series of stories, belonging to a cycle, and indiscriminately applied to the northern Sālbāhan and any of their immediate legendary descendants.[4]

Once, there was a king of Sialkot by the name of Sālbāhan. He had two queens. The elder of these queens was named Ichrān. She had a handsome young son called Pūran. The younger one, Lunān had no children. And as described earlier in the story of Pūran Bhagat, she plotted against Pūran.

After being banished, Pūran Bhagat wandered in different lands with Gorakh Nāth. One day he was filled with the desire to see his mother. Guru Gorakh Nāth gave the young man permission to go to Sialkot. Pūran Bhagat went to his native city. And he sat

down in a garden near the palace, where he had played as a child. The garden had become a wasteland. Pūran Bhagat grew flowers and fruit trees. And soon the bare land became a lovely garden again. The news of this miracle spread far and wide. People came from many parts of the kingdom to see the young *sadhu*.

The king and the queens also heard of the news. They came and saw the miracle of the wasteland become green. Additionally, Pūran Bhagat touched the eyes of his mother, Achala, who had become blind through crying for him. He restored her eyesight by a miracle. At this Lunān asked the *sadhu* for the birth of a son she had so long desired. She fell at his feet and prayed: 'Oh, holy man, give me the gift of a son, who may gladden the heart of Sālbāhan in his old age.[5] Pūran answered that Sālbāhan had a son already and she had him put away. He asked her to tell him the truth if she wanted God to forgive her. On hearing this, Lūnān felt humbled. In the presence of king, Sālbāhan told the ascetic how she had told lies and got Pūran's hands and feet cut, and had him thrown down the well. At this Pūran disclosed his true identity and said he was still alive. Lunān was bewildered. To be sure, he was Pūran. Only he had put on a beard and big earrings of a *Sādhu*. She fell at his feet and asked him to forgive her. "Take this grain of rice,' said Pūran. If you eat it you will have a son. The boy will be brave and good. But he will go away from you when he grows up, and you will suffer as my mother suffered."[6]

As Pūran Bhagat had said, a son was born to Lūnān. The priests wrote the horoscope of the child. The magic paper showed that the boy would live to be a great man. Only, for twelve years, he must not look, either at the king Sālbāhan or the queen Lūnān. If he did so, they would die. Lūnān asked the Brāhmaṇs if they could say some prayers, which might change her son's destiny. They said: Keep the child in a dark cell

for twelve years. Do not see him during this time. Only thus can you avert the death of the king and yourself. After twelve years, the boy can come out. Then he must bathe in the river, cast off the curse on him and come to see you.[7]

Rāni Lūnān had named her son, Rasālu meaning full of *Rasa*, or the sap of life. He was a beautiful boy. She had an underground palace built and put him there. And she appointed nurses and servants to look after him as he was growing up. Rasālu lived in the underground palace for eleven years. He was fond of a parrot, which his mother gave him and he talked to the bird every day. And he rode on a colt, which was born on the same day as he. Strong and beautiful, intelligent and brave, he wished to go and see the world as he entered his twelfth year.

Instead of nurses' pleadings not to go out, he put a saddle on his horse, put on his shining armour, and rode out of the palace. The nurses wept to see him go. But they blessed him and asked him to stop when he came to a river, bathe in the pure water, put on new clothes and then go.

Not far from the palace, Rasālu found a stream. And he did what the nurses had asked him to do. He dipped in the holy water. He put on new clothes. Then he mounted his horse and reached the outer walls of Sialkot city. Thirsty, he stopped near a well where women came to draw water and to fill their earthen pitchers. He asked them for water. They gave him the water. Then they got busy with their chores. He did not know how to send a message to his father, that he had come out of the underground palace. So he began to throw stones at the pitchers in which women carried water from the well. The women were angry and went to complain to the king. When the king Sālbāhan heard of

this mischief, he thought it was the God Kṛishṇa, who had come to life again. Then he thought it might be his son, Rasalu, in whom Kṛishṇa, the cowherd God, had been incarnated. But the boy may have come out of the underground palace before the end of his twelve years. And he dare not send his soldiers to go and bring him to the court. He remembered the words of the Brahmaṇs, who had made the horoscope: 'If the young prince saw his father or mother before the end of twelve years, they would die.'[8] So the king gave the women brass pitchers in place of the earthen pitchers to fetch water from the well.

But Rasālu was not to be defeated. He shot sharp arrows at the brass pitchers of the women. When the women told the king about this, he was still afraid to call him. Rasālu could wait no longer. He mounted his horse and charged into his father's palace. And, facing the king, he said: "I come to greet you, Rājā Sālbāhan, not to harm you. What have I done that you turn me away? Scepter - and crown for me have no charm I go to seek a better prize, without harm. After this he strode out of the court."[9]

As he was galloping through the palace door, he heard his mother weeping on the terrace. He pulled up his horse and said: "Oh! Rāni filled with grief, have you nothing but tears for your son. Are you my mother? If so, give a thought to my life just begun."[10]

Rani Lūnān wept and answered that she was his mother, though she wept for the sight of him. She made her farewell and asked him to keep his heart good and pure.

Rasālu turned away from the terrace. And with his white horse under him and his parrot seated on his wrist, he went in search of his fate. On the way, he met the son of a carpenter who wanted to join him and also the son of a goldsmith who wanted to go with

him. Rasālu took them both and headed for the plains of Indus. At the end of the day's march, they came to a thick forest. They sat down to rest. As the place was very lonely, they decided to become watchmen in turn. The carpenter's son became the first watchman. He was to be followed by the goldsmith's son. Rasālu would keep third watch.

When the goldsmith's son was on watch, and the other two slept, a snake came towards the sleepers. While the goldsmith's son confronted the snake, he told him that he had killed everyone within twelve miles and said that he was the king of the jungle. When the snake darted forward to attack, the carpenter's son caught him by the tail, dashed him to the ground and killed him. Then he hid the snake's body under his shield.

When it came to Rasālu's turn to keep watch, a terrible monster came out of the bush. The monster claimed that he had killed everything there within twice twelve miles around and that he was the emperor of that land. Rasālu shot an arrow into the heart of the monster and killed him.

At the end of the night, Rasālu woke his friends. The carpenter's son immediately uncovered the serpent under the shield and showed his kill to Rasalu. However, when Rasalu showed his friends the dead body of the monster, they shuddered to think what would have happened to them if the prince had not killed the demon. They fell on their knees before Rasālu, saying: 'We are not fit companions for a brave prince. Pray let us go back home.'[11] Rasālu was sad to think that he should lose them, but he did not want to drag them with him. He was sure that he would meet many dangers. So he bade them farewell.

After his friends had turned back, Rasālu went on his way towards the Rāvi river.

One day's ride and he arrived in the city of Lahore. On entering the market, he was fascinated by the sight of an old woman, who was baking bread. She laughed and then she wept as she worked. Rasālu asked the woman that he wanted to hear of her joys and her sorrows. The old woman saw that the boy had a kind face. She had tears in her eyes and told him that she had seven handsome sons. Six of them were eaten by a demon, which came to take the life of a young man, a buffalo, and a basket of rotis from their town every day. Her seventh son, the youngest and the most dearly beloved, would also have to go that day, as it was her turn to pay the tribute to the enemy.

Rasālu's heart was touched by this story. He said to her that the sons of kind mothers who stay at home become cowards. And that brave princes alone can venture into the unknown. He asked her not to weep as he feared neither life nor death and was ready to confront the monster. Saying this he got down from his horse and sat down by the old woman. So that he may look to be her son to the demon. The monster's servants came. Rasālu rose and offered himself to them. The demon's servants took away Rasālu, the buffalo they had taken, and the basket of rotis, they had collected. And they went towards their master's house in the jungle.

As Rasālu approached the demon's palace, he met a water-carrier, with a goatskin full of water. The water-carrier spoke to Rasālu roughly and advanced to eat his beautiful horse. Rasālu drew his sword. And with one mighty sweep he cut off the head of the water-carrier from his shoulders. The monster saw this happen and ran away to save his life. The giant's sister was passing by. Seeing him run in a panic, she shouted, why was he running? The monster answered that the much-awaited Rājā Rasālu had come to destroy them all. And he made for the darkest corner in the forest. His sister followed

him, as she had heard of the legendary Rasālu and how he would come and bring death to all demons. The other demons of the jungle heard of the uproar.

Seeing Rasālu advancing towards the jungle, they went to an astrologer to ask him if it was really Rasālu who had come. The astrologers told them that Rasālu's arrow would pierce seven girdles placed one behind the other. This was much to the relief of demons. However, Rasālu challenged them to place the girdles and stand behind them in a row. The demons did as Rasālu said. Rasālu took aim and shot the arrow. He pierced the girdles, as well as the demons, with his arrows.

After this, Rasālu made an image of himself and placed it on a pedestal near the jungle, to frighten the remaining demons. And it happened as he thought. The demons looked out of their holes, saw Rasālu's statue, and thought he himself was standing there, to kill them if they came out. They were so frightened. They dare not go out even to get their food. And they died of hunger. So this is how Rasālu killed the demons.

After some time, Rasālu reached the city of Hastinapura. One day, he was passing under the shadow of the palace of the famous beauty queen Sundrān. And he saw an ash-smeared *Sādhu*, sitting by a log of wood. Rasālu asked him why he was seated near the palace. The ascetic told him that he had been waiting for a vision of queen Sundrān for the past twenty-two years.

Rasālu requested the *Sādhu* to take him as his disciple as he too had heard of her beauty and wanted to see her. The *Sādhu* pierced the ears of the disciple for earrings. And he initiated him into the mysteries of his faith. In the evening, the *Sādhu* went to beg for alms from houses according to his custom. As he had to give half the food to Rasālu, he

felt hungry. The same thing kept happening for many days. Rasālu sat by the fire all the time, waiting to see the vision of queen Sundrān.

The *Sādhu* became impatient and said that he had made him his disciple, hoping he would look after him. Instead, the *Sādhu* himself had to do everything for him. Therefore, Rasālu took the begging bowl and went off to the town to beg for alms. He made straight towards the palace. And, from under the shadow of the terrace, he called the Rāni crying out "*Alakh Alakh*![11] He said that he had come from a far off land to see her and that he had heard of her charm. He begged for alms. Rasālu's words seemed to melt Sundrān's heart. She sent her maidservant with a handful of rice to give to the Sādhu. She herself peeped out of the door, and as she saw Rasālu's beauty, she fainted. Rasālu cried *'Alakh Alakh*![12] The sound again pierced Sundrān's heart. She got up and asked another maidservant to give alms to the beggar. The servant also fainted to see Rasalu's beauty. Then Sundrān herself went with a bowl of jewels in her hand. She poured these into Rasālu's bowl and asked about his whereabouts and how he had become a yogi. Rasālu bent his head towards the Rāni and replied that he had fallen in love with her and that she should take back her jewels and give him food instead. As he said that he begged for fair Sundrān, no other he saw, Sundrān blushed and went into the palace.

Rasalu's *Guru* was surprised to see the pearls he had brought. However he sent him back to bring food instead. Rasalu went again to the palace. The Rāni gave him food. When he was going away with his alms bowl, full of good food, she asked his name and whereabouts. Rasālu revealed his identity. He told her that he had come for her beauty's fame and to see if she really was as beautiful as men said. As he had seen her so he

wanted to go away. Rasālu returned to his *Guru* and put the food before him. Then fearing that queen Sundrān might try to keep him in Hastinapura, he wandered away.

Sundrān waited for Rasālu to come the next day. As he did not come, she went to the yogi's hut and asked him where his disciple was. The *yogi* was angry. He felt he had sat there for twenty years and the queen never came to see him. But the disciple had become a favourite in a few days. So he lied to her that he had eaten his disciple. He was hungry and Rasālu did not bring enough food. At this Sundrān cried that he should eat her too. And, saying this she threw herself on the fire and died for the love of the handsome Rasālu.

Rasālu journeyed on. When he reached the valley where King Harish Chandra ruled, the soldiers tried to kill him. He fought them all single handed, dethroned the king and became the king. After King Rasālu had ruled his new kingdom for a year, he was challenged to play dice by Sirkap, the king of the neighboring country. As he was halfway, there was a storm. And there was no way to take shelter from the thunder, lightning and rain, except a graveyard. He saw a headless corpse. He prayed to God that the ghost of the corpse might come to be with him, as he felt lonely without a friend. His wish was fulfilled. The ghost of the headless corpse came into the body.

King Rasālu was surprised and said to the ghost that they should take shelter in the grave and spend night there. All the night they kept talking. The ghost told him that he was a dead king. He was the brother of King Sirkap. He told Rasālu that Sirkap was an evil man. He killed two-three persons every morning just for fun. And it was Sirkap who cut his head. However, King Rasālu was not to be prevented from going to beat king

Sirkap and play the game of dice. At this the ghost of the king asked him to take some bones from that graveyard and to make dice out of them as king Sirkap couldn't defeat the magic dice made from the bones.

As king Rasālu rode along towards the kingdom of Sirkap, he heard a voice from a burning jungle. It was a cricket burning in fire and crying for help. Rasālu went and rescued him. The little cricket was grateful. He pulled out one of his feelers and, giving it to his preserver said that whenever he was in trouble he should put that into the fire. The cricket would come to his help at once. Rasālu took the feeler and went his way.

When Rasālu reached the capital of King Sirkap, he saw seventy fair girls, daughters of the king, come to greet him and to make fun of him. The youngest of them was so struck by his beauty that though she had come to laugh, she stayed to praise him. As she knew what was in store for Rasālu in her father's palace, she said that if he loved his life he should go away.

King Rasālu smiled at the young princess and answered that he had come from a far and he would cut King Sirkap's head away. And then she would be his bride. On hearing these brave words, the little princess had faith in his courage. And she loved him all the more. The other sisters were jealous. They scoffed at Rasālu and asked him to prove himself a good brother-in-law by passing the test of separating the two out of the mixture of hundredweight of millet seed with a hundredweight of sand. King Rasālu did not know what to do. He wanted to go and play dice with King Sirkap. The work, which the girls had given him, would take a long time. He racked his brain for some way out of the difficulty. Suddenly, he thought of the cricket, which had said he would help him. He

threw the feeler, which was given to him, into the fire, and the cricket stood before him. He asked the cricket to separate millet from the sand for him. The cricket called the members of the cricket brotherhood and soon separated the seed from the sand.

They put another test of swinging them all on one swing till they are tired. King Rasālu, tied the swing rope to his bow, and stretched the bow to the fullest bend and then let it go. The sixty-nine damsels shot into the air. And they laughed and they giggled at going up and down. As the swing came near the ground, Rasālu cut the rope with one sweep of his sword, and all the maidens fell dead.

There was a custom that drums should be beaten to announce his challenge to king Sirkap. Rasālu wanted to break the custom. So he sounded the drums so hard that he broke all the drums. The princess told him that he would now have to strike seventy gongs with the hammer to announce his arrival. Rasālu hammered the gongs, till the earth seemed to shake. Then he struck the gongs so hard, that they broke into pieces. As the young princess saw the might of Rasālu, she went to her father and told him that a mighty prince had come on a white horse and wanted to beat him in the game of dice and take her for his bride.

King Sirkap vowed to cut off his head. But as he said these words, King Sirkap was shaking in his shoes. He had heard of the deeds of King Rasālu. He thought of killing him before the prince should come near. So he sent a tray of food as offering to the prince, having put poison in the sweets.

Rasālu threw the food to the dogs. The dogs died. Rasālu told the attendants that they should go and tell their king that it was not brave to kill an enemy by fraud.

After that, King Rasālu set out for the palace. On his way, he came across a cat near the pottery kiln, mewing in distress. He asked what her problem was. The cat told him that her kittens were in an unbaked pot in the kiln. And the potter was just going to set the kiln on fire to bake the pots. She feared that her little ones would die a fiery death.

Rasālu was touched by this sad story. So he bought the whole kiln from the potter. Then he looked into every pot. At last he found the kittens and restored them to the cat. Gratefully, the cat gave him a kitten saying that he should keep it in his pocket and that it might help him in time of need. Rasālu put the kitten in his pocket and went towards the palace, where the game of dice was already laid.

Sirkap fixed the kingdom as the first stake; the wealth of the whole world as the second stake and his head was the third stake. Rasālu made the first move. He forgot the ghost's warning and played with Sirkap's dice. Rājā Sirkap let loose his notorious rat. The rat ran over the dice board and upset the pieces. So Rasālu lost the first game. He had to give up his shining armor.

In the second game, the rat again upset the pieces. So Rasālu lost his horse. The horse cried to his master that he should put his hand in his pocket. King Sirkap was angry to hear the horse giving the advice to his master. He ordered his servants to take the horse away. Rasālu's eyes filled with tears when he saw his white horse being led away.

Rasālu now remembered the kitten that was in his pocket and also the dice of bones, which the ghost had asked him to use. So he told King Sirkap that he shouldn't take his armour, or his horse, till the last game was over. As King Sirkap saw Rasālu talking in a firm voice, he called his queens to come and see the match from the terrace.

He thought their beauty would distract the enemy from the game.

But Rasālu's eyes were on the game. He said to King Sirkap that they had played with Sirkap's dice twice and now they should play with his dice the third time. Rasālu emptied his pocket of the dice. The little kitten also emerged. And he went to sit near the hole from which King Sirkap's rat had come in. Rājā Sirkap saw Rasālu winning the game. And he whistled to his rat. The rat did not come out of the hole, because he saw the kitten. So Rasālu won two stakes, one after another and he took back his armour and his horse. Sirkap prayed to his demons to help him. Then he thought his fate was in dice. So he prayed to the dice. However, Rasālu beat him. Just then a servant came and told Rājā Sirkap that a daughter was born to his youngest queen. The defeated Sirkap was angry and shouted,

> Go kill her at once! She has come at an evil moment. She has brought bad luck to her father![13]

Rasālu was shocked at Sirkap's speech. He asked him to spare his seventieth and the seventy-first daughter. They had done nothing to deserve death. He would take them away and if he promised never to play for the stake of another's head, he would spare him. King Sirkap fell at the feet of king Rasālu and asked to be forgiven. He promised never to play again for another's head and allowed him to his seventieth daughter for a queen and the seventy-first.

King Rasālu came back home with his beautiful bride and her sister. The whole town of Sialkot came out to meet him. And his father announced that he would give up the throne and put his son on the throne. And King Rasālu lived happily ever afterwards and ruled as a just king.[14]

3.3.1. "Raja Rasālu": Archaeological Evidence

The city of Sialkot is believed by the Brāhmaṇs to have been founded by one Rājā Sul or Sala, the uncle of the Pāṇḍhavas, whose heroic deeds are recorded in the *Mahābhārata.* After his death, some 5,000 years ago, there is a tradition that the dynasty continued for some 1,600 years and then the country was flooded and remained one vast uninhabited region for 1,000 years. The popular belief is that it was re- founded in the reign of Vikramaditya of Ujjain by Raja Sālivāhan or Sālbān, who built the fort and city and gave the place its present name. He was of Siāl caste, mention of which is found to this day, and it is believed that the word means the fort of Sālbān or Siā.

A curious legend exists that a Khatrāni woman, when bathing in the Aik, was wooed by a serpent called Basak Nāg. She conceived and bore a son who was called Sālwān, who rose to be a man of great power and wealth, and through the assistance of this snake was made a king. This legend has probably a direct connection with the Nāg worship of the hills and must be of great antiquity. It is said Vikramaditya even visited Sialkot, and, Sālwān refusing to meet him, a severe battle was fought in which the former lost his life and Rājā Sālwān, exulting over his triumph, caused the era to be changed to that of Saka, which is even referred to now-a-days.[15] Legend also says that Sālivāhan had two sons - one, Pūran by name was killed by the instrumentality of a wicked step-mother, and thrown into a well, still the resort of pilgrims, near Sialkot; the other, Rasālu, the great mythical hero of Punjab folk tales, is said to have reigned at Sialkot. Towards the end of his reign Rasālu became involved in wars with Rājā Hoḍi, popularly stated to have been a Gakkhaṛ chieftain. Being worsted in battle, Rasālu, as the price of peace, was

forced to give his daughter in marriage to his conqueror, who gave the territory he had conquered to Rasālu's adopted son.[16] According to Prinsep: "After the death of Rājā Rasālu, the country is said to have fallen under the curse of Pūran for 800 years lying totally devastated from famine and incessant plunder."[17]

It has also been suggested that Sialkot is the site of the ancient town of *Sakala or Saqal*. The principal buildings and shrines of historical interest are the fort, which afforded shelter to the European inhabitants during the 1857 War of Independence. It stands on a circular eminence, and is said to have been built by Rājā Silwān. It was partly dismantled in 1856; at the foot of the mound is a small cemetery containing the graves of those who fell in the Independence War. The past history of Sialkot is involved in some obscurity, but it is beyond doubt one of the most ancient cities of the Punjab. Tradition assigns its foundation, in the first place, to Rājā Sāl or Shāl, mentioned in the *Mahābhārta* as maternal uncle of the Pāṇḍu princes, and, secondly, to Sālwān, or Sāhvāhanu, otherwise called Vikramaditya, father of the hero Rasālu of legendary renown. General Cunningham apparently credits the latter story. Sālivāhan was the son of a Yādava prince, whom General Cunningham supposes to have been expelled from, Gajipur (which he identifies with the modem town of Rawalpindi) by an incursion of the Indo-Scythians. His father having lost his life in battle against the invaders, "the young prince", writes General Cunningham, "founded a new capital at Sālbāhanpur, which is generally identified with Sialkot." As the same Sālivāhana subsequently defeated the Indo-Scythians in a great battle at Karoṛ, the date of which, A.D. 78, is fixed as the initial year of the Saka era founded in honour of the victory, the foundation of Sialkot may, if the above story be true, be placed with some approach to accuracy about the year 65 or

70 A.D. Rājā Sālwān was succeeded by his son Rasālu, whose exploits form the subject of countless Punjabi legends. Rasālu's capital is universally stated to have been at Sialkot, but towards the end of his reign he was involved in wars with Rājā Hoḍi. Under the Mughal Emperors the town was the headquarters of a fiscal district.

In the centre of the town stand the remains of an ancient fort crowning a low circular eminence, which, in popular belief, is the original structure of Rājā Sālbāhan. Recent excavations, however, prove that the fort has not, in all probability, existed for more than 1,000 years. The masonry is not cemented with mortar, and the bricks are for the most part in perfect condition. The outer walls too were apparently built of the fragments of bricks taken from old buildings, and the whole appears to have been re-erected upon the debris of an old town, which, falling into decay from the effects of time, had formed a mound, which now rises about 30 feet above the level of the lower streets. There are other similar mounds on the outskirts of the present town.

The fort was an ordinary square redoubt, with small bastions, at intervals of about 70 feet. The only object of curiosity discovered in the course of the excavations was the ruins of some old hot-baths, with pipes of solid masonry, the walls of which were in perfect preservation. The area enclosed by the dilapidated walls of the ancient fort was devoted during the British rule to a few buildings used for public purposes, and the last remaining bastion had been demolished. In English memory the fort is inseparably associated with the 1857 War of Independence, for it was here that the few European residents took refuge, while just below it a small cemetery contains the remains of those who were killed.

3.3.2. Rājā Rasālu: Historical Evidence

Sialkot City was once the capital of the Madras. *Saskaladvipa* or the 'Island of Sakala' was the name of the doab between the river Chenab and Ravi. Sakala was the capital, or one of the capitals, of the Greek kings of the House of Euthydemus, and the residence of *Menander (Milinda)*. After the invasion of the Hūṇas (Huns) in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. it became the capital of Toramāṇa and his son Mihirakula.[18]

Sir Alexander Cunningham in his *Archaeological Survey Reports*, II, 21, 22, and XIV, 44 to 47, discusses the antiquities of *Sialkot.*

> ...Its early history is closely interwoven with traditions of the Raja Sālivāhan, his son Rājā Rasālu, and his enemy, Rājā Hoḍi, famous in Punjabi folklore. In the earliest days, the whole surface of the country was waste and studded with thick forests, but inhabited by a pastoral race, called Yahars or Yirs, who lived in juns or rude mat huts, chiefly along the banks of rivers. These tribes were numerous and powerful. Sometime after the invasion of Alexander against Porus, it is said that large volunteer armies flocked into the province from remote parts of Hindustan. Among them arrived Shun, Hun and Dall, the three reputed sons of the great Rājā Rachor Rao of Rajputana, whose capitals were Ujjain and Indore. The emigrants fraternized with the early settlers, and introduced the art of agriculture and the use of wells for irrigation. It is even stated that out of 500,000 warriors some 35,000 devoted

themselves so diligently to the cultivation of land that in 250 years after their arrival the whole country from Lahore to Multān and Kashmir to Sialkot was cleared of jungle. These settlers were assisted by the original tribes, who were known also under the names of Yirs in the Jach and Sind Sāgar Doābs; Jhuns and Pachadas in this doab; and Bhular, Man, Her in the Bari Doab. The Shun Dal in the time of Vikramaditya are recorded as the most powerful tribe in the Punjab, but they would not intermarry with the aborigines, who were looked upon as an inferior race of Ghator, Ghauts or Gat (Sanskrit, yuta), or as they are now called Jats. Even to his day in the heart of the Hindu agricultural tract, the people will tell you there are only 2 $^{1/2}$ pure Jat races now remaining, viz, the Bhular, Man and Her, which last counts only as half a caste; all the rest are really of Rājpūt origin. But those days have passed and little traces exist of such races now.

The principal tribes now are the Bājwas, who probably came from the direction of Multān; the Awāns who say they have come from Ghazni; the Ghumans, from Makiāla in Central India; the Sindus from Oudh; and the Salehria Rājpūts from the hills. Of these the Awāns only can point to as distinct Muslim origin. There are also the Minhās, who are a royal clan from their having a common pedigree with the Jammu princes; and the Bājus, who give their name to Bajwāt. It is a curious fact that both of these clans, who now are essentially Rājpūt in name and association, have a common pedigree, the Minhās with the Virk and the Bāju with the Bājwa clans, both of whom are called essentially Jat, which

shows the prevalence of the Rājpūt origin.

The places of greatest antiquity appear to be the cities of Sialkot, formerly called Sulkot; Pasrūr known as Parasrūr. Pasrūr is surrounded by villages held by the Bājwa Jats, whose first founder, Kholu, settled in Panwana and had six sons, who founded Bhāgowāl, Rurki, Khanowāli, Chowinḍa, Nārowāl and Pasrūr; Mankah founded Pasrūr . The tradition is that during the better days of the Mughal Empire, a *faqīr* came to visit the shrine of Syed Jalāl. Mankah hearing of his arrival in accordance with old usage offered him *nazer*, which was indignantly refused. The *faqīr* took his departure, but did not forget the civility, for 12 years after he returned to the shrine as none other than Humayun summoned Mankah, and made him the ruler of the Pasrūr pargana. So Mankah built the city, locating traders of every kind. Owing to his son being a minor, on Mankah' s death the fief was managed by Fatah Chand, son of Naru (the brother), who went in person to Delhi and was honoured by Akbar. However, the distant history of Sialkot bears the names of Raja Sālbāhan and his sons Raja Rasālu and Pūran Bhagat.

As mentioned earlier, the tales of Rājā Rasālu, Princess Adhik Anup Dai and Pūran Bhagat have appeared in a series, belonging to a cycle, and indiscriminately applied to the northern Sālivāhana and any of his immediate legendary descendants. These tales, or at least some of them, are elsewhere shown to be equally applied to the southern Sālivāhana; but it is not clear whether the northern and southern Sālivāhanas of modem legends were the same people, or lived at the same period. In the Calcutta Review for 1884 in an article on Rājā Rasālu, R.C. Temple endorsed the reality of his character and dilated upon his origin and the veracity of the tales. These tales as we accumulate them from different sources from the beginning display such similarity to the

Sindbād cycle as to presume a common source. It should be remembered that the Sindbād series is demonstrably of Indian origin. If Rasālu were the representative of the Hindu, or perhaps Buddhist, opponents of the first Arab invaders of India in the 8th and 9th centuries then he is also the hero of a large number of Arabic- Persian folk tales which would be well worth investigation.[19]

It is important that it must not be presumed that hero and story, or story and incident, have any real historical connection until it is demonstrated that such is the case. It may be taken as established that historically Bhartrihari and Vikramaditya cannot have belonged to the same era, nor could Hoḍi and Rasālu, while we may take it as fairly certain that Rasālu is only figuratively the 'son' of Sālivāhana, even if he be of the same race.

> The Legend of Rasālu is of unusual value both for its historical and its folklore bearings. It gives a hint of the true history of that Indo-Scythian hero, who may yet be identified with Sri Syalapati Deva, whose coins, till the beginning of 20th century, were still found in abundance all over the Punjab, and who must have flourished between the first Arab invasions of Sindh and Kabul and the rise of the Ghaznavid Dynasty. It also contains in places the most remarkable analogies to the almost universal stories of the Seven Wise Men, the germs of which are to be found in the Sukasaptati and Panchatantra in India, and in the story of Sindbād in Europe and Asia, repeated in Arabic in the Alif Laila, in Persian in the Sindi-badnāma and the Tutināma, in Greek in the story of

> Syntipas, in the Hebrew Mishle Sandabar and in Spanish in the IL Libra de los Engannos de las Mugeres, besides many modern versions in most of the languages of Europe and in the bazar books of modem India and Pakistan.[20]

3.4. Rājā Rasālu: A Punjabi Hero

Even today, Rājā Rasālu is considered the embodiment of Punjab's cultural identity. Elaborating upon the distinct characteristics of Punjabi culture-, Buddha Parakash has observed:

> The Punjab became a meeting place of various peoples and the melting pot of diverse cultures in ancient times. Hence its society became heterogeneous and heterodox and detracted from the standards of the conservative people. The puritans nestled in the Gangetic valley and branded the Punjabis impure and impious and shunned contact with them. Their literature breathes a spirit of revolt against the people of the Punjab. But in this land of sin and sacrilege there was a unique widening of horizons and broadening of perspectives as a consequence of the mingling of various traditions.

This assimilative spirit and liberal outlook of the ancient Punjab is reflected in the legendary figure of Rājā Rasālu. Greek, Roman and Iranian myths, Biblical and Quranic tales, and faint memories of the distant past are creatively interwoven to transform the

historical person of Rājā Rasālu into a legendary hero.

As mentioned earlier, R.C. Temple was led to the conclusion that Rasālu was the representative of the Hindu, or perhaps, the Buddhist, opponents of the first Arab invaders of India in the 8th and 9th centuries. However, Prof. Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik disagrees with R.C. Temple. According to him, both history and folklore reject Temple's supposition. Fie was right in pointing out that "Rājā Rasālu did really live", but he was mistaken in identifying Rasālu as an opponent of the Arab invaders. Folklore as well as history supports the opposite view, according to which Rasālu was an ardent supporter of the Muslim conquerors of India. The Soviet scholar I. Serebryakov states:

> There are variations of the legend in which Rasālu quarrels with his father, and to take revenge accepts Islam and sets out for Gujrat to ask the Rājā for help against his father.[21]

Charles Swymerton committed the Rasālu legend to paper before R.C. Temple did and said:

> A.D. 700 is the earliest approximate date for Rājā Rasālu, the very period when the Muḥammadan invaders were over-running Central Asia. Rasālu was a Rājpūt of Sialkot, and Sialkot, as the name implies, was the stronghold of the Syals, a tribe, still flourishing, popularly claims descent from Rājā Rasālu himself.[22]

Charles Swymerton's *Adventures of the Punjab Hero Rājā Rasālu*, unfolds the mystery of Rasālu's revolt against his father stating:

> The prince sought his father's presence and said to him we

will obey you in all things if you will accept two conditions. The first is that you make me a Musalmān; and the other is that you become a Musalmān yourself... Hearing these words, the King lost control and in a furry ordered his son to instantly quit the palace.[23]

After he was banished Rasālu went to Mecca and came back with a Muḥammadan army to conquer Sialkot. After the fall of Sialkot the priests said to Rasālu: "Go forward to your father and bid him to become a Muḥammadan so Rasālu went in and bade his father either to turn Muḥammadan or die.[24]

Al-Balādhuri gives an interesting account of the conversion to Islam of a Rājā, who ruled on the borderland of Kābul:

This Rājā had a son who fell ill. And although the priestly oracles predicted that he would recover, he died. The oracular pronouncement was manifestly belied. The Rājā, thereupon, sent for a Musalmān merchant and having satisfied himself about the essentials of the creed, embraced Islam.[25]

When one turns from legend to history, one finds that Raja Rasālu stood in revolt against the rule of his father and collaborated with the Arab invaders. The prevailing religion in Sindh and the adjoining areas was Buddhism. But it had lost its political power. The unpopular Chach dynasty started in 622 when Chach, a Brāhmaṇ minister of the Buddhist king, usurped the throne. Buddhism was steadily losing ground to Hinduism. Among other factors, this struggle between Hinduism and Buddhism paved the way for the Arab

conquest. I.H. Qureshi quoted several instances of Buddhist collaboration with the Arab invaders.

> Kaka Kotak, a Buddhist chief of the area near Sehwan, advised his followers and Jats not to fight against the Muslims. Similarly, it was a Buddhist chief who provided the boats, which made it possible for Muḥammad Bin Qāsim to cross the Indus. According to Tārā Chand, active cooperation of the chiefs with the invaders and voluntary surrender of the people was the outcome of the policy of ruthless suppression of the dissident groups. The Rājā ...inflicted great humiliation on the Jats and Meds, who were forbidden to carry arms, wear silk garments, or ride on horseback with saddles. They were commanded to be bareheaded and barefooted when they walked about and be accompanied by dogs.[26]

The above situation gave rise to prophecies of Arab victory:

> Again and again we come across the assertion that the ancient seers and astrologers prophesied the fall of the Hindu dynasty and the rise of Arab power.[27]

Pinning all their hopes on Islam as their deliverer, the Buddhist priests fabricated and spread prophecies and predictions of the fall of the cruel tyrants, and the suffering masses personified all their hopes of a saviour and all their dreams for social revolution in the contemporary hero, Rājā Rasālu. In all probability, the creative imagination of the people picked up the figure of the Punjabi Rājā who had embraced Islam, and gave him a

lasting glory. At a time of great upheaval when dynasties were founded and destroyed in a quick succession, the people saw a hero in the figure of Rājā Rasālu and transformed the life of this ordinary mortal into the legend of a hero.

Apart from its outer similarities to the fable of the Quranic Yūsuf and Zulaikha and the Biblical Joseph, this opening episode of the legend of Rasālu has its roots in distant Athens. It is almost an exact copy of the Greek legend of Phaedra and Hippolytus, as rendered in the famous play by Euripides. Pūran rejects the overtures of his father's wife with horror and disdain and is condemned by his father. In the same way the Greek hero is tempted and slandered and in like manner victimized. The myths and legends of ancient Greece had stirred the mind of the ancient Punjab. Consequently, Punjab folklore holds many curious reminiscences of the Hellenistic genius. But the pattern is of creative assimilation.

This assimilation happened as a wide and lasting consequence of Greek penetration into the areas now called Pakistan. From the time of Cyrus the Great to the Hun invasions, from the sixth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. history witnessed Greek presence in Pakistan as the Greeks left lasting record of their influence on the Gandhāra art as well as on the folklore of Pakistan. Their saintly king, Menander shifted his capital from the Gandhāran heartland of Greek power to *Sakala* (Sialkot) in the Punjab. Referring to a Buddhist sacred text, the *Milindapañha*, George Woodcock tells us that in those days, the inhabitants of Sialkot:

> ...included many Greeks, who held high and well-defined positions, in its social order. It was, like all the Bactrian Greek

> centres, an active trading city, importing goods from the western world, and also from the great cities along the Ganges. Its people were un-oppressed. There was religious toleration under a king and a Greek ruling class that was willing to inquire into every belief, so that Brāhmaṇs and Buddhists and men of other creeds lived there freely, without persecution.[28]

During Menander's reign Sialkot became a great meeting place of Eastern and Western currents of thoughts, where intellectual curiosity and philosophical inquiry were encouraged.

Sialkot for many years flourished as the capital of the half-brother and godson. The Rasalu legend sprang from the same great centre of Greek influence in the Punjab. No wonder that the myth of *Phaedra* and *Hippolytus* was transmitted to the folklore through the play of *Euripides*, staged at the court of *Menander* (d. 130 B.C.) in the city of Sialkot. Centuries later, after the decline of the Greco-Buddhist power and with the rise of Brahman rule, Islam acted as a kind of catalyst to reinvigorate a stagnant society, and to prepare it, for a social revolution. Perhaps, it was at this great turning point in the history of the region, that the legend of *Phaedra and Hippolytus* was absorbed into the legends of Rājā Rasālu. According to the Buddhist lore,[29] towards the end of his life, *King Menander* had abandoned his kingdom, renounced the world and retired into saintly contemplation.

The collective imagination of the people preserved that memory of this happening by combining the king and the saint in the person of Rasālu.

In his brilliant analysis of Qādiryār's (1802L1891) poem *"Pūran Bhagat"*, Najam Hussain Syed dwells on the deeper symbolic meaning of Pūran's character and sees in him a rebel against the self-indulging ruling class. To him Pūran's being is perpetuated in Rasālu: "The new arrival is at once a constructive and a destructive force. His new existence marks the destruction of the parents' individual being. .. ."[30]

This contention is fully supported by Charles Swynnerton's version of the Rasālu legend recorded direct through oral recital by professional bards of *Attock and Hazāra* districts.

As he entered his twelfth year of confinement in the underground palace, Rasālu arrived in the capital. He created discontent against his father's administration by breaking the pitchers of women with the arrows of his mighty bow. When persuaded not to disrupt peace Rasālu demanded his father's conversion to Islam as a precondition for his obedience. His father rejected this condition with contempt. Rasālu revolted against him and went to *Mecca* where Imām Álī, Pīr Punjābi and Surkru Sobeh embraced him: "Their embraces so purified his heart that the locks of infidelity were broken asunder. Also, they taught him the prayers, and so Rasālu ceased to be a Hindu and became a Mohammadan."[31]

Rasālu appraised the authorities at Mecca of the situation prevailing in Sialkot under the rule of his father. While Rasālu was still at Mecca, an old woman came to the Great Mosque and lamented: "Behold a helpless old woman, having no protector. A Hindu Rājā, the biggest infidel in Hindustan, has cruelly killed my son and buried him under the foundations of a wall. If you are indeed followers of the Prophet, come and

avenge me." "Mother, do not weep", answered they "our heads shall answer for your son's."[32]

Rasālu was, thus, sent with an Arab army to invade Sialkot. He defeated his father and established a new rule. Later, he set out to deliver the people of adjoining areas from the yoke of tyrants like Rājā Sirikap, whose very name meant: "he who cuts peoples' heads". On his way he met a saint and became his disciple. He passed through a burning forest and saved a tiny bird from the fire and set it free. He liberated a female swan from the treacherous crow and restored her to her proper mate. He rescued the people of Hazāra from the dragon - Tilyar Nāg, the great flying serpent and his friend Sunder Nāg, the sea raven. He relieved the people of the city, which was silent like the grave, from paying the daily tribute of a fair young man, a buffalo and a basket full of cakes by killing the dreadful giants. Finally, he entered the domain of Sirkap. He passed a long and dreary night in an old graveyard, where the corpse of Sirkap's brother begged him to give up the idea of playing dice with the cruel Raja, who cuts off the heads of two or three innocent men every day before breakfast, just for the sake of amusement. Instead, he determined to overthrow Sirkap. Rasālu rode on his horse and reached the city of Sirkap. He exposed all the magical tricks of Sirkap and won first his kingdom, then the wealth of the whole world, and, lastly, his head.

The cycle of legends on Rasālu teems with motifs assimilated from the legends of many lands. It has relationship with the European, Iranian and Indian myths under the influence of caste-free, egalitarian concepts of Buddhism and Islam. Rasālu's fight with the giants bears a striking similarity with the Germanic hero's fight with the dragons. Although stories of dragon-fights are found in Iranian heroic legends relating to Rustum,

Isfandyar and Ardshīr, Rasālu's adventures have much more in common with Beowulfs struggle against the monsters.[33]

Rājā Rasālu, tender-hearted and strong, the royal falcon, finally destroyed the order symbolised by Sālvāhan and Sirkap, liberated human beings, birds and animals and initiated a process of transformation of the society according to the heroic pattern in which the boundaries between the domains of saints and Kings were first blurred and then vanished.

Notes

[1] Sayyid Fayyaz Mahmud, *Folk Romances of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Lok Virsa, 1995), p.8

[2] Fayyaz Mahmud, op.cit, p.90

[3] R.C. Temple, *The Legends of the Punjab,* vol. II (Islamabad: Institute of Folk Heritage 1981), pp. ix, x.

[4] Temple, op.cit., p.viii

[5] Mulk Raj Anand, *Folk Tales of Punjab* (New Delhi, 1989) p. 81

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] *Punjab District Gazetteers*, Sialkot District, Volume XXIII-A (Lahore 1921) p. 14.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Temple, op.cit., p.ix

[20] Temple, op.cit., p. 1

[21] Nauka, *Punjabi Literature* (Moscow 1968) p. 14, quoted by Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik, Punjabi Identity (Lahore 1989) p.40.

[22] *Romantic Tales from Punjab* - Introduction, p.XLI, (London 1903), quoted by Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik, *Punjabi Identity* (Lahore 1989)

[23] Op. cit., p.119

[24] Op. cit., pp. 151-152

[25] *Futuh-ul-Buldan,* Leiden (1866), p.446

[26] *A short History of Indian People*, p. 121, quoted by Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik, Punjabi Identity (Lahore 1989)

[27] Kufi, Muḥammad Ali bin Hamid bin Abu Bakr, *Chachnāma* (Delhi 1936), p.21

[28] The Greeks in India (London 1966) p.110, quoted by Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik, *Punjabi Identity* (Lahore 1989)

[29] Milindapanha, quoted by Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik, *Punjabi Identity* (Lahore 1989), p. 47

[30] Najam Hosain Syed, *Recurrent Patterns in Punjabi Poetry* (Lahore 1968) p. 109

[31] *Romantic Tales From Punjab*, p. 146, quoted by Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik, *Punjabi Identity* (Lahore 1989)

[32] Op. cit., p.151

[33] Fateḥ Muḥammad Malik, *Punjabi Identity* (Lahore 1989), p.52

Chapter 4

Themes of Resistance

The Punjāb was home to one of the earliest civilizations (the Indus Valley 3300-1200 BC) which had well planned streets and a drainage system. The Aryans (1500 BC) are said to have destroyed this civilization.

The Punjāb has always been a place of small independent principalities and villages living quietly in their own agrarian way of life. The waters of five rivers irrigated its fertile lands providing a stable means of livelihood. But this prosperity invariably proved to be a liability when its peace was broken by the outside invaders - both from the East and from the West. While the rulers often did cave in easily, brave Punjābis did rise and fight for their land. This is the story of those heroes whom our history has forgotten.

When Alexander (325 BC) wanted to cross the river Jhelum, he had to face Porus a legend from Punjāb. Porus fought bravely. But eventually, Alexander's horses won against the Porus' elephants. Alexander finally crossed the river Jhelum. For some reason, while the Punjābis still name their sons after Alexander, there has been a case in which one child was found by the name Porus. Thereafter, Punjāb became a part of the Eastern empires of Chandra Gupta and Ashoka with Taxila becoming a centre of Buddhism.

As the centuries rolled by, one heard about the two folk heroes of Punjāb - Rājā Rasālu and Pūran Bhagat, sons of the Rājā of Sialkot (100-200 AD). Rājā Rasālu was a handsome prince who dallied with pretty maidens, went hunting, killed giants, robbed the rich and gave to the poor. He had a horse "faulādi" and a parrot "Shādi" always resting on

his shoulder. Pūran, the elder brother was more saintly. He rebuffs the advances of his step mother, Lūnān, and leaves home. He became a symbol of goodness and is called Pūran Bhagat. And so as the history moves on, Pūnjab is again broken up into small principalities until conquered by the Gupta Empire around 400 AD. This is time of the *Purāṇas*.

The next intruders are the Iraqi Arabs (Ummayads and Abbasids 712 AD) who capture the southern Punjāb up to Multān. They rule for 150 years; but Islam came to Punjāb much later through the non-Arab Sufi saints of Turk, Persian and Afghan origin.

After the Arabs, Maḥmūd of Ghaznī (1018 AD) captured the North Western area of Indian sub continent. Rājā Jaypāl of shāhi dynasty faced him near at Peshāwar. It was a bloody fight where Jaypāl lost and committed himself to a funeral pyre because his subjects thought he had brought disaster and disgrace to the dynasty. As Mahmud advanced, he showed no mercy even to the Muslim states of Multān and Tulamba. His Turko-Afghan successors like Qutbudin Aibak, Iltutmish and Raẓia Sultana are better; during their time, art and literature flourished.

The next invader Timūr (1370 AD) is held by Shaikha Khokhar, the chieftain of Salt Range. Shaikha fights bravely but Timūr prevails. The moment Timūr left for Dehli to end the Tughlaq dynasty, Shaikha again captures Lahore. On the way back, Timūr again takes back Lahore but takes with him Shaika's son Jasrat On the way to Farghāna, Jasrat escapes, returns through the arduous terrain and again re-captures Lahore. During this period, one finds a peasant revolt led by Sārang (1419).

Then, after 100 years, Bābar (1526) comes to defeat the Afghān ruler Ibrāhīm

Lodhi. In his *Bābar Nāma*, Bābar describes the bravery of the Jats and Gujjars who had fiercely resisted him at Sialkot. Then Dulla Bhatti of Pindi Bhattian revolts and holds against Akbar for ten years. The peasants are asked not to pay the tax and revenue. Finally, Akbar agrees to let the land be a hereditary right, a departure from the past where all land belonged to the king.[1]

At the time of the decline of the Mughal Empire, Nādir Shāh (1736 AD), the Persian ruler, moved into the Punjāb on his way to Dehli. At the Indus-Jhelum *doāb*, the Khaṭṭars, Ghaebas and Gakkhaṛs fought him. After he crossed the Jhelum, the Gondal Rājpūts take him on. Najābat, a poet of the time, writes about the accounts of valour by Dhilloo and Saidoo. After crossing Gujrāt, when he reached Chenāb, Mirzā Qalandar was waiting for him. When he reached Rāvi, Khoja Yaqūb was there to fight him. He spared Lahore from rampage. But when he reached Delhi to put an end to the reign of Muḥammad Shāh Rangīla, he went to the Jamiâ Mosque and took out his sword - a signal for pillage of Delhi. 20,000 were killed and the booty included the Peacock Throne and the Koh-e-Nūr diamond. Mīr Taqi Mīr, who was then 16, explains this gruesome brutality in his verses.

Aḥmad Shāh Abdāli (1747), founder of the first Afghan state, is the next pesky visitor. Mir Manu fights him and repels him though he manages to capture Sialkot and Pasrūr. Finally, Abdāli ends the reign of Azīz-ud-din

The Punjābis went on aggression only once - when they had their own empire for forty years under efficient rule by the Sikh Ranjīt Singh (1799-1839) and the empire extend up to North western part of Sub-continent. After the death of Ranjīt Singh, the British found an opportunity to capture the Punjāb. Ahmad Khān Kharal of Rāi Nathoo (Neeli bār between Sāhiwāl and Multān) at the age of 80 took up arms against the British in the 1857 mutiny. Then Bhagat Singh (1926) was instrumental in beginning a labour and peasant movement in Lahore. Lālā Lājpat Rāi, Sher-e-Punjāb, lost his life in this struggle. The British radically transformed the landscape of Punjāb by introducing a canal system, railways and cantonments. They set up seminaries and churches and introduced a new faith in the area.

> Punjāb became a part of the Western Empires about six times - Greeks, Arabs, Afghāns, Turks, Persians and Pashtūns. And it became a part of the Eastern empires about four times — Chandra Gupta, Aśoka, Mughals and British.[2]
>
> "Punjāb produced brave soldiers like Porus, Jaypāl, Ranjīt Singh, Shaikha, Jasrat, Dilloo, Saidoo, Ahmad Khān Kharal, Bhagat Singh, Lālā Lājpat Rāi and Mirzā Qalandar. Its romantic heroes like Rājā Rasālu, Pūran Bhagat, Sārang and Dulla Bhatti live even today in the memory of village folk. Its Sufī saints and poets, who preached a message of love, include Amīr Khusrao, Guru Nānak, Kabīr, Dātā Gunj Baksh, Bābā Farīd, Bahāudin Zakaria, Bullah Shāh, Sultān Bāhu, Miān Muḥammad and Shāh Ḥusain. Not only great men but also the Punjābi folk lore has

> strong willed women who dominated their beloveds - in the tales of Hīr Rānjha, Sassi Punnū, Mirzā Sāhibān and Sohni Mahinwāl.

Every invader who came to this land had one basic human failing - a greed for wealth. And their wrath was indiscriminate - irrespective of religion, race or creed. The attacks and occupation by the foreign rulers has had a deep impact on the psyche of the Punjābis - their threshold for subjugation has increased. They continue to readily accept a man on the horse back the moment he appears on the horizon.

There exists a huge corpus of the resistance poetry written during the last five hundred years. Hundreds of songs were exclusively devoted to Dulla Bhatti, Jasrat Khokhar, Ahmad Khān Kharal, Murād Fatiāna, Faẓal Māchi, Javana Mor, Nizām Lohār, Jabrū Nāi, Malangi and others. What is left out of this huge corpus is *Var* Dulla Bhatti, Var Nādir Shāh, Jang Hind-Punjāb by Shāh Muḥammad and some *dholas* about Ahmad Khān Kharl and his comrades-in-arms.

> It is tragic that after the fall of the Punjāb in 1849, the Punjābis, particularly Muslim Punjābis were weaned away from the resistance poetry of the great Punjābi writers. This trick on Muslim Punjābis was played with utmost subtlety. Their medium of education was switched to Urdu. The purpose of the British Rule and their camp followers was that the Punjābis should not remain in contact with their glorious history from Porus to Ahmad Khān Kharal. Had the Punjābi language and literature been used in the curriculum introduced by the British, every literate Punjābi would

> inevitably have become fully familiar with the resistance his ancestors put up against the invaders from Alexander to the British.[3]

The Punjāb was the last province to be annexed by the British and this fact is not without significance. Annexation at a single stroke afforded a clearer and wider field for administrative effort of which full advantage was taken by a select body of exceptionally able officers. The officers decided from the very beginning to rule the province firmly and, if necessary, ruthlessly. In the rest of India the people retained their arms, matchlocks, swords and spears long after these became unnecessary for the protection of their persons and property, whereas in the Punjāb, there was a general disarmament after the annexation. The Punjāb has been the province that most young men entering the Indian Civil Service have wished to go to. It began as a frontier province, the shield of India with a military role which gave its administration the severity and the ruthlessness of the camp and the field.[4]

Not much is known about the history of the heroes hailing from the other regions of Pakistan. The heroes raised their voices and arms against the internal as well as external tyrant. In the far-off northern valleys surrounded by snow clad mountains and in the deep thick jungles on the banks of the five rivers, many battles had been fought from time immemorial. Many men of true mettle had challenged the might of their own rulers, who became ruthless and flouted the norms of good governance. Most of these worthy men have been forgotten. This is most unfortunate.

4.1. Dulla Bhatti: *The Robin Hood of the Punjāb*

Dulla Bhatti was a son of the soil who stood against Akbar. He was a disciple of Shāh Behlol, along with Shāh Ḥusain. According to various accounts, Dulla Bhatti annoyed Emperor Akbar, who then had him executed outside the Delhi Gate.

Much has been written in poetry and praise of his bravery, mentioning him as a hero in the folklore. Some historians say the emperor also had executed the then Lahore police chief, Ali, after he reported him the last words of Dulla Bhatti against him (Akbar). Dulla Bhatti was buried in the Mīanī Ṣāhīb graveyard without leaving any traces of his grave. But it was later located by people of his tribe.

4.1.1. Ḥusain and Dulla Bhatti

The biography of Sufi poet Shāh Ḥusain in Persian verse under the name of *Haqīqatul Fuqrā* was written by one Shaikh Muḥammad Pīr in 1071 A.H., just 63 years after the death of the poet. Nine years before that Dārā Shikoh in his book *Hasnātul Arifīn* had painted Shāh Ḥusain as a strong man whom nobody could ever check for his living outside the *Shariah*.

Shaikh Muḥammad Pīr says that when Akbar and his Shaikhul Islām, Ábdullāh Sulṭānpuri, got information about this *Sūfi*, the king ordered his *Kotwal (*S.S.P), Malik Ȧlī, to arrest and present Shāh Ḥusain before him. But the *Kotwal* failed to arrest the poet. In those days the rebel of Sāndal Bar area, Dulla Bhatti, was in prison and Akbar ordered that he should be publicly hanged in Nakhas area (now the area of Landa Bazar). Ȧlī Malik was the executioner and when Bhatti was being hanged Shāh Ḥusain together

with his party of dancing *dervishes* arrived at the scene. Shaikh Muḥammad says about Ālī Malik that Ālī Kotwāl was in search of Shāh Ḥusain who was not found anywhere. The king ordered that Dulla Bhatti, a landlord of his area, be hanged. He was a rebel and a tyrant. On the hanging day a big crowd of Lahorites gathered at the spot and suddenly Shāh Ḥusain also appeared on the scene.

Thus, according to the story, Malik Ālī Kotwāl arrested Shāh Ḥusain for his non-conformist living. Shāh Ḥusain was much annoyed when Ālī not only abused him but also threatened him with a disgraceful death. Shāh Ḥusain told him that what he intended to do to Ḥusain would be done to Ali himself. So far nobody knew why Ḥusain had arrived there, whether he was angry with Akbar and Ali over the hanging of Bhatti or whether he had been antagonized by the misbehaviour of Malik Ālī. But it so happened that after the hanging of Bhatti, Malik Ālī lost king's favour and he also was hanged in the way Shāh Ḥusain had predicted.

Ḥusain was presented before the King who afterwards set him free. Later on prominent ministers and commanders used to pay respect to Shāh Ḥusain and sought his good wishes for their success in different campaigns.

Shāh Ḥusain was an anti-establishment man and, because of the Shaikhul Islām's performance, not happy with the regime. It is possible that he had developed some romantic views about rebels like Dulla Bhatti, or he might have developed some relations with the rebels. There does seem to have been an indirect link between Ḥusain and Bhatti.

Shāh Behlol, a prominent man of the Qādiri Sūfi order, had visited all the sacred

places in Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Arabia. On his return he came to Lahore and spotted out Ḥusain at a mosque school. Later on he taught and trained Shāh Ḥusain and when Ḥusain was twenty-six he went back to his ancestral area in a Chiniot village which is adjacent to Dulla Bhatti's Pindi Bhattiān. He lived in Qilla Kingran and off and on came to Lahore and visited Shāh Ḥusain. In 983 A.H. Shāh Behlol died. This is the time when Dulla Bhatti was hanged and Muḥammad Ālī, son of Behlol, also slipped away from this area and took refuge in Hyderābād Deccan which was not under the direct rule of Akbar. Haider Ali of Mysore was a grandson of this Muḥammad Ali, who was a *Sipra Jat.*

It seems that Shāh Behlol was not only a link between Shāh Ḥusain and Dulla Bhatti but also a strong bond between the story of Hīr and Rānjhā and Shāh Ḥusain.

So far as Dulla Bhatti is concerned, no official record of Akbar's period ever mentioned his name. However, Nūr Aḥmad Chishti, while compiling the book *Taḥqīqāt-i- Chishti,* met the guards of Malik Ālī Kotwāl's family graveyard in Mīani Ṣāḥib in 1860. They also narrated the version given above with a small difference. They told Chishti that Dulla Bhatti was a court jester and because of his stubbornness he annoyed Akbar.

Whether being a highwayman or rebel or jester, Dulla Bhatti has been made a great hero by poets since Akbar's time. In present times Najm Husain Syed had in his drama *Takht Lahore* made him as well as Shāh Ḥusain two heroes who were fighting on physical and intellectual fronts against the tyranny of the Mughal rule. Major Ishaq Muḥammad also wrote a drama in Punjābi on Dulla Bhatti, titled *Quqnas.*

And the hero Dullah of the folk war poem says:

I lower the fortresses of the Mughals, I repulse the Waves after waves of Mughal troops.

I can raise clouds of dust and terrorise Umarkot (the birth place of Akbar).

I will kill the white lion and put his skin under my feet.

I will ride on my horse up to the enemy's lines. And I will earn lasting fame.

What mean king will ever dare to attack Dullah - the warrior.

And about Bhattis, a Persian proverb was coined which was current till the arrival of the British in the area. Mr. H. A. Rose in his *"Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjāb and Frontier"*, writes: And there is a Persian proverb which says the Dogars, the Bhattis, and the Kharls are all rebellious people and ought to be slain".

4.1.2. Lohri

Like all Indian festivals, Lohri also has some legends and lore attached to it. One of the many interesting legends is about a place that lies between Gujaranwala and Sialkot, covered by thick forest known as Rakh. The forest was the home of Dulla Bhatti, who was considered as the Robin Hood of Punjāb. This brave and generous man was always helpful to the needy. During the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar, a Hindu spread a rumour that his niece was very beautiful and would do credit to the Muslim harem. On hearing this, the Mughal officers wanted to carry her off forcibly.

The girl's father was extremely worried and sought the protection of Dulla Bhatti. Dulla at once got her married to a young Hindu boy at a simple ceremony in the forest.

He lit the sacred fire in keeping with the Hindu custom. Since there was no priest to chant the holy mantras, he broke into a hilarious song composed extempore to add cheer to the occasion. This song is sung even today on the occasion of marriage.

The song goes like this:

Sundri Mundri ḥoe, ḥoe!

Tera kon vichara! ḥoe!

Dulla Bhatti vāla! ḥoe!

Dulle dī dhī viyāhi! ḥoe!

Šīr Šakar pāī! ḥoe!

Kuri de māme āī! ḥoe!

Unāne churī kuṭi! ḥoe!

Jimīdārī luṭi! ḥoe!

Ik kolā ghuṭ gayā!

Jimidār āpni...

4.2. Sārang Khan

In August 1393, Bahādur Nāhīr of *Mewāt* attacked Delhi and plundered it up to Mehrauli. Muḥammad Shāh rushed to Mewāt and defeated Bahādur Nāhīr who fled to Firozpur Jheerka.

Soon afterwards, the Khokhars rose in rebellion in Lahore under the leadership of Shaikha Khokhar. They had been restive since the time of Firoz. But before any army could be sent to deal with him, Sulṭān Muḥammad expired. That was January 20th, 1394.

Then Humāyūn Khān, son of the deceased Sulṭān ascended the throne as Sulṭān Ālau-ud-Din Sikandar Shāh, but died within a few weeks. The *amīrs* and *maliks* of the Punjāb such as Ghālib Khān, *amir* of Sāmāna, Rāi Kamāl-ud-Dīn Miān, Mubārak Khān Hulajun and Khwās Khān, *amīr* of Indri and Karnāl, who were present at Delhi, raised Muhammad, son of Nāsir-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh, to the throne on March 23rd, 1394. He assumed the title of Sulṭān Nāsir-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh.[5]

At this point, Sārang Khan, son of Ẓafar Khān Lodhī II, was entrusted with the governorship of Dipālpur by Sulṭān Maḥmūd, who then proceeded to crush the rebellion of Shaikha Khokhar. He defeated him at a place known as Sāmuthala at a distance of 12 *kos* from Lahore.[6]

Sulṭān Maḥmūd's power was challenged by a rival king called Nāsir-ud-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh. The former held Delhi and its suburbs; the latter occupied Firozābād, besides some portions of the Doāb, south east of Delhi, Sambbal, Pānipat, Jhajjar and Rohtak. As a result, utter confusion prevailed everywhere and the *amirs* and *maliks* began to behave as kings. In 1395, Sārang Khān Lodhī, the Governor of Dipālpur, and Khiẓr Khān, the ruler of Multān, started an internecine warfare. Sārang Khan occupied Multān with the help of his brother Mallū Iqbāl Khān who wielded great power at Delhi.

Since Sārang Khan had earlier maltreated Shaikha Khokhar and had seized his territory. Shaikha Khokhar waited upon Timūr and persuaded him to invade India.

In 1419, the Punjāb once again became a trouble-spot. Surprisingly this time, the leader of the rebellion gave himself out as Sārang Khan, brother of Lāl Khān who had been the master of Lahore, Sindh, Multān and Dipālpur when Timur invaded the Punjāb.

One does not hear of him after the fall of Multān, which he had surrendered to Pīr Muḥammad, Timūr's grandson, after a long and harrowing siege. When speaking of this rising, Badāyūni asserts that he had been killed sometime earlier, whereas the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* is only interested in denying his claim. Firishta, however, makes the categorical statement that Sārang Khan had been killed during Timūr's campaign. It is rather difficult to understand how anyone could hope to reap any advantage by pretending to be Sārang Khān, especially when he had never exercised any authority over this part of the Punjāb. But Sārang Khan had at one time had Khiẓar Khan as his prisoner and that fact might have lent some prestige to the leader of a rising against Khiẓar Khān.[7]

Sārang Khān challenged Khiẓar Khān's authority at Māchhiwāra, midway between Rūpaṛ and Bajwāra, according to Yahya, Badayuni and Nizam-ud-Din, who describe it as included in the government of Jullundur. Bajwara lies 28 miles from Jullundur to the north. Had the rising had its origin there, the logical course would have been to order the governor of Jullundur to put it down. But in order to put it down, Khiẓar Khān appointed Sulṭān Shāh Lodhī to Sirhind and entrusted the work of putting down the rising to the new governor of Sirhind. What is still more important is the fact that Sārang Khan moves on to Rūpaṛ rather than to Jullundur which he would have done, had he risen to prominence at Bajwāra.

Sulṭān Shāh reached Sirhind in June 1419. Sārang Khān had now moved on to Rūpaṛ where he was able to enlist the help of the malcontents in the area. A battle was fought near Sirhind in which Sārang Khan was defeated. He was, however, able to escape to the Shivālak hills nearby via Rūpaṛ.

The Delhi forces were now augmented by those of Tughān Khān from Jālandar and Zīrak Khan from Sāmāna and by reinforcements sent under Khair-ud-Dīn. The combined forces now gathered at Rūpaṛ where Sārang Khān had appeared once again. He was defeated, but he again retired to the hills.

The Shivālak hills seemed to prove an effective barrier against any action by the Delhi force. Sārang Khān came out again in 1420. Tughān Khān, governor of *Jālandar*, now joined him. There is no honour among rebels, however, and Tughān Khān murdered Sārang Khān and in return was soon pardoned by Khiẓar Khān and restored to his position at Jālandar.[8]

4.3. Resistance in the Punjāb -1857

It is considered that the Punjāb made little contribution towards the war of 1857. Too much stress is laid by certain historians on this role. In reality they do not take into account the confessions of the British themselves that if the local forces which captured the Delhi Fort had not been erratic it would have been difficult for them to recapture India. Historical records show that the deserting armies had no clear objective and the Delhi rulers were so weak that they could not give an alternative administration in the disturbed areas. It was they who actually failed their people. The positive role of the Punjābis and the Punjāb-based British Army has been kept in low profile. As discussed earlier, the feudal lords who ruled this area never wanted to expose the disgraceful role of their forefathers. These people never allowed the Punjāb to know its history, culture and literature and the aspirations of the Punjābis who made solid contribution to the Pakistan movement.

As far as the role of the army (including the newly recruited Punjābis) stationed in the Punjāb is concerned, *The Mutiny Report, Punjāb Government Records,* (Vol, VIII, Part I and II, Lahore, 1911, says:

> At Ambāla, the incendiary fires began in March and continued at intervals until the outbreak.The sepoy guards at Phillour and Ferozepure were specially set aside by European troops.
>
> On June 8, the Jalandar Brigade had mutinied and were in full march to the Sutlej.
>
> Early in June an attempt was made in Koolloo to excite its Population to rise in rebellion against us (the Europeans). This movement was organized by one Partap Singh who pretended to be the rightful Raja or chief of principality of Koolloo.
>
> On May 3, the Mess house of 33rd Native infantry at Hoshiarpur was burnt to the ground. There is every reason to suppose that this was the act of incendiaries.
>
> On June 9, sepoys were blown from guns on the Anarkali (Lahore) parade ground for using mutinous language. Native regiments in Mian Mir had already been disarmed.
>
> On July 7, the 14th Native Infantry at Jhelum refused to give up their arms and made a violent and determined resistance.
>
> Within 48 hours of the outbreak at Jhelum the 9th Cavalry and 46th Infantry at Sialkot mutinied.
>
> On July 30 the 26n Infantry at Miān Mīr (Lahore) rose.... and went off in a

body about 11 a.m... during a dust storm.

In the meantime, the Kharls and other turbulent tribes in the Gogera (Sāhiwāl) district rose in insurrection, disarmed the police and cut off the communication with Multān... Owing to the nature and extent of the country and the paucity of troops the disturbance was not very easily put down.

No doubt the whole Punjāb was disturbed in 1857. Siālkot, Jhelum, Rāwalpindi and Ferozepur cantonments had bloodbaths but according to the Mutiny Reports the *Kharls* had cut the Punjāb into two and the British were worried about 'the resistance which they met from the unarmed Kharls, Wattoos, Qureshis and Siāls of the area who were being led by an old man, Aḥmad Khān Kharl, of Ṭoba Ṭek Singh district.

This was the man about whom the bards of the area composed *dholas*. But most of the *dholas* could not be recorded due to fear of the rulers. After more than a century, recording of oral tradition started, though in a hostile atmosphere. Neither newspapers nor radio gave any importance to this important chapter of the history of the Punjāb. The situation has not yet taken a turn for the better. The people of Faiṣalābād, Toba Tek Singh and their representatives are not aware of the importance of the part played by this son of soil, Aḥmad Khān Kharl of Jhamara. Nor do the Sāhiwāl people remember the battles fought in Gogera, Chichāwatni, Harappa and on the bank of the Rāvi.

No monuments have been raised in Ṭoba Ṭek Singh or Faisalābād in the memory of those who laid down their lives to keep alive the traditional resistance of the Punjāb against invaders and tyrants. All credit goes to the village bards who eulogized these heroes for whom no sophisticated poem came from the pen of our renowned poets.

4.4. Rāi Aḥmad Khān Kharl: Symbol of Resistance

The rebel Rājpūt tribes including Kharls, Wattoos, Sials and Bhattis were settled in Nīlī Bār in Sāhīwāl district and Sāndal Bār in Faiṣalābād, Ṭoba Ṭek Singh, Shaikhupura and Gujrānwala districts. Sāndal Bār produced Dulla Bhatti, a rebel who followed in the footsteps of Porus and Jasrat Khokhar and had a direct clash with the emperor Akbar. The same Sāndal Bār in 1857 threw up another unforgotten hero of the Punjāb, Rāi Aḥmad Khān Kharl, who led the 1857 war in this part of the country. He fired his first shot on the British in June-July and kept them on their toes till September.

> We have killed the kāfirs (the British) in broad daylight. We are happy over being sent to Kālā Pani. Happiness be your fate our country!

This was the last song of the freedom fighters of Nīlī Bār, heard on the banks of river Rāvi in 1857. Their's was the last post that fell in October 1857. No help reached them from anywhere. They fought all alone on both sides of the Rāvi. Their first encounter with the British, who had taken over from the Sikhs, was in June 1857, when the war of independence broke out in Meerut cantonment. The Mujāhids in uniform were led to Delhi. The revolt engulfed almost all the cantonments in the Punjāb (the NWFP was then part of this province). Nīlī Bār and the Muree Hills were the only civil areas where people, especially the Muslims, rose against the well-armed British.

Many songs were composed by unknown poets about the war fought during the six months in the two *bārs* (jungles). The unknown bards paid rich tributes to these heroes in the Punjābi language. But the foreign educational experts deprived the Punjābi

language of its rightful status which it had enjoyed since the days of Shahjehan. Therefore, the Punjābis at large forgot the long-drawn out wars between the East India Company and the Punjābis. They just forgot their proud contribution to the 1857 effort. They were forced to remember only the part played by a few hand-picked Punjābi quislings. These hand-picked men (Muslims, Hindus and the Sikhs) were made 'Chiefs of the Punjāb'.

> The real chiefs of the Punjāb like Aḥmad Khān Kharl, Nādir Qureshi, Sārang, Mamūd, Nathu Kāthia, Wali Dād Mardāna, Bābā Nigāhi, Amānat Ali Chishti, Suja Bhadroo, Jallā Tarhāna, Mokha Vāhniwal and many others were forgotten by all but the unknown poets who composed 'dholas' in which they recorded almost all the events of that turbulent period. These songs are still heard on both banks of the Rāvi, in the close vicinity of Harappa, the remnant of the oldest civilisation of the land of five rivers. No serious attempt has ever been made to collect this poetic record of a glorious chapter the history of Punjāb.

The only reason is that this would have lowered the status of the 'Punjāb Chiefs' who were the creation of the British. Who among the Kharls could give supporting voice to Aḥmad Khān Kharl who said to Mr. Berkeley:

> The Kharls have been doing battle with the previous governments. Ranjīt Singh avoided confrontation with them. He used to bypass their areas. Their tribal leader, Mirzā - hero of a Punjābi love story

> Mirzā Ṣāhībān - was murdered by the Siāls. The Kharls cleared their accounts with the Siāls. They attacked the Siāl territory and destroyed them. They also engaged Akbar the king. And they never wavered in the battlefield. They snatched the wealth of Alexander the Great and never surrendered it back".[9]

This chivalrous tradition of the Kharls had produced Aḥmad Khān Kharl of *Jhāmara* (a village in district Ṭoba Ṭek Singh), who was the popular leader of the areas on both sides of the Ravi. In 1857, he was in his seventies. He was a terror in his youth. Ranjeet Singh never challenged his autonomy. The Mahārāja once took some Kharl prisoners, immediately Aḥmad Khān Kharl went to him and secured their release.

The British wanted to subdue these 'trouble-making' tribes. They asked the tribal chiefs to provide them with horses and recruits. This was resented by these chiefs including Aḥmad Khān Kharl:

> The Englishman Berkely says: 'provide them with horses and men, Rāi Aḥmad, and I will secure a citation for you from London. Rāi Aḥmad says: No one in his life ever shares wives, land, and mares with others. Aḥmad and Sārang refused point-blank and went back to their village, Jhamara.

That annoyed the English rulers. They gave them chase. But both Aḥmad and Sārang were on a mission to muster support for a massive attack on their foreign adversaries. They were not in *Jhāmara.* Capt. Elphinstone and Berkely (EAC) jointly crossed the Rāvi and put Jhāmara to the torch. An unknown poet says:

> The British have burnt down tenements on both banks of the Rāvi. Then

they came to the dwelling of a *faqīr* which was also set on fire. They say:

"We have to burn down Jhāmara and bulldoze the town.

Jhāmara, residence of Aḥmad Khān Kharl, stood the wrath of the masters but he stood his ground.

Aḥmad was above the average – both bold and crafty. He was the man who roused the tribes. All the important tribes of the Rāvi rose. The first real precursor of the storm that was brewing occurred on the night of July 26th in the shape of an outbreak in the Gogera District jail. This appears to have been in all probability the work of Aḥmad Khān. Reliable information was received to the effect that Aḥmad with a large body of Wattoos had retreated into the jungle near Gashkori, some six miles south of Gogera. Capt. Black was sent with a detachment of cavalry to destroy them. He was joined by Lt. Chichester. A sharp skirmish took place in which the cavalry had to retreat. They were however rallied and Aḥmad together with Sārang, chief of the Begka Kharls, was killed.

> In the name of God the Kharl rides his horse. Says Rāi Aḥmad: nobody must waver. Draw your swords and advance. This is the real test for real men. That day the British Army was mauled. Rebels have shown their mettle. The British Army was forced to retreat through barren lands.

There are traces of their retreat which can he seen.Today almost all Punjābis have forgotten the great struggle their forefathers put up against the invaders from the East as well as the West.

4.5. Murād Fatiāna

As discussed earlier, the history of many of the heroes hailing from the areas of Pakistan is not known to many. Someone somewhere can still find a clue to the lost chapters in our history. One unknown, unsung hero of northern areas has been traced by Syed Muḥammad Abbās Kāẓmi who has collected the folk songs of Baltistān. One of the songs is about Teestey Murād, a seventeenth century hero. Another Murād is from the plains of central Punjāb, *Murād Dalīl-da* (Murād, son of Dalīl) who was the trusted lieutenant of Aḥmad Khān Kharl, who rose against the new foreign masters of the Punjāb in 1857. In November of 1857, when Murād was being transported from Sāhiwāl areas to the Andamān Islands (*Kālā Pāni*), he sang:

> We have to face whatever is our fate. But you will never again
> hold your court in Gogera
> They were fettered and put aboard on river boats.
> Murad says:
> We have killed our enemies in broad-day light.
> We are happy over that
> May you live long and prosper, our country.[10]

The record is silent about what happened to Murād Fatiāna after he had been arrested and sent to Andaman. But his end can be imagined.

Murād Fatiāna a Mahini Siāl of Garh Fatiāna of Ṭoba Ṭek Singh belonged to the tribe of Ṣāhībān, the ill-fated heroine of the popular legend. Aḥmad Khān Kharl, the leader of the rebels of 1857, belonged to the tribe of Mirzā the hero of the above

mentioned story. When Ṣāhībān eloped with Mirzā and Mirzā was murdered by her brothers, the tribes had a bloody battle in which the Kharls emerged victorious. The town of Mahini Siāls, Khīvā, was ransacked and totally destroyed by the Khāns. From that time the two tribes were never on good terms with each other. They came a little bit closer when in the Sikh period Aḥmad Khān Kharl got some Mahini Siāls released from the custody of Ranjīt Singh. Rāi Aḥmad was a respected senior elder of the areas on both sides of the river Rāvi. When the Meerut mutiny started and many jails were broken, Shamoo of Dherkey, who had been held in the Āgra jail, came to this area and called on Rāi Aḥmad Khān.

Shamoo Dherkey told Rai Aḥmad what had happened in Delhi and around after the armed uprising against the English rulers. The District Gazetteer of Montgomery says. Emissaries from Delhi appeared before the end of May to have crossed the river from the direction of Sirsa and Hissar - news of the Meerut mutiny and massacre and of the disarmament of the native troops at Mīan Mīr reached Gogera via Lahore on the 18th May. Aḥmad was a bold and crafty man. In 1848, he had induced Dhara Singh of the Gogera Nakkai to hold Satgharā against the English. It was this man who roused the tribes:

> And one of the *dhola* says:
>
> Rāi Aḥmad has called the meeting of the elders of the Hairo, Kāthia, Vāhniwal, Māhini Siāl, Baghela, Wattoo and Kharl tribes.

Rāi Aḥmad sought after their collaboration and help to fight against the English. But the elders from some tribes were not ready to face the might of the foreigners.

"They warn Rāi Aḥmad who is out to face the English.

You are challenging the Government.

They had dethroned Rājā Ranjīt Singh.

They have subdued Mūlrāj (of Multān) by force

They have plundered his coffers.

But Rāi Aḥmad refused to listen to them and the Kāthias, Wattoos, and some sections of Kharls and Siāls, and Vāhniwals committed their support to him. Murād of Gaṛh Fatiāna was one of them. Rāi Aḥmad says: "I know more about the British. They had 37% share in the collection of Pīr Bahāul Haq Zakarya. They invaded Multān. The Nawāb of Bahāwalpur has recognized them. In Hindustān, rulers of Bekanīr have also given them 37% share." And he says:

> The first real precursor of the storm that was brewing occurred on the night of July 26th in the shape of an outbreak in the Gogera jail. This appears to have been in all probability the work of Aḥmad Khān, as he had managed with the connivance of the Dārogha to pay an unauthorized visit to the jail during June, when he no doubt conferred with the more turbulent of its inmates. The outbreak in the jail was promptly suppressed, 51 prisoners were wounded and killed.

Rāi Aḥmad and many other chiefs were detained in Gogera at an earlier stage of the War of Independence. On the banks of the river Rāvi his followers continued creating

trouble. And one day Rāi Aḥmad again escaped. He crossed the river. Berkely, the Extra Assistant Commissioner, gave chase but failed to catch him. In anger he looted and burnt the village Jhāmara of Rāi Aḥmad.

Rāi Aḥmad with Sārang and Murād tried to win the support of the tribes of the right bank of the river Rāvi. He succeeded in organizing a sizeable force to reckon with the English. In the meanwhile his opponent and a Kharl patronized by the British, Sarfrāz Khān of Kamālia, "on the night of September 16 informed Capt. Elphinstone that all the chiefs of the Rāvi tribes who had been called to Kamālia had fled evidently with the intention of rising in their villages."[11]

To quell the turbulent tribes under the leadership of Rāi Aḥmad, about 10 different detachments were sent under the command of Col. Paton, Captain Black, Lieutenant Chichester, Capt. Elphinstone, Mr. Berkely, Captain Chamberlain, Lieutenant Neville, Captain Snow and Captain MacAndrew. They all were after the head of Rāi Aḥmad Khān Kharl. On 21st Sept, "a sharp skirmish took place in which the cavalry had to retreat. They however, rallied and Aḥmad together with Sārang, chief of the Begke Kharls, was killed."

Aḥmad had refused to attack a Government post in Syedwāla (Shaikhūpura) because it was manned by native sepoys. Throughout his armed struggle his target was the English and that was the motto of all of his lieutenants including Murād Fatiāna.

When Aḥmad was martyred his head was severed and brought to Gogera jail where it was put on display. This was an added insult. After three days one of his dare devil companions stole the head and it was buried in his ancestral graveyard.

After the death of Rāi Aḥmad, Murād Fatiāna Siāl became desperate. He declared that, come what may, he would kill the well-armed English commander and do the same with his dead body that they had done with the body of Rāi Aḥmad. Murād continued the struggle launched by Rāi Aḥmad and Sārang. He declared:

With the fall of Aḥmad

Britain has tried to lower the head of the Punjāb

Berkely says, we have... clamped the mouths of the chiefs

We are riding with chafing bits rough-shod on their backs

Some have been killed

While others' noses have been bored and nailed

This taunt made by Berkely,

Is no less than a sword-cut

Taunts hurt the chiefs

As a spark burns through silk

After hearing this taunt,

The Fatiānas of Gaṛh have sounded the war drum

Murād Fatiāna says to (Sāvi) his mare:

I have given you unprecedented service

I have given you the best to eat.

Take me once to English Berkely

I want to smash his black baggi into smithereens.

The Mare says: In the Name of Allah mount my back

I will fly.

And the golden headgear of the English falls.

Murad pierces Berkely

He falls from his horse as a dyer loops out a skein from his cauldron.

News of the death of Berkely is heard in London.

They mourn his death and beat their bare heads in sorrow.

The English women weep and wail and say:

Our commander of twelve companies has been slain.

The Jats have plundered the palace.

And it says:

> By the 4th November insurrection was over. The leaders were executed or transported and many persons sentenced to other punishments. Over four lakhs of rupees were realized from the insurgent tribes by fine or by confiscation and sale of property.[12]

4.6. Niẓām Lohār: The Rebel of Society

The policy of the British Rāj in the Punjāb was to encourage and to develop in rural areas, landed gentry (including members of old nobility) who would be strictly loyal to the British.

The landed gentry consisted of 'loyalists', as the Government called them

'moderates' as they called themselves 'sycophants', as their opponents called them. This was the position at the turn of the 19th century. It is not so difficult to guess how the common man or to be more precise the worker was suffering at the hands of the high powered officers and their subordinates as well as of landed gentry, so endeared to the British.

Niẓām Lohār of Amritsar district, Jewana Mor of Sangroor State, Jabrū Nāi of Lahore and Chīrāgh Māchhi and many others, were the products of these particular conditions. Whatever they were called and whichever end they met, they were loved and respected by their class as heroes.

Niẓām Lohār was born in village Sohal in Amritsar district. By profession he was a blacksmith. He joined the British army as an ordinary sepoy or a blacksmith at the monthly salary of six rupees. During military service, he was abused by a British officer. Niẓām could not take it lying down. He physically attacked the officer, murdered him and fled with whatever arms were easily available to him.

After killing a British officer it was no longer possible for Niẓām to return to his native village or to a routine life. The 'crime' he had committed could only lead him to the gallows, or the firing squad. He had no other way but to join the outlaws of his own area. He joined the Cheeto-Meeto band of Ferozepur district. Chait Singh and Milkeet Singh were active supporters of the Babbar Akali Tehrik which clearly showed that they were labelled as dacoits and they were declared offenders. However, they had their own political direction. Niẓām was welcomed by the group which still used old arms like swords and spears and Lohār was a master craftsman at these. The second point was that

only those who were declared absconders were accepted by such gangs which were comprised usually of people who had reached a point of no return. Before Niẓām and Cheeto and Meeto there was another big name in the underworld. He was Jewana Mor.

Niẓām, the blacksmith, joined Cheeto Meeto who was hiding in a jungle on the banks of the Sutlej in Ferozepur district. They were joined by Nadiri Bhatti, Jabroo, Sunder, Tehla and many others. They were together for almost ten years. Then Lohār and his friends shifted to the *Bingotha jungle*. Earlier, a devastating plague had taken a heavy toll and many young men died. Anyhow after shifting to Lahore district he had with him Nadiri Bhatti, Prema Sansi of Badhoke and Lachhman Singh of Jabha (Kasur), Jabroo Nāi of Jahman (Lahore), Ghumma and Deeva of Qan (Kasur), Chīrāgh Māchhi of Sureej (Kasur), Sunder and Nathoo Mehra. Here again they renewed their pledge to loot and plunder only the money-lenders, supporters of the Government and face the Establishment squarely. Whatever they would get the larger portion of it would be distributed among the poor and the destitute. The story of Jabrū Nāi or "barber" reflects the Niẓām's popularity and inclination to help the poor and the destitute.

Jabrū Nāi or "barber" belonged to the village of Jahman situated on the outskirts of the Lahore cantonment. Village barbers also used to serve as match-makers. Jabrū had gone to another village on a match-making assignment. In his absence, a young Sikh landlord tried to molest Jabrū's young wife. Though the miscreant could not succeed, he left reason enough behind on which anyone could take the law in his own hands. In those days, these areas were dominated by Sikh landlords who had made their fortunes during the Sikh period. Therefore, for a menial like Jabrū it was difficult to face the landlord.

On his return, Jabrū was told what the landlord's son had tried to do. Because almost the whole village was witness to the incident, the elder brother of the culprit and his wife came to Jabrū and apologized on behalf of the absconder.

Jabrū listened to his wife. He also listened to the culprit's brother but did not reply. He made no commitment except that as per custom he gave a Joṛā (dress) to the Sikh lady who had come with her husband to apologise. After that he went straight to Niẓām Lohār.

Jabrū put the matter before Niẓām and sought his help. Should he accept the apology or should he not? If not, what should he do? Niẓām saw that Jabrū was injured and insulted by a landlord and landlords considered their workers as their slaves, who thought they were at liberty to rape women of the working class at will and no one had the right to object. It was not for the serf to seek justice. Niẓām was also injured and insulted in the same way. He himself had killed a British officer, deserted the army, taken refuge in the jungle and lived the life of an outlaw.

If Jabrū and his wife had been in a state of mind where compromise was possible, Niẓām might have asked Jabrū to go back and accept the landlord's apology. Even the most feared outlaws secretly cherish the desire for a settled life which, unfortunately, is not possible.

> Both Niẓām, Jabrū and their other comrades raided the Jahman village late at night.
>
> They murdered the accused zamīndar.
>
> Then they went to the wife of Jabrū.

They asked her to have a good sleep

No one would now dare to cast dirty looks on you.

Now Jabrū also joined Niẓām's gang and shifted to Bingotha. The next operation of the group was in village *Rukanpur* of Kasūr. The money-lending family here had "legally" plundered hundred of poor farmers. The police, revenue officials and the courts were all on its side. The family's area of operation was extended up to Ghawindi (now the last town on the Indo-Pakistan border in Lahore district). The poet says:

> The Shāhs (money-lenders) of the area were afraid of Niẓām Lohār. They had made invincible security arrangements. Niẓām with his colleagues went up to Rukanpur. He called the men who were on guard duty for the money-lender. He asked them to hold his horse's reins. He went inside. Opened the safe and asked his men that all the account books should be collected. These books would be burnt.

Niẓām's operation was successful. After burning the account books, they safely returned to the base. The wealth from the money-lender's house was distributed among the poor people of the Mājha and Sāndal Bār areas in which this group was operating.

The Lohār is a much honoured man

Even the trees pay respect to him

He has a group of eighteen warriors

And like Dulla Bhatti he is also a rebel

When Niẓām's group was active in Kasūr sub-division the police was also

looking for him. Many spies were deployed to unearth him. *Zaildārs, lambardārs* and other "respected" citizens were given arms. All the members of the Niẓām group were declared proclaimed offenders. Among the spies one was Sigri Wattoo. He had another poor relative, Bāhli Wattoo. The Niẓām group was also conscious of this fact that no one within reach was spared. Bāhli Wattoo was a poor man but in the hope that he might get a big cash prize if he could help police trace the outlawed group or any of its members. Therefore, he accompanied his relative Sigri Wattoo on spying missions off and on.

Nathoo Mehra and Ghasīta Chohra of Niẓām's group were told that Bāhli was also after them. One day, they raided Bāhli's house and took away some jewellery and cloths which were to be given as dowry to his daughter who was to be married soon.

Bāhli was shocked. He went to some respectable citizens of the area who were somehow in touch with Niẓām. One of them was Nathoo Khān Bhatti. Bhatti approached Niẓām and narrated what his men had done with Bāhli Wattoo. His daughter had been deprived of her dowry.

Bāhli was not hopeful. But one day an armed group stopped in his courtyard. Niẓām Lohār came down from his horse, apologized to Bāhli Wattoo and invited him and his family to lunch.

The next day, Bāhli and her wife went to Niẓām's lunch. Niẓām exchanged his *pagrt* (turbin) with Bāhli. He was given what was his and apart from that a handsome amount in cash was also given for the marriage of his daughter.

One of Niẓām's friends, Deeva Singh Mān, went to attend a marriage in his maternal village. Kasīr Sing or Kaiser Singh of village Bhichoke informed the police and Mān was

arrested when he was going back to his destination. The Niẓām group was planning how to get Deeva Singh Mān released. In the meanwhile, Chīrāgh Māchhi and Jabrū Nāi were deputed to kill the informer Kasīr Singh.

Chīrāgh Mācchi lenda wal Kasīr Singh Nu

Puchda kidhar gae o tere yār sipāhi

Translation:

Chirāgh Macchi got hold of Kasīr Singh and

then asked him "where have your

friends, policemen, gone?"

Jabrū and Chirāgh had killed the informer who got a fifty-rupee reward from the Government but Mān was in jail and his release had to be secured.

Niẓām had close relations with impermissible political groups active in the Punjāb including Babbar Akali. Modern arms and ammunitions were procured. The terrorists from other districts of the Punjāb also arrived and the Kasur Jail was stormed suddenly. The jail staff and police on duty were no match for Niẓām and his men. Jail-break was child's play after the police had run away for fear of life. A wall was also broken and most of the prisoners fled, Deeva Singh Man was naturally among them. After that, all of them were again declared proclaimed offenders and handsome cash awards offered for information leading to their arrest. More police was sent to the area. Many feudal lords were appointed honorary magistrates. Informers and accomplices were given cash awards and large tracts of crown land.

The Kasūr jail incident recalls to memory another assault on a prison under the command of Aḥmad Khān Kharl. It was Gogera jail and the year was 1857.

The War of Independence started in the Punjāb when the fall of the Mughals in Delhi was almost complete and the situation was firmly under British control. In Sāhiwal, it started from the district jail, Gogera, from where Kharl got the best manpower.

After the Kasūr jail operation, the administration was put on alert in Lahore Ferozepur and Amritsar districts. Therefore, the best thing for the group to do was to lie low for a while. Nadiri Bhatti told the gang that some of his colleagues had been arrested, sentenced and imprisoned in Bikāner. It was time they went there and secured their release.

Meanwhile, Niẓām Lohar attacked another police station from where he picked up police uniforms. The gang put on police uniforms and proceeded to Bikāner. Niẓām crossed the Sutlej from Sulemānki at the head of his band of daredevils to Bikāner through Bahāwalnagar. Whatever they planned and how they planned and executed, met with complete success. Niẓām lost Ghumma Singh Mān in an encounter with the Suba (the bodyguard of the Mahārāja of Bikāner). Ṣūba was killed by Jabrū. They broke jail and freed their friends.

Whatever they brought from Bikāner was distributed among the poor, needy and the handicapped. Jabroo dug a well in Jahman and Niẓām constructed a seraey in his village Sohal which was intact till 1947.

4.7. Critique and Final Words

Dulla Bhatti, Niẓām Lohār, Jabrū Nāi, Malangi Faqīr and other such people are known as dacoits and they will continue to be known as such because they do not belong to any "respectable family." They were poor village workers, the slaves of the land-holding families, money-lenders, and their masters in police, revenue and other departments. They might not have been conscious enemies of the social set up but what they did in the direction in which they moved proved that they were against the *status quo*. They revolted against the high-handedness of the ruling classes. They had no respect for established values. They may be called misfits. But what made them misfits? The injustice meted out to the lower rungs of society to which they belonged. To revolt against any type of injustice is politics purer than the politics of the multi-class political parties. So far the lowest class is bound to make a Lohār, a Nāi and a farmer their hero. This is a fact and no one from the permissible side can deny it.

Notes

[1] Khan, Nazar . *Punjabi Heroes that History Forgot*, 2003.

[2] Khan, Raja Afsar,The concept, Volume 24, Issues 7-12, 2004.

[3] Shafqat Tanveer Mirza, *Resistance themes in Punjabi literature (Lahore*: Sang-e-meel publications, 1992) p.43.

[4] Peter Malcolm Holt, *The Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.3.

[5] Yahya ibn Ahmad Sirhindi, Muhammad Hidayat Husayn, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* (Bibliotheca indica, 1931) p. 142.

[6] Fauja Singh, *History of the Punjab* (Patiala: Punjabi university 1972) p. 162.

[7] Op.cit, p. 188.

[8] Op.cit, p. 193

[9] Mirza, Op.cit, P.102.

[10] Mirza, op.cit, p.107

[11] Mirza, op.cit, p.110

[12] Mirza, op.cit, 113

Chapter 5

Romantic Tales of the Indus Valley

The folk heritage of the Punjāb has thousands of years of history. There are a number of folk tales which are popular in different parts of Punjāb. These are the folk tales of Mirzā Ṣāhibān, Saiful Malūk, Yūsuf Zulaikhān, Hīr Rānjhā, Sohni Mahinwāl, Dulla Bhatti, Rājā Rasālu, Pūran Bhaghat, and Sassi Punnū. The mystic folk songs include the *kāfees* of Khwāja Ghulām Farīd in Seraiki, Punjābi and ashloks by Bābā Farīd Shakar Ganj. They also include *baits*, *dohras*, *loris*, *sehra*, and *jugni*. The most famous of the romantic love songs are *Māhiāh* and *Dhamāl*, *Jhoomar*, *Bhangṛā* and *Luddī*. Punjābi romantic dances include *Giddha*, *Dhola* and *Summi*.

Punjāb has always combated invaders. Therefore, the truth of life became a reality like blood in one's veins. All this inculcated in the lovers of Punjāb not only an appreciation and periscopic sense of beauty but also the courage to live life. The action became two dimensional: while, on one hand, mortal love gained the stature of worship of God; on the other hand, it lent courage to defy religious constraints.

The beautiful truth is that for centuries the *saga* of the folk lovers which immortalizes the memory of Hīr, Sohni, Ṣāhibān, Sassī, and others has been handed down from generation to generation. Their memories are still alive as they had died for love and not because their lovers had died for them at the altar of love. They rebelled against the conventional norms of society. These women who loved did not treasure their body or soul: they sacrificed everything for love. The roots of this philosophy are

embedded in the poetry of Wāris Shāh, who believed that the world existed on love. He says:

Be thankful to God

For making love the root of the world;

First he himself loved

Then he made the prophets

His beloved ones.

It is this belief which endowed the woman of Punjāb with a romantic soul and filled it with the conviction of truth and gave her the courage to speak. Therefore we do not come across any love story which portrays a woman pining to death or quietly nursing her love within her bosom. In all the love tales the women are volatile and have dynamic characters.

5.1. Contribution of Sufi Saints

The Sufi cult is akin to mysticism. It is believed in some quarters that it was born out of the interaction between Semitic Islam and Aryan Vedantism on the soil of India. This is not the whole truth. Ṣūfism took its birth in Arabia in the 9th century. However, the Aryan perceptions in Iran and then in India influenced it a great deal, more particularly, in accentuating the emotional content as against the dry-as-dust self-denial of the Arabs. The Arabs laid stress on asceticism and torturing the body, while the later Ṣūfis in Iran and India under the influence of Greek philosophy, Platonic ideology, Christian faith, Vedantist thinking, Buddhist lore, etc. believed in leading an emotionally

rich life. They drank and danced and advocated that physical love can sublimate itself into spiritual love. They had faith in God; they loved the Prophet but they maintained that the *murshid* or *guru* could also lead to the Divine Reality.[19]

Literally speaking, a Sufi is one who is pure or one who goes about with a woollen blanket. In Greek, he is a Sūfi who is enlightened. According to the Sūfi, the seakers for truth by intensive "inwardness" can rise by successive stages of exaltation to a state, where they can actually have a vision of the divine essence. The stages are: 1 Resolve (niyyat) 2 penitence (tauba) 3 Striving (Mujāhida) 4, Soul presents itself in absolute surrender to God (Muḥāzara) 5 Lifting the veil (Mukāshafa) 6 Vision (Mushāhada). The entranced soul stands in the presence of truth itself and light falls distinctly on the "Human heart". (Syed Ameer Ali, the spirit of Islam, London, 1965, P.475)

Ghazzāli divides creation into two categories: the Visible and the Invisible. The Visible world (Ȧlam al-Mulk) is the world of matter. The invisible has two categories: 1 (Ȧlam al-Jabarūt) 2, (Ȧlam al-Malakūt). Angels and forces of nature live in Ȧlam al-Jabarūt. Ȧlam al-Malkūt is near to divine essence where souls live. [20]

The practitioners of the Ṣūfi cult came to India following the Muslim conquerors, more with a view to propagating Islam. There came to be established several centres at Lahore, Pākpattan, Kasūr, Multān and Uch in the Punjāb. However, the most popular sects among them were those who combined in themselves the best of every faith and promoted it amongst the people. Bullah Shāh, the noted Sufi poet, belonged to this group.

The Ṣūfis loved God as one would love one's sweetheart. God for them is the

husband and the human being His wife. The man must serve, love, undergo asceticism, gain enlightenment and then get merged in God. The Indian Sūfis laid stress on repeating the name (*japu*), concentration (*dhyān*) and meditation (*habs-i-dam*). A Ṣūfi must eschew sin, repent, live a simple and contented life and should look for the grace of the *murshid* or the *guru*. The Ṣūfis maintain that the soul has been separated from the Divine Reality and the supreme mission of life is to achieve reunion with God.

Punjāb, the land of five rivers, is very fortunate in having developed and cherished, since centuries, a long and glorious, tradition of a composite culture. It seems to have been evolved and enriched by a galaxy of God-intoxicated men who belonged to various faiths and creeds, such as Ṣūfi *fakīrs*, Hindu saints and Sikh *gurus*. Their mystical songs, in particular, are the pride of the whole Punjāb and form a common and invaluable heritage of all Punjāb. The lyrical effusions of those men, incidentally, gave birth to a distinct stream of the poetry of this land, called *Sufi kavya-dhara*, which inherits a rich and long literary tradition. The content and form, scope and standard as well as the flow of masterly beauty of Farid Bani, is a proof of this *'dhara'* having been in vogue about seven centuries ago. It was developed by Shāh Ḥusain during the sixteenth century and raised to its pinnacle by Bullah Shāh during the eighteenth century. Its downfall began after Hāshim Shāh during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was, however, kept flowing by Maulvī Ghulām Rasūl, Syed Mirān Shāh and Khawāja Ghulām Farīd during the next few decades.

Most of all major poets of Punjāb have, more or less, been influenced by it. Its influence on the Non-Muslim mystic poets of the first half of the twentieth century viz. Sant Rein, Sādhu Dayā Singh, Paul Singh Ārif, Mān Singh Kālidās and Kishan Singh

'Ārif is quite evident. Even the poets of the modern period, including Bhāi Vīr Singh (1872-1957), have also imbibed its impact.[21]

Shaikh Farīdad-din, (1173-1265) was the first Ṣūfi poet who sang of his insatiable hunger for the love of the Lord in works of immortal beauty. Farīd's message had a wide humanitarian base and a broad human approach. In an age marked by the great brutality, he brought the touch of humanity and fellow feeling to all. Farīd was also the first poet of Punjāb and Punjābi who used the symbol of human relationship between wife and husband to express his longings for union with the Divine.

The *kāfīs* (lyrics) of Shāh Ḥusain (1538-1599), the popular romantic Ṣūfi saint of Lahore added to Ṣūfi poetry its peculiar element of *masti* (rapture) and introduced enraptured dancing and passionate signing. Ḥusain was also the first Ṣūfi poet of Punjābi who adopted the popular measure of *Kāfi* to express his mystic ideas. The credit of introducing the element of the popular love-legends of Punjāb (*Hīr Rānjhā and Sohni Mahinwāl*) to Ṣūfi verse and utilizing their persons, places, motifs and incidents as images, metaphors and allegories etc. also goes to him.

Sulṭān Bāhū (1629-1691) one of the greatest mystics of India, who belonged to district Jhang, adopted the verse-form of *Siḥarfi* (arostic) for the expression of his sentiments, ending every line of his verse with a lyrical tone of exquisite charm, pronounced as '*hū*'. It was he who, preferred *'Ishq'* (love) not only to *'Aqal'* (wisdom) but also to '*Īmān*' (faith).

He wrote about 140 books in Persian including *Dīwān Bāhū, Akal Bedār, Shams-ul-Aarifin, Moḥkam-ul-Fakar, Ain-ul-Fakar and Miftah-ul-Aarifin.* He also composed

some Siḥarfis in Punjābi included in *Abyat-i-Bahu*. He is the second eminent Ṣūfi poet of the 17th century. In every verse composed by him, the word hū occurs at the end. It may be an abbreviation of his own name or it may be a derivative from *Ḥaq* meaning God. He does not want to remain in religious bondage, therefore, he does not like the high gates of religion; he even likes the small inlet leading towards God:

The letter Mīm - The gates of religions are high and

The Pathway of God is narrow like a small hole"

We pass away, in secrecy, from the Pandits and Mullahs,

They put obstacles and restrictions in the path of the Faithful,

Bāhū,

Let us go and reside there, where there are no other claimants.

The poet revolts against the traditional path and adopts the path of love, which can be realized through the grace of the *Guru (Murshid)*. The path of love is different from the path described in the religious books:

The letter Pe - Studying a thousand books, people become

scholars,

But they do not know the letter of Love and are thus misled,

If the Lover sees once, he visualizes *lakhs* of stars,

But if a scholar sees many times, he does not realize anything.

There is a lot of distance between Love and scholarship,

a gap of hundreds of miles,

Those who have not purchased the Love they do not receive

respect in both the worlds.

The Murshid of Bāhū is the Prophet himself, through whose grace he reads the *Kalimah* of his heart like a True Lover and visualizes the Lord nearby.

Syed Bullah Shāh (1680-1758), was the most famous Ṣūfi poet of Punjāb. Bullah asserted his commitment forcefully and longed for his visit so feelingly, as under:

You are just a herdsman for the folk,

People call you by the name of Rānjhā.

But for me you are my religion and my faith.

O come and do enter my courtyard.

Bullah's earlier verses expressed theological ideas of Islam. But when he turned a pantheist under the influence of *Vedanta and Sikhism*, he became so convinced of God's omnipresence and integrity of the universal soul that he began to experience and express that sort of cosmopolitan joy which knows no limits and divisions. Bullah had also taken then the path of reconciliation and talked of peace and unity among the adherents of various faiths and denominations.

Syed Ali Ḥaider (1690-1785) of Multān, was the first Ṣūfi who poetized Hīr Rānjhā in the form of a *Qissa* (long narration), entitled *Qissa Hīr va Rānjhā*, and added thereby a new tributary to the stream of Punjābi Ṣūfi poetry. His *Abyāt* (verses) are known for their grace, poetic flow and play with words. The first letter of the alphabet, viz. *Alif, stands for Allah (God)* and the *letter Mīm for Muḥammad*, the prophet. While Bullah talked of the agony of Punjāb in some of his verses, Ḥaider grieved over the lot of

Hindustān. Referring to the invasion, slaughter and plunder of Nādir Shāh in 1739, he reproached and cursed all those who were responsible for the loss and distress suffered by India and Indians.

Fard Faqīr (1729-1790) who lived during the same time in Gujrāt, also reproached the rulers of the day. But he did so, in verses as the following, for their ill treatment of labours and workers belonging to various professions.

Being rulers they sit on carpets

And tyrannize the people.

They call the workers 'menials'

And keep on even sucking their blood.

His *kasab Nāma* broke a new ground by describing the process of wearing cloth for expressing his Ṣūfistic ideas and beliefs. In his Siḥarfi, Fard did not spare even the ever hostile *'Ulamā* (doctors of law and religion) by expressing their hypocrisy and observing that "it hardly avails if an ass is loaded with books". Punjābi ṣūfī poetry got a new fillip with the advent of Syed Hāshim Shāh (1735-1843), a highly learned, prolific and multilingual writer who flourished during the Sikh supremacy in Punjāb and who has been mentioned in terms of esteem even by eminent Western scholars.

In Punjābi, he versified the popular love-tragedies of Punjāb to describe and acclaim the *'Kamāl Ishq'* (perfect love) of their heroes and heroines (viz. Sassi & Punnū, Hīr & Rānjhā, Sohni & Mahinwāl, Shīrīn & Farhād).

Among the later Ṣūfis of Punjāb, Syed Ghulām Jīlānī Rohtaki (1749-1819) gave a deep Vedantic touch to his verses. Maulvī Ghulām Rasūl, (1813-1874), took refuge under

the tragic romance of Sassi Punnū to sing his own emotions and pangs of separations.

Syed Karam Ālīm Shāh (19th Century) contributed musical *Khayāls* (thoughts) and *loris* (Lullabies) of Ṣūfi effusions to this lore. "The musical tunes in which he expressed his sentiments of Divine Love, are popular all over Punjāb and more so in Sikh circles. Sometimes he employs even the works peculiar to the Sikh social and religious literature".

Syed Mirān Shāh (1830-1913) of Jālandhar like Syed Hāshim Shāh also symbolized his mystic experience through love legends, his *'Guldasta'* contains a large numbers of *Kāfis*, *Ghazals*, *Baramah* & *Satvara.*

Syed Mīr Ḥusain of Dinjwan, (Gurdāspur) best conveys the allegorical interpretations of Sassi Punnū, in his version entitled (*Bāgh-e-Muḥabbat*, that is, the Garden of Love.) He interpreted almost all the characters, motives, sites, and situations of the tale in metaphorical and metaphysical terms. For him Sassi, instead of being the daughter of someone named Ādam Jām was in fact, the human soul itself, and Punnū as the object of union of divine love, herdsmen as mediators of this union etc.

Sāīn Yatīm Shāh, another popular Ṣūfi of the Punjāb (Distt. Gurdāspur) had versified the same love relations, "In order to convey its purport to the lovers by presenting in it the struggle between body and the soul, Yatīm Shāh in this *Qissa* has woven the beads of mysticism, preached virtuous and moral values to all communities and has explained the way of ignoring worldly things and coming into living contract with the almighty.

Like the Iranian Ṣūfis who sang the praises of Yūsuf Zulaikhā, Laila Majnūn and

Shīrīn Farhād, the Ṣūfis in the Punjāb idealized the romances of Hīr Rānjhā, Sohni Mahinwāl and Sassi Punnū. Preoccupied with the metaphysical, they resorted to the use of symbols drawn from the everyday life around them like the spinning-wheel, Persian wheel, boat, dowry, etc. As poets they employed kāfi, bāramāh, athwāra, siḥarfi, *doha*, and *baint* as their favourite poetic forms. Their language is simple and conversational, light and lyrical. There is no denying that they made an indelible impression on the life and thinking of the people of the Punjāb[22]. As a matter of fact, the Ṣūfi saints and poets of Punjāb contributed so much and so well not only to the linguistic, literary and cultural heritages of Punjāb, they also identified themselves, intrinsically, with its land and people.

5.1.1. Blossoming Punjābi Literature

In one and a half century between the death of Aurangzeb (1707) and the seizure of the Punjāb by the British, the social, economic, and political development of the country proceeded towards increasing national consolidation. It is only natural that this process should have had a beneficial effect upon cultural life. Every aspect of it experienced a period of blossoming. This applies equally to literature. As observed earlier, the most outstanding Punjābi writers belong to the 18th and early 19th century - Bullah Shāh (1680-1752), Wāris Shāh (1735-1784), Hāshim Shāh (1751-1821) and Ahmad Yār (1768-1840). The main merit of their literary attainments is that they gave ultimate moulding to Punjābi literary tradition, and created the foundation on which the edifice of a national Punjābi literature was erected by writers and poets of the period in which the peoples of

India fought for national independence. One of the symptoms of the Mughal Empire's disintegration was the strengthening of various tendencies directed against orthodox Islam. Ṣūfism in particular was revitalized. [23]

Sufi literature was most characteristically represented by Bullah Shāh. He was born in 1680 into a family of landowners. He received a thorough education, and became a Ṣūfi under the impact of circumstances obscure as yet, and against the will of his kinsfolk. According to implications in Bullah Shāh's poetry, their main objection was that his selected master originated from a low caste.[24]

Sisters and sisters-in-law came to Bullah to advise him

(They said) you belong to the family of the Prophet and are

a direct descendant of Ālī,

You have insulted them,

O Bullah, listen to what we say and give up living in

uninhabited places.

The poet's answer was decisive:

He who calls us Syed will be tortured in Hell

The one who calls us Arāīn

Will enjoy a life of bliss in Heaven.

About one hundred and fifty verses and several small epic poems belong to Bullāh Shāh's pen, mostly written in the *kāfi* genre, and one in the *bārahmāh* genre. He was a lyric poet of the Sufi type.

I have been caught and bound,

I am experiencing a great ecstasy (beyond all description)

I have forgotten everything and all doors have been opened

Some lover has left me.

Sorrow is eating me up, breaking my bones,

Separation (from my beloved) has me in its clutches.

Bullah Shāh, if you want to reach your beloved

Be prepared for a search longer than life.

Deep sorrow at unrequited love rings in these lines, and though this is common among Ṣūfi poets, Bullah Shāh conveys it so forcefully that the reader is drawn into intimate participation.

Many of his poems refer directly or indirectly, to his epoch, in which he finds little indeed to gladden his heart:[25]

Punjāb had fallen on bad days,

Those (who claimed to be) supporters, have proved treacherous.

Something is saved if I tell a lie;

If I tell the truth, the flames burn stronger.

He calls his time "upturned", mourns the injustice that reigns throughout, that "the hares have devoured the falcons". This pessimistic note is not ungrounded as Bullah Shāh was a contemporary of Aurangzeb, Gobind Singh, Banda Bahādur, and Nādir Shāh. His was a time of contradictions, of bitter battles, of tragic events. The poet never tried to adjust himself to conditions; he firmly adhered to his views. He writes of himself with a

touch of humour:[26]

Bullah, you have become a lover of God,

Everywhere people malign you a hundred thousand ways.

If people call you kāfir,

You say yes to them.

Bullah you became a kāfir the day before

And yesterday you worshipped idols,

I came and sat down in my home,

Because there (where people were maligning me)

I did not have a chance to say anything.

Bullah Shāh holds a place of his own in the history of Punjābi prosody. No poet before him had shown such virtuosity in manipulating all the current poetic forms, none had achieved such organic fusion of the devices used in Arab and Persian versification with those known to Punjābi prosody. Rhyme, though not new to Punjābi poetry, acquired now qualities in his verse. He favoured inner rhyme even in so laconic a genre as the *kāfi* or the *doḥra*, thus demonstrating the infinite possibilities of poetic expression inherent in the Punjābi language.

Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār was an outstanding late 17th century epic poet, author of a number of works on canonized Muslim theology, famed for his *Qissa* Yūsuf and Zuleikhā , Sassi and Punnū and Mirzā and Ṣāhibān. Before Barkhurdr, Pīlu had composed the Qissa of Mirzā Ṣāhibān. Not much is known about the life of Pīlu. Ḥafiẓ Barkhurdār has praised the work of Pīlu. He says:

O friends, the poets err in competing with Pīlu,

The five *pirs* pat his back and put their hands on his shoulder.

In Sikh literature Pīlu has been mentioned as one of the four saints of Lahore including Shāh Ḥusain, Kahna and Chhajju, who went to Guru Arjan Dev to request him to include their verses in *Granth Sahib*, which was under preparation at that time.

The mystic poetry of Pīlu seems to have been lost except his four verses whose translation is given below:

Pīlu says, O poet, where have the people of the world gone,

There had been many social and religious gatherings.

Pīlu, they are better than us, who died at the time of their birth,

Because they were not entrapped in the mud and did not get dirty.

His only poem that has come down to us is his Qissa *"Mirzā Ṣāhibān"*. We find excellent portrayal of the beauty and character in the first Qissa *of Mirzā Ṣāhibān* composed by Pīlu[27]

The stories of Barkhurdār's *qissas* are very close to their folklore prototypes. Ḥāfiz Barkhurdār was a great scholar of folklore, and enjoyed wide popularity. His language is rich in borrowings from the Persian, but these are predominantly words that had entered popular speech. Mirzā and Ṣāhibān is a typical sample of his poetry. Interestingly, Barkhurdār has mentioned the name of his village in this Qissa, where Pīlu is heard addressing a crow:

"O crow, go to (the village) Musalmāni."[28]

The plot of this *qissa* is one of the most exquisite love stories created by the Punjābi people. Ḥāfiz Barkhurdār found the most appropriate form of expression and specifically vivid imagery to convey his interpretation of this folklore tale, and bring it home to his listeners. The poet's interest in the legend lay not in the bare plot, but rather in the heroes' inner world. He dwells at great length on their emotions and thus heightens the tragic sounding of the story. He had chosen a plot through which he could reveal the deep tragedy of human fates, and this kind of selection became characteristic of many poets, especially those who were conscious of the social significance of their creative writing. In this the spirit of the epoch is clearly evident. Death was a frequent incident in the wars as well, yet it never evoked such sympathy, since the victims never came so close to the reader or listener. In the qissa, the narrative concerns images alive and comprehensible, connected with definite tribes, endowed with clearly defined character traits, convincing, because they were people you meet in daily life. The Qissa reflects daily life, the customs and habits of the Punjābi family. The sincerity and artlessness with which Ḥāfiz Barkhurdār revealed his heroes' intimate world endeared them to readers and listeners, making them live through the vicissitudes of the tragic lovers' fate.

Ḥāfiz Barkhurdār's tradition was taken up by Wāris Shāh, who in 1765 wrote a qissa of Hīr and Rānjhā. The date could be ascertained by the poet's mention in the *qissa* of the assaults by Nādir Shāh and Ahmad Shāh Abdāli, so that the poem cannot belong to an earlier period.

Wāris Shāh paints a truthful picture of the Punjābi people and local scenery. Actual contemporary life is the fount from which he derived his aesthetic imagery and devices. His characters are generalizations of his contemporaries and the background is

the events of his time. The same generalized image of man in this complicated and eventful epoch occurs in the poetry of Wāris Shāh's younger contemporary, the lyrical poet Hāshim Shāh. His life story is obscure, and despite persevering investigations few data have been ascertained regarding its events. Some hold that he was born in the village of Jagdeo near Amritsar, into the family of a carpenter called Qāsim Shāh. Others claim for him aristocratic origin of parents belonging to the court of Ranjit Singh. Still others derive his descent, from the Arab tribe of the Qureyshits, maintaining that the poet's father was born in Medina.[29]

Hāshim Shāh was highly educated and had command of the Persian and Arab languages as well as of Hindi. He entered the history of Punjābi literature with the lyrical epic poems *Shīrīn and Farhād, Sohni and Mahinwāl, Sassi and Punnū, Hīr and Rānjhā* and *Laila and Majnūn*, all based on traditional plots taken not only from his native literature and folklore, but also from Persian, Tājik and Arab literatures. Hāshim Shāh's love lyrics and philosophic poetry present considerable interest and contain social motifs. More than two hundred lyrical poems in the *dohṛa* genre belong to his pen, in addition to, poetry written in other genres. A ṣūfi poet, he could naturally have been expected to devote his main attention to the theme of mystical love, love of God, which alone is called by the Ṣūfi "*ishqi ḥaqīqī*", i.e., real love. However, Hāshim gives preference to the theme of earthly love, human love, the kind of love called *"ishqi majāzi"* in ṣūfi terminology, which means love that is imperfect, only sensuous. To the poet, love is the very foundation of the world, its moving force.[30]

As to the generalized hero-image, Hāshim elaborates it with greater depth than did any of his predecessors. He probes into the spiritual life of his characters; he shares

their emotions. The incidents of the plot are so vivid, the acting personages so graphically presented, that the reader is persuaded of the biographic nature of the poetic narrative.

Sassi and Punnū enjoy special popularity. The story was widely known in the folklore of the peoples inhabiting the Indus valley - the; Kashmīris, Sindhīs, Balochs and Pathāns. In selecting the plot of Sassi and Punnū, Hāshim set himself a complicated task. The story about the love between Sassi and Punnū had been poetically expressed before him, among others by poets of great prominence, such as Ḥāfiz Barkhurdār and Wāris Shāh. Each of them had added some individual touch to the denouement. Hāshim's rendering was novel too. He was the first Punjābi poet to choose his heroine's inner life for the focal point of his poem. To attain this, he eliminated all minute, sometimes over-elaborated details some of his predecessors had included into the story. This treatment of the plot necessitated a new approach to poetic form. Hashim weighed every word and retained only those poetic elements that carry an aesthetic function. In this way he created a poem of great emotional tension, chiselled in construction, unadorned. He avoids alliteration and assonance, while rhyme - one for all four lines of the quatrain is used not for decorative purposes, but to round off each line and lend unity to the quatrain.
The power and the vivid emotional quality of *Hāshim's Sassi and Punnū* are among the most interesting creations of Punjābi poetry in the late 18th - early 19th centuries.

5.1.2. The *Qissa*

One specific form of poetic narration in Punjābi is qissa, an Arabic word current in West Asia. It owes its birth to the love story of Yūsuf (Joseph), the Jewish prophet, and the Egyptian beauty Zuleikhā who came to purchase a slave in the market where Yūsuf

was brought for sale by a slave-trader and fell in love with him. This story is found in the Holy Qurān for which reason; perhaps, it is called *Aḥsan-al-Qaṣaṣ*, the *best of qissas*. Muslim poets in West Asia have taken it for a model in their love stories, investing selfless and unreserved love between man and woman as an approach to divine love. It is in this spirit that the qissa in Punjābi as well as in countries of West Asia is distinguished from medieval Indian love stories and even those of Sanskrit drama which are secular in spirit.[13]

It is argued that the very first available qissa in Punjābi was composed by Damodar. It contains the love story of Hīr and Rānjhā. He has mentioned in his Qissa that he had personally seen the sad plight of Hīr. It is possible that by saying this he might have been thinking of enhancing the value of his work, but because of his mention of Akbar several times, some scholars believe that he might have been present on the scene. The language that he has used in his poetry is also the dialect of Jhang. Bhai Gurdas and Shah Hussain have referred to the love story of Hīr Rānjhā and both of them are near contemporaries of Damodar. The story has remained popular with both the mystics and Qissa poets.[14]

The Qissa in Punjābi literature usually centres around two lovers belonging to different tribes. Their infatuation collides with tribal traditions, and the conflict usually ends in tragedy. The death of the lovers, however, serves as a grim lesson to those who remain alive, and the conclusion, whether implied or stated, is that peace and friendship among tribes is an essential necessity. Tribal differences between the two main heroes are sometimes superseded by social ones, yet the poets dwell not so much on these distinctions as on the heroes' personal virtues and sublime emotions.

According to the original plot the *qissa* falls into two main groups: those created in the Punjāb, and those borrowed either from ancient Indian literature (*Nala and Damayantī*, for example), or from Arab literature (*Laila and Majnūn*), or else from Persian-Tājik literature (*Farhād and Shīrīn*). At the time when the *Dasama Granth* came into existence, the *qissa* of the first group presumably already existed in Punjābi oral lore. At any rate, it was the *Dasama Granth* that initiated this genre in Punjābi literature. Among the worthiest of its masters were Damodar (1556-1605), Wāris Shāh, and Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār (18th century).

5.1.3. The Kāfis of Shāh Hussain

Shah Ḥusain was the first Ṣūfi poet of Punjābi who adopted the popular measure of Kāfi, short poems, to express his mystic ideas. A typical Husain Kāfi contains refrain and some rhymed lines. The number of rhymed lines, is usually from four to ten. Only occasionally a more complex form is adopted. To the eye of a reader the structure of the *Kāfi* appears simple. But the *Kāfis* of Ḥusain are not intended for the eye. They are designed as musical compositions to be interpreted by the singing voice. The rhythm in the refrain and in the lines are so balanced and counter pointed as to bring out a varying, evolving musical pattern.

Through his deliberate rhythmic design, Shāh Ḥusain evokes the symbolic music of the Punjābi folk songs. His *kāfis* live within this symbolic back ground and use it for evolving their own meaning. The voice of Hussain in transcending folk-singer's voice brings into being the dimension of freedom rendering actual what had for long remained only possible[15]

Do not talk of the Kheṛās to me,

O mother, do not.

I belong to Rānjhā and he belongs to me.

And the Kheṛās dream idle dreams.

Let the people say, "Hīr is crazy;

she has given herself to the cowherd.

He alone knows what it all means,

O mother he alone knows.

Please mother, do not talk to me of the Kheṛās.

In another *kāfī* using the *Hīr-Rānjhā* motif we are taken back to a still early stage of the poet's emotional Odyssey:[16]

Travelers, I too have to go;

I have to go to the solitary hut of Rānjhā.

Is there anyone who will go with me?

I have begged many to accompany me and now I set out alone,

Travelers! Is there no one who could go with me!

The river is deep and the shaky bridge creaks as people step on it.

And the ferry is a known haunt of tigers.

Will no one go with me to the lonely hut of Rānjhā?

During long nights I have been tortured by my rain wounds.

I have heard that he in his lonely hut knows the sure remedy.

Will no one come with me, travelers"?

Ḥusain is the first Ṣūfi poet to write verses in modern Punjābi. His short and meaningful *kāfis* are clad in sweet expression. He is a *'Faqīr of the Lord'* and prostrating before Him supplicates millions of times for his sight:[17]

The nights without the Lord seem to have become very long
My flesh has weaned and appears like a skeleton,
And my bones have broken into particles.
The Love cannot remain concealed and
Pangs of separation have increased enormously.
I am the Yogini of Rānjhā Yogi and people call me insane;
Ḥusain the Faqīr of the Lord says that I have caught
Hold the skirt of Thy Garment.

5.2. Hīr Rānjhā: The Legend of Punjāb

The tale of Hīr-Rānjhā has stirred the imagination of a large number of Punjābi writers, both old and new - Wāris Shāh, Damodar, Hamīd, Muqbil, Aḥmad Yār, Bhagwān Singh Ārif, Joga Singh, Kishan Singh and Ṣūba Singh.[18]

The love story of Hīr Rānjhā takes a pre-eminent place in what may be called the *'qissa'* literature of Punjāb. It is the story of young man and woman who did not receive the sanction of society to marry, a major theme of literature, music, dance and drama not only in Punjāb, but everywhere in the world. Hīr is universally known for her beauty. Hence she is the greatest challenge to all competitive acquirers. And Rānjhā, the man with the flute, the waster, the shirker, the unproductive, the un-acquiring, could be

reduced to absurd proportions by being juxtaposed against Hīr.[19]

The story of Hīr Rānjhā performed in the form of an opera as well as a ballad is very typical. Hīr was the daughter of a feudal landlord Chūchak Siāl from Jhang. Before her sacrifice for Rānjhā, she proved herself to be a very courageous and daring young girl. It is said that *Sardār* (Chief) Nūra from the Sambal community had a really beautiful boat made and appointed a boatman called Luḍḍan. Nūra was very ruthless with his employees. Due to the ill treatment one day Luḍḍan ran away with the boat and begged Hīr for refuge. Hīr gave him moral support as well as shelter.

Sardār Nūra was enraged at this incident. He summoned his friends and set off to catch Luḍḍan. Hīr collected an army of her friends and confronted Sardār Nūra and defeated him. When Hīr's brothers learnt of this incident they told her, "If a mishap had befallen you why didn't you send for us"? To which Hīr replied, "What was the need to send for all of you? Emperor Akbar had not attacked us."

It is the same Hīr who, when she is in love with Rānjhā, sacrifices her life for him and says:

Saying Rānjhā, Rānjhā for all time I myself have become Rānjhā

No one should call me Hīr, call me Dhīdo Rānjhā

Speaking of recurrent patterns in Punjābi literature, Najm Hosain Syed describes the river as a symbol. He maintains that to the youth in the realm of the parents the 'river' is both a longing and a threat, a prospect of rejuvenation and a prospect of utter destruction of those who went across the 'river', Rānjhā is the foremost. He crosses the Chenāb.

He leaves his parents' home. But his brothers cling to parental consciousness. They inherit the parental home land and tribal honours. The system of competitive possession is not strictly a part of their inheritance but a logical development of the breaking up of their parents' system of tribal ownership.[20]

Rānjhā (dhīdo) was the youngest of four brothers, after a confrontation with his brothers, Rānjhā leaves home and travels around and comes to Hīr's village where he found his love, Hīr, who offered him a job to take care of her cattle. Having met Rānjhā, Hīr became mesmerized by the way Rānjhā played the flute (*Wanjli*) and eventually fell in love with him. They would meet each other secretly for many years until they were caught by her jealous uncle "Kaido" and parents (Chūchak and Malki). Hīr was forced to be married to another man, Saida *Kheṛa.* It is Hīr who plucks up courage during the wedding ceremony and reprimands the *Qazi* (priest). "Qazi, I was married in the presence of the Nabi (Prophet). When did God give you the authority to perform my marriage ceremony again and annul my first marriage? The tragedy is that people like you are easily bribed to sell their faith and religion. But I will keep my promise till I go to the grave."

Rānjhā was left broken-hearted and left to walk the quiet villages on his own until eventually met a *jogi* (devoted believer in God). Having entered Gorakh's *ṭilla* (Shrine), Rānjhā could only see his departed lover and being emotionally scarred he voluntarily became a *jogi.* On his travels around the Punjāb he found the village, where he was reunited with Hīr. They escaped (also with Saida Kheṛa's sister "Sehti", who was in love with "Murād Baluch", another famous love story of Punjābi Culture, but was caught by the Mahārāja's police. The Mahārāja punished him with jail but the same night the whole

city was in flames. The Mahārāja freed Rānjhā and permitted him to marry Hīr.

They came back to Hīr's village where Hīr's parents agreed to their marriage. On the wedding day, Hīr's jealous uncle, "Kaido" poisoned her so the wedding wouldn't take place. Having heard the news Rānjhā rushed to aid Hīr but was too late as she died. Rānjhā becoming broken hearted once again died on her grave.

Let us tell a tale of Takht Hazāra

That fabled place where Rānjhās held sway

And where handsome youths wanton and gay

Each more striking than the other

Dreamt eternally of sport and love

To Aḥmad Yār goes the credit of using first of all the *bait* form of verse in his romance of Hīr and Rānjhā. It was subsequently used with great effect by Muqbal and Wāris Shāh in their narratives of the same tale that also follow many of the details given by Aḥmad Yār and the change of names of characters from Damodar: Saida instead of Ṣāhiba, Aju instead of Aḥmad and Bālnāth instead of Sidh Bagai.

Interestingly, of all the Punjābi writers of yesterday, Aḥmad Yār alone was a professional man of letters. His poetry lacks the popular tinge which Wāris Shāh and Hāshim Shāh's poetry possesses. It seems he was trying to evolve a literary style of Punjābi that should appeal to the educated and sophisticated sections of Punjābis. It would be reasonable to say that if the British had not conquered the Punjāb and introduced Urdu in schools, the Punjābi language and literature might have developed on the lines laid down by Aḥmad Yār.[21]

Muqbal's Hīr is decidedly an improvement on Aḥmad Yār's Hīr. It is much more facile and has a more refined style. Indeed, Wāris Shāh has followed Muqbal's version in both substance and diction very closely, so that it can be said that Wāris Shāh's Hīr is a more detailed, more sophisticated, and more urbanized version of the same story. Muqbal's stanza is invariably of four lines, while Wāris takes some of his stanzas to greater length. Muqbal's language is simpler.

There is no profit from the love of women,
And one should not seek their friendship.
The snake will not refrain from biting,
One may feed it on milk all its life.

Wāris Shāh's narrative is such a mixture of good and bad qualities that one despairs of pronouncing a critical judgment more because of the applause accorded to it from generation to generation by a people that have not travelled far from their unsophisticated and even crude taste. Like all people of Ṣūfi inclinations, Wāris Shāh is satirical about Mullas and Qāzis, the spokesmen of the Sharia or legal code of Islam. Being a Syed of a priestly class accorded high status in Muslim society, like the Brāhmaṇ in Hindu society, he is full of contempt, and even hatred for the Jats, the dominant land-owning class in Punjābi society, both Hindu and Muslim. He holds them up to ridicule in words like the following:

The Jat is a liar and his word is not to be trusted.[22]

But for all his Ṣūfi liberalism, Wāris Shāh does not take kindly to the political change that is taking place in the country which he describes as anarchy and disorder, in

words such as:

The high-born have been put to grief,

The lowly peasants are on the spree.

They have become lords of the land,

New governments rise in every part.[23]

Wāris Shāh is to Punjābi poetry what Chaucer was to English - the pulse beat of its people. He turned poetry into Punjābi and Punjābi into poetry. His chief contribution was the creation of the immortal Hīr, the epic poem of love of Hīr and Rānjhā, sung by the people of Punjāb in the same style and syntax without any variation since the time it was completed and composed in 1776 during the eighth invasion of Aḥmad Shāh Abdāli. Wāris Shāh was 36 at that time. He lived to see his Hīr sung for nearly a quarter of a century. Enthralling generations of Punjābi poets, opera writers and listeners, Wāris Shāh is a literary colossus who bestrode the literary scene of Punjāb as no other poet did after Farīd. With Wāris Shāh begins the modern period in Punjābi poetry.

Addressing Wāris Shāh, Amrita Pritam, the prima donna of Punjābi poetry today, wrote after the partition holocaust: "If the tragedy of one Hīr could make you cry, what would have happened if you were alive in 1947 when a million Hīrs were raped in the same land."

Aj ākhan Wāris Shāh nu

Kithon kabrān wichon bol

Te aj kitāb-i-ishq da

Koi aglā warqa phol

Ik roi si dhi Punjāb di

Tu likh likh wāre wain

Aj lakhān dhian rondiān

Tainu Wāris Shāh nu kahan

Uṭh tak apna Punjāb

Aj bele lāshān wichiān

Te lahu di bhari Chenāb

Translation:

> Oh, Warris Shah, I ask you to speak out from your grave and turn the new page in the Book of Love. With the cry of one daughter of Punjāb you created an epic and gave her tongue a life's lament. Today, millions of Punjāb's daughters are wailing and beckoning you to come out of your grave and listen to them. 0h, Angel of compassion have a look at your beloved Punjāb whose green pastures are littered with corpses and rivers filled with blood.

The poets of Punjāb have beckoned Wāris Shāh for the last 200 years. If Punjābi poetry is to be conceived as a story of moral and spiritual values, Wāris Shāh occupies the same place as Milton did in English literature and Walt Whitman in American literature. Hīr-Rānjhā is both history and poetry.[24] As history it is unread as poetry it is exquisite. Bullah Shāh made these 600 stanzas of Hīr immortal by singing it in *kāfi* style. Hīr has been sung in a dozen styles but the most lyrical is *kāfi*. It is said, when it was first sung in the Soviet Union people went wild in ecstasy. The Urdu poet Saudā in

one of his couplets says,

Suna jo rāt woh qissa Hīr Rānjhā ka

To ahl-i - dard ko Punjābiyon ne lūt liyā

Translation:

Last night when I heard the story of Hīr Rānjhā I felt that the Punjābis took away my heart.

Wāris lived through the invasions of Nādir Shāh (1739) and Aḥmād Shah (1761). There are references in his Hīr about these invasions and the devastation they wrought in the Punjāb:

Khādā pītā lāhe dā

Bāḳi Ahmad Shāhe dā

Translation

Whatever you eat is yours, the rest belongs to Aḥmād Shāh

Wāris Shāh's Hīr also amply demonstrates that though the people of the Punjāb were divided into various religious sects, they were nevertheless secular in outlook and respected each other's religion. Wāris Shāh describes Punjāb as a fertile country with fields of mustard and corn yielding rich harvests. The rulers of Punjāb were said to be corrupt and committed atrocities, extorted revenues mercilessly from innocent people. That brought the Hindus and Muslims closer to each other. The foreign invasions further cemented their ties and they developed remarkable cordiality and amity. There are also

stray references to the *shawls* of Lahore and Kashmir, the *phulkāris* of Multān, the silken *lehngās* and the *Tahmads* of Takht Hazāra, the home town of Rānjhā in district Sargodha. There was enough milk and honey in Punjāb as described in the Hīr, and the rivers of Punjāb have been referred to very evocatively.[25]

More than the official or the formal historical account, Wāris Shāh's epic can be easily regarded as an authentic source of the history of the Punjāb. But more than that, Wāris Shāh is the historian of the heart of his people. Wāris Shāh died in 1790, at the age of 60.

As poetry, the story of Hīr Rānjhā is the food of every Punjābi. If wheat is his staple food to eat, Hīr is his spiritual food. It touches his soul. Highest poetry, they say, must conform to the tenets of music. Judged from that standpoint, Hīr occupies a very high position in the development of Punjābi poetry. After the songs of Bābā Farīd, it is the poetry of Wāris Shāh and Bullah Shāh which inspired the Punjābis to revolt against the twin curse of absentee landlordism and foreign invasions.[26]

> Hīr-Rānjhā is a *qissa*, a tale, a romance based on Persian Masnavī. Through the voice of Hīr Rānjhā, Wāris Shāh has become the spokesman of the Punjābi mind. It must, however, be remembered that the first Hīr in Punjābi was written by a poet called Damodar who had not given it a tragic ending. His story is narrated in the local dialect of Jhang which lends it a particular regional charm. But subsequent writers rejected the dialect in favour of the central form of the language. The people of the villages in the story are Muslims but they have not yet forsaken

> their old Hindu customs, so that even marriages are arranged by Brahmans and Dhido as a yogi holds in awe the villagers who are Muslim by faith.[23] Maqbūl, the early 18th century Punjābi poet, followed Damodar and sent the united lovers Hīr and Rānjhā on a Haj (pilgrimage) to Mecca. It is only Wāris Shāh who gave the epic a tragic ending. Since tragedy appeals more to the human mind, the epic became not merely popular but immortal.

Hīr Rānjhā must have been a very old story or legend for certain reasons. Two poets, a Persian, and the other Hindu (Damodar), wrote the story in the 16th century. The poet had to observe certain traditions. The qissa had to open with a dedication to God, a song of praise to love, an address to friends, a statement of the poem's purpose, a description of the heroine's life from her birth and up to the events described in the qissa, and the life-story of the hero. It had to depict the meeting between hero and heroine and the story of their love that formed the basic plot and provided the dramatic conflict.

These, however, were traditions and not a canon, and the poet was completely free to pay as much or as little attention to them as he deemed necessary. Damodar omitted the initial elaborate dedication to the gods, demonstratively addressing one couplet to the Divine Essence pervading all nature, the deity proclaimed by Kabīr and his followers. Further, he declares himself an eyewitness of the events described in the poem, thus claiming their truthfulness. He chose a plot widely popular in the lore of the Punjābis, Sindhis, Baloch and Afghāns.

Bāqi Kolābi (d.1579) who came to the Subcontinent in the days of Akbar the Great (1556-1605) wrote a Masnavī named *Hīr Rānjhā* during 1575-1579. Akbar who was known as Shah-i-Adil (the Just King) is referred to as Ádlī Rājā by Kolābi. Even Wāris Shāh writing in the 18^{n} century uses this label for the ruler of Multān. Damodar is not too well known - but his Hīr Rānjhā is extant. The incidents are mainly the same. Only the emphasis is different. Both assume that everybody knows this popular romance. Said Saidi (1628-1658), another Persian poet who wrote up this story, says he invented the story himself. Another poet, Chenābi, attempted the story and wrote a *Mathnavi* in the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1709). He was a contemporary of Muqbil, the Punjābi poet. Though all poets mention the meeting of Rānjhā with the Five Saints, of whom one is a prophet (Khwāja Khiẓer) who blessed him and promised him his heart's desire, that is, Hīr. Rānjhā goes to a Hindu saint, Guru Bālnāth for spiritual enlightenment and gifts. This indicates that the meeting with the Five Pirs (a popular legend) was interpolated and originally the story had either a pre-Islamic origin or was conceived when Hindu culture was predominant.[27]

Kohli argues that, after Bhāi Gurdās, Ḥusain is the second poet, who has pointed towards the love story of Hīr and Rānjhā. He considers himself as the *Yogini* of Rānjhā Yogi. It is, of course, surprising that in Western literature the man pines for his woman, but in Eastern literature, the order is reversed. The Eastern mystic poets consider themselves as the wives of Lord-God.[28]

In the version popular in the Punjāb, Rānjhā loses his beloved and dies with her, after gaining her for a time. But like the folk-lore tradition, both Rānjhā and Hīr are buried in the same tomb and become immortal. This similarity with a folk-tale is another

sign of the antiquity of this romance, or, at least, of its basic elements.

If Rānjhā and Hīr had lived in the 16th century as Mādhu Lāl Ḥusain's contemporary Damodar, the Aṛoṛa Hindu poet, who first versified the tale in a native language said, or as the Persian poet Bāqi Kolābi who first wrote up the story in Persian both living in the reign of Akbar the Grand Mughal (1556-1605) intimated, the word Rānjhā could not have acquired a symbolic value. It takes generations for a story to become first a legend and then a symbol.

It has been a convention of folk literature that there is a two-way traffic between the Unseen World and the protagonists of a tale, drama or poem. For example, in the ancient Egyptian story of Anpu and Bata, nine gods came down to greet the good Bata. Saints and Pīrs have thus an old tradition of making impact on human lives. In all Greek literature the Olympians have the same entry into the mundane life of human beings. A god solved a human tangle in the end and he was called Deus ex Machina. In Hīr and Rānjhā, too, though Rānjhā has not yet merited any supernatural concern, he is met by the famous traditional Five Pirs, one of whom is the wandering Prophet Khiẓer. They bless him and promise him Hīr and disappear from the scene, nor do they come to his rescue when later he is in trouble. And strange to say, for spiritual exaltation, high morale and miraculous powers he is indebted to a Hindu Saint. It is with the powers invested in him by Guru Bālnāth that Rānjhā makes headway. It appears, therefore, that the Bālnāth incident belongs to an original theme and the Five Pir episode is a later addition. This, too, points to the ancestry of the tale, and it may be the truth as a folk-tale has no age.[29]

However, Temple argues that, it is not likely that the date of Hīr and Rānjhā as

historical personages goes back much beyond 300 years, and the story is really a tribal one of the abduction of a Rajput girl by a man of another race and of the subsequent vengeance of her tribe. But there happens to be a tomb of some local sanctity at Jhang built to this pair of lovers, and in this volume are versions of their story evidently framed so as to connect Rānjhā as a wonder-working saint with guru Gorakhnāth and to glorify his memory in order to add to the revenues of the tomb. His development into a saint of the Sakhi Sarwar type is evidently a mere matter of time and opportunity.[30]

An interesting feature of the folk-literature is the utter absence of cause and effect, or any pretence of realistic presentation of human behaviour. Of course, the audience would not be interested in the why and wherefore of human conduct or the everyday routine of life. They would only be interested in the highlights. They would be thrilled if gods and jinns, *jogis* and *pīrs*, saints and *sādhus* came unasked to help poor mortals or in answer to prayer. The more dramatic the entrance of a person of this order, the more pleased and thrilled would be the unsophisticated listeners. So, either the minutiae of everyday life or observance of psychological myth or analysis of motive would be beyond the compass of the bards or the people, whose wishes and imagination gave, in the words of Shakespeare "to airy nothing a local habitation and a name".[31]

The poem, the only one by Damodar extant, is so magnificently constructed that it still makes fascinating reading. Its charm lies not only in masterful denouement, but also in subtle psychological character drawing, in humorous passages that take the reader unaware, and in its succulent, vivid, dynamic, truly indigenous language. No fixed metre cramps Damodar's verse; the rhythms are pliable, changing wherever is required by the emotional pitch. Each quatrain is held together by a euphonic nominal or verbal rhyme;

sometimes, though sparingly, the poet resorts to alliteration or assonance. He intersperses a variety of Persian and Arab words, lending them Punjābi forms. All aesthetic devices, all images, and the very plot are realistic and spring directly from the concrete life of the 16th century Punjāb. This is evidently a conscious subordination of form to a realistically conceived poetic task. Damodar may be considered the father of the realistic trend in Punjābi literature.[32]

5.2.1. Wāris Shāh's Conception of Tragedy

The folk-legend of Hīr-Rānjhā has been used as a frame of symbols with multiple meanings ranging from the romantic to the mystical. With Damodar it takes the form of a comedy; some others have introduced into its pattern supernatural elements. Wherein lays the greatness and supremacy of Wāris Shāh over other writers of this Qissa? Fresh realistic imagery, romantic treatment, Ṣūfi-mystical undertones and critical references to the social-economic conditions of the age - these are some of the outstanding characteristics of *Hīr* as written by Wāris Shāh.[33] Further, it is our first and great tragedy in the modern sense of the term. With Wāris, as with other romantics, love is the medium for the expression of man's freedom. By calling love as the essence of God and of the whole universe, he gives mystical or divine sanctions to the individual's freedom. But despite this, Wāris Shāh's concept of love is that it is essentially a human phenomenon. He only gives mystical sanctions and not any mystical dimension or quality to the human love. Before Wāris Shāh there were two stock treatments of human love. It was used as an analogy to express the relation of the individual to the Divine. This is the way of the predication of the Absolute in terms of human love as employed by Guru Nānak. On the

other hand, Ṣūfi mystics tried to transform or subjet the human love into the Divine love. This is called the divinization of the earthly love. The way of Wāris Shāh was different from either of these two courses. He treats human love as it is in its pure sensuous form. The source of the tragedy is the contradiction that, with Wāris, the social context is both necessary and hostile to this human phenomenon. The fact that Rānjhā after his abduction of Hīr still wants to have social sanctions for his love through the institution of marriage is a clue to the whole nature of the tragedy as conceived by the poet.

Wāris Shāh's concept of tragedy is modern in the sense that it has no fatalistic aura about it. That is why he could make it a saga of suffering which is human in nature but social in context. In the end, he tries to give Ṣūfi-mystical coloration by describing Hīr as the "soul" and Rānjhā as the "body". But the important point to note is that the "soul" and "body" are yearning to unite with each other.

One of the reasons why in Indo-Pak literature the tradition of tragedy could not develop is the continual emphasis on the soul-body contradiction implying the reality of the soul as against the unreality of the body. Hence suffering is divested of its human and social dimensions and becomes either an illusion or divine, pre-ordained *leela* through which the soul has to pass before it can liberate-itself from the body.[34] Wāris does not accept these metaphysics. With him the soul-body opposition takes the form of the soul-body unity. So, the Sufi leanings of the poet do not result in submerging the human in mystic love. On the other hand, his outlook helps him in conceiving a metaphysical unity of the two in the context of which he could sustain and uphold his concept of love as essentially a human relation in its full sensuous sense. This is how Waris gives a non-escapist orientation to medieval ideologies like Sufism. Any other

poet could have given a mystical meaning to the quest of Rānjhā for Hīr; at least after he becomes a *jogi.* But that is not what Wāris Shāh has done. He remains consistent in his conception and treatment of the tragedy. From another angle it may be said that the realistic nature of the imagery is a means which saves the story from becoming a mystical allegory in the hands of Wāris Shāh.

5.3. Sassi Punnū

Sassi means "Moon" - beautiful was the only daughter of King Ādam Khān of Bhambore, Sindh. At her birth the astrologers predicted that she was a curse for the royal family's prestige. The king ordered that the child be put in a wooden chest with a *tawīz* tied on her neck and thrown into the river. The chest was seen floating by Atta, the washer man of *Bhambore* village. The *dhobi* believed the child was a blessing from God and took her home and adopted her as his child. Many, many years passed by and the king did not have another child, so he decides to get married again. When he heard that the daughter of Atta, the washer man, was as beautiful as the angels, the king summoned her to the palace.

Sassi was still wearing the *tawiz* (amulet), which the queen mother had put around her neck when she was taken away to be drowned. The king recognized his daughter immediately on seeing the *tawiz*. The pent-up sufferings of the parents flowed into tears. They wanted their lost child to return to the palace and bring joy and brightness to their lives, but Sassi refused and preferred to live in the house where she had grown up. She refused to leave the man who had adopted her.

Sassi did not go to the palace but the king presented her with abundant gifts, lands

and gardens where she could grow and blossom like a flower. As all the rare things of the world were within her reach she wanted to acquire knowledge and sent for learned teachers and scholars. She made sincere efforts to increase her knowledge. During this time she heard about the trader from Gajni, who had a garden with a monument, the inner portion of which was enriched with exquisite paintings. When Sassi visited the place to offer her tributes and admire the rich art, she instantly fell in love with a painting, which was a masterpiece of heavenly creation. She soon discovered this was the portrait of Prince Punnū, son of King Ali Hūt, the ruler of Kicham.

Sassi became desperate to meet Punnū, so she issued an order that any businessman coming from Kicham town should be presented before her. There was a flutter within the business community as this news spread and someone informed Punnū about Sassi's love for him. He assumed the garb of a businessman and carrying a bagful of different perfumes came to meet Sassi. The moment Sassi saw him she couldn't help saying," Praise to be God!"

Punnū's Baloch brothers developed an enmity for Sassi. They followed him and on reaching the town they saw the marriage celebrations of Sassi and Punnū going on, they could not bear the rejoicing. That night the brothers pretended to enjoy and participate in the marriage celebrations and forced Punnū to drink different types of liquor. When he was dead drunk the brothers carried him on a camel's back and returned to their hometown Kicham.

The next morning when she realized that she was cheated she became mad with the grief of separation from her lover and ran barefoot towards the city of Kicham. To

reach the city she had to cross miles of desert land, the journey that was full of dangerous hazards, leading to the end of world. Her end was similar to the end of Kaknoos bird. It is said that when this bird sings, fire leaps out from its wings and it is reduced to ashes in its own flames. Similarly Punnū's name was the death song for Sassi who repeated it like a song and flames of fire leapt up and she was also reduced to ashes.

Sassi Punnū is the old story of the Desert and the Sown. Myriads of actual contacts between the two worlds and the consequent of human involvement, the recurring incidents of attraction and repulsion, of longing as well as prejudice are the background of this romance. Nothing could be more romantic than a desert prince, the archetype of the Shaikh of modern European extravaganzas, falling in love with a washer-girl and pledging his family prestige and honour and even his life in the pursuit of ideal love. Therefore, one cannot question any incident in this story, rooted as it is in the pulsating border between the Nomad and the Settler, between the vibrating horizons of the wanderers and the beckoning glamour of civilization. As to who were the parents of the heroine who come from nowhere, lapped in the waves of a mighty river, a new Aphrodite born of foam, we need not bother much. Beauty always comes as a surprise and is always a mystery. It bursts into splendor, sometimes causing havoc and sometimes bestowing great happiness and is soon extinguished. This romance may be taken as an allegory which illustrates this age-old enigma.[35]

One point may, however, be mentioned here. C.A. Kincaid, an old Indian civil servant and anthropologist, the author of "*Tales of Old Sind*" (O.U.P - 1922) says in his version of the story named "*Saswi and Punhu*", which he collected from the Ghats of Sindh that Saswi was the daughter of a Brāhmaṇ high priest of North Sindh, who had

been foretold that if he had a daughter, she would turn Muslim and marry a Muslim. The Brāhmaṇ was so outraged at hearing this that he put his baby-daughter in a small box and floated it down the river.

However, Sekhon and Duggal[36] state that Sassi was born in the house of a chief, known simply as '*Jām*' the common title of the rulers of Sindh and Kāthiawād. As an echo of the story of Pūran Bhagat, another myth and legend, an imprecation is pronounced on the infant by the astrologers. She is denounced as boding ill-omen for her father's house and deserving to be discarded. Parental affection, however, makes '*Jām*' get the infant ensconced in a casket in which a large amount of jewellery is deposited before it is cast on the water of the river to be floated to an unknown destination.

Dr. M. Baqir in his excellent study, *"Punjābi Tales in Persian"* published by the Punjābi Academy (1957) mentions four Persian *mathnavis* on the subject in vol 1. The first of them was *Dastūr-i-'Ishq* (1723), by Munshi Jost Parkash, the second by *Inderjit* (1727), both Hindus, and they mentioned Jām Ādam, the ruler of Bhambore as the real father of Sassi. The other two writers of these Persian poems were Maḥmūd Ḥusain and Shāhbāz (1735) and Farah-Bakhsh Farḥat who wrote his poem in 1840. These two also give Sassi a Muslim father. But in volume two, Dr. Baqir discusses a Mathnavi named "*Zeba Nigar*" by Mohammad Raza Razabi, who wrote his poem in 1643, in which he says that Sassi's father was a Brahman priest. Obviously, there must have been an old oral tradition of this nature in Sindh, which was gathered two and a half centuries later. Razabi changes the names giving Sassi and Punnū Muslim names but his story is obviously based on what he heard from a *Ghat*. This indicates that even Sassi and Punnū may be a timeless legend. The best version of this glorious tale in Punjābi is of course by

Syed Hāshim Shāh and in it Sassi is the daughter of Jām Ādam.[37]

5.4. Sohni Mahinwāl

Romantic folklores are a valuable literary asset to any region, besides being a vital part of its history and culture. Sohni Mahinwāl has passed from generation to generation. A number of national and local literati have evaluated this romantic tale. In 1899, the then deputy commissioner of Gujrat, Capt A.C. Elliot, recorded the whole story in his book called *Chronicles of Gujrāt*. Local academics,, including Professor Dr Ahmad Ḥusain Qiladari, Feroze Nagin, Muḥammad Būta and Salīm Shāhid, also narrated this romantic legend in their respective writings in Urdu and Punjābi poetry and prose as well as Persian poetry.

This romance has fewer episodes and fewer snags, very little conflict, and no heroic exploit. Yet it has all the elements of romance in it. It has strangeness added to beauty and intensity of feeling allied to extra ordinances of face, figure and spirit. A noble hero comes out of a distant land, falls in love with a country maid, loses his all for her sake and wins her devotion. These incidents in themselves fulfill all the requirements of true romance. It now depends on the heroine to rise to the occasion and prove that she is no ordinary village maiden or a run-of-the-mill potter's daughter; even though her father is a famous *Kuza-gar* (maker of fancy earthenware). Sohni fulfils the role of the spirited heroine to perfection, though it must be confessed that she does not come to life in the most popular account of this folk-romance, that is, the poem of Fazal Shah.[38]

Local history tells that during the reign of Muḥammed Shāh Badshāh Ghazi, a girl

was born to a potter named Tulla in 1632 in an area situated on the banks of Chenāb river. The child was named Sohni because of her bewitching beauty and because her tiny angelic steps brought happiness to Tulla's family. Sohni's fame grew with her beauty as she assisted in her father's shop. One day a merchant named ʿIzzat Beg who had migrated from Bukhāra in 1651 came to her father's shop and was deeply struck by Sohni's radiance and innocence.

ʿIzaat Beg started visiting the shop regularly to see Sohni on the pretext of buying earthen pots but Sohni did not commit herself to his advances. ʿIzzat Beg soon went bankrupt buying pots from Sohni's father and then offered his services as a servant to Tulla. Love eventually did grow between Sohni and ʿIzzat Beg. He used to watch over the family's buffaloes and was called *mahinwāl*, which in Punjābi means a herdsman. However, just when their love was blossoming, Sohni was forcibly married to her cousin, Dam, and *mahinwāl* was thrown out of his job.

ʿIzzat Baig renounced the world and started living like a *fakir* (hermit) in a small hut across the river. The earth of Sohni's land was like a *dargah* (shrine) for him. He had forgotten his own land, his own people and his world. Taking refuge in the darkness of the night when the world was fast asleep Sohni would come by the riverside and ʿIzzat Beg would swim across the river to meet her. He would regularly roast a fish and bring it for her. It is said that once due to high tide he could not catch a fish, so he cut a piece of his thigh and roasted it. Seeing the bandage on his thigh, Sohni opened it, saw the wound and cried.

From the next day Sohni started swimming across the river with the help of an

earthen pitcher as 'Izzat Beg was so badly wounded, he could not swim across the river. Soon spread the rumours of their romantic rendezvous. One-day Sohni's sister-in-law followed her and saw the hiding place where Sohni used to keep her earthen pitcher among the bushes. The next day her sister-in-law removed the hard baked pitcher and replaced it with an unbaked one. At night when Sohni tried to cross the river with the help of the pitcher, it dissolved in the water and Sohni was drowned. From the other side of the river Mahinwāl saw Sohni drowning and jumped into the river to save his love but both drowned in the mighty river. .

The story does not end here, as the local literary profiles have created a paradox in the local literature proving the romantic legend a true story. Ganesh Das Wadera, a writer of Chahār Bāgh, Punjāb, in 1790, argued that the story literally took place in 1732 near a village Ruliāla, some 18 kilometers east of Gujrāt near Jalālpur Jattān, which was devastated by the curse of Sohni. Other literary circles argued that the incident happened in 1632. The locals of Kunjāh believed that Sohni came from Kunjāh but Prof Qiladari contradicted this myth. Salīm Shāhid gave new colour to this folklore by translating it into a Punjābi-prose style and named it *Punjābi Sohni Mahinwal*. Whatever the facts, the tragedy of Sohni Mahinwāl will probably remain alive in the hearts and imaginations of local people.

'Izzat Beg became *Mahinwāl* (the buffalo-herdsman) and crossed over to the other side of Chenāb. A rich merchant from Bukhāra, he had given up his wealth, his trade and disbanded his caravan. He could have, as an affluent merchant, asked for the hand of Sohni and Tulla the potter would have thought it his good fortune to have him as a son-in-law. But 'Izzat Beg spends all his wealth in buying pots made by Tulla - heaps and

heaps of them - for he knows that is the most money can do. He knows that to get to Sohni he has to transform his consciousness, to be reborn as Mahinwāl. He has to cross to the other side of the Chenāb, outside the society raised and sustained by competitive individual production and possession. It is only then and only there that he and Sohni can know love. Only by dispossessing himself of his riches, of his name (which literally means "prestige"), and of his friends and relations of the earlier existence, can he be himself and be alone with Sohni. Between Izzat Beg and his liberation runs the river Chenāb.[39] Therefore, the symbol of river, as in case of Hīr Rānjhā is the focus of *Sohni Mahinwāl*.

As mentioned above, the name, Mahinwal, was given to the hero because he became a buffalo herder. Dr. Lajwanti Rama Krishna in her book quotes the following *kāfi* of Mādhū Lāl Ḥusain:[40]

> Oh! Mother! Whom should I tell the story of the pains of separation?
> I have been pierced to the point of madness by the thorns of my bereavement.
> Whom should I tell O Mother?
> I wander from jungle to jungle in search of my Beloved. My Mahinwāl has not come!
> Whom should I tell O Mother!
> If I rake the smoke of my heart, burning as it does with pain.
> It would be red hot at its centre
> Whom should I tell O Mother!
> Whom should Ḥusain the *faqir* of the Lord
> Tell of the disinherited ones of the earth?
> O Mother Mine! Whom should I tell all this?[41]

This would mean that like Rānjhā, even the word Mahinwāl was being used as a symbol of the Divine Beloved in the days of Lāl Ḥusain (1539-93). It may also indicate that the tale of Sohni Mahinwāl has also a long background and it was given flesh and blood much later. The time indicated in the romance is the reign of Shāh Jahān (1627-1658).[42]

It is worth mentioning here that Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār's *qissa*, Sassi Punnū, is the first *qissa* in Punjābi. The poet seems to have been inspired for composing this *qissa* from Persian literature. In this work, the narration is brief. The death of Sassi has been depicted excellently.[43]

5.5. Mirzā Ṣāḥibān: Sacrifice of Love

Mirza-Ṣāḥibān, a love-lore, is a treasure of Punjābi literature. It is a romantic tragedy. Ṣāḥibān was another lovelorn soul. Describing her beauty, the poet Pīlū says, "As Ṣāḥibān stepped out with a *lungi* tied around her waist, the nine angels died on seeing her beauty and God started counting his last breath..." Whereas, Barkhurdār portrays her beauty as:[44]

> With pure white teeth, her lips were red like the red resplendent jewels,
>
> When she talked smilingly, the flowers seemed to drop from her mouth,
>
> Her sharp eyes were like daggers, which inflicted wounds,

...Her thighs were like the logs of sandalwood,
which spread fragrance,

Her navel was like the bottle of wine, from
which the lovers had a sip.....

The *qissa* was first narrated by Pīlū, a Muslim Jat. Pīlū's text is available only in bits and parts but a complete version of the same story is furnished by Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār. This story and its treatment by Pīlū and his successors is indeed a more realistic account of life in the Punjāb, its passions of love and hate unspoiled by the sophistications under Ṣūfī influence as seen in the story of Hīr and Rānjhā. It treats love as a plainly secular phenomenon, not as something approaching the divine.[45]

Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār begins this *qissa* in a dramatic style. He brings the soul of Ṣāḥibān to the grave of Pīlū where she requests him to compose the *qissa* of her love. But Pīlū says that this *qissa* would be composed by Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār. In his *qissa*, Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār writes the praises of Pīlū, e.g.[46]

None can compete with Pīlū, who had the mystic pathos;

Some great saint had turned his graceful eyes towards him.

Mirzā and Ṣāḥibān who were cousins and childhood playmates, fell in love with each other. But when this beauty is about to be wedded forcibly to Tāhar Khān by her parents, without any hesitation she sends a taunting message to Mirzā, whom she loves, to his village Dānābād, through a Brāhmaṇ called Kammu.

You must come and decorate Ṣāḥibān's hand with the marriage henna.

This is the time you have to protect your self-respect and love, keep your

promises, and sacrifice your life for truth. Mirzā, who was a young full-blooded man, makes Ṣāḥibān sit on his horse and rides away with her. But on the way, as he lies under the shade of a tree to rest for a few moments, the people who were following them on horseback with swords in their hands catch up with them.

Ṣāḥibān was a virtuous and a beautiful soul who did not desire any bloodshed to mar the one she loved. She did not want her hands drenched in blood instead of henna. She thinks Mirzā cannot miss his target, and if he strikes, her brothers would surely die. Before waking up Mirzā, Ṣāḥibān puts away his quiver on the tree. She presumes that, on seeing her, her brothers would feel sorry and forgive Mirzā and take him in their arms. But the brothers attack Mirzā and kill him. Ṣāḥibān takes a sword and slaughters herself and thus bids farewell to this world.

In the story of Mirzā Ṣāḥibān, the symbol of river, mentioned earlier, is replaced by *bār,* the wilderness. Mirzā Khān, a scion of the Kharal tribe from Dānābād wants to reach his beloved Ṣāḥibān, the Siāl beauty from Jhang. Mirzā must hurry up because Ṣāḥibān's parents are about to marry her off to a young man from the Chaddaṛ tribe. As Mirzā prepares to ride his celebrated grey *bakki*, his parents, sisters and his servants, all exhort him to desist from the venture. They pull him back to what is. They do not want him to venture forth into the new, into the future. They do not want him to be; they want him simply to live on as what he is to them. They do not want Mirza to experience his otherness. They want him to stay within the confines of his parental heritage. If Mirzā goes forth and crosses the *bār* to meet Ṣāḥibān - an act that would challenge the deathlike tribal will - he is likely to die as a brother, a son, a master. The fear of death that is sought to be woven round Mirzā's feet is in fact the inner fear of those connected with him

through the inherited bondage.[47]

Three authors have been consulted about this romance: Pīlū, Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār and Malik Muḥammad Ashraf. Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār follows close on Pīlū's heels in his narration of Mirzā and Ṣāḥibān. Indeed, he starts with claiming that he was induced to write this story by a crow crowning from the poet Pīlū's grave. He has used the same meter and style as Pīlū's and has taken over some of Pīlū's lines in to it. But while Pīlū makes indirect references to Ṣāḥibān's beauty, Barkhurdār is more direct and lyrical in this respect.[48] For instance, describing Ṣāḥibān's charm he says:

The colour of majīṭh (Deep Red) drips from
Ṣāḥibān's face to smear the earth.
The two earrings falling on her cheeks are two swans
Picking their feed of jewels.
Her frame is slim and wavy like the needle of
The spinning-wheel.

Like Pīlū, Barkhurdār also dwells upon the relentlessness of fate and accuses women of failing the test of love.

Richard C. Temple, the author of *Legends of the Punjāb,* discovered that Pīlū's poem is the oldest. He had heard it from the Ghāts of Jālandar. He translated it into English too. It is fragmentary yet, as the Americans say, "it packs a punch". Ḥāfiẓ Barkhurdār's poem is long, detailed and has a folk-tale tinge, as birds and beasts speak and participate in the narrative. Malik Ashraf's poem is of recent days, but it lacks the sternness of Pīlū and the humanity of Barkhurdār.

Temple says in his *Legends* (vol III, legend no. 39) that as a result of the abduction/elopement of Ṣāḥibān the Mahinis (Siāls) and the Kharls entered on a long feud which has lasted for centuries. It is doubtful whether the feud was the result of elopement or the story emerged out of a long feud by means of the creative imagination of a gifted bard assisted by later generations of minstrels.[49]

Innumerable folk songs of the Punjāb narrate the love tale of Sassi and Punnū. The women sing these songs with great emotion and feeling, as though they are paying homage to Sassi with candles lighted on her tomb. It is not the tragedy of the lovers. It is the conviction of the heart of the lovers.

Wāris Shāh who sings the tale of Hīr elevates mortal love to the same pedestal as spiritual love for God saying, "When you start the subject of love, first offer your invocation to God." This has always been the custom in Punjāb, where mortal love has been immortalized and enshrined as the spirit of love.

Just as every society has dual moral values, so does the Punjābi community. Everything is viewed from two angles, one is a close-up of morality and the other is a distant perspective. The social, moral convictions, on one hand, give poison to Hīr and on the other make offerings with spiritual convictions at her tomb, where vows are made and blessings sought for redemption from all sufferings and unfulfilled desires.

But the Sassis, Hīrs, Sohnis and others born on this soil have revolted against these dual moral standards. The folk songs of Punjāb still glorify this rebelliousness.

When the sheet tears,
It can be mended with a patch:

How can you darn the torn sky?
If the husband dies, another one can be found,
But how can one live if the lover dies?

5.6. Sindhi Folk Tales[50]

The Indus Valley is the farthest visible outpost of archaeology. After this civilization, there is a gap of more than a millennium with the exception of the tale of a mythological king (Jayadrath, 12-13th century B.C) in the ancient history of Indus Valley, of which Sindh formed a major portion. In the Indus delta or the lower Indus Valley, this region assumes a pattern of three collateral belts: the central stretch of rich alluvial plain bisected by the long and winding silvery line of the Indus, flanked on the right by a rocky range, and on the left by the sand-dunes of a semi desert region.

The Indus has been the main artery of Pakistan and the life-stream of the lower valley of Sindh. The economy and, consequently, the political history of this region have been influenced since the beginning of history by the changes, for better or worse, in the course of the Indus. Until the medieval times the Indus Valley demarcated, though vaguely, India and trans-Indus lands. The territories west of the Indus Valley have in the remote past more often formed part of the empires whose seats were situated variously in Persia, Greece, Turkistan, Arabia or Iraq.

This region is home to the oldest languages of the Subcontinent with a variegated culture, extensive literature and vast folklore. The languages of the region have extended their influence beyond the geographical boundaries. In northern Sindh, they flow over the north-west into Baluchistān, to the north and north-west into Punjāb and on the west they

are spread up to *Kohistān*.

The conceptual development of folklore motifs from something spiritual to the mundane is one of the most significant aspects of the literary annals of the region. The main characteristic of the folklore of this region over the centuries has been its development of an atmosphere of intensely humanistic mysticism, which has transcended the rigidities of dogma and glorified self-abnegation as the highest virtue. That people are not literate does not necessarily imply that they are inarticulate. They, too, experience moments of joy and great happenings, they, too, listen to the great epics and the most enchanting tales of dexterity, courage and victory of truth over villainy, handed over by their forefathers by word of mouth.

In folk literature, folk tales are placed above all other forms. The tradition of narration of folk tales goes back to the Vedic period.

Sindhi folk tales, being discussed in the next section, are basically romantic in character, based on some historical facts. Their heroes and heroines even when they belong to history are endowed with superhuman powers.

5.6.1. Umar-Mārvi

It is said Umar Sumro ruled over Sindh in the period from 1355 to 1390. There was a fertile and prosperous landscape in the district of Tharpārkar called Malīr. There lived a farmer, Pālni, who belonged to the Māru community. Poor Pālni and his wife Madvi worked very hard in their fields and would graze their cattle in the surrounding areas. They shared their fields with another farmer, named Phog.

Pālni had a daughter, Mārvi, whose beauty was known far and wide. Many youths used to plead with Pālni to give his daughter's hand to them in marriage. Phog also had an eye on Mārvi right from her childhood. When Mārvi blossomed into marriageable age, Phog expressed his desire to Pālni. But Mārvi's parents had already fixed up her alliance with one of their relations, Khet Sen. Phog's suit was thus rejected. He was hurt by the refusal, which ultimately turned into retribution. In a fury Phog left Malīr and, burning with vengeance, rode towards Umarkot. On the way he hatched a plot to bring Mārvi into the clutches of Umar, the king. With this plan in mind he reached the palace gate of Umarkot and obtained an audience with king Umar.

He said to the king, "Sir, in my township, there lives a maiden, Mārvi, whose beauty has no parallel on this earth. But unfortunately she is a goat-herd's daughter and is in torn rags. If she were clad in fine dress she would be fairer than the fairies. Such an ecstatic beauty should effulge in your edifice."

When king Umar heard Mārvi's description, he decided to see her. The king accompanied by Phog set off for Malīr in the guise of an ordinary farmer on a camel. They saw Mārvi fetching water from the well. Umar was enamoured by her beauty. He seized Mārvi and took her to Umarkot. There he detained her in his palace. Umar proposed to marry her. But she continued weeping day in and day out. Umar visited her every night and tried to allure her without any success.

Umar offered her generous gifts to win her love but all his efforts were in vain. She told Umar that her coarse rags were dearer to her than his silken clothes and she preferred her tribe and home over Umar's riches. She asked him to allow her to hurry

home.

When Umar realized that kindness and gifts cannot win her, he put her into a prison. Mārvi felt like at the brink of death in detention. One day she sent for Umar and told him that she had lost all her hopes to meet her kith and kin and felt that her days were numbered. She asked him to fulfill her last wish to send her dead body to Malīr so that her people could bury her corpse in her native land. She fell unconscious.

Umar was moved much by her love for her people and good sense prevailed upon him. Out of compassion he immediately freed her from the prison and treated her like his own sister. He sent a word to her parents to come to Umarkot to take their girl back. When this message was conveyed to them, they felt relieved, but at the same time they had doubts about Umar's intentions. So they sent one of their relative to find out the facts. On reaching Umarkot, he met Mārvi and consoled her that immediately on his return he would bring her parents to take her back to Malīr.

When Mārvi's parents were informed about the wellbeing of their daughter and that Umar was prepared to release her, they started for Umarkot to meet the king. The king extended a warm welcome to them and restored their girl to them honourably.

When Mārvi came back to Malīr, her fiancé Khet Sen started doubting her chastity. Somehow this news reached Umar also. He got upset at the plight of the poor girl for which he was instrumental. A chaste girl was being accused of infidelity. He attacked Malīr and when Marus surrendered, Umar told them, "Khet Sen should change his attitude towards Marvi as the same is not only disgraceful for you but puts my reputation at stake too." Hearing this Mārvi could not remain quiet and angrily said to

Umar, "We are your subjects and you have detained me in your palace for about a year, as such my people have every reason to doubt my chastity. For the fear of detraction even if they kill me, they would be fully justified to do so." On hearing this Umar repented his action and ordered his army to withdraw. The king called Khet Sen and told him, "I swear that Mārvi is chaste and undefiled by me. I am prepared to prove this by any test." On hearing this Mārvi replied, "It is for me to prove my chastity. Of what use would your testimony be to us." At last it was decided that an iron bar be heated in fire and Mārvi should hold that burning bar in her hands to prove her innocence. Mārvi held the hot iron bar in her hand, but was unscathed. Everyone was thus assured of her chastity. Umar, too, was surcharged with emotions and he too passed through the flames to free him off from accusations. He, too, came out unharmed by the fire.

5.6.2. Mūmal-Rāno

In the early 15th century, a king, Rājā Nand, belonging to the Gujar community, ruled over Mīrpur Mathelo, a city of Sindh. He had nine daughters. Of the nine Mūmal was the most beautiful and Sūmal, the eldest, was the wisest.

One day while Rājā Nand with some of his ministers and courtiers was strolling along the banks of the river Indus in search of a hunt, he saw a wild pig. Rājā Nand immediately aimed his bow and arrow at the beast. The beast jumped into the river, but the rider and the horse followed it. Strangely, as the pig forged ahead the water went on changing into a dry land. Nand was surprised to see this miraculous happening and chased the pig. In his racing spree both the pursued and pursuer reached the other bank of the river.

The king became sure that the pig was not an ordinary one and he was determined to either catch it alive or kill it. The pig escaped being caught alive but was shot to death by the king's arrow. The king thought that there must be some magic influence in some part of his body which dried up water. He slashed the carcass into small pieces and went on throwing one by one into the water to find the magic reaction. Ultimately, he came to know that this miracle was hidden in a tooth. The king preserved the valuable tooth and crossed the river by drying it up again with the help of that tooth and returned to his palace. He secretly removed all his treasure from the palace to the river with the help of this tooth and buried it in its bosom, thus insuring it against all risks of fire or theft.

However, the king's secret hiding place of the treasure became known to a 'faqir' who had occult power. The faqir was keen to lay his hands on the hidden wealth. He reached Mirpur Mathelo and erected a small hut on the outskirts of the city and settled down there to look for an opportunity to achieve his end.

One day the faqir got to know that the king was setting off on a long journey to some far-off destination along with his associates. He availed the opportunity, and in the guise of an anchorite reached the main gate of the king's palace. There he started crying in anguish. When Moomal was informed about it, she called the faqir inside the palace and asked him about his ailment. The faqir replied that he was dying of pain and could only be cured by a pig's tooth alone.

Mūmal recollected that such a tooth was hidden in her father's room. She went into the room and after a little search found it out. Ignorant of its usefulness and the consequences of her action, Moomal gave that tooth away to the faqir, who, thanking and

blessing her, went his way. On reaching the banks of the river, he dried up the water of the river, took the hidden wealth of the king and left the town to settle down at some far-off place.

On his return, Rājā Nand, one day desired to look at his hidden treasure, but when he found the tooth missing, he was perplexed. He searched every nook and corner of his palace but there was no trace of the tooth. After a searching inquiry, he learnt that Mūmal had passed it on to a faqir. Rājā Nand flew into a rage and was about to kill Mūmal, when his eldest daughter, Sūmal, with all her wisdom interceded on her behalf and promised to get back the lost treasure to her father.

Sūmal was an expert in the art of magic. After much deliberation she accompanied her sisters and maids to Jaisalmer. There was a town, known as Ladāno, near Jaisalmer. This township was built on the banks of the river Kak. When Sūmal arrived there, she was much impressed by the beautiful surroundings of Ladano. Soomal built a wonderful mansion in the wilderness on the bank of the river Kak by using her magic powers. Around the mansion she directed a stream of water. In the palace she contrived a wonderful maze, placed ferocious beasts, birds and various animals - all creations of her sorcery - in different corners and stairs. Around the palace, she grew a beautiful garden, with different kinds of colourful flowers. Inside the garden a labyrinth palace was built; which was so confusing that once anybody entered into it, it was virtually impossible for him to come out. In the midst of the garden she constructed a pond made of glass but anybody could be deceived by taking it to be a real one. In the main hall of the palace she put up seven swings — six were hung on cotton threads and the last one on an arc lever. Beneath the first six swings she dug deep invisible ditches.

The palace was named *Kak-Maḥal.*

When the palace was complete, all the sisters and maids started living there. A word was spread around the city that the first man who would cross the maze and reach the palace intact would win Mūmal for his bride.

The city of Ladāno became a big pilgrimage centre, and many kings, princes and traders from far and near used to visit it. The fame of the beautiful princess in the wonder mansion in the wilderness had spread far and wide. Many fair youth went to the palace to try to win the hand of pretty Moomal.

On the main gate of this wonder mansion a big beating drum was placed. Anybody wanting to try his luck had to beat that drum at the first instance. There are similar stories in Uzbek and Kazākh folk traditions.

On hearing the sound of the beat, Mūmal would get ready and would direct all her sisters and maids to wait for the prey. The chief maid, Natar, was the most cunning among them. She was sent out to welcome the visitor. She would go down to the gate, meet the visitor and accompany him for some distance and then suddenly she would also slip away and disappear. The visitor would get lost in the mazes or he faced ferocious lions and panthers and magical ponds and got bewildered in these surroundings. Ultimately, he would leave all his wealth and belongings over there and run for his life. The less fortunate persons even lost their lives in the bargain. Then by her sorcery, Mūmal made up her father's lost treasure and very soon restored all that was lost by her folly.

During that period, a Sūmro Prince, called Ḥamīr Sūmro, ruled over that district

of Sindh. His kingdom's capital was Amarkot. He had three ministers named Daunr Bhati, Sanro Damachani and Rano Mendhro. The king would not let them be away from him for a moment.

Rāno's sister was married to king Hamīr. All the four friends were very fond of hunting and led a luxurious life. One day while hunting they came across a faqir sitting under a tree. He told them that once he too was a prince, but after losing everything in Kak-Maḥal, he was wandering in that jungle as a defeated man. Then he narrated the details of Kak-Maḥal. All the four friends were moved by this tragic story. Consequently, they decided to visit Kak-Maḥal.

Mūmal knew about their arrival. Reaching there, the maid Natar served each with a silver plate containing a handful of grams and few clutters of cotton thread. Except Rāno, all got busy in eating gram and trying to set right the cluttered thread. Rāno put the plate in front of his horse, made a garland of cotton thread and put it around the neck of his horse. Then he reproached Natar to go and tell everything to her princess.

To test Rāno's wisdom further, Mūmal sent him a plate of Ḥalwa (sweet dish). On seeing this, Rāno with his sarcastic smile said, "Does your princess, consider us to be woman-like?"

Next time Mūmal got a variety of dishes prepared and put a little poison in each dish. Natar told them that these were prepared by Mūmal herself and requested them to enjoy all. Rāno stopped his friends from eating and threw few loaves in front of a dog. The dog died instantly.

Natar went and explained everything to Mūmal and suggested to Mūmal that it

was impossible to find a man of Rāno's wisdom and caliber and he was a perfect match for her. She rebuked her maid and said, "I would not let anyone laugh at me by surrendering like this, go and tell Rāno that if he is so brave and wise, let him come and try his luck".

When Mūmal's message was conveyed, king Hamīr accompanied Natar to the Kak-Maḥal. As soon as both crossed the entrance of the garden, Natar gave Hamīr a slip. At her disappearance, Hamīr lost his way and somehow managed to escape. He advised his friends to forget about Mūmal. On hearing Hamīr's experience, Rāno asked Hamīr to let him try his luck as well.

Next day Hamīr's two other friends also met the same fate. At last Rāno entered the Kak-Maḥal. The catacombs and the shyness of the cunning maids cast a spell on Rāno, but the brave man did not lose heart. Rāno cautiously took out his silver ring and threw it on the cascade. It became clear that there was fake cascade. He moved forward and reached the entrance of the palace. Mūmal was watching all his movements from her chamber. She immediately sent her maid to welcome Rāno. The crafty maid took him to the parlour and asked him to relax on a swing for a while so that she may inform Mūmal and slipped away.

Rāno was not so credulous. The seven swings in a line made him suspicious. Before sitting over it, he lanced the arrow in each of the swings. Then he removed the carpet under each swing. Below the carpets, there were deep ditches, full of sharp weapons. Rano found that the seventh swing was completely safe. He then sit on that and looked for Mūmal to come.

When Mūmal watched all that she felt helpless and sent a message to Rāno to come up. Rāno entered her chamber and saw a group of pretty girls dressed up very attractively. He was confused and could not make out who the Mūmal was. While he was in a fix to spot Mūmal, he saw a beetle hovering around her hair. Rāno moved towards Mūmal. Thus he succeeded to find his way to Mūmal's heart. Mūmal was already fascinated by his wisdom and courage. He had stood all the tests. She also moved ahead and said, "Dear, you have won my love. Henceforth I am yours."

Rāno stayed that night with Mūmal in her chamber. In the morning, he left to meet his friends after promises and assurance to Mūmal that he will return.

Rāno's friends were surprised at his story. Hamīr said it was his desire to see Mūmal. Rāno agreed but asked him to accompany him in the guise of his man as otherwise Mūmal might not meet him. Hamīr took the guise of a milk-man and accompanied him. When they reached there, Mūmal got suspicious about Hamīr. Therefore, she asked him to milk the cow. With great difficulty he could succeed in taking some milk out of the cow. He was so agitated that he distributed the milk among servants and left the palace without informing anyone.

Hamīr felt humiliated and he turned against Rāno. He sent a message to him, "Your friends are leaving for their home, if you want to join them, do so immediately, otherwise whatever message you want to convey to your people lets us know." Rāno went to bid them farewell. They forcibly lifted him and tied him around the back of a camel and left for Amarkot. On reaching their Rāno was put into a prison.

Separation from Mūmal became unbearable for Rāno. After much persuasion by

his ministers Hamir agreed to set Rāno free but on the condition that Rāno would never see Mūmal again.

However, Rāno secretly started meeting Mūmal every night. However, the secret was out in few months. Hamīr imprisoned him for not keeping his promise.

For the happiness of Rāno's sister (Hamīr's wife), the king set him free again. At the first opportunity Rāno fled to the side of Mūmal. She had lost all her charm and grace. To please her Sūmal dressed up like Rāno and slept with her on the same bed. When Rāno reached her chamber late in the night, he saw a stranger sleeping with Mūmal. He was shocked and left his stick by the side of her bed and left in a rage. Early in the morning Mūmal found Rāno's stick lying by the bedside. She understood Rāno had doubted her to be sleeping with someone else.

To clear this misunderstanding Mūmal sent many messengers to Rāno and made every effort to win him back, but failed. Mūmal, therefore, built a small cottage in front of Rāno's palace in Amarkot and started living there in the guise of a male ascetic. She succeeded in developing friendship with Rāno but Rāno soon recognized her. He did not forgive her and left her crying.

On reaching her palace, she lit a fire and jumped into it. Rāno rushed to the spot. At being unable to save her life, he also jumped in the fire and finished himself.

5.6.3. Sohni-Mehar

There lived a wealthy and famous potter, Tula, in the village of Gujrāt during the reign of Mughal Emperor Shāh Jahān. He had a beautiful daughter named Mahi. Her

beauty bloomed during her teens, which earned her the nickname of Sohni.

'Izzat Beg, a merchant from Bukhāra, passed through Gujrāt on his way back home. During his stay in Gujrāt he was told of the enchanting potteries of Tula. He sent one of his servants to Tula to buy pottery for taking gifts with him. The servant told him of the bewitching beauty of Tula's daughter. 'Izzat Beg became eager to see her.

Pretending to be a trader, 'Izzat Beg reached Tula's shop and found Sohni attending the shop in the absence of her father. At the very first sight, he was spell bound by her beauty and fell headlong in love with her. He changed his mind about going back home and decided to stay on indefinitely in Gujrāt. He bought a shop in the city and took a selling agency for Tula's pottery. Every day he would visit Tula's shop to buy potteries so as to see Sohni. He used to buy the earthenware at a high rate from Sohni and sell them at a throwaway price so that his daily routine of visiting his beloved may not in any way is hampered. This way the money he had went on shrinking day by day. His servants were sore at their master's wasteful expenses and finally escaped with all of the remaining wealth. The next morning, Izzat Beg woke up to find himself a pauper. However, he continued buying material from Tula's shop on credit. The amounts went on piling up and Tula started making demands. He was unable to pay back his loans. So 'Izzat Beg informed Tula that his servants had escaped with his money and now he had no means of clearing his debts, except that he is to be taken in his employment so as to repay. Tula agreed to the proposal and employed him as his domestic servant. He performed various jobs till he was employed as the cowherd. He did these jobs as a labour of love. Due to this assignment, he was nicknamed 'Mehar', the buffalo-grazer.

One evening, as Mehar and Sohni were alone, he opened his mind to his beloved. When Mehar conveyed the secret of his heart to Sohni, she was struck by his rare devotion. She was already infatuated by his charming looks. She readily reciprocated his love. Thus the bonds of love went on strengthening, culminating in clandestine trysts. Both got restless unless they saw each other.

These secret meetings could not continue for long without being found out. It started with whispers and ended with rumours all over. Sohni's mother made her best efforts to dissuade her from indulging in any such affair with their servant but she paid no heed. Sohni's mother informed her husband who got infuriated and immediately turned Mehar out of his home. To cover the whole affair and to be saved from disgrace the girl was quickly forced into a marriage with one of their relations, named Dum.

When Sohni, now a bride, reached her husband's home, she prayed to God, "Oh lord, save my honour and let me be faithful to my true love." Every night when Dum entered Sohni's room, he felt drowsy and went to sleep immediately. Chaste Sohni lived in perpetual mourning. She stopped to eat and drink anything due to separation of Mehar. She would go to the riverside and ask every one of the whereabouts of her lover. Somehow she continued to communicate with her lover through a friend.

For Mehar also the separation from his beloved was unbearable. He wandered for sometime around the city in the guise of a beggar and thereafter settled down on the other side of the river. Being informed of Sohni's whereabouts, he in the guise of a Faqīr reached the doorsteps of his beloved and gave her a call. Sohni immediately recognized her lover's voice and came to the door with alms. She narrated to him all that had

happened to her. She, however, gave him word that very soon they would be together again and thereafter no power on the earth could separate them.

Mehar was convinced of Sohni's sincerity and was consoled by her assurances. But no sooner did he leave her door, he felt forlorn. He wandered from place to place and at last settled down outside an old cave on a hillside near a forest. He continued staying there for a couple of months, when one day the occupant on seeing a stranger outside the cave asked him, "If you are a real *yogi*, come inside." Mehar replied, "I am not a yogi but wish to become one." The *yogi* was much impressed by Mehar's attractive looks and he accepted him as his disciple.

Mehar served his Guru so untiringly that he blessed him with prophetic words that all of his desires would be fulfilled. After a few days Mehar took his Guru's permission to leave and returned to Gujrāt. On the one side of the river Chenāb was Sohni's house and on the other bank Mehar established himself in a cottage as a yogi. By and large his fame spread all over the neighboring villages and people would gather around him bringing lots of gifts such as milk, butter, fish, etc. In a couple of day's people from the distant places started visiting him. When Sohni came to know of it she got an intuition that this *yogi* is none other than her Mehar. She requested her sister-in-law to let her also visit such a holy man, to which she agreed. Once again two lovers were together and secretly settled to meet every night across the river.

Every night Mehar would swim across the river and meet his love. Sohni would arrive there even before Mehar. Every day Mehar would bring along with him a roasted fish and would eat it together and the lovers would part and get back to their respective

places before dawn.

One night Mehar could not procure fish from the fishermen because of a heavy storm. He did not want to go to his beloved empty-handed, so he cut out a piece of his thigh, roasted it and took it as a gift for his beloved. When he swam across the river, he was completely exhausted. Seeing him limping, Sohni got perplexed. At knowing the reason she wept bitterly and said, "You have fully demonstrated your intensity of love, now it is my turn." The next night she waited for Mehar, but he could not reach. She thought that perhaps his wound had worsened. So Sohni picked up an earthen jar from her house and swam across the river with the help of the jar. So the meetings continued. Sohni's sister-in-law got suspicious and one night when Sohni was preparing to slip out, she pretended to be fast asleep. When Sohni crossed the main gate of her house,' she followed her and came to know of everything. Next morning she narrated to her brother all that had happened the preceding night. Sohni was threatened, tortured and chided by Dum but nothing would refrain from meeting her lover.

When her husband and sister-in-law saw that all their efforts were in vain, they decided to teach her a lesson. The place where Sohni used to hide her earthen jar was known to her sister-in-law. One day she treacherously replaced Sohni's jar with an unbaked one. That night the river was also stormy. Consequently, she was drowned. At this sight Mehar also jumped in the river and the water took them both away.

5.6.4. Nūri and Jām Tamāchi

In the days of the Samma family's rule over Sindh, a prince, Jām Tamāchi, was one of the rulers. A tribe of fishermen known as Mohānas were settled around Kinjhar

Lake.

The tribe lived in distressing poverty and their sordid living evoked repulsive feelings among the passers-by. The tribe mostly consisted of old and ugly people who wore untidy clothes and lead strange lives. The attacking smell of fish around them polluted the area and nobody went near them.

By chance a most beautiful girl was born among the tribe. Her parents befittingly named her Nūri, the effulgent. Jām Tamāchi, a fond traveler and sailor, while sailing about the Kinjhar Lake chanced to see Nūri standing at the bank of the lake. He was enticed by her bewitching beauty. She was the only one among the tribe who smelt fresh and clean.

Nūri's beauty continued to haunt Jām Tamāchi even after his return to the palace. The prince decided to marry her and sent for her parents. The fisherman's joy knew no bounds when the king sought his daughter's hand in marriage. They immediately consented to the proposal which would bring honour to their tribe. Jām Tamāchi ordered lavish decorations throughout his kingdom. All taxes on fishermen were withdrawn and the tribe was extended all the amenities of life.

Jām Tamāchi's love for Nūri was so intense that at times he would forget his status and salute Nuri. Every evening he took her to the Kinjhar Lake in the royal boat and sometimes they strolled on the bank. Other queens of Jām Tamāchi also used to bow before this low-born fisher girl. But in spite of respect and honour bestowed on her, she remained humble and modest. She used to tell the king humbly, "I was a poor fisher girl and your highness has honoured me and my tribe by accepting me as your queen."

One day Jām Tamāchi decided to test the modesty of his beloved queen, Nūri. He sent word to all his queens that all of them should dress in their best finery and he would choose whosoever appeals to him most to accompany him for sailing in the lake that evening. All the queens bejeweled themselves and perfumed themselves and their clothes and expectantly awaited the king. Nūri dressed herself as she was dressed at the time of winning the king's heart.

Jām Tamāchi entered his palace. All the queens gathered around the king in high hopes to be declared the fairest, but Nūri offered her respects to him from a distance. The king beckoned her towards him and she modestly moved towards her husband with her eyes full of love and respect. The other queens raised their heads high and smiled at Nūri's untidy dress, but they were taken by surprise when they saw Jām Tamāchi move towards her and take her into his embrace. After that day the king made Nūri his chief queen and gifted the whole of the Kinjhar Lake to her tribe.

Notes

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2 Syed Ameer Ali, *The spirit of Islam(* London:Chatto & windus 1965*)* pp 474-75

[3] Surindar Singh Kohli, *History of Punjabi Literature* (Delhi:National book shop,1993) p.65

[4] Ibid., p.65

[5] I.D. Serebriakov, *Punjabi Literature* (Lahore: Progressive Books, 1975) p.46

[6] Ibid, p.46

[7] Ibid, p.47

[8] Ibid, p.47

[9] Kohli, op.cit, p.72

[10] Ibid., p.72

[11] Serebriakov, op.cit, p.53

[12] Ibid. p.56

[13] Sekhon & Duggal, op.cit., p.74

[14] Kohli, op.cit., p.66

[15] Najm Hosain Syed, *Recurrent Patterns in Punjabi Poetry* (Lahore: Punjab Adbi Markaz,1978) p. 6

[16] Ibid., p.7

[17] Kohli, Op.cit, p.63

[18] Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, *Punjabi Literature in Perspective* (A Marxist Approach)

(Ludhiana: Kalyan 1989) p. 117

[19] Najm Hosain, op.cit., p. 35

[20] Ibid.,p.l33

[21] Sekhon & Duggal, op.cit., p.87

[22] Ibid., p.79

[23] Ibid. p. 83

[24] Najm Hosain, op.cit., p. 53

[25] Sekhon & Duggal, op.cit., p.75

[26] Serebriakov, op.cit., p. 39

[27] Sayyid Fayyaz Mahmud, *Folk Romances of Pakistan*, (Islamabad: Lok Virsa 1995)p.l4

[28] Kohli, op.cit., p.63

[29] Najm Hosain, op.cit., p. 39

[30] R.C. Temple, *The Legends of the Punjab*, Vol. II, (Islamabad: Institute of Folk Heritage 1981) p. x

[31] Ibid, p. 19

[32] Serebriakov, op.cit., p.42

[33] Jasbir Singh, op.cit., p. 117

[34] Ibid, p.118

[35] Sayyid Fayyaz, Op.cit., p.21

[36] Sekhon & Duggal, Op.cit p.74

[37] Sayyid Fayaz, op.cit., p.22

[38] Ibid, p. 19

[39] Najm Hosain, op.cit., p. 41

[40] Lajwanti Rama Krishna, *Punjabi Sufi Poets* (latest edition by Ashajanak Publications, New Delhi 1973) p. 42

[41] Punjab University Library MS No. 374, Kāfi No. 9

[42] Sayyid Fayaz, op.cit., p.20

[43] Kohli, op.cit., p.74

[44] Ibid., p.73

[45] Sekhon & Duggal, op.cit., p.76

[46] Kohli, op.cit., p.72

[47] Najm Hosain, op.cit., p. 41

[48] Sekhon & Duggal, op.cit., p. 78

[49] Sayyid Fayaz, op.cit., p.23

[50] The Sindhi folk tales have been taken from *'Folk Tales of Pakistan'* by Laxman Komal (New Delhi 1992).

Conclusion

The research study in hand supports the theory of the Unity in diversity and diversity in Unity. It also exhibits the idea of oneness and Unity on Social, Cultural and Political basis in the provinces of the present Pakistan. The folk stories discussed and elaborated in this study reflect the environment and events of the more recent historical past. They have some geo-historical basis, and can be more clearly distinguished as belonging to a particular people. Among them, the names of some places can be recognized geographically, and references to some persons, events and occurrences identified historically.

Perpetuation and continuity of each society largely depends upon its literature, oral traditions and folk wisdom, which have been developed over time and are culturally approved and became public knowledge. These stories, folk songs, and classical literary traditions, determine the culturally appreciable behavior and disliked happenings. In the present situation, these oral and classical traditions go back to the Indus valley culture.

The Indus Valley or Mohenjo-Daro civilization is the farthest visible outpost of archaeology on the scale of time. This region has Sindhi, Punjāb i, Baluchi and Pushto as its major languages, besides dialects like Sirāiki. Poṭohāri and Hindko. These are the oldest languages of the Subcontinent with a variegated culture, extensive literature and vast folklore. The languages of the region have extended their influence beyond the geographical boundaries. In northern Sindh, they flow over the north-west into Baluchistān, to the north and north-west into Punjāb and on the west they are spread up to Kohistān.

The Indus culture is as old as any other culture of the World in terms of its organization. It is traditional and mainly based on kinship ties. This point is explained and elaborated through the folk tales of *H r Rānjhā, Sassi Punnū, Sohni Mahinwāl, Mirzā Ṣāḥibān,* and many others. These stories also reflect the oneness of cultural heritage.

The Indus Valley was the cradle of one of the most ancient civilizations in the world. As far back as 3000 B.C., Harappan culture flourished here on the basis of an elaborate class society with highly developed productive forces and a remarkable standard of urban life. With the decline of this civilization and influx of *Aryans* from Central Asia into the Indus Valley, a new era took root around 1500 B.C. It was around 1750 B.C. when the hymns of the *Ṛig Veda* were memorized and collected. Other *Vedas* namely the- *Sāma, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas* followed it. *Ṛig Veda* is the earliest literary source and, along with other *Vedas,* it formed the basis of the historical reconstruction of the Aryan life and institutions. Whereas, the two epics, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata,* are concerned with events which took place between 1000 and 700 B.C. But the existing versions could only be regarded as historically valid if supporting evidence is found to bear them out.

The early history of Indus Valley has been enriched by the incorporation of evidence provided by the systematic study of society in its various facets, and the extensive use of contemporary evidence from archaeology. The importance of the former lies in the fact that it indicates the possibilities of new ways of approaching the Indian past; and of posing questions, in the answers to which may lie a more real comprehension of the history of India. The study of society has also stimulated an interest in comparative studies and analysis of many cultures on new lines and not by declaring one culture to be

standard and judging others by it.

Thus, there are two separate sources of information on the past; the historical, which consists of the archaeological evidence and that derived from Vedic literature, and the oral and mythical, consisting of the stories in the *Purāṇas*, the later being composed at a later date than the *Vedas*.

> *It is not surprising to find the variants of Indus Valley folk tales in the ancient scriptures as both flow from a common source, the collective consciousness of the entire people. The difference lies in the fact that the elite class distorted the available material whereas the folk tales current amongst the common people retained their pristine glory. As such only those tales are to be considered authentic which are taken down by the scholars from the wandering bards or the old people particularly the Grandmas or Grandpas.*

The *Indus Valley* folk tales could be traced to the *Ṛig Veda,* the *Purāṇas*, and the *Mahābhārata,* the ocean of the stream of stories of ancient Greece and Rome and to the Buddhistic *jātaka* tales. The ancient scriptures and other works referred to earlier were the creation of the *elite* classes and more often these folk tales were distorted in their interests. However, the *Vedas, Epics* and *Purāṇas* are central to the evolution of these folk tales and the social consciousness of the region. While keeping in view their significance, the initial ages of the Aryan history in India are named as the Vedic Period and the Epic Period.

After the age of the *Vedas*, the Aryans extended their conquests beyond the limits of the Punjāb. During this age, the Aryans expanded to the south and the east and established their kingdoms at Hastinapur, Oude and Mithilā under two dynasties, i.e., solar and lunar races. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* celebrate events of this age. These epics are stories about Aryans life, wars, and accomplishments. The former, talks of Aryan wars amongst themselves, where two clans, the Pāṇḍuvas and the Kauravas, battle it out, and the Pāṇḍuvas emerge victorious. Therefore the period from roughly 1000 BC to 500 BC is named after the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* and called as the Epic Period.

Sanskrit epic poetry is divided into two main classes, i.e. *itihāsa, akhyāyana* or *Purāṇa* and *kavya.* The *Mahābhārata* is an *itihāsa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a *kavya.* The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the work of a single poet and homogeneous in plan and execution. It was composed in the east of India. But the *Mahābhārata* is a congeries of parts. Its main story is the struggle between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍuvas in the field of Kurukshetra. A number of anecdotes and a large quantity of didactic matter have been added to the main story and the book is now considered an encyclopedia of moral teaching.

In the immortal epics of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa,* only two events of the heroic age have been rescued from oblivion. These are the great war of the two branches of the lunar race - Kurus and the Panchālas, who finally coalesced into a single people; and the expedition of Rāma, a sovereign of the solar race to the Deccan and Ceylon.

For the construction of the ancient history of India the *Mahābhārata* does not help

us very much. It is difficult to find out the authenticity of the stories which have been mixed up with fables and in many cases have been presented in an exaggerated form. But there is no doubt that most of these stories are based upon historical incidents. The picture of society is more interesting than any other information. Brahmanism had already made sufficient progress but still the Kshatriyas held the supreme position in society.

The epic, *Rāmāyaṇa*, is so intermingled at every turn with the grotesque fancies of mythology, and the agency is so constantly described as supernatural, that it is difficult to extract from it the germs of historical truth on which it was based. But it appears clear that it indicates the first expedition of the *Aryans* to the Deccan, that the southern division of it was still peopled by the aborigines, and that the island of Lanka or Ceylon was the seat of a higher civilization, probably migrated from Egypt. It led to no permanent conquest, as the army of monkeys and bears which aided Rāma, after accompanying him in triumph to his capital, returned to their forests, and one hears no more of them on the page of history till they had been transformed into orthodox Hindus. It must not be forgotten that the poem was composed ten centuries after the events it celebrates when Brahmanism was consolidated into a dominant system, which it was intended to support.

> The Indus Valley tradition of literature, unique for its content as well as chronological development, ran in two lines: mythological and pragmatic. Beginning with the *Vedas* at the dawn of civilization the first line branched out into the *Upanishads*, gave way to the epics and the *Mahapurāṇas,* followed by *Upapurāṇas* and the rest. The second line consisted

> of the *Bṛihat Kathā* (the precursor of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*), the *Jātakas* and the *Panchatantra*, etc. They shed light on different aspects of life and other worldly complexities, sometimes didactic (as in the *Jātakas*) but more often simply expository of the various possibilities of life.

In the epics of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa,* the events of Great War of the two branches of the lunar race and the expedition of Rāma, are embodied in a number of stories, the cream of the life of those distant times, of a high artistic order, enriching the main stream of national upheaval. But the canvas is too broad and the personnel too colossal for a folk romance. Whereas, in the folk romance the centre of interest is some individual experience, which brings forth themes strong enough to get hold of the imagination of generations. The great epics embody social and moral codes and the courtesies of civilized behaviour. The ideal of a certain way of life is embodied in the heroes, who become the cultural symbols. However, many strands go to the making of a folk romance, generation after generation. Additions are made to it with some aspect emphasized and some angle dissipated, a sort of artistic mutation working at and moulding the primary theme, till a complete picture is offered to the public by a more persuasive tongue or a person of more graphic imagination; for instance, the story of Pūran Bhagat - the oldest folk romance that belongs to Indus Valley. Its intriguing theme revolving around the father, son and mother has attracted the attention of many writers from the ancient times. The story of *Kunāla*, the elder son of Aśoka (273-236 BC) in ancient Indian history, also bears close resemblance to the tale of *Pūran Bhagat*. This sort of sex-triangle must have not been an uncommon phenomenon in all ages, though we

cannot tell with surety whether this is a universal social abnormality or whether the story has travelled like a folk-tale from one region to another except, of course, the true life story of Aśoka's son Kunāla.

As the earlier Indus folklore has travelled from generation to generation owing chiefly to bards, we notice the stories run in cycles. They tend to connect all their heroes in some way or other. Stories are indiscriminately told of several heroes, and if one calls to mind the names of the most celebrated they are sure to be found to belong to a group all genealogically connected with each other as is the case with the Greek and Roman classics. In the tales of *Vikrāmaditya, Gopi Chand and Chandarbhān*, and in those of *Sālivāhana, Rasālu, Pūran Bhagat, Sirkap and Hoḍi* one has, as it were; the stories of the chief heroes of both sides of what must have been at one time a life and death struggle between races in India.

Pūran Bhagat is a story of a man who was born pure and without any sexual impulses or who had smothered it very early. He saw the light of day after much praying of his parents. His father Rājā Sālbāhan was the ruler of upper Punjāb in early eighth century. Sir Richard Temple, the famous antiquarian and author of *Legends of the Punjāb* said in the introductory remarks to legend No. 30 (Pūran Bhagat) and his article on Rājā Rasālu in the *Calcutta Review* of 1884 (p. 390) that it was Rājā Sālbāhan and later his second son Rājā Rasālu who stopped the advances of Muslim forces under Moḥammad bin Qāsim and his successors, early in the eighth century, from further conquests. That may have been the reason why Pūran's younger brother Rasālu became a legendary hero.

The first volume of folk tales of Punjāb began with the adventures of Rājā Rasālu,

giving a disconnected series of stories fastened on to the name of this popular hero. Since then the stories of Princess Adhik Anup Dai of Sila Dai and of Pūran Bhagat have appeared, showing that these are really stories, or series of stories, belonging to a cycle, and indiscriminately applied to the Northern Sālivāhana and any of his immediate legendary descendants.

Even today, Rājā Rasālu is considered the embodiment of Punjāb's cultural identity. The assimilative spirit and liberal outlook of ancient Punjāb is reflected in the legendary figure of Rājā Rasālu. Greek, Roman and Iranian myths, Biblical and Qurānic tales, and faint memories of the distant past are creatively interwoven to transform the historical person of Rājā Rasālu into a legendary hero.

The cycle of legends on Rasālu teems with motifs assimilated from the legends of many lands. It has an obvious relationship with the European, Iranian and Indian myths under the influence of caste-free, egalitarian concepts of Buddhism and Islam. Rasālu's fight with the giants bears a striking similarity with the Germanic hero's fight with the dragons. Although stories of dragon-fight are found in Iranian heroic legends relating to *Rustum, Isfandyar* and *Artchsir*, Rasālu's adventures have much more in common with Beowulfs struggle against the monsters.

> Punjāb produced brave soldiers like Porus, Jaypāl, Ranjīt Singh, Shaikha, Jasrat, Dilloo, Saidoo, Aḥmad Khān Kharal, Bhagat Singh, Lālā Lājpat Rāi and Mirzā Qalandar. Its romantic heroes like Rājā Rasālu, Pūran Bhagat, Sārang and Dulla Bhatti live even today in the memory of village folk. Its Ṣūfi saints and.

poets, who preached a message of love, include Amir Khusro, Guru Nānak, Kabīr, Dātā Gunj Baksh, Bābā Farīd, Bahāudin Zakaria, Bullah Shāh, Sulṭān Bāhu, Miān Moḥammad and Shāh Ḥusain. Not only great men but the Punjāb i folk lore has strong willed women who dominated their beloveds - in the tales of Hīr Rānjhā, Sassi Punnū, Mirzā Ṣāḥibān and Sohni Mahinwāl.

All invaders who came to this land had one basic human failing - greed for wealth. And their wrath was indiscriminate - irrespective of religion, race or creed. The attacks and occupation by the foreign rulers has had a deep impact on the psyche of the Punjāb is – their threshold for subjugation increased. They continue to readily accept a man on the horse back the moment he appears on the horizon. There exists a huge corpus of the resistance poetry written during the last five hundred years. Hundreds of songs were exclusively devoted to Dulla Bhatti, Jasrat Khokhar, Aḥmad Khan Kharal, Murād Fatiāna, Fazal Māchi, Javana Mor, Nizām Lohār, Jabroo Nāi, Malangi and others. What is left out of this huge corpus is Var Dulla Bhatti, Var Nādir Shāh, Jang Hind-Punjāb by Shāh Muḥammad and some *dholas* about Ahmad Khān Kharl and his comrades-in-arm.

Dulla Bhatti was the son of the soil who stood against Akbar. He was a disciple of Shāh Behlol, along with Shāh Husain. According to various accounts, Dulla Bhatti annoyed Emperor Akbar and was therefore executed outside the Delhi Gate. Much has been written in poetry and praise of his bravery, mentioning him as a hero in the folklore.

It is said that Punjāb had made a negative contribution towards the 1857 War of

Independence. The bigoted historians on this negative role lay too much stress. They forget the confessions of the British themselves that if the local forces, which captured the Delhi Fort, had not been erratic, it would have been difficult for them to recapture India. Historical record shows that the deserting armies had no clear objective and the Delhi rulers were so weak that they could not give an alternative administration in the disturbed areas. It was they who actually failed their people. The positive role of Punjāb is and the Punjāb -based British Army has been kept in low profile. As discussed earlier, the feudal lords who ruled this area never wanted to expose the disgraceful role of their forefathers. These people never allowed the Punjāb to know its history, culture and literature and the aspirations of the Punjāb is who made solid contribution to the Pakistan movement.

No doubt the whole Punjāb was disturbed in 1857. Siālkot, Jhelum, Rāwalpindi and Ferozepur cantonments had bloodbaths but according to the Mutiny Reports the Kharls had cut the Punjā into two and the British were worried about the resistance which they met from the unarmed Kharls, Wattoos, Qureshis and Siāls of the area who were being led by the old man Aḥmad Khān Kharl of Ṭoba Ṭek Singh district.

This was the man about whom the bards of the area composed *dholas*. But most of the dholas could not be recorded due to the fear of the rulers. After more than a century, recording of oral tradition started, though in a hostile atmosphere. Neither newspapers nor radio gave any importance to this most important chapter of the history of the Punjāb . The situation has not yet taken a turn for the better. The people of Faisalābād, Ṭoba Ṭek Singh and their representatives are not aware of the importance of the part played by this son of the soil, Aḥmad Khān Kharl of Jhāmara. Nor do the

Sāhiwāl people remember the battles fought in Gogera, Chichawatni, and Harappa and on the bank of the Rāvi.

As discussed earlier, many do not know the history of many of the heroes hailing from the areas of Pakistan. Someone somewhere can still find a clue to the lost chapters in our history.

Dulla Bhatti, Murād Fatiāna, Niẓām Lohār, Jabrū Nāi, Malangi Faqīr and other such people are known as dacoits and they will continue to be known as such because they do not belong to any "respectable family" They are poor village workers, the slaves of the land holding families, money-lenders, and their masters in police, revenue and other departments. They might not have been conscious enemies of the social set up but what they did in the direction in which they moved proved that they were against the status quo. They revolted against the high-handedness of the ruling classes. They had no respect for established values. They may be called misfits. But what made them misfits? The injustice meted out to the lower class of society to which they belonged. To revolt against any type of injustice is politics purer than the politics of the multi-class political parties. So far the lowest class is bound to make a Lohār, a Nāi, and a farmer their hero. This is a fact and no one from the permissible side can deny it.

> The folk heritage of the Indus Valley is the traditional urge of thousands of years of its history. There are a number of folk tales which are popular in different parts of Indus Valley. These are the folk tales of Mirzā Ṣāḥibān, Saiful Malūk, Yūsuf Zulaikhān, Hīr Rānjhā, Sohni Mahinwāl, Dulla Bhatti, Rājā Rasālu, Puran

Bhaghat, and Sassi Punnū. The mystic folk songs include the Kafīs of Khawāja Ghulām Farīd in Seraiki, Punjābi and *ashlook* by Bābā Farīd Shakar Ganj. They also include baits, *dohras, loris*, *Sehra*, and *Jugni*. The most famous of the romantic love songs are *Māhiāh* and *Dhamāl*, *Jhūmar*, Bhangṛā and Luddi. Punjābi romantic dances include *Giddhā, Dholā* and Summi.

Punjāb has always combated invaders. Therefore the truth of life became a reality like blood in one's veins. All this inculcated in the lovers of Punjāb not only an appreciation and periscopic sense of beauty but also the courage to gift of life. The action became two dimensional: while on one hand mortal love gained the stature of worship of God; on the other hand, it lent courage to defy religious constraints.

The beautiful truth is that for centuries the *saga* of the folk lovers which immortalizes the memory of Hīr, Sohni, Ṣāḥibān, Sassi, and others has been handed down from generation to generation. Their memories are still alive as they had died for love and not because their lovers had died for them at the altar of love. They rebelled against the conventional norms of society. These women who loved did not treasure their body or soul: they sacrificed everything for love. The roots of this philosophy are embedded in the poetry of Wāris Shāh, who believed that the world existed on love. He says:

Be thankful to God
For making love the root of the world
First he himself loved
Then he made the prophets

His beloved ones.

The Indus Valley is the farthest visible outpost of archaeology. After this civilization, there is a gap of more than a millennium with the exception of the tale of a mythological king (Jayadrath, 12-13th century B.C) in the ancient history of the Indus Valley, of which Sindh formed a major portion. The Indus has been the main artery of Pakistan and the life-stream of the lower valley of Sindh. The economy and, consequently, the political history of this region have been influenced since the beginning of history by the changes, for better or worse, in the course of the Indus. Until the medieval times the Indus Valley demarcated, though vaguely, India and trans-Indus lands. The territories west of the Indus Valley have in the remote past; more often formed part of the empires whose seats were situated variously in Persia, Greece, Turkistan, Arabia or Iraq.

This region has the oldest languages of the subcontinent with a variegated culture, extensive literature and vast folklore. The languages of the region have extended their influence beyond the geographical boundaries. In northern Sindh, they flow over the northwest into Baluchistān, to the north and north-west into Punjāb and on the west they are spread up to Kohistān. The conceptual development of folklore motifs from something spiritual to the mundane is one of the most significant aspects of the literary annals of the region. The main characteristic of the folklore of this region over the centuries has been its development and an atmosphere of intensely humanistic mysticism, which has transcended the rigidities of dogma and glorified self-abnegation, as the highest virtue. That people are not literate does not necessarily imply that they are inarticulate. They too experience moments of joy and great happenings, they too listen to

the great epics and the most enchanting tales of dexterity, courage and victory of truth over villainy, handed down by their forefathers by word of mouth. In folk literature, folk tales are placed above all other forms. The tradition of narration of folk tales goes back to the *Vedic period.* The Sindhi folk tales discussed in this study are basically romantic in character, based on some historical facts. Their heroes and heroines, even when they belong to history, are endowed with superhuman powers.

> The folk tales of Indus Valley reflect the idea of unity and diversity on cultural and philosophical grounds. On political scene, they can be termed as: the United States of Indus Valley, which is in fact the Present Pakistan. For example, the story of Sohni Mahinwāl is a Punjāb i and simultaneously a Central Asian tale. It is also worth mentioning that Sohni and Mahinwāl, according to local tradition, are buried in Shāhdādpur, a town in Upper Sindh. Many Sindhi and Punjāb i Poets including Shāh Latīf Bhitāi and Fazal Shāh have composed this tale; similarly Sassi Punnū is a Sindhi and Baluch tale, popularly described in Sindhi, Punjāb i, Baluchi and Pashto literature and folklore. The tale of Hīr Rānjhā is not only known in the Indus Valley region but also in whole of the South Asia.

Through research into the history and folklore of the Indus Valley, the study has explored the structures of unity patterns in the four provinces of Pakistan and examined and compared the social and cultural diversity exercised in the present regions of Pakistan.

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