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A NOTE ON THE ETYMOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF THE TERM *MASJID*

S. M. Hasan

[*Communicated by* : A. KARIM]

The word *Masjid* مسجد, plural *Masājid,* مساجد is derived from the radical verb *sajada,* سجد. With a view to arrive at an explicit interpretation of *Masjid,* we have to bear in mind the following meanings of the radical *sajada,* سجد :

1. Prostration, i. e., putting the forehead on the ground.
2. Becoming lowly, humble and submissive.
3. Bending or inclining.
4. Putting the forehead on the ground, also said of a camel.
5. Salutation, thanks-giving gesture.[1]

The various meanings of verb, *sajada,* سجد, infinitive *sujūd,* سجود, *sajada* being a single act of *sujūd* or prostration, must also be considered.[2] It denotes :

1. To look continually and tranquilly at something.
2. To lower the eye-lids with a look indicating anger, love or coyness.
3. To prostrate oneself in prayer by dropping gently on the knees, placing the palms of the hands on the ground, a

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1. *AEL,* Vol. 4, pt. 4, Book. 1, pp. 1307-8. See also Langberg, Le Comte de., *Glossaire datînois,* Troisième Volume, Leiden, 1942, p. 1902. Any discussion on prostration is bound to be linked up with the prostration God wanted Iblis (Satan) to make before Adam. The passage in the Qur'ān (XV, 33) runs thus : "Iblis says, "I am not such that I should make obeisance to a mortal whom thou hast created of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape."
2. Jeffery, A., *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān,* Gaewad Oriental Series, Baroda, vol. LXXIX, 1938, p. 263.

little before the place of the knees, and then putting the nose and forehead on the ground, the former first between the two hands.

4. To be humble, to submit, to incline or bend.

Prostration, according to Wensinck, implies an act of awe and reverence, impelled by the Divine presence. It is practised for three-fold purposes, as a form of mourning rite, a measure of expressing awe for a highly dignified or supernatural being : a liturgical mode of worship.[1]

Masjid is inseparably linked with *sajada,* being its derivative noun. The correct interpretation of the term *Masjid* has been facilitated by the profound etymological affinity between the two words. It implies :

(a) *Masjad,* مسجد :

1. Forehead, bearing the mark made by prostrations (*sujūd*) in prayer.[2]
2. Parts of a man that are the places of *sujūd,* i. e., forehead, nose, hands, knees, feet.[3]

(b) *Masjid,* مسجد :

1. Any place or house in which one performs the act of prostration in prayer.
2. A Muslim place of prayer and devotion.
3. Oratory or place of private prayer.
4. *Miḥrāb,* also signifies a place of prayer or *Masjid* of the congregation.

Both Lane and Steingass have expressed the same view, namely, that primarily *Masjid* is more concerned with a materia-

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1. Wensinck, A. J., *Some Semitic rites of mourning and religion : studies on their origin and mutual relation,* Amsterdam, 1917, p. 18 (Hereafter cited as *Semitic Rites*).
2. Qur'ān, Ch. LXXII, Verse 18.
3. Steingass, F., *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary,* London, ND, p. 1236.

listic expression of a ritualistic devotion and worship rather than with worship and devotion themselves. Literally, *Masjid* means "a place of prostration" and does not refer in the least to any part or limb of the human body implicated in devotional practices, which is denoted by *Masjad.* Moreover, it would be wrong to identify or substitute *Masjid* for *Miḥrāb*, i. e., oratory, as many scholars have done.[1] In the true sense of the term, *Miḥrāb* constitutes one of the many rudimentary elements of a Mosque : it is the niche marking the *qibla*.

It must be remembered that Islam is a social religion. Its practices were laid down by the conquering armies in the early days of the Faith. It is well known that there are no priests in Islam but learned men, and it is a common practice that the most learned or elderly believers present should lead the prayer. Yet it must be remembered that the times of prayer are obligatory upon all Muslims whether in company or not. The fulfilment of the obligation of set prayers at fixed times is an individual duty, as well as a social.[2]

It has been asserted that prayer requires concentration and undivided attention. Therefore, it is a common practice for a believer to lay out his turban or place his walking stick transversely in front of him, thus cutting himself off from possible distraction. The Arab Bedouins use muskets as *sutra* during their prayer for this purpose of confining themselves in the imaginary seclusion required for devotional practices. Such isolation converts the place of prostration into a Mosque, though the obligation of the recital of the daily prayer does not include the Sermon which is a main feature of the Friday prayer in an established Mosque, where the resident Mu'azzin fulfils the additional function of proclaiming the times of the prayers and giving the exhortation before the *Khuṭba* or preaching by the *Khaṭib* or *Imam,* leader of the prayer, to the Friday congregation.[1] The Jāmi' Masjid is not only a circumscribed place of prostration for individual worshippers but also a theatre for weekly congregation and other social festivals. On these occasions to the personal prayers is added the Sermon or Khuṭba suitable for the celebration of the 'Īd or whatever local festival is being celebrated.[2]

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[1] Serjeant, R. B., *Miḥrāb*, in *BSOAS*, vol. XXII, No. 3, 1959, pp. 439-53. See also G͟hūl, M. A., *Was the Ancient South Arabian Md͟qnt the Islamic Miḥrāb* ?, in *BSOAS*, vol. XXV, pt. 2,1962. p. 333.

[2] Lees, J. C., *Mohammedanism, in the Faiths of the World,* St. Giles Lectures, Second Series, Edinburgh & London, MDCCCLXXXII, pp. 385-86.

An unsettled linguistic question which is the source of contradictory opinions among scholars of repute is the origin of the term *Masjid.* It must, therefore, be examined thoroughly and carefully.

Sachau, Ungnad Noeldeke have emphatically asserted the Aramaic origin of the word *Masjid.* Sachau refers[3] to the word, *msgd,'* מסגדא as a parallel to Masjid. It occurs in papyrus fragments, recording, as far the restored reading goes, an oath taken in a law court. This Aramaic usage has been derived from the root, *sgd,* סגד which in the ordinary sense of the term means prostration or reverence and in later Aramaic, "to bow down."[4]

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1. *AEL,* Book I, Part 5, pp. 2172-73. See also Wensinck, A. J., *Sutra,* in *EI,* vol. IV, Part 1, p. 573.
2. Jeffery, *op. cit.,* pp. 197-98. *Abū Isḥāk al-Shīrazī,* in his *Kitāb al-Tanbīh fi'l-Fikh,* pp. 41, 19, says, "... the Ṣalāt (on the two Feasts) is to be held in the Mosque : but when this is not spacious enough people have to perform their ṣalāt in the open air." (*Semitic Rites*), p. 93; *Kitāb al-Tanbīh fi'l Fikh,* edited by Juynboll, Leiden, 1879 : pp. 452-53 ; Heffening, *Abū Isḥāk al-Shīrazī,* in *EI,* vol. IV, Part 1, 1934, p. 377 ; Mittwoch, E., *'Īd al-Fiṭr,* in *EI,* vol. II, 1927, Part 1, p. 445.
3. Sachau, E., *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka,* Leipzig, 1911, Tabel, 32 : Text Papyrus 32, Line 3, Pl. 33, n. 118-19.
4. Jeffery, A., *op. cit.,* p. 163.

In a wider perspective, this Aramaic term could be interpreted as a "temple."[1] This view has been corroborated by Ungnad[2] who quotes Sachau, and maintains that the derivative *sgd,* סגד perhaps denotes "anbeten," i.e., "beseech."[3] Cowley emphatically states that the Aramaic term *msgd,'* מסגדא denotes properly "the place of worship," like *Masjid,* مسجد, used even of the Temple at Jerusalem,[4] known as *al-Bait al-Muqaddas* or "Holy House." Referring to the Qur'ān this was adopted as the first *qibla* of Islam. *Miḥrāb* is the embodiment of the *qibla* and gives the direction of the Muslim prayer. The change of the *qibla* from Jerusalem to Mecca was a radical innovation in Islam.[5]

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1. Jeffery, A., *op., cit.,* p. 163.
2. Ungnad, A., *Aramäische Papyrus Aus Elephantine,* Leipzig, 1911, Papyrus 32, No. 33, n. 33, Line 3, p. 50.
3. Ungnad, A., *op., cit.,* p. 50. See also Cook, S. A., *A Glossary of the Aramaic inscriptions*, Cambridge, 1898, p. 75 : Fraenkel, S., *Die Aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen,* Lieden, 1886, p. 120.
4. Cowley, A., *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C.,* Oxford, 1923, Text 44, Line 3, pp. 147-48.
5. Hughes, T. P., *Ka'bah, in the Dictionary of Islam, being a cyclopaedia of the doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and customs, together with the technical and theological terms of the Muhammadan religion,* London, 1885, p. 258. The Qur'ānic reference to the Ka'ba occurs in v. 97; 142-47; in ii. 44; it is explicitly mentioned that Mecca is the *qibla* of Islam. The passage runs thus : Indeed we see the turning of your face to heaven, so we shall surely turn you to a qiblah which you shall like; turn then your face towards the sacred mosque, and wherever you are, turn your face towards it, and those who have been given the Book most surely know that it is the truth from their Lord : and Allah is not at all heedless of what they do, (Muhammad Ali, The Holy Qur'ān, London, 1917, pp. 67-68; n. 187) Ka'ba is derived from Ka'aba, meaning to swell or to become prominent.

Attempts have been made to derive the etymological origin of the term *Masjid* from Nabataean sources by Ryckmans,[1] Cooke,[2] Schwally,[3] and Lidzbarski. According to Lidzbarski[4], the word *msgd'*, מסגדא occuring not infrequently in the Nabataean inscriptions, has a peculiar resemblance to the Arabic word مسجد , *Masjid*. It clearly signifies "a place of worship."

Savignac and Jaussen also referred to a cognate word in the Nabataean inscriptions which is similar to the Arabic word *Masjid*. Quoting the Nabataean inscription of the Stele of the God A'ara, they observe, "we have there (Médain Salih) an authentic Mesgida, with the name of the god to whom it was dedicated along with the name of the Person who erected it and along with the date of erection."[5]

Doughty explains "*Mesgeda*" as *beth-el* (house of the god), as a kneeling or voting stone, erected to Aera (A'ara), great god at Médain Salih,[6] to which Savignac and Jaussen also refer. (Figs. 1, 3) De Vogüé has published an inscription from

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1. *C. I. S.* i : 176, 185, 188, 190, 218.; ii : 161
2. Cooke, G. A., *A Text book of North Semitic Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1903.
3. Schwally, Fr., *Lexikalische Studien*, in *ZDMG*, liii, 1898, p. 134, Leipzig, Band I.
4. Lidzbarski, M , *Handbuch der Nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, Weimar, 1898, Text 1, pp. 152, 323. See also Jeffery, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
5. Savignac, P. P., et Jaussen, R. R., *Mission Archéologique en Arabie*, I, Paris, 1909, p. 417, Planche XLI, Fig. 206; See also Jeffery, *op. cit.*, p. 263. See also C. I. S., ii, 218. (Hereafter cited as *Mission*).
6. Doughty, C. M., *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, London, 1923, vol. I, p. 121, Pl. facing p. 176, No. 1; E. Renan deciphered the Nabataean inscription discovered by Doughty at Medáin Salih (Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, in Doughty, *op cit.*, Appendix to Ch. IV, V. VI, p. 180; M. P Berger translates ou (A'ara) as à Aoura de Bostra in Doughty, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-7).

Boṣra which runs thus : "This is the place of worship which Taimou, son of Welid-el-Baal built."[1] Euting published another inscription dated A. D. 39 which reads : "Cippus which Shakuhu, son of Thora, made to A'ra who is at Boṣra, the god of Rabel. In the month of Nisan, the first year of Mâliku, the King."[2] It is, therefore, clear that the term is pre-Islamic.

Indeed, Cooke, dealing with the Nabataean remains at Ḍumêr (ضمير) says that the Mesgida of certain votive inscriptions denotes an altar.[3]

From these inscriptions, it seems that Cooke's Mesgida is similar to the ancient Greek Hermae. These were pillars, small at the base than at the summit, which terminated generally with a head of Hermēs. (Fig. 2) Seyffert says, "In the earliest times, Hermēs (in whose worship the number 4 played a great part) was worshipped under the form of a single quadrangular pillar of marble or wood, with the significant mark of the male sex. As art advanced, the pillar was surmounted, first with a bearded head, and afterwards with a youthful head of the god. Hermēs being the god of traffic, such pillars were erected to him in the streets and squares of towns ; in Attica, after the time of Hipparchus, the son of Pisisträtus, they were also erected along the country roads as milestones."[4]

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1. De Vogüé, Le Cte., Syrie Centrale : Inscriptions Sémitiques Paris, 1867-77, He also derives מסגדא from סגד, meaning "prosterner or adorer." See also Levy, M. A., *Drei nabatäische Inscriften aus dem Hauran,* in *ZDMG,* vol. *XXII,* pp. 106-268. See n. 17.
2. Euting, J. Von., *Nabatäische Inscriften aus Arabien,* Berlin 1885, pp. 14-15, 21. See also Mission, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-5.
3. Cooke, *op. cit.*, pp. 238, 249. Reffering to *CIS,* 11, 218, he says that Ḍumêr was the first station on the Roman road from Damascus to Palmyra. The hexagonal column bearing inscription resembles a Greek altar. The inscription is lying in the Louvre Museum, Paris.
4. Seyffert, O., *A Dictionary of Classical Antiquities, Mytho-*

But it would seem that *Mesgida* served the purpose of altars, whereas the Hermēs or statue, according to Verrall, was an "amalga, a sacred dedication... the object of a cult."[1]

Moreover, it has been ascertained that the *Mesgida*, as an object of veneration, takes various forms, that is to say, not only dedicatory pillars but also memorial tablets and votive altars as well as figural representations of the devotee as a mark of veneration of the deity.[2] It seems that the Nabataean *Mesgidas* were as high as three feet, hexagonal in shape and ornamented with a bust.[3]

Quite contrary to the Islamic intepretation of *Masjid,* namely the place of prostration, the Nabataean term *Mesgida,* therefore, implies the existence of "an object", a votive stone before which one prostrates."[4] In other words, the wide spread existence of the idolatrous religious practices is attested to by the discovery of innumerable stone stelae or votive stones, (Fig. 3) dedicated to deities.[5] It must be noted here that the

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logy, Religion, Literature and Art, Tr. by H. Nettleship and J. E. Sandys, London, 1891, pp. 285-86.

[1] Verrall, M. de G., *Mythology & Monuments of Ancient Athens.* (Being a translation of a portion of the 'ATTICA of Pausanias), commentry by J. E. Harrison, London, 1890, p. 130, n. 252.

[2] Dussaud, R., and Macler, *Voyage Archéologique,* Paris, 1910.

[3] Cooke, *op. cit.,* p. 249ff. See n. 17 ; *C. I. S.* ii, 162 : it is dated A. D. 94 and is now preserved in the Louvre, Paris.

[4] *Mission,* I, pp. 417, 204, 205, ii, pl. XLI ; Nabataean No. 39, Figs. 206, 207.

[5] Cooke, *op. cit.,* p. 238. The Qur'ān refers to idolatry as follows :
XLIII : 18 "What ! that which is made in ornaments and which in contention is unable to make plain speech !"
V. 3 : "Forbidden to you is that which is sacrificed on stones set up (for idols) and that you divide by the arrows ; that is a transgression. (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.,* p. 252, n. 663.)

most celebrated idol of ancient Arabia, *al-Lat*, *Manat*, and *al-'Uzza* were large stones, worshipped by the ancient Arabians as beings of supernatural power.[1] It has been argued by many scholars that the institution of *Hajj* or pilgrimage with its concomitant custom of stone-throwing is a survival of the pagan rites of ancient Arabia.[2]

Pedersen has attributed the origin of the Arabic use of the term *Masjid* to Hebrew.[3] The existence of Jewish tomb stones on ancient sites between Madina and Palestine as well as literary references to the fortified Jewish high places in and around Madina, testify to the early infiltration of the Jewish language and culture into the Arabian peninsula.[4] The earliest occurrence of the corresponding word *Masjid* may be traced in the Jewish Elephantine Papyri in which the meaning of the term *lmsgd'w*, למסגד אוד may be presumed to be "place of worship."[5]

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[1] Sale, G., *The Preliminary Discourse to the Koran*, London, (1730), 1921, pp. 20-21. See also Beaume, J. N., *Le Koran Analsé, Bibliotheque Orientale*, vol. IV, Paris, 1878, pp. 398-99 ; Ryckmanns, G., *Les Religions Arabes Préislamiques*, Louvain, 1951, Bibliothèque du Muséon, vol. 26, pp. 10-11-13.

[2] *DI*, p. 225, Jamrah. In the solemn institution of the Ḥajj, there is a very ancient pre-Muslim custom of throwing or pelting stones, usually seven, at the stone pillars, known as Jamrat-al-'ulā (the first), Jamrat-a-Wustā (the middle), Jamrat-al-'Aqiba (the last), in commemoration of Abraham's escape from the wiles of Satan by the same practice. How far it is a survival of pre-Islamic rites is an open question.

[3] Pedersen, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

[4] Horovitz, J., *Jewish proper names and derivatives in the Koran*, in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, volume II, Cincinnati, 1925, pp. 147-203. He also regards *al-Rahman*, referred to in the Qur'ān, 55 : 1, Meccan Sūra, as of Babylonian Talmudic origin which was employed before Islam.

[5] Cowley, *op.cit.*, pp. 147-48. See also Pedersen, *op.cit.*, p. 315

2—

Scholars have also endeavoured to derive the etymological origin of the Arabic word *Masjid* from the Syriac Aramaic *Mesgedā*, ܡܣܓ݂ܕܐ , denoting "to salute reverentially." This is referred to in the Bible (Sam. ix, 6). They are, strikingly enough, analogous Greek words as mentioned by Rudolph and Jeffery, such as σέβω, i.c., to revere, and πeoσkυνέω i.e., to kiss, revere.[1]

The Arabic term *Masjid*, also, recalls the almost similar Ethiopic term *Mesgad*, meaning a "temple or church" as well as the Amharic term *Masged*.[2] Dillman thinks that the Ethiopic term *Masgid* መስጊድ corresponds to the Muslim house of prayer, *Masjid*.[3] But etymologically, *Masgid* is a loan-word from Arabic.

Prostration is also referred to in the Bible as a form of mourning rite. An ancient and wide-spread Semitic custom, mourning by prostration was observed by the Ummayad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik when he heard the news of the death of his rival 'Abd al-Allah al-Zubayr.[4]

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[1] Rudolph, W., *Die Abhangigkeit des Qorans vom Judenthum und Christenthum*, Stuttgart, 1922, p. 7, n. 2. See also Jeffery, *op. cit.*, p. 163, Part 2 ; Pautz, O., *Muhammeds Lehre von der Offenbarung*. Leipzig, 1898. p. 149. n. 1.

[2] Noeldeke, T., *Semitic languages*, in *EB*, vol. 24, Cambridge, 1911, p. 629. (Hereafter cited as "*Semitic*"). Ethiopic is the language of Aksum, generally Ge'ez. It is closer to Himyarite than Arabic. Amharic is also Semitic but not in syntax and it is a non-literary language. I am grateful to Dr. Irvine in connection with this point.

[3] Dillmann, A., *Ethiopic Grammar*, Tr. by J. A. Crichton, Revised by C. Bezold, 2nd Edition, London, 1907. p. 39. See also Rossini, C. C., *Storia d'Ethiopia*, Milano, MCMXXVIII, pp. 203-14.

[4] *Semitic Rites*, pp. 12-13. In Bible Job, 1,20, the passage runs: "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped." It also occurs in the Islamic period when 'Abd al-Malik

However, the problem of the philological origin of *Masjid* is complicated by the absence of *Masjid* in South Arabian and the occurrence of another term of apparently similar meaning in the Himyarite inscriptions. The word specifically employed in the Himyarite character is 𐩮𐩡𐩥𐩩 *Ṣalūt*.[1] The Himyarite term is etymologically related to the commoner word for Muslim worship, *Muṣallā*, derived from *ṣalāt*.[2] Rossini has referred to the term 𐩮𐩡𐩥𐩩 as the South Arabian cognomen for chapel.[3]

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heard the news of the death of his great adversary ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, he prostrated himself. Wensinck quotes the Arabic opening version of a manuscript, preserved in the Vatican Library, bearing the number Cod. 51 : "This prayer is an amulet against the devils and a means to secure those who appear before the Sultan for favour." Jeffery, p. 197, See also n. 43.

[1] Rhodokanakis, N., *Studien jur Lexikographie und Grammatik des Altsüdarabischen*, vol. II, pp. 44-46.

[2] Diez, E., *Muṣallā*, in *EI*, vol. III, part 2, 1934-39, p. 159. Supplement. See also Wensinck, A. J., *Muṣalla*, in *EI*, vol. III, Parts 2, 1934-39, p. 746 ; Pautz, O , *op. cit.*, pp. 149-52.

[3] Rossini, C.C. *Chrestomathia Arabica Meridionalis Epigraphia with Glossarium*, Roma, 1931, p. 244.

Chapel= 𐩮𐩡𐩥𐩩 See also Hommel, F., *Sudarabische chrestomathie minäe-sabaische Grammatik*, München, 1893, p. 125. Wissmann, H., et Höfner, M. *Beitrage zur historischen Geographie des vorislamischen Sudarabien*, Wiesbaden 1952, p. 243. He also refers to 'al-Mesājid ... in the Maʾrib oasis. Dr. Irvine also expresses the same view in a letter addressed to me : "salut seems basically the front or face of an object (e. g. a building), and then a fore-court." (His letter is dated London, April 1st, 1965) See postscript.

Postscript :

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
SENIOR COMMON ROOM LANGHAM 9021

April 1st 1965

Dear Mr. Hasan,

Just a note on the South Arabian word *ṣlut*. I don't

In the Himyarite, however, so far as the word is attested, it is found in the material sphere of building or possibly also a chapel, whereas in Arabic the word صلاة, *ṣalāt* is actually limited to intellectual activities of prayer.

In opposition to this view, Wensinck thinks that *ṣalāt* is derived from Aramaic *ṣelota*, the *nomen verbale* of the Syriac-Aramaic verb צל, *ṣelā*, meaning to "bow down."[1]

Finally, Rhodokanakis says that the term of *mdqn*, occurring in South Arabian inscriptions can be interpreted as a place of worship or mosque (Betplatz).[2] Maḥmūd 'Alī Ghūl, corroborating the views of Rhodokanakis points out that the possible meaning of the term *mdqnt* could also be *cella*, presumably "the innermost part of the covered sanctuary of the temple."[3]

The use of the term *sājada* in the *Mu'allaqat*, the ancient Arabian Odes, according to many Orientalists is consistent with the wide currency of Aramaic of North Arabia.[4] Scholars, such as, Horovitz and Schwally, think that the close cultural

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think it would help your discussion of masjid to mention *ṣlut* since it has little to do with Arabic *ṣallā*. *Ṣlut* seems basically the front or face of an object, e. g., a building, and then a fore-court. Another apparent sense in some texts is that of "document." See N. Rhodokanakis, *Studien jur Lexikographie und Grammatik des Altsüdarabischen*, vol. II, pp. 44-46, and *ṣlut* does not seem to occur in any inscriptions from Nagab al-Hajar. So I wouldn't say anything about it if I were you. The Arabic "*sallā*," "to pray", may be derived from a root idea of "to face."

Best wishes for your thesis,

Sd/A. K. Irvine,
Lecturer in Semitic Languages

[1] *Semitic Rites*, p. 13.

[2] Rhodokanakis, N., *Studien zur.....* p. 34.

[3] Maḥmūd 'Ali Ghūl, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-33.

[4] Horovitz, J., *Koranische Untersuchungen*, Berlin, 1926, p. 140. See also Schwally, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

contact between Arabia on the one hand and Aramaic and Hebrew on the other has led to the intrusion of the term into ancient Arabian literature. It appears here in exactly the same sense as it did in the Nabataean, Himyarite, Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions. The *Mu'allaqat* of *'Amr Ibn Kulthum* illustrates the pre-Islamic use of the term *sājada*.[1] The verses run thus :

ملأنا البر حتى ضاق كنا * و ظهر البحر لملأه سفينا
لنا الدليا و من أضحر عليها * و نبطش حين لبطش قادرينا
اذا بلغ العظم لنا صبى * تحز لر الجبابر ساجدينا

Translation :

"Lo, the lands we o'errun, till the plains grow narrow,
lo, the Seas will we seek with our war-galleys,
Not a weanling of ours but shall win to manhood,
find the world at his knees, its great ones kneeling."
(prostrating)

The wide currency of the term *Masjid* in languages of great antiquity obviously make the question of its philological origin difficult. Parallels are hard to establish. Language, far from being an inherent quality of any particular race has served through the ages as the disseminating factor of cultural history.[1] Stemming from a common source of Primitive Semitic (*Ursemitisch*), the North Semitic and the South Semitic struck out two different orthographical forms of expression.[2] As a matter of fact, the Semitic languages resemble each other in a peculiar but cognate morphological classification system, as well as in certain radical forms.[3] Geographical factors and political sovereignty can bind multi-racial people into a comprehensive linguistic unit, namely, the Aramaic speaking culture.[4] Nevertheless, sharply defined lines of cleavage in the Semitic languages become apparent owing to the ceaseless migratory habits of the people throughout the "Fertile Crescent" and along the Arabian high lands. Based on common

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[1] Abel, L. : *Die Sieben Mu'allakât*, Berlin, 1891, pp. 26,90. He derives the word ساجدينا from سجد, meaning one who prostrates, 'als anfetende' ; Odes of 'Amr Ibn Kulṭhūm, 104. See also Lyall, C.S., *Ancient Arabian poetry as a source of Historical information*, in *JRAS*, 1941, vol. I, Part I, p. 63. 'Amr, son of Layla, daughter of Muhalhil, the warrior, belonged to the Banu Taghlib. His odes consist of the address which he delivered in front of the King of Hira, complaining of the animosities of the Banu Bakr. (Blunt, W.S., *The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia known as the Mo'llakāt.* Tr. from the original Arabic by Anne Blunt, done into English verse by W. S. Blunt, London, MDCCCCIII, pp. 37-43 ; Nicholson, R. A. ; *A Literary History of the Arabs*, London, 1907, pp. 109-113.) Lichtenstädter has discussed

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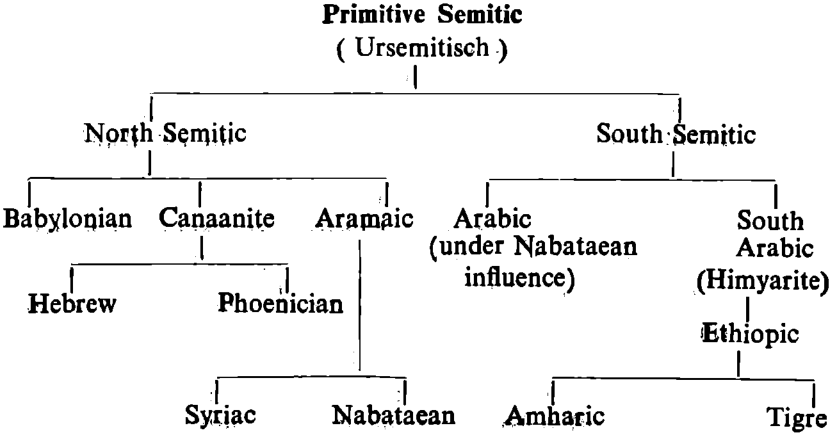
in detail the encounter between 'Amr ibn Kulthūm and 'Amr Ibn Hind : (*Women in the Aiyam al-'Arab*, London, 1935, pp. 57-60).

[1] O'leary, De Lacy, *Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*, London, 1923, p. 1.

[2] *Semitic*, pp. 617-23 : see also Barton, G. A., *Semitic Languages*, in *JE*, XI, NE, p. 1881. He gives the following chart, showing the development of the Semitic Languages.



cf. Mario P. Pei and Gaynor, F., *A Dictionary of Linguistics*, London, MCMLVIII, pp. 148-51.

[3] Barton, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[4] *Semitic Rites*, p. 617.

sources, different languages branch off, which are more than mere dialects. The concomitant tendencies are phonetic changes, modification of grammatical forms, and often additions to the basic vocabulary.[1]

Moulding themselves into different linguistic atmosphere,[2] unlike that of the North Semitic tongues, the South Arabian languages[3] maintain a more intimate relation with Abyssinian than with Aramaic.[4] South Arabic differs from North Arabic in some features of its morphology, e. g., determination by - *n*, indetermination by - *m*.[5] It also differs in vocabulary, the alphabet used and in syntax. On the other hand, South Arabic is similar to Ethiopic in script, some features of phonology, and in some of its vocabulary.[6] There were commercial and colonial relation-

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1. O'leary, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
2. Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8. South Arabic consists of Sabaean, Minaean, Ausanian, Qatabanian and Hadrami. Himyarite is a later political term covering all South Arabic. I am indebted to Dr. Irvine for the above suggestions. The entry of the Semitic colonists into Abyssinia seems to have commenced at least in the 6th century B. C. By the 1st century A. D. the Kingdom of Aksum was founded and continued until the 9th century A. D. The Abyssinian Christian King Abraha vanquished Dhū Nuwas, the Jewish King of the Yemen in A. D. 525 and established Abyssinian rule in South Arabia. (Bell, R., *The Origin of Islam in Christian environment,* The Gunning Lectures, Edinburgh University, 1925. p· 28). In physiognomy, languages and traditions of both the countries, there are unmistakable similarities. (Wright, T., *Early Christianity in Arabia,* London, 1855, pp. 41-42).
3. Nicholson, Intro. XXI.
4. Margoliouth, D. S., *The Relations between Arabs and Israelites prior to the rise of Islam,* The Schweich Lectures, The British Academy, London, 1921, London, 1924, p. 10.
5. Nicholson, Intro. XXI. The chief resemblances are broken plural and the sign of the dual.
6. Margoliouth, *op· cit·*, p. 11.

ships between Arabia and Abyssinia[1] and this fact is reflected in the orthographical affinity between the two languages and in common morphological features.[2]

The Christianization of Abyssinia paved the way for the infiltrations of Monophysite Christianity,[3] and Syro-Greek terms, *Masgad* and *Mesgad*, which are consonantally identical with the classical Arabic term, *Masjid*, developed in a completely different vocalic structure than the corresponding terms found in Aramaic, Nabataean and Hebrew.

The Ethiopic word *Mesgad* and the Amharic term *Masgad* are, therefore, probably later modifications of the Arabic term *Masjid*, which had already gained considerable currency in the pre-Islamic Arabic Odes. Hence it is impossible to believe as Pedersen does that the Ethiopic word has been derived directly from Aramaic.[4]

Although the South Arabic term *slwt* and the classical Arabic term *Masjid* etymologically imply devotional practice of similar type, there is no reason to suppose that the origin of the Islamic term should be sought in South Arabic.[5] The contentions of Rudolph and Pautz about the Syro-Greek origin of the term *Masjid* are hardly convincing.[6]

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1. Rossini, C., *Storio d'...* pp 203-14.
2. Nicholson, *op. cit.*, Intro. XXI.
3. O'leary, *op. cit.*, p. 22. He says that the penetration of Coptic and Greek works was effected from the North of Egypt as well as South of Arabia. As Wensinck relates the successive phases of the translation of the old tale of Bent-rash, concerning the legend of Hilaria into Coptic, then into Syriac, demonstrating linguistic attachment between Syriac and Abyssinia (*Legends of Eastern Saints, chiefly from Syriac Sources*, Leyden, 1913, vol. 11, pp. XVIII-XXII.
4. Pedersen, *op. cit.*, p. 315.
5. See *Supra*, n. 42, 43.
6. Pautz, *op. cit.*, p. 149, n. 3, traces the origin of *ṣalāt* from the verb (صلا) *ṣallah*, Syriac ܨܠܐ "sich neigen" to incline oneself. Rudolph and Jeffery trace the cultic origin of *ṣalawat*, referred to in the Qur'ān (الصلوة) Surā IV,

As a language Syriac, which is basically Aramaic but with strong Greek influence, assumed significance only in the Second century A.D. in the works of the Christian writers of Edessa and Nisibis. It is modern in comparison with the older Semitic languages, Aramaic, Hebrew and even Nabataean which alone can have a direct bearing on Arabic proper.[1] Although some of the earliest specimens of Arabic writing are to be found in the trilingual inscription of Zabad,[2] the oldest examples are in the Nabataean character.[3]

In view of the intimate relation between Arabic and the Nabataean, a local North Arabic dialect of Aramaic, it is not too far-fetched to maintain that the Islamic term *Masjid* is derived from Aramaic, the parent tongue of both the Nabataean and the Hebrew.[4] The Hebrew origin of the term can hardly be supported, for,[5] philologically speaking, it is indebted to

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verses 101, 102), to the Greek term προσευχη meaning adoration. These terms have parallels in Syriac *sgdt'*, ܣܓܕܬܐ and *sgd'* ܣܓܕܐ which also denote adoration.

1. Barton, *op. cit.*, p. 127. He mentions various Aramaic dialects, namely, Jewish Aramaic, Jewish Palestinian, Christian Palestinian, Syriac, Nabataean.
2. *Semites*, p. 626. He refers to the trilingual inscription of Zabad, South East of Halaf (Aleppo), written in Greek, Syriac and Arabic, and dating from A.D. 512-513. See also Nicholson, Intro. XXII : Moritz, B., *Arabic writing*, in *EI*, vol. I, Part I, 1913, pp. 382.
3. Nicholson, Intro., XXV. See also Noeldeke, T., *Die Semitischen Sprachen*, p. 36, sqq. and p. 51, and Moritz, *op. cit.*, p. 382. It also refers to the inscription of al-Namarah in eastern Harran, dated back to A. D. 328 which was set up as an epitaph on the grave stone of Imru'l al-Qays, the King of the Kinda tribe.
4. Goiten, S.D., *Jews and 'Arabs*, New York, 1955, p. 137. In Hebrew the term *ṣalāt* is not unfamiliar, denoting prostration as to touch the ground with forehead.
5. O'leary, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

Aramaic.[1] Inspite of early recordings of analogous terms in the Jewish Elephantine Aramaic Papyra,[2] it is clear from its radical formation that *Masjid* is a logical derivative from the Aramaic.[3]

The earliest existing inscription of Nemara, South-East of Damascus, retaining the Nabataean character and dating from A.D. 328[4] led scholars like Lidzbarski, Dussaud and Mackler to derive the term *Masjid* from the Nabataean tongue.[5] But the Nabataeans were Arabs. They spoke Arabic and used the Aramaic script for writing.[6] As Hitti puts it, "The Nabataean cursive script taken from the Aramaic developed in the third century of our era into the script of the North Arabic tongues, the Arabic of the Koran and of the present date."[7] The absence of Nabataean literature obviously precludes reliable epigraphical documentation. Hence Aramaic can be suggested rather than Nabataean, as the main source of the term *Masjid.*

A language of great antiquity, Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of the "Fertile Crescent" for several centuries.[8] Supp-

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[1] Hitti, *op. cit*, p. 147.
[2] Pedersen, *op. cit.*, p. 315.
[3] O'Leary, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.

	Arabic	Hebrew/Aramaic
Ṣ	س	ס
g, ĝ, J	ج	ג
d	د	ד

Therefore مسجد = סגד

4 *Semites, op. cit.*, p. 626.
[5] See n. 17-21.
[6] Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. Intro. XXV.
[7] Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[8] O'leary, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
He says that Aramaic is the language of the Semitic invaders of Palestine and Syria, who advanced further north and settled in Aram or "High lands". With the decline of the Phoenicians, it became the common language of political and commercial life throughout all

lanting Hebrew, after the destruction of Judah, it became a literary language as well as the *lingua franca* among the peoples of Western Asia, serving as the fountain-head of various local dialects. The influence of Aramaic tongue on the Arabic alphabet and many proverbs was brought about by mercantile colonies in Arabia.[1] As Margoliouth puts it, "The Aramaic script of twenty-two letters was employed to express the Arabic alphabet of twenty eight, a certain number of the letters had to do double or treble duty, and these were afterwards differentiated by points."[2] The intimate Arabic-Aramaic relationship is testified to, also, by the incorporation of many Aramaic words and proverbs in classical Arabic.[3]

In conclusion, we can therefore, say with a fair amount of certainty that the term *Masjid* corresponds unmistakably with the Aramaic term מסגדא *msgd'*, both maintaining almost identical verbs, ס ג ד *sgd* سجد, *sajada*.[4] The term is, therefore, not original in classical Arabic,[5] the language of the Qur'ān. However it assumed an independent formation as an originally foreign verbal noun[6] and passed into pre-Islamic Arabic, as testified by the Golden Odes.[7] Against the views of Pedersen, who says "probably the above-mentioned Aramaic substantive was simply taken over, although no links can be shown between the Nabataean inscriptions and the Kur'ān,"[8] it may be main-

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Western Asia and Egypt under the Persians, except the Coptic and Ethiopic. (Goiten, *op. cit.*, p. 13.)

[1] *Semites*, p. 624. See also Dussaud, M., *Mission dans la yarie Moderne*, Paris, 1903, p. 315.

[2] Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

[3] Goiten, *op. cit.*, p. 204. See also Doughty, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 629. Masjid is corrupted into Spanish term Mezquita, whence the French Moschée and the English mosque came into use.

[4] Pedersen, p. 315.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Jeffery, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

[7] See n. 48.

[8] Pedersen, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

tained that the affinity between the Nabataean Mesgida and the Islamic *Masjid* is clear. The constant mercantile intercourse between the pre-Islamic Arabians and the Nabataeans, facilitated the spread of the Aramaic term throughout Arabia and it thus was later on embodied in the Arabic of the Qur'ān. Islam gave a new and somewhat startling interpretation to the term *Masjid,* without any tinge of anthropomorphic ideas, and this gave birth to a distinctive style of architecture, based on the ancient concept of a place of prostration. Therefore, *Masjid* is a loan-word in Arabic which came to represent the place of worship throughout the Islamic world.

ABBREVIATIONS :

1. AEL =Arabic-English Lexicon.
6. EI =Encyclopaedia of Islam.
2. BSOAS=Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
3. CIS =Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.
9. ZDMG=Zeitschrift der Deutsch Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Leipzig.
4. DI =Dictionary of Islam.
5. EB =Encyclopaedia Britanica.
8. JRAS =Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
7. JE =Jewish Encyclopaedia.

AḤMAD B. ḤANBAL—HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Ziauddin Ahmed

1. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal, the founder of one of the four major Sunni schools and one who has profoundly influenced the modern revival of Islam in Wahhabism and the Salafiya movement through his distant disciple Ibn Taimiya,[1] was born in Bag͟hdād in Rabī' i, 164/Nov., 780 (according to one version, Rabī' ii) a few months after his father, a captain of the Abbasid army stationed in Khorasan, which fought to overthrow the Umaiyads, had moved to Bag͟hdād. His grand-father Ḥanbal b. Hilāl, an advocate of the Abbasid claim for the Caliphate, was governor of Sarak͟hs under the Umaiyads. He descended from a purely Arab stock, the family of S͟haibān, belonging to Rabī'a.[2]

2. After completing his preliminary education in language at the age of sixteen, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal devoted himself to the study of Tradition. He first studied under Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) of *Ra'y* school by whom he was not profoundly influenced in his thought.[3] For seven years he remained in Bag͟hdād and studied under different teachers. Among them Hus͟haim b. Bas͟hīr (d. 183/799-800), from whom Ibn Ḥanbal collected a good number of Traditions, was his principal teacher.[4] In the year 186 A.H. and onwards, in the pursuit of knowledge, he undertook extensive journeys to Kūfa, Baṣra, Makkah, Madina and Yaman, where he met a great number of the Traditionists, whose names have been preserved in great detail by Ibn al-Jawzī in his *Manāqib*.[5]

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[1] cf. *EI*¹, 2 : 422 : *EI*², 1 : 272.

[2] *Manāqib*, pp. 13-19 ; *Tarjama*, pp. 58-9, 62 ; cf. Patton, pp. 10-11, *EI*².

[3] *Op. cit., Bidāya,* 10. : 327.

[4] *Op. cit.*

[5] p. p 25-56.

It appears that from the beginning of his career, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal preferred *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth* to *Aṣḥāb al-Ra'y* as his teachers. Still it cannot be said that he was unaware of the works belonging to the school of *Ra'y*. It is said that Ibn Ḥanbal had copied the books of *Ra'y* and memorized them, but did not pay any heed to them.[1] In the year 190 A.H., at the time of his visit to Ḥijāz, he might have known the judicial works of al-Shāfi'ī when both met together ; but he must not be regarded, as is done sometimes, simply a disciple of al-Shāfi'ī. Al-Shāfi'ī once said to Ibn Ḥanbal, "Inform me whenever you come by an authentic *Ḥadīth*, I shall go to it, be it a Hijāzī or a Shāmī, an Irāqī or a Yamanī."[2]

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal performed *Ḥajj* five times, and on some of these occasions he stayed in Hijāz for a longer period.[3] During these occasions he might have collected Traditions of the Prophet and discussions of his Companions (*Fatāwā al-Ṣaḥāba*). For the preservation of Traditions, Ibn Ḥanbal did not rely upon his memory only ; he used to keep them in writing. His practice was to read them out from his writing-tablets instead of transmitting from the memory.[4]

Although primarily a traditionist, Ibn Ḥanbal had a knowledge of Fiqh and jurisprudence as he had come in contact with two great *Imāms*, Abū Yūsuf and al-Shāfi'ī. But it cannot be said with certainty that he had knowledge of other sciences too, inspite of the fact that during his time the organisation of translations had paved the way to the Greek sciences. Yet, it is certain that Ibn Ḥanbal learnt a great deal about the sects of Islam and their dogmas during his visits to Kūfa, Baṣra and other places.[5]

3. Although held in great admiration as an authority on the Traditions when he was still a youth, Ibn Ḥanbal did not

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 64 ; *Tarjama Ibn Ḥanbal*, by al-Dhahabī, p. 64.

[2] *Bidāya*, 10 : 327 ; cf. *EI*².

[3] *Bidāya*, 10 : 326.

[4] *Manāqib*, pp. 190-1.

[5] Abū Zahra, *Ibn Ḥanbal*, p. 30.

start as a regular teacher until he was forty. It is said that he refused to give lessons on *Ḥadīth* until his teacher 'Abd al-Razzāq (d. 211 A. H.) died.[1] He used to hold classes in his residence, where he delivered lectures on his *Musnad* before members of his family. His audience sometimes exceeded five thousand, of whom about five hundred were there to write down what they heard.[2] He appears to have continued his lectures until the accession of al-Mutawakkil (232-247/847-861) to power, but owing to failing health or for some other reason he took an oath not to teach *Ḥadīth*, a vow which he appears to have kept until he died.[3]

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal occupied himself more with the sources of the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth* than with a systematic deduction of laws (*Qiyās*) ; hence a hostile attitude of his followers towards al-Ṭabarī, according to whom Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was a mere *Muḥaddith*, and not a *Faqīh*.[4] To Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, knowledge of religion (*Dīn*) and that of the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* were identical. To record mere opinions of human beings was to him an innovation. He always disliked that his decisions, when he had to give them, should be recorded.[5] Yet he is to be regarded as an independent *Mujtahid* who always traced his sources in Traditions. Al-Khallāl remarked of him that whenever he spoke, he did so with skilled judgment.[6] In the language of Ibn 'Aqīl, "Certain positions adopted by Ibn Ḥanbal are supported by Traditions with such a skill as majority of the people were unaware of it, and certain of his decisions bear witness to a juridical subtlety without parallel."[7]

4. The most striking event in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's life, however, was the Mu'tazilite religious inquisition (*Miḥna*) of

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[1] *Manqāib*, pp. 187-9.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[3] *Tarjama*, p. 105 ; *Hiliya'* 9 : 211 ; Patton, p. 142.
[4] Ḥājī Khalīfa, 1 : 196 ; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, 6 : 436-7.
[5] *Manāqib*, pp. 192-4.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[7] *Ibid.*, *EI*,^{2} 1 : 273.

the Creation of the Qur'ān, in which he had to face a severe persecution, initiated by al-Ma'mūn (170-218/786-833) towards the end of his reign and continued for more than fifteen years (218-2 4/833-848) at the instigation of Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād (d. 240 A. H.) who was promoted to the post of chief *Qāḍī* later. The laudable courage that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal showed during the *Miḥna* brought him into prominence at once.[1]

Al-Ja'd b. Dirham, the teacher of the last Umaiyad Caliph Marwān II (d. 132/750), is said to have been the originator of the dogma of the Creation of the Qur'ān, having his idea carried back to Labīd b. al-A'ṣam, a Jew. Al-Ja'd was put to death by Khālid b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qasrī, the Governor of Irāq at the command of Caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik in 124 A.H.[2]

The doctrine of the Creation of the Qur'ān does not appear to have come into prominence in the history of Muslim dogmas until the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-193/786-809) came to power. During his time Bishr b. Ghiyāth al-Marīsī (d. 218/833) whom Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf expelled from his lecture room and who is said to have taken this idea from Jahm b. Ṣafwān who in turn took it from al-Ja'd b. Dirham, was propagating that the Qur'ān was created. Eventually, it is said, Bishr had to hide himself for twenty years in order to escape the persecution threatened by the Caliph.[3]

When al-Ma'mūn, who happened to be a pupil of Abu'l-Hudhail al-'Allāf, the *Mu'tazilī*, passed about fourteen years of his reign, the Mu'tazilites were able to influence him publicly to adopt their dogma as the official creed.[4]

On hearing of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's refusal to assent to the doctrine of the Creation of the Qur'ān from Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm, the governor of Baghdād, who was in charge of testing its doctors and Shaikhs, al-Ma'mūn, then at Tarsūs, sent for Ibn

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 310-3 ; *Bidāya*, 10 : 319.
2. *Sarh al-'Uyūn*, pp. 162-3 ; *Bidāya*, 9 : 350.
3. *Manāqib*, pp. 308-9 ; *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, 1 : 323 ; *Bidāya*, 9 : 350.
4. Khaṭīb, 3 : 260 ; *Manāqib*, p. 309.

Ḥanbal to be brought before him in chains together with his fellow-opponent Muḥammad b. Nūḥ. But shortly after they left al-Raqqa, they were sent back to Bag͟hdād when the news of the Caliph's death was received ; Ibn Nūḥ died on the way and Ibn Ḥanbal was sent to prison.[1]

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal once again proved firm in his conviction, when two men, namely, Aḥmad b. Rabāh and Abū S͟hu'aib al-Hajjām continued to be sent for several days to reason with the Imām when he was confined in Ibn Ibrāhīm's house having been brought from the common prison. Consequently, however, the Imām was bound in four chains instead of one.[2] He showd such a great courage during these proceedings that he preferred to be beheaded with a sword rather than to resort to the humiliation of *Taqiya*. His only apprehension was that he might not be able to stand by his belief, if scourged with whips. But on hearing that after two strokes he would not be conscious of what would happen to him, he heaved a sigh of relief.[3]

In Ramaḍān, 219 A. H., al-Mu'taṣim (218-227/833-842), the new Caliph, summoned Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal to his court on the persuasion of Ibn Abī Du'ād with a view to the fulfilment of the testament made by al-Ma'mūn to continue the Miḥna, although the Caliph himself was inclined to abandon it. The questioning about the createdness of the Qur'ān continued for three days, after which the Imām was flogged severely, when still he persisted in his refusal to accede to the dogma of the Creation of the Qur'ān. Eventually Ibn Ḥanbal was set free, and his uncle Isḥāq b. Ḥanbal was persuaded to make an announcement that no harm was done to the Imām.[4] Thus the possibility of a popular uprising was averted.

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1. See details in Ṭabarī, ii : 1112-33 ; *Manāqib*, pp. 305-15 ; Patton, pp. 56-88.
2. *Tarjama*, p. 91 ; *Manāqib*, p. 319.
3. *Op. cit.*
4. *Manāqib*, pp. 319-32 , 340 ; *Tarjama*, pp. 92-8, 103.

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According to one version, al-Wāt͟hiq, the next Caliph (227-23 /842-847) at first continued the policy of his predecessors, but later abandoned the inquisition, following a debate between an elderly man and Ibn Abī Du'ād on the question of the Creation of the Qur'ān, in which Ibn Abī Du'ād was silenced.[1] Ibn Ḥanbal, however, remained in retirement until the Caliph died, and the former was able to avoid further reprisals by the Mu'tazilites.[2]

Shortly after his accession to power, al-Mutawakkil by a public proclamation stopped the application of the Miḥna.[3] Ibn Ḥanbal was now able to resume his courses of lectures. But he does not appear to have been included when al-Mutawakkil appointed a number of Traditionists to oppose the Mu'tazilites and the Jahmiyas.[4] The enemies of the Imām, however, were still active. Once he was alleged to have concealed a S͟hī'ite intriguer in his house. But eventually the allegation proved false.[5]

Several times Ibn Ḥanbal was invited by al-Mutawakkil to his court. When at Samarra, the Caliph even requested him to give lessons in *Ḥadīt͟h* to the young prince al-Mu'tazz.[6] Although the Caliph showed a friendly interest in Ibn Ḥanbal, it appears that the latter was always reluctant to be in the courts. On several occasions he distributed royal gifts which were sent to him inspite of his objections, and sometimes without his knowledge, among the needy ones.[7] He is said to have deserted his two sons and his uncle during the last days of his life for receiving monetary allowance from the royal treasury in times of need.[6]

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1. *Op. cit.*
2. *Op. cit.*
3. *Bidāya*, 10 : 337.
4. *Op. cit.*
5. *Op. cit.*
6. *Manāqib*, pp. 363-5 ; *Tarjama*, pp. 109-10, 114-5 ; *Bidāya*, 10-338.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Manāqib*, pp. 381-3.

5. Ibn Ḥanbal died in Rabīʻi, 241/July, 855, at the age of 77 or 78 after short illness leaving behind his two sons, Ṣāliḥ and ʻAbd Allāh, both of whom were men of eminence, as well as three sons and a daughter by a slave woman.[1] A very large number of mourners, seldom witnessed anywhere, attended his funeral. The story of 10,000 persons (some say even 20,000) being converted to Islam from other religions on the day of his death, although dismissed by his biographer al-D͟hahabī, and similar other partly legendary stories surrounding his death, show the great popularity Ibn Ḥanbal commanded. His tomb was a much visited shrine until it was eroded away by the Tigris in the 8th/14th century.[2]

From the very beginning of his career, Ibn Ḥanbal commanded an undisputed respect from his contemporaries, as well as from his disciples, not only as a Muḥaddit͟h, but also as a Faqīh. Abu'l-Qāsim al-Jabbulī once remarked, "Most people thought that Ibn Ḥanbal achieved his well-acknowledged reputation owing to the *Miḥna*. In fact it is not so. For, whenever he was asked about a *Masʼala*, it was as though the knowledge of the world was set before his eyes."[3] By many testimonies he was considered to have occupied the position of his great predecessors—Sufiyān al-T͟hawrī, Mālik b. Anas, al-Awzāʻī, al-Lait͟h b. Saʻd and so on.[4] He gained such a sound footing in the intellectual circle that an adverse comment from him was sufficient to discredit anyone in the eyes of the people.[5]

WORKS

The books left by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal at his death are said to have been estimated at twelve and a half loads, all of which he had memorized.[6] A list of titles of his work which have come down to us is as follows :

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[1] *Tarjama*, pp. 86-9, 124.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 129-31 ; *Manāqib*, pp. 409, 414-7 ; cf. *EI²*, 1 : 273.

[3] *Manāqib*, p. 62.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 151, 185-6.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 60. *Tarjama*, p. 62.

1. *K. al-Musnad.*
2. *K. al-Radd ‘ala’l-Jahmiya wa’l-Zanādiqa.*
3. *K. al-Zuhd.*
4. *K. al-Sunna al-Mūsil al-Mu‘taqid ila’l-Janna.*
5. *K. al-Ṣalā wa mā Yalzam fīhā, or al-Risāla al-Saniya fi’l-Ṣalā.*
6. *K. al-Wara‘ wa’l-Īmān.*
7. *K. al-‘Ilal wa’l-Rijāl.*
8. *K. al-Ashriba.*
9. *K. al-Nāsikh wa’l-Mansūkh.*
10. *K. al-Faḍā’il.*
11. *K. al-Tafsīr.*
12. *K. al-Farā’id.*
13. *K. al-Īmān.*
14. *K. al-Manāsik al-Kabīr.*
15. *K. al-Manāsik al-Ṣaghīr.*
16. *K. al-Tārīkh.*
17. *al-Muqaddam wa’l-Mu’akhkhar fi’l-Qur’ān.*
18. *Jawabāt al-Qur’ān.*[1]

The most celebrated of his works is his *Musnad* which he himself considered most important of them all.

"Why did you dislike writing of books when you have compiled this one ?" asked his son ‘Abd Allāh. "I have compiled this book (*Musnad*) so that it may be a guide", replied Ibn Ḥanbal, "Whenever people differ as to a Tradition of the Prophet, they might have an opportunity to refer to it."[2]

But Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal died before he could bring his vast collection of Tradition together in book form. It was his son ‘Abd Allāh who collected the dispersed materials and edited them with some of his additions after the death of his father.[1] The *Musnad* was transmitted in the recension of his Baghdād disciple Abū Bakr al-Qaṭī‘ī (d. 368/978-9) with some more additions.[2] It was selected from 70,000 (in some accounts 75,000) Traditions (so claims Ibn Ḥanbal himself) and contains 30,000 (in some accounts a little less than 40,000) Traditions transmitted from more than seven-hundred Companions of the Prophet.[3] In this vast collection, the Traditions are neither classified according to subject matter, nor arranged under the alphabetical order of their narrators. This largely accounts for its being less used than it could have been.[4] But the book proved so indespensable that a number of scholars spent a great deal of labour in order to make it easily accessible by rearranging its Traditions. It was ordered alphabetically by Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥibb al-Ṣamad, from whom Ibn Kathīr took the work and made it of great value by adding the Traditions of the ‘Six Books’, as well as *Mu‘jam al-Tabarānī, Musnad al-Bazzār* and *Musnad Abī Ya‘la al-Mawṣilī.* This work is known as *Masānīd al-‘Ashara.* A few parts of this voluminous work are preserved in the Dār al-Kutub, Cairo.[5] ‘Alī b. Zuknūn al-Ḥanbalī (837/1433-4) had the great merit of arranging its Traditions according to the chapters of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.[6] During the present century two Arab scholars, Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bannā’ al-Sā‘ātī and Aḥmad Shākir took it up again for rearrangement. al-Sā‘ātī classified the whole work into seven categories (*Qism*) of Traditions with a number of books (*Kitāb*) and their chapters (*Bāb*). In the main work the *Sanads* have been almost dropped, except the first authority, and the repetitions of Traditions have been minimized to a great extent with a valuable commentary in the foot notes.

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[1] *Fihrist*, 229, *GAL* 1, 193 ; *GALS* 1, 309-10 ; Ḥājī Khalīfa, v : 43, 45, 57, 91 ; *VI* : 156 ; *Manāqib*, 191-2.

[2] *al-Musa‘ad*, p. 30.

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1. *Ibid.*, cf. Patton.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 41.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-4 ; *Khaṣā’iṣ*, pp. 21-3 ; cf. Patton, p. 19.
4. cf. Patton.
5. *Bulūgh al-Amānī*, 1 : 20 ; *Shadharāt*, 6 : 231 ; *GAL* 1 : 193.
6. *Shadharāt*, 7 : 222-3 ; *EI*^{2} ; *GALS* 1 : 309-10.

The main work is named as *'al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī'*, and the commentary as *'Bulūgh al-Amānī'*.[1] Aḥmad Shākir began its rearrangement according to a most convenient method. The Traditions were numbered and the foot notes were added, and a comprehensive index was appended to each part. Unfortunately the learned scholar died before he could complete one fourth of the work.[2]

K. al-Radd (published in Cairo and India), transmitted by Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, is important for direct study of Ibn Ḥabal's dogmatic position in relation to the Divine attributes and the Doctrine of the Creation of the Qur'ān. In this treatise Ibn Ḥanbal refutes Jahm b. Ṣafwān and his followers who denied the Divine attributes and raised doubts in regard to the ambiguous (*Mutashābih*) verses of the Qur'ān.[3] This book is probably a part of al-Khallāl's *K. al-Sunna* frequently mentioned by Ibn Taimiya and Ibn al-Qayyim in their theological discourses.[4] An English translation of this treatise by Dr. Morris S. Seal appears towards the end of his 'Muslim Theology.'[5]

K. al-Sunna. A very short treatise of a few leaves called '*K. al-Sunna*' has been published together with the Cairo edition of *K. al-Radd.*[6] In this book Ibn Ḥanbal defines very briefly his position on all principal points of his creed.

K. al-Zuhd (published in 1357/19.8-9), transmitted by 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad with a number of his own additions, contains

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1. cf. Introductory chapters of his edition of *Musnad.*
2. 13 parts have so far been published which cover upto a portion of *Musnad Abū Huraira.*
3. cf. *EI'*.
4. cf. Introductory pages of my doctoral thesis entitled : "*A critical edition of the first volume of 'al-Musnad min Masā'il Abī 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal*".
5. published in 1964. The translation has been made on the basis of the Br. Mus. MS. No : Or. 3106. The published editions of the book must have escaped the eyes of Dr. Seal. He asserts that it is "The unpublished MS. of Ibn Ḥanbal". (p. 2.)
6. A longer verson of the *K. al-Sunna,* transmitted by 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad, has been published in Macca, 1349 A. H. cf. *EI*^{2}, *Muslim Creed,* p. 281.

Traditions about the pious and ascetic life of a number of the prophets, the *Ṣaḥāba* and a few of the *Tābi‘ūn.*

K. al-Wara‘ (published in Cairo and Sa‘ūdī Arabia) transmitted by Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī, contains Ibn Ḥanbal’s opinions on certain cases where scrupulosity (*Wara‘*) seems necessary. A number of sayings from other doctors have also been added.[1]

K. al-Ṣalāt (published in Cairo and India) transmitted by Muhanna’ b. Yaḥya al-Shāmī, deals with the correct observance of the communal prayer. The Imām wrote this treatise after he had found a group of people performing prayers in an irregular manner.[2]

K. al-‘Ilal, (Ist volume published in Ankara, 1963) transmitted by ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad with a few of his additions, is a very important and extensive work on the causes of weaknesses pertaining to Traditions and their narrators. Besides Ibn Ḥanbal, a number of the contemporary *Muḥaddithūn* are quoted as having written books on this subject, among which only the *‘Ilal al-Ḥadīth* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim and the short *K. al-‘Ilal* of al-Tirmidhī have been published earlier.[3]

K. al-Faḍā’il (MS. Istanbul). Probably to this work Ibn Taimiya makes a reference and says that Ibn Ḥanbal compiled a book on the merits (*Faḍā’il*) of the four Caliphs and a host of other Companions, in which he collected both *Ṣahih* and *Ḍa‘īf* Traditions so that the people might know them. This book has also a number of additions from ‘Abd Allāh and Abū Bakr al-Qaṭī‘ī.[4]

K. al-Imām. According to Ḥājī Khalīfa, this work is one of the books of Traditions (*min Kutub al-Ahādith*).[5] It is worth mentioning here that fols. 94b-147a of *al-Musnad min*

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1. cf. *EI^2, art. Ḥanbal.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. cf. Ibn Ḥanbal, *K. al-‘Ilal,* Introductory Chapters ; Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth,* p. 181.
4. *Minhāj al-Sunna,* 3 : 6.
5. vol. v : 57

Masā'il Ibn Ḥanbal (MS., Br. Mus., No. Or. 2675)[1] compiled by Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, deal with the problems related to *Imām* and *Islām*, in which Traditions occupy the major part. Our investigation reveals that the Tradition contained in this part, except a few, are mentioned in the *Musnad* almost without variations in the *Matn* as well as in the *Sanad*. Further, at fol. 146b of the above MS., a few versions before the end of this part, will be found : *Ākhir Kitāb al-Imām li Abī 'Abd Allāh*. With all probability it can be held that al-Khallāl, who was the compiler of the teachings of Ibn Ḥanbal, took the *K. al-Imām* of the *Imām* for his work either in its full form, or at least he used it without making any omissions.

The other works of Ibn Ḥanbal, except the K. al-Ashriba, a MS. of which is preserved in the Ẓāhiriya, appear to be still untraced.

7. It has been seen in course of the previous discussions that Ibn Ḥanbal was not in favour of codifying his opinions. He is more a traditionist than a Faqīh. He always endeavours to find his sources in the Traditions and the Precedents of the Prophet as well as of the Companions. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Warrāq, a disciple of Ibn Ḥanbal, said, "The opinion of Aḥmad was sought on 60,000 *Mas'ala*, in which he always replied with '*Akhbaranā*' and *Ḥaddathanā*."[2]

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal probably had a preconceived idea that the people would not find interest in endeavouring to derive knowledge direct from the *Qur'an* and the *Ḥadith*, if the opinions of the *Faqihs*, which were supposed to incur frequent mistakes, as well as being subject to alterations, were compiled. He used to ask his followers to refer to the original sources (*Aṣl*) rather than to write down his own opinions.[3] He is quoted as having discouraged his disciples even from looking into books written by other *Muḥaddithūn*, like Isḥāq b. Rāhwaih,

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1. The writer has edited this work for his doctoral thesis.
2. Ibn al-Farrā', *Ṭabaqat*, p. 153.
3. *Manāqib*, pp. 192-3.

Sufiyān al-T͟hawrī and Ibn al-Mubārak,[1] not to speak of those compiled by the *Ahl al-Ra'y*.

Ibn Ḥanbal's negative attitude towards the codification of his opinions seems to have resulted greatly in their becoming much more variant, sometimes rather contradictory, than what we find in those of his counter-parts. Of course, this has possibly provided his followers with a wider field of choice.

According to certain other sources, however, one may conclude that Ibn Ḥanbal was not totally opposed to those who wanted to preserve his teachings. His only object was to persuade his followers to stick to Traditions and Precedents. Once on being requested by 'Abd al-Malik al-Maimūnī for some *Masā'il* to write down, Ibn Ḥanbal said, "Had I not had any regard for you, I would not have allowed you to write down these *Masā'il* ; this is very hard upon me. I prefer only the Traditions."[2] At another time he declared his disapproval of some of his *Masā'il* when Isḥaq b. al-Manṣūr al-Kawsaj (d. 251) spread them in Khorasan in the name of the Imām. Having compiled them, al-Kawsaj came to Bag͟hdād and presented them before the Imām for reapproval, whereupon the latter expressed high admiration of the former.[3] As a Faqīh, however, Ibn Ḥanbal appears to have neither compiled any work, nor left any material of his own to be the basis for a future work. All his extant works are the produce of a great traditionist.

The laudable courage that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal displayed in the course of the *Miḥna* undoubtedly brought him to the forefront as the greatest authority of his time on the affairs of religion. And it was rather a historical coincidence that, unlike the founders of other *Mad͟hhabs*, none of his contemporaries among the traditionists and the *Faqihs* was of the same rank as himself. Al-Awzā'ī (d. 157/733-4) and Sufiyān al-T͟hawrī

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1. *Manāqib*, pp. 192-3
2. Ibn al-Farrā', 156.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 74. A MS. comprising the *Masa'il*, of Ibn Ḥanbal compiled by al-Kawsaj is preserved in the Zāhiriya.. *Ibid.*, p. 74, f. 1.

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(d. 161/777-8) were contemporaries of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 159/767). While Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) and Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-S͟haibānī (d. 189 / 805) lived when Imām Mālik (d. 179/795-6) and Imām al-S͟hāfi'ī (d. 204/820) founded their *Mad͟hhabs.*[1]

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal lived for more than twenty years after he was first tested in the *Miḥna.* During this long span of time a large number of disciples gathered around him and constantly consulted him on all sorts of questions relating to laws, ethics, rites, dogmatics and so on.[2] They preserved what they acquired of his *Fiqh,* or more popularly his *Masā'il* (as Ibn Ḥanbal himself and his disciples called them), and carried them everywhere. The biographical notices of Ibn Ḥanbal's disciples available particularly in the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn al-Farrā' indicate that a fairly large number of them had in their store the *Masā'il* of their Imām in great quantities—in parts even in volumes. Hardly any of his disciples will be found, who is not quoted as having transmitted at least one or two *Mas'ala.*

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal died leaving his teachings with a very great number of followers. It was Abū Bakr al-K͟hallāl (d. 311 A. H.) of the second generation of the *Ḥanābila* who with extensive labour collected these dispersed materials, compiled them in volumes and earned the fame of being considered as "*Jami*' (or *Mu'allif*) *al-'Ulūm li Ahmad b. Ḥanbal*",[3] i. e. Compiler, *par excellence* of the knowledge left by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.

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1. cf. Abū Zahra, p. 172.
2. *EI*^{2}.
3. cf. Hāji K͟halifa, 2 : 579 ; *Tad͟hkira,* 3 : 7.

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THE BACKGROUND OF THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY
(1757)

M. Mohar Ali

After the death of Aurangzeb (1707) the Mug͟hal empire proceeded rapidly towards decline and disintegration.[1] Like many of the last great emperors of the preceding imperial dynasties such as Asoka, 'Alā'al-din K͟haljī and Muḥammad-bin-Tug͟hlaq, Aurangzeb also has been blamed for the fall of the Mug͟hal empire. The prop of this allegation—that his oppression of the Hindus goaded them into revolts and insurrections – appears to be ill-founded ; for the latter's hostility and insubordination did not originate during his reign; nor was it unlikely that a strong ruler, of the sort of either Akbar or Aurangzeb, could have held together the different parts of the empire, at least in northern India. The most potent cause of the breakdown of the Mug͟hal political authority was this failure of an efficient succession to the throne. All the rulers of the dynasty after Aurangzeb were weak and inefficient. During their reign the empire was seized with a processs of double dismemberment. Thus along with the hostilities of the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs, the different provincial governors also asserted independence for all practical purposes, retaining their allegiance to the Mug͟hal emperor only in name, and that also often for legitimising their usurpation of authority. This was specially the case during the reign of Muḥammad S͟hāh (1719-1748) when Nawāb Murs͟hid Quli

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[1] For a discussion on *the decline and fall of the Mughal empire* see Irvine, W., *Later Mughals*, (Ed. Jadunath Sarkar), 2 vols., London, 1922 ; Keene, H. G., *The Fall of the Mughal Empire of Hindustan*, London, 1887 ; Sarkar, Jadunath, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1932-34 ; Sharma, S. R., *Mughal Empire in India*, Part III, Bombay, 1935.

Khān[1] in Bengal, Sa‘ādat ‘Alī Khān[2] in Oudh and the Niẓāmal Mulk[3] in the Deccan became supreme in their respective territories. During the same period, which coincided with the peshwaship of Bājī Rā’o (1720-1740) the Marathas embarked upon a policy of territorial aggrandisement and by 1737 established their authority over Malwa and Rajputana.[4] In the same year they defeated the Mughal forces and forced the Emperor, by the treaty of Durai Sarai (1738), to cede to them all the territories between the Narmada and the Chambal rivers. They also made their authority felt in the western coast and successfully humbled the Portuguese power.

Along with this process of dismemberment foreign powers also made intrusions into this subcontinent. Thus the Europeans, especially the French and the English, appeared from the side of the sea coast, while the Afghāns led their invasions from the north-west. The latter under their leader Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī, invaded the subcontinent as many as ten times between 1747 and 1761. Their principal aim was plunder and not the foundation of an empire. Thus by 1740 the Marathas, the French and the English appeared to be the most serious contenders for imperial power in this subcontinent. In the couple of decades that followed the English not only outwitted their French rival but also, with the assistance of the Hindu mercantile community of Bengal, grasped political power in that province wherefrom

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1. For Murshid Qulī Khān see Karim, Abdul, *Murshid Quli Khan and his times*, Dacca, 1964 ; also Sarkar, Jadunath (ed.), *History of Bengal*, vol. II, (the University of Dacca), 1948, Chap. XXI.
2. For the early history of Oudh see Srivastava, A. L., *The First two Nawabs of Oudh*, 2nd edition, Agra, 1954.
3. For the Nizāmal-Mulk see *The Cambridge History of India*, (ed. Richard Burn), vol. IV, Cambridge, 1937, Chap. XIII.
4. For the Maratha history see Duff, J. Grant, *History of the Marathas*, 3 vols, Bombay, 1873 ; Kincaird, C. A., and Parasnis, D. B., *A History of the Maratha People*, 3 vols., London, 1918 ; Ranade, M. G., *Rise of the Maratha Power*, Bombay, 1900 ; Sardesai, G. S., *New History of the Marathas*, 3 vols. Bombay, 1940 ; and *Main Currents of Maratha History*, Calcutta, 1926.

they completely ousted the French from the field of Indian politics and ultimately destroyed the power of the Marathas and other independent local rulers.

It has sometimes been suggested that the establishment of the British empire in India and Pakistan was accidental and providential, the English found themselves to be the masters of an empire without actually intending it.[1] Two broad sets of facts contradict this assumption. First, following the important geographical discoveries of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries and the consequent impetus to international trade, the European nations entered into an intense colonial and commercial rivalry with one another. The establishment of the Spanish empire in America, the Dutch in the Spice islands, the French in south-east Asia and the English in south Asia, was an outcome of this scramble for colonial possessions. Secondly, during the latter part of the seventeenth century the East India Company itself had come over to a "forward policy"[2] and intended their agents to be a political power in the area of their trade. The Dutch wars of that century had convinced the East India Company that there was little hope of their successfully competing with the the Dutch in Indonesia, and when in 1682 the latter expelled the English from their factory at Bantam, they turned their attention more seriously towards the subcontinent of India and Pakistan. This attitude was reflected in the charter granted to the Company in 1683 which empowered them, *inter alia,* to make war and peace and to enter into alliances with Indian rulers.[3] The charter granted by James II in 1688 was still wider. According to it the Company was, as the directors described it, "in the condition of a sovereign state in India."[4] This attitude led the Company to declare war against the Mughals in 1686 allegedly

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1. Professor Seely, quoted in Hunter, W. W., *A History of British India,* vol. II. London, 1900, p. 4.; also Muir, Ramsay, *The Making of British India,* Manchester .
2. Clarke, G. N., *The Stuarts,* Oxford, 1949, pp. 336-337.
3. Hunter, *op. cit.,* vol. II., pp. 185, 288.
4. *Ibid.,* p. 304.

on the ground of the Bengal Nawab's oppression.[1] In a despatch of 1687, which has often been quoted, the directors instructed the President of the Surat Council to "establish such a politie of civil and military power and create and secure such a large revenue...as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded sure English dominion in India for all time to come." The war against the Mughals brought defeat and disgrace upon the Company. For sometime therefore they continued to doubt the wisdom of following imperial ambition in the east. It was at this stage, however, that their agents and servants showed greater determination and, having had more intimate knowledge of the situation in the subcontinent, followed a systematic policy of territorial aggrandizement.

The English East India Company's agents had at first to deal with the French.[2] The latter had their headquarters at Pondichery, on the Coromondal coast, with subordinate factories at Masulipatam, Karikal, Mahe, Surat, Chandarnagar and some other places. The English had, on the other hand, their principal factories at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. The open conflict between the two nations in India first broke out during the European War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748). In 1746 Dupleix, the French governor-general of Pondichery, attacked and captured Madras. The English attempt to recapture it and to seize Pondichery, in 1748, was not successful. This first round of conflict, which showed the superiority of the French, was brought to a close by the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle (1748) whereby the European war also was ended. According to the terms of the treaty Madras was handed back to the English, much to the disgust of Dupleix. From 1749 to 1755, however, the two nations were once again engaged in

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1. See for a criticism of the allegation of the Nawab's oppression Ali, M. M., "Nawab Shaista Khan and the East India Company's trade in Bengal, 1664-69", *J.A.S.P.*, Dec., 1965, pp. 85-119.
2. For a detailed account of the Anglo-French conflict in India see Dodwell, H., *Dupleix and Clive*, London, 1920, part I.; also *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. V., chaps. V & VI.

wars in the Deccan although they continued to be at peace in Europe. In this phase of the conflict, which clearly demonstrated the political ambitions of the English and the French, the chief manoeuvre of both of them was to support the rival claimants to the thrones of the Carnatic and Hyderabad in a bid to establish their political influence over the two territories. For a time Dupleix maintained the French superiority and succeeded in placing his nominees, Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib, respectively on the thrones of Hyderabad and the Carnatic. The French influence in the Deccan was now very great. The position of the English was, however, relieved by Robert Clive's surprise attack upon and capture, in 1751, of Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, and Stinger Lawrence's seizure of Trichinopoly in 1752. These discomfitures discredited Dupleix with his home authorities who recalled him in 1754. Godhew, the new French governor-general, concluded a treaty of peace with the English in 1755. Thus the Second Carnatic war ended with definite signs of recovery by the English. The French position, however, remained strong in Hyderabad and the Northern Circars.

It was during this period of recovery at the later stage of the Second Carnatic war that the English took steps to establish their political supremacy in Bengal as well by placing on its throne their own nominee. For this purpose they began to extend their fortifications at Calcutta. The suggestion that these fortifications were necessitated as a defensive measure against the "French peril" is misleading ; for the two nations were actually at peace in Europe and their conflict in this subcontinent was at that time confined to the Deccan. The news of the commencement of general hostilities between the two nations consequent upon the outbreak of the Seven Years' War (1756) did not reach Bengal before February 1757 by which time the English had already committed themselves to bringing about what they called a "revolution" in Bengal. The fortification work was undertaken with a view to bringing about this revolution and, from the position of strength which could thus be secured, to launching an offensive against the French if the need for it arose. The monoeuvre of the English in Bengal was thus the very antithesis of the so-called defensive measure against an apprehended attack of the French.[1]

The steps taken by the English were, however, wise on their part ; for in Bengal the influential Hindu mercantile class were ready for an alliance with the English East India Company for the overthrow of the Muslim Nawab. The rise of this class of the Hindus was due to the increasing commercial activities by the European companies in Bengal during the later part of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century. During that period a number of Hindu families had grown rich and influential by having recourse to trade and commerce. Some of them rose to power and eminence as revenue administrators and bankers. Soon this class of the Hindus began to play decisive parts in the state affairs. Thus, on the eve of Nawab Murshid Quli Khān's death (1727) they opposed the succession of his nominee and grandson, Sarfaraz Khān, and successfully espoused the cause of the latter's father, Shujāuddīn Khān. During the latter's rule (1727-1739) the Hindu bankers became the leading faction at the provincial court and their leaders, Alam Chand and Jagat Seth, became the virtual rulers of the eastern provinces. The former of the two also became the chief minister.[2] On the death of Shujāuddīn Khān the Hindu faction assisted 'Alivardi Khān, the Deputy Nawab of Orissa.[3] During 'Alivardi Khān's administration the court rivalries, which had been let loose since the death of Murshid Quli Khān and for which the machinations of the Hindu faction were partly responsible, reached their climax. On the other hand, the Marathas, being at times encouraged and invited by the rival faction at the court, began their systematic intrusions into Bengal.[4] Under these circumstances 'Alivardi Khān preferred the

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1. See below, p. 45.
2. *Seir*, vol. I, pp. 279-81.
3. *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 279-281, 326-340 ; Datta, Kalikinkar, *Alivardi and his times*, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 17-35.
4. The nawab got rid of the Maratha menace by ceding to them, in

Hindus in every important office of the state. This dependence on them further strengthened the Hindu faction, whose leaders now included Rai Durlabh Ram, the Jagath Seth brothers, Mahtab Rai and Swarup Chand, Rājā Jānaki Rām, Rājā Rāmnarāin and Rājā Māṇik Chand,[1] and relegated into the background the Muslim nobility whose influence upon state affairs was gradually on the wane since the death of Murshid Quli Khān.

The position which the Hindu elite now had in the administration ought to have cemented their allegience to the Nawab. This was not to be so, however, on account of three complementary developments. First, with the weakening of the Mughal central authority there was a "revival of Hindu feeling" throughout India.[2] Affected by such revivalist feeling the affluent and influential Hindu community of Bengal did not remain satisfied merely by having a predominant position in the otherwise Muslim political set-up. They were desirous of putting an end to it. Secondly, the European companies, especially the English East India Company, had been carrying on their trade in Bengal through Hindu agents and contractors.[3] A century of such cooperation had not only helped the rise of the Hindu

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1751, the province of Orissa and by agreeing to pay them an annual *chauth* of 12 lakhs of rupees.

[1] For Durlabh Rām see Datta, Kalikinkar, "Durlabh Ram", *I. H. Q.*, vol. XVI (1940) pp. 20-39 ; for the Seth brothers see Little, J. H., "The House of Jagat Seth", *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. XX, (January-June, 1920), pp. 141-200 ; vol. XXII, (January-June, 1921) pp. 1-119 ; and for Rāmnarāin see Askari, S. H. "Raja Ramnarain", *I. H. Q.* vol. XIV, (1940), pp. 74-95. 757-79 ; vol. XV (1939) pp. 13-38.

[2] See Gupta, Brijen K., *Sirajuddaullah and the East India Company*, 1756-1757, Leiden, 1962, p. 30.

[3] During the years 1736-40 the East India Company carried on its investment at Calcutta with 52 native merchants, all of whom were Hindus. So were also the 25 principal merchants with whom the Company were associated at Kasimbazar about that time. It was only at Dacca that out of 12 such merchants only 2 appear to have been Muslims—*Bengal Public Consultations* 6 July 1736 and 15 December 1740 ; *Kasimbazar Factory Records*, vol. V., 31 January

mercantile class but had also created a community of interest between the two. The continuation, and in fact an enlargement of the commercial privileges of the English East India Company was thus naturally considered by the Hindus as being conducive to their own interest. Thirdly, as indicated earlier, the East India Company's agents had about that time combined their commercial speculations with imperial ambitions. This presented the Hindu elite with the prospect of substituting the Nawab's rule by that of the English who were not only non-Muslims, but whose commercial interests and *terminus a quo* in a distant land were also likely to make their dependence upon the Hindus more extensive and real.

A little after the outbreak of the Second Carnatic War the English assumed sovereign rights over their zamindari in Bengal possessions.[1] As an instance as well as a consequence of this they began to give protection to the fugitives from the Nawab's justice all of whom were, significantly enough, Hindus. Thus in 1751 they defied the Nawab's orders for surrendering one Rām Krishna Seth, a merchant of Calcutta, who was accused of smuggling. Similarly in 1755 and 1756 the English

1789 and *Dacca Factory Records*, vol. II., 12 April 1739, all quoted in Mallick, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal*, Dacca, 1961, p. 62.

[1] In 1698 the English East India Company obtained zamindari rights over the three villages of Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindapur on an yearly rental of Rs. 1,195 only. Although Nawab Murshid Quli Khān did not allow further extension of their zamindari, the Company substantially enlarged its possession by fraudulent purchase of a large number of villages in the name of their Hindu employees. The nawab, not unaware of this, demanded an enhancement of the rental commensurate with the actual revenue realised by the Company from the villages thus secured. The latter, much against their wish, had to compromise the matter by paying the Nawab the sums of Rs. 20,000, Rs. 55,000, and Rs. 85,000 respectively in 1726, 1736 and 1754. (See Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10). The Company's actual revenue from its settlements stood at Rs. 11,071 in 1717 and it rose to Rs. 107, 131 in 1754. (*Ibid.* ; also Hunter, W. W., *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, vol. I., p. 20).

resisted the Nawab's legal claim to the properties of Lacchi, Rādhānāth, Gosāin Sen, Kanhiya and Sacher, all of whom had died intestate and without any successor.[1] A more serious intransigence of the English factors was their decision, taken as early as 1754, to extend their fortifications at Calcutta,[2] although the Nawab (Alivardi K͟hān) successfully enforced neutrality within his dominions and prevented the French from erecting similar fortifications at Chandernagar.[3] The English factors' decision was made, not to forestall any apprehended French attack, as Robert Orme and others would have us believe,[4] but specifically to secure "the settlement [of Calcutta] from any attacks from the Country Forces."[5] In fact Colonel Scott, the Company's military engineer at Fort William, who had drawn up the fortification project, had the intention of bringing about with the assistance of the Hindus, a revolution in Bengal. Charles F. Noble, secretary to Colonel Scott, informs us as follows :

> "Colonel Scott observed in Bengal the *Jentue rajah* [Hindu Rajas] and inhabitants were very much disaffected to the Moor Government, and secretly wished for a change and opportunity of throwing off their tyrannical yoke. And was of opinion that if an European force began successfully, that they would be inclined to join them if properly applied to and encouraged, but might be cautious how they acted at first until they had a probability of success bringing about a Revolution to their advantage.
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> "I look on old Omy Chund [Umi Chand][6] as the man in Bengal the most capable of serving us if he has

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1. Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.
2. Court of Directors to the Fort William Council, 29 November 1754, Wilson, C. R., *The Indian Records* ; *Old Fort William in Bengal*, vol. II., p. 15.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Orme, *A History of Military Transactions etc.*, vol. II , p. 54 ; Dodwell, H., *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. V., p. 142.
5. Court of Directors to the Fort William Council, 29 Nov., 1754. *op. cit.*
6. Umi Chand was an eminent merchant at Calcutta and was intimately

> a mind to it......he is intimate with the Nabob and all the Court.
>
> "There is a man named Nimo Gosseyng [Nimu Gosain] the High Priest of the *Gentues* [Hindus], who has a great influence among the *Jentue rajahs* and with a particular caste of people who go up and down the kingdom well armed in great bodies, of the *facquier* or religious beggar cast [sic], who might possible be of service to us if they could be engaged to our interest, which by Nimo Gooseyng's means I have particular reasons to believe might be done.
>
> "This priest gave Colonel Scott very good information and advice relating to the affairs of that country, and told him he could bring 1,000 of these men to assist the English in four days warning when needful."[1]

Thus the predominant motive of the English was to capture the political authority in Bengal with the assistance of the Hindus. With this end in view they secretly proceeded with the work of fortifications[2] disregarding even the Court of Directors' instructions to do so with the consent, or at least the connivance, of the Nawab, for obtaining which they had also sanctioned the expenditure of a sum of Rs. 2,00, 00.[3]

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acquainted with the affairs of the Company.

1. Charles F. Noble to the Select Committee, Fort St. George, 22 September 1756, *Hill,* III. p. 328.
2. Orme, *op. cit.*, vol. II., p. 54.
3. Court of Directors to the Fort William Council, 29 November 1754, Wilson, C. R., *Old Fort William in Bengal,* vol. II., pp. 18-20. On being informed of the Court of Directors' instructions William Watts, Chief of the Kasimbazar factory and the Fort William Council's representative to deal with the Nawab's court, opined that Alivardi Khān would not "take any notice of our making Calcutta defensible" and added "I must declare to you Gentlemen that I think a previous application to the Nabob for Leave to Fortifye Calcutta a Step highly Improper for us to take. For in case the Nabob should absolutely refuse us his Permission We must at Once give over All Thoughts of Fortifying or do it in Defiance of Him..." (Watts to Fort William Council, 15 August 1755, Wilson, *op. cit.*, vol. II., p. 28.)

That the fortification work was undertaken "for the defence of the place against a Country Enemy" was reiterated, on 28 September 1755, in the Fort William Council's reply to the Court's above-mentioned instructions.[1] The Court was not specifically informed, however, that the Nawab's leave was not obtained, but was simply told that "due regard" would be paid to their instructions.[2] Within a few months substantial progress was made in the work of the fortification and on 21 February 1756 the Fort William Council were able to report to their masters that the redoubt at Perrin's Corner was nearly completed.[3] Along with this secret preparation for resisting the "Country Enemy" the English also began grossly to abuse their trade privileges, especially with regard to the illicit traffic in *dastaks* or trade permits whereby the Nawab's exchequer was deprived of a large amount of revenue.

Alivardi K͟hān, the then Nawab, was not unaware of the political ambitions of the French and the English and of their intrigues in south India. He had also come to know through his informants that some fortification work was in progress at the English settlement at Calcutta ; but he was in his death-bed at that time and could not therefore take any effective step against it. His heir-apparent, Sirājuddaula, was, however, fully aware of the designs of the English and was determined to thwart them. This attitude of the young prince all the more intensified the factors' intention to bring about the "revolution." Thus even before the death of Alivardi K͟hān they began to align themselves with the rival claimants to the nawabship, specially with Ghasiti Begam, Alivardi K͟hān's daughter and the widow of the governor of Dacca, who had also the support of such influential Hindus as Rājā Raj Ballabh, the revenue administrator of the place. Jean Law, the Chief of the French factory at Kasimbazar, informs us as follows :

> "During the 1st illness of Aliverdikhan, there were two considerable parties which pretended to the *subahdarī*, and

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[1] Wilson, *op. cit.*, vol. II., p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

> which, though divided, appeared likely to unite in order to overthrow that of Shiraj-uddaula. The one was the party of the widow of Nawajis Muhammad, whose plan was to get recognised as *Subahdar* the bastard child of Badshah Kuli the brother of Shiraj-uddaula, whom he had under her charge. The other was that of Shaukat Jang, Nawab of Purneah, a Prince held in much esteem. These parties necessarily caused much confusion. It was in the effervescence of these troubles that the English gave Shirajuddaula reason for complaint against them. Always led by the idea that he would not have sufficient influence to get himself recognised as *Subahdar* they carried on a correspondence with the *Begum...,* and withdrew to Calcutta the treasures which she wished to put in a place of safety and also those of Raj Balav her chief *diwan*. It is even said that they had an understanding with the Nawab of Purneah."[1]

Sirājuddaula suspected some such move by the English and this was confirmed by the affair of Krishna Das alias Krishna Ballabh. The latter was the son of Raja Raj Ballabh who, as revenue administrator of Dacca, was suspected of embezzlement and of having "amassed immense treasures by oppression and other unjust ways." Sirājuddaula, acting on behalf of the ailing Nawab Alivardi K͟hān, demanded an account from Raj Ballabh and wanted to "know what was become of the King's revenues collected ... for some years past."[2] Immediately Raj Ballabh obtained shelter for his son and family, together with a treasure estimated at Rs. 5,300,000, in the English settlement at Calcutta. The English factors' unhesitating offer of shelter to the fugitives was due to their belief in the ultimate success of Ghasiti Begam and the influence which Raj Ballabh had on her.[3] When pressed on by Sirājuddaula for the accounts Raj Ballabh evaded rendering them on the plea

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1. Law's Memoir, *Hill,* vol. III., pp. 163-164.
2. William Tooke's Narrative, 10 November 1757, *Hill,* vol. I., 278-279.
3. See Holwell's letter to the Court of Directors, 10 August 1757, *Hill,* vol. III., pp. 348-349 ; also his letter of 30 November 1756, *Bengal and Madras Papers,* vol. II.

"that his son was fled and taken protection with the English with everything appertaining to him, which rendered it impossible for him to comply with his [Shirajuddaula's] demands."[1]

'Alivardi K͟hān died on 10 April 1756 and was succeeded by Sirājuddaula. Immediately Ghasiti Begam "got 20,000 of the military over to her party" and entrenched herself near Murshidabad. Sirājuddaulah, however, promptly overpowered her and kept her confined in the palace. He also marched against his cousin, S͟haukat Jang of Purnea, and secured his allegiance. Thus quickly subduing his rivals Sirājuddaulah turned his attention towards the English. He repeatedly asked them to surrender Krishna Das and to dismantle the fortifications. To these Roger Drake, the governor of the Fort William Council, hurled open definance and arrogant replies.[2] The Nawab sent K͟hwāja Wajid, an influential merchant of Hughli, as many as four times to Calcutta in order to persuade the English to come to an amicable settlement ; but he was dishonourably dismissed on every occasion and was finally "threatened to be ill used if he came again on the same errand."[3] It was in course of this correspondence that the Fort William Council for the first time raised the plea of the probability of a war with the French as a justification of their fortification work at Calcutta[4] which was, as noted above, begun two years earlier with the motive of capturing political power in Bengal. And after the actual outbreak of the Seven Years' War the same posterus explanation was forwarded to the Court of Directors presumably in order to palliate their earlier dislike to extend the Calcutta fortifications without the Nawab's consent

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1. Tooke's Narrative, *op. cit.*
2. Memoir of Law, *Hill*, vol. III, p. 165 ; also see Gopal, Ram, *How the British occupied Bengal*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 69-80.
3. William Watts and Matthew Collet to Fort St. George Council, 7 and 16 July 1756, *Hill*, vol. I, pp. 58 & 108. "I am still of opinion", wrote Richard Beecher to the Fort William Council, "that the protection granted to Kissendas and the insult to the Nabob's messenger were essential causes of our late misfortunes..."—*Hill*, vol. II, p. 157.
4. *Hill*, vol. II, p. 147.

or connivance. However, when every attempt to bring about a settlement had failed Sirājuddaulah decided upon strong action. In a letter written to Khwāja Wajid on 1 June 1756 Sirājuddaula gave the following reasons for his decision :

> "I have three substantial motives for extirpating the English out of my country, one that they have built strong fortifications and dug a large ditch in the king's dominions contrary to the established laws of the country; the second is that they have abused the privilege of their *dustucks* by granting them to such as were in no ways entitled to them, for which practice the king has suffered greatly in the revenue of his customs; the third motive is that they give protection to such of the king's subjects as have by their behaviour in the employs they were entrusted with made themselves liable to be called to an account..."[1]

In pursuance of this decision Sirājuddaulah invested the Kasimbazar factory with a large force on 3 June and captured it. His motive was not to plunder the factory, as Hill would have us believe,[2] but to put pressure on the Fort William Council. This is evident from the fact that he "touched none of the Company's effects at Cassimbazar except the warlike stores"[3] and only obliged Watts to sign a capitulation whereby he undertook, in essence, that the English would desist from the three kinds of irregular activities complained of by the Nawab.[4] He also released all the Englishmen at Kasimbazar except Watts and Collet whom he asked to accompany him in his march to Calcutta. After putting the factory warehouses under lock and key in order to prevent their plunder by the native soldiers[5] the Nawab, with the two Englishmen, proceeded towards

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1. *Hill*, vol. I, p. 4.
2. *Hill*, vol. I. pp. liii ff.
3. Watts and Collet to Council at Fulta, 8 July 1756, *Hill*, vol. I, p. 61.
4. *Hill*, vol. I., 10.
5. Watts and Collet to Fort St. George Council, 2 July 1756, *Hill*, vol. I, p. 46.

Calcutta continuing, at the same time, his overtures for a peaceful settlement.[1]

Drake continued, however, to be defiant and arrogant. He was hopeful of overthrowing the Nawab[2] presumably with the help of Ghasiti Begam and her party and also with the help of the English troops who had assembled in southern India in connection with the First Carnatic War. In fact it was this political ambition and the feeling of strength generated by the presence of the English troops in the Deccan (who had now no war to fight against the French) that determined Drake's attitude. Thus on 4 June, 1765, three days before the news of the capitulation of Kasimbazar reached him, Drake sent a request to Fort St. George for immediate military reinforcements[3] ; and on 10 June, a week before the Nawab's arrival at Calcutta, Drake commenced hostilities by sending two detachments to capture Sukhsagar, a place halfway between Calcutta and Hughli, and the Thana fort, situated at the narrowest part of the river Hughli. An advance guard of the Nawab's forces repelled the English attack on both the places. The Nawab arrived before the Fort William on 16 June with a force of 30,000 troops. Even then Drake thought that Sirajuddaulah would retreat if the English had offered a determined resistance.[4] After two days' fighting, however, Drake escaped, on 19 June, with the main body of the Englishmen to Falta, a few miles down the stream, leaving Holwell and some others in the fort who were to follow suit on the following day. Before that could be done, however, the Nawab's forces captured the fort at midday on the 20th when Holwell and his companions had to surrender. No violence was done to the persons of the Englishmen.[1] It was only at night that some Englishmen, who had indulged in excessive drinking and had become riotous,[2] had been confined in a room measuring 18′×14′ which the English factors themselves had constructed for putting disorderly elements under restraint. The number of the confined persons ranged between forty and sixty of whom about a half or one-third died at night on account of fatigue and exhaustion presumably for the preceding four days' of hard fighting. This incident has been magnified into the "Black Hole Tragedy" by Holwell who puts the numbers of internees and survivors respectively as 146 and 23 and who mentions heat and congestion as the cause of the death of so many Englishmen.[3] Recent researches show that his account is distorted and exaggerated.[4] However, on 21 June the Nawab released all the Englishmen within the fort except Holwell and three others who were ordered to be taken to the capital, Murshidabad. On 24 June Sirājuddaulah left Calcutta leaving Manikchand in charge of that place. By the 26th June all the Englishmen who were left at Calcutta and other factories made their way to Falta.

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[1] See *Hill*, vol. I, pp. 104, 142 and 254.

[2] Watts and Collet to the Court of Directors, 17 July 1756, *Hill*, vol. I., p. 116.

[3] Fort St. George Council Consultations 1756, vol. LXXXVI, pp. 1-3, cited in Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[4] Alexander Grant, "An account of the capture of Calcutta", *Hill*, vol. I, p. 76.

Sirājuddaulah's action in releasing the Englishmen and in taking Holwell and others to the capital indicates that he intended to allow the English to stay and trade in Bengal on just and reasonable terms. This is further evident from his letter to George Pigot, governor of the St. Fort George, written on 30 June, 1756. The Nawab wrote :

> "It was not my intention to remove the mercantile business of the Company belonging to you out of the *subah* of Bengal, but Roger Drake your *gomasta* was a very wicked and unruly man and began to give protection to persons who had accounts with the *Patcha* [Badshah] in his *koaty* [*Kuthi* or factory]. Notwithstanding all my admonitions,

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1. Cooke's evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *ibid.*, vol. III., p. 301.
2. Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, vol. I., p. 153.
3. *Hill*, vol. III, pp. 131 ff.
4. See Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-80 ; also *Oxford History of India*, Third Edition, (ed., T.G.P. Spear), p. 479.

> yet he did not desist from his shameless actions. Why should these people who come to transact mercantile affairs of the Company be doers of such actions ? However, that shameless man has met with the desert of his actions and was expelled from this *subah*. I gave leave to Mr. Watts who is a helpless, poor, and innocent man to go to you. As I esteemed you to be a substantial person belonging to the Company, I have wrote these circumstances of his shameless and wicked proceedings."[1]

Sirājuddaulah was thus consistent in his policy towards the English. His step against the Fort Willam Council was necessitated by the latter's intransigence in enlarging the fortifications in defiance of clear instructions not to do so, in giving shelter to the fugitives from justice and in abusing the trade privileges in a number of ways. His anger was specially focussed on the arrogance of Roger Drake. The Nawab's willingness to allow the English to resettle in Bengal under a more sensible leader and on just term, is implict throughout the letter. This accommodativeness of the Nawab probably explains also why, after the seizure of Calcutta, he allowed the English to remain at Falta.

In exhibiting such accomodativeness the Nawab had indeed viewed the English factors primarily as commercial agents and had underestimated their political aspirations which had been heightened by the Carnatic Wars and the presence of the English troops in the Deccan. True to these latter developments Roger Drake and the other Englishmen at Falta were bent upon re-establishing themselves by force. To keep the Nawab in good humour till reinforcements arrived from Madras, however, they opened negotiations, on 6 July 1756, with his principal nobles apparently for a pacific settlement with the Nawab.[2] Explaining this manoeuvre to gain time Drake and his colleagues wrote to

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1. *Hill*, vol. I, p. 196.
2. Compare Falta Council's letter to Khwaja Wajid, Watts and Collet, 6 July 1756 (*Hill*, vol. I, pp. 57-58, 59) with that written to Fort St. George on 13 July 1756 (*ibid*., pp. 71-72).

the St. Fort George authorities on 13 July and once again entreated for immediate reinforcements.[1] At this stage the English were actively encouraged and helped by a number of Hindu notables, inlcuding even Manikchand, Sirājuddaulah's governor of Calcutta and the adjoining districts. Thus Śri Babu or Śiva Babu, the chief assistant to K͟hwāja Wajid, fanned the Englishman's apprehensions that the Nawab would not allow them to reestablish themselves along with their former privileges and told Watts that after the humiliating defeat of the English at Calcutta peace with honour was almost impossible and that "the only method to reestablish Calcutta upon creditable terms would be to proceed to Madras and there concert measures with the Governor and Council, and to return with strength..."[2] Another person, Govinda Ram Mitra, who had, during the Nawab's invasion of Calcutta, impeded his progress by "felling down trees and cutting through the roads"[3] now engaged himself in spying for the English.[4] With the assistance of such men Watts and Collet, who had been staying at Chandarnagar, and Warren Hastings, who had been staying at Kasimbazar, collected informations regarding the position of the Nawab and his army, and established contact with the malcontents at his court. Manikchand, on his part, made the stay of the English comfortable by making provisions and necessaries available to the English at Falta and by posing to mediate between them and the Nawab.

Drake's letters for military assistance and the news of the surrender of the Kasimbazar factory reached Madras in the middle of July, 1756. Immediately the Fort St. George Council resolved to send a reinforcement of 200 men under Major Kilpatrick[5] who sailed from Madras on 20 July by the ship

1. Falta Council's letter to Fort St. George, 13 July 1756, *op. cit.*
2. Watts and Collet to Court of Directors, 17 July 1756, *Hill*, vol. I, pp. 117-18.
3. Drake's Narrative, *ibid.*, pp. 139-40.
4. Orme MSS, India V., pp. 1159, 1160, quoted in Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
5. *Hill*, vol. I, p. 99.

Delaware and arrived at Falta on 31 July only to find that the English had been ousted from the Fort William. In view of the rainy season and the inadequacy of the forces under his command, however, he thought that an immediate attack upon the Nawab would be useless and therefore wrote to the Fort St. George authorities, on 5 August, for "large supplies of" military and marine forces.[1] In order to gain time and to allay any suspicion of the Nawab Kilpatrick confirmed and continued the manoeuvre adopted by Drake and wrote a letter to Sirājuddaulah on 15 August "assuring him" of his (Kilpatrick's) "good intentions" and beseeching his favour.[2] Kilpatrick also wrote to Manikchand, Jagat Sēth and others asking their intercession on behalf of the English.[3] The letter to the Nawab was not delivered, but the one to Manikchand elicited his "many compliments and the strongest assurance of his assistance. He sent at the same time a boat with a *dastack* with orders for opening a bazar in Calcutta and for supplying us with provisions of all kinds."[4] Manikchand also pleaded with the Nawab that the English had no hostile intentions against him and was told in reply that if they did not intend war he would be inclined to grant their requests.[5]

As has been indicated above, the intention of the English was not really to come to peaceful terms with the Nawab but to gain time in order to consolidate their position. About this time their machinations were greatly facilitated by Sirājuddaulah's preoccupations with S͟haukat Jang of Purnea who, having obtained from the Mug͟hal emperor a *farman* for the nawabship of

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
2. Falta Select Committee Consultations, 22 August 1756, quoted in Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
4. Falta Select Consultations, 5 September 1756, quoted in Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
5. *Ibid.*, 6 November 1756, Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 90 ; see also Patras Arratoon's letter to the Court of Directors, 5 January 1759, *Hill*, vol. III, pp. 364-65.

Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, challenged Sirājuddaulah's authority. The English secretly hoped for Shaukat Jang's success,[1] but to their disappointment he lost his life in the engagement with Sirājuddaulah which took place on 6 October 1756.

In the meantime the news of the fall of Calcutta and Drake's and Kilpatrick's requests for further military reinforcements had been received at Madras in the middle of August 1755. Already in Europe the Seven Years' War between England and France had broken out in May ; but the news of it had not as yet reached the Deccan. The Fort St. George Council suspected, however, the probability of such a war and were therefore hesitant about sending an immediate expedition to Bengal. In September the ships, the *Chesterfield* and the *Walpole* arrived from England and they still did not bring any news of the outbreak of any war with the French. Accordingly early in October the Fort St. George Council resolved to send an expedition to Bengal under Robert Clive and Admiral Watson. Clive was instructed, *inter alia*, as follows :

> "The mere re-taking of Calcutta should we think by no means be the end of this undertaking ; not only their Settlements and factories should be restored but all their priviledges established in the full extent granted by the *Great Mogul*, and ample reparation made to them for the loss they have lately sustained ;...
>
> Should the Nabob on the news of the arrival of these forces, make offers tending to the acquiring to the Company the before mentioned advantages, rather than risque the success of a war, we think that sentiments of revenging injuries, although they were never more just, should give place to the necessity of sparing as far as possible the many bad consequences of war, besides the expence of the Company's treasures, but we are of opinion

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[1] Falta Council to Fort St. George, 17 September 1756, *Hill*, vol. I, p. 219.

> that the sword should go hand in hand with the pen, and that on the arrival of the present armament, hostilities should immediately commence with the utmost vigour. These hostilities must be of every kind which can either distress his dominions and estate or bring reprizals into our possession.
>
> We need not represent to you the great advantage which we think will be to the military operations, and the influence it will have in the Nabob's councils to effect a junction with any Powers in the provinces of Bengal that may be dissatisfied with the violences of the Nabob's Government, or that may have pretensions to the Nabobship."[1]

In pursuance of the last mentioned strategy letters were also sent to the nawabs of Dacca, Purnea and Cuttack, asking their assistance. At the same time the Fort St. George Council sent a reply to Sirājuddaulah's letter of 30th June 1750 expressing resentments at the "violence and cruelties exercised" upon the English in Bengal and threateningly demanding satisfaction from the nawab. Pigot informed him :

> "...I have sent a great *Sardar*, who will govern after me, by name Colonel Clive, with troops and land forces. Full satisfaction and restitution must be made for the losses we have sustained. .. You have heard that we have fought and always been victorious in these parts...."[2]

The apprehension of a fresh war with the French thus acted as a deterrent rather than as a stimulant to the speedy sending of an expedition to Bengal. The strategy adopted was obviously to outwit the French by establishing the supremacy of the English in Bengal before the commencement of hostilities with that nation, and in the event of the outbreak

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1. Fort St. George Council to Fort William Council, 13 October 1756, paras 9, 10 and 11, *Hill*, vol. I, pp. 239-240.
2. *Hill*, vol. I, p. 243.

of such hostilities, to concentrate all the forces in the south to combat the French. Such political and and military designs clearly militated against any prospect of a peaceful settlement. Clive was sent with a sum of 4,00,000 rupees[1] and a sizable force[2] and was instructed to commence vigorous hostilities immediately on his arrival in Bengal. He was also asked to effect a junction with the nawab's enemies and to create dissensions among the nobles of his court. Clive was to spare the "many bad consequences of war" only if the nawab, on hearing "the news of the arrival of these forces", did not "risque the success of a war" and made "offers" for rendering satisfaction to the English for their losses and for reestablishing them with "all their privileges...in the full extent." Even in the course of such peace efforts Clive was to see that the sword went "hand in hand with the pen." Obviously under these circumstances war could be averted only if the nawab made peace on the English terms. The English had wilfully and unjustly provoked Sirajuddaulah to take strong action against them and then they began to accuse him of aggression although the truth was that it was their aggressive political designs and consequently their arrogant defiance of the nawab's orders which led to the complications.

Clive arrived at Falta on 15 December and on that very day he addressed a letter to Manikchand thanking him for the "great friendship and regard" he had shown for the Company, and expecting that, since he (Manikchand) had "hitherto professed a desire to serve the Company", he would "retain the same disposition in their favour" when "their affairs most"

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
2. The expedition consisted of five ships, the *Kent*, the *Cumberland*, the *Tyger*, the *Salisbury* and the *Bridgewater* ; one fireship, the *Blaze*, three Indiamen, the *Protector*, the *Walpole*, and the *Marlborough* ; and three ketches, the *Lapwing*, the *Snow*, and the *Boneta*. These vessels carried 528 infantrymen, 109 artillerymen, 940 sepoys and 160 *laskars*, besides military supplies and provisions. (*Hill*, vol. I, p. 233).

required it.[1] In reply Manikchand expressed his sincere "rejoice" to hear of Clive's "safe arrival in these parts" and informed him as follows :

> "The causes of the misfortunes which had befallen the Company's settlements you will learn from their former agents. My conduct in them you must have already known as well as my disposition for peace and quiet which I have solely in view. Your letter had determined me more than ever in the same sentiments, and in my desire of serving the Company which I shall continue to do to the utmost of my power. Radakissen Mullick, a man of trust whom I have sent to you, will impart you some further particulars which I recommend to your attentive consideration,&c., of which you will make such use as will be most agreeable to the interest of the Company .."[2]

What "further particulars" were transmitted to Clive through Radakissen Mullick [Radhakrishna Mallik] are not on record. Evidently these were of such a nature as could not be safely written lest they should fall into wrong hands. Clive acknowledged receipt of the information thus transmitted and then sent to Manikchand, through the same Radhakrishna Mallik, Governor Pigot's letter to Sirājuddaulah, and another of Nawab Ṣalabat Jangof the Deccan, along with a forwarding note by Clive himself in which he added :

> "After reading these letters it will be the Nabob's own fault if the troubles of this country should begin again, and be worse than ever..."[3]

As indicated above, Pigot's letter contained clear threats of war. Manikchand who had hitherto represented to the nawab the good

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1. Clive to Rajah Manikchand, 15 December 1756, *Bengal and Madras Papers* (published by the Imperial Record Department, Calcutta), vol. II, "Colonel Clive's Correspondence", No. 1, p. 1. (Hereafter cited as *Clive Correspondence*).
2. Manikchand to Clive, 19 December, 1756, *ibid.*, No. 2, p. 1.
3. Clive to Manikchand, 21 December 1756, *Clive Correspondence,* No. 3. p. 1.

intentions of the English, now found it difficult to forward such a strongly worded letter to him and therefore asked Clive to carry out certain amendments in the letter and then to return it for transmission to the nawab.[1] Clive straightly declined to do so stating :

> "We are come to demand satisfaction for the injuries done us by the Nabob, not to entreat his favour, and with a force which we think sufficient to vindicate our claim."[2]

Indeed Clive did not want a pacific settlement, nor did he bother for the nawab's reply. The same day on which he wrote the above noted letter (25 December) he decided to commence hostilities.[3] The sequence of the offensive was as follows. On 29 December the fleet was ordered to proceed up the river and on the 30th Budge Budge was taken. On the following day the Thana fort was captured and on 1 January 1757 Fort William in Calcutta was recaptured. Thereupon preparations were set on foot for an attack on Hugli. At the same time Clive wrote to Manikchand, who had withdrawn to the latter place, asking him to continue his friendship as he had so long been doing.[4] Clive also wrote letters to Jagat Seth and Khwaja Wajid, asking them to "prevail upon the Nabob to give us [the English] satisfaction for our losses", and coupled this request with the threat : "You must have heard that we have shewn no want of courage on the Coromondel Coast, and we have much stronger reasons to exert ourselves upon this occasion .."[5] Clive did not wait for the reply of these gentlemen and on 10 January he stormed and occupied Hugli. The whole town was plundered and "burnt to ashes" in order, as Drake and Beecher wrote, "to strike a terror in the Subah's Troops &

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1. Manikchand to Clive, 23 December 1756, *ibid.*, No. 4, p. 1.
2. Clive to Manikchand, 25 December 1756, *ibid.*, No. 5, p. 2.
3. Clive to Kilpatrick, 25 December 1756, *Hill*, vol. II, pp. 73-74.
4. Clive to Manikchand, 8 January 1757, *Clive Correspondence*, No. 8, p. 3.
5. Clive to Jagat Seth and K͟hwāja Wajid, 8 January 1757, *Clive Correspondence*, Nos. 9 & 10, p. 3.

encourage any malcontents to declare in our favour."[1] Manikchand, who had been well aware of the warlike preparations of the English, did neither inform the nawab of these, nor did he strengthen the defences of the places retaken by the English. Indeed, he did not put up any resistance worth the name, although he had sufficient troops under his command, and withdrew from each of the forts Budge Budge, Thana, Calcutta and Hugli at the approach of the English. A perusal of the extant records as well as his correspondence with the English suggests that he had been in complicity with them and had actively helped and encouraged them in their rather incredibly swift recapture of the places. It was only after the pillage of Hugli that he wrote to the nawab that the English he had now to deal with were very much different from those whom he had defeated in June last.

On coming to know of the recapture of Calcutta and the destruction of Hugli by the English the nawab immediately marched down with a large army and reached the outskirts of Hugli on 20 January. The same day the English withdrew from that place and entrenched themselves at the Fort William. Consistently with his offer to Governor Pigot (made on 30 June 1756) Sirājuddaulah now wrote to Admiral Watson, on 23 January, 1757, indicating that he would be willing to allow the English to reestablish themselves in Bengal only if a "new chief" was appointed instead of Drake.[2] The Nawab repeated the same intention on 24 and 30 January and asked Clive to send a "trusty person" with the English proposals.[3] These letters had some sobering effect on Clive who, also with a view to keeping Sirājuddaulah away from Calcutta, now showed an inclination to negotiate terms with the nawab.[4] The latter, however, entered the confines of Calcutta on 3 February 1757.

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[1] Drake and Beecher to the Secret Committee for Affairs of the Company, 26 January 1757, *Bengal and Madras Papers, op. cit.*

[2] *Hill*, vol. II, pp. 130-31.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 184.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 208.

This produced some misgivings in the minds of Clive and Watson. Still Scrafton and Walsh were sent to the nawab's camp for negotiations on the evening of 4 February. These two men unreasonably suspected that Sirājuddaulah intended to confine them. They therefore escaped from his camp in the night and informed Clive that the nawab intended to attack the English by surprise the following morning. It is easy to see that the suspicion of Scrafton and Walsh was unfounded ; for there is nothing to suggest that Sirājuddaulah had ordered or arranged for the detention of the English emissaries. Moreover, if he had really the intention to attack the English by surprise, the detention of their messengers would have resulted only in defeating his purpose by alerting them. That the Nawab had no such intention is further evident from the fact that he was taken aback when Clive, acting on the information of Scrafton and Walsh, stealthily attacked his camp in the morning of 5 February.[1] Even after this provocation Sirājuddaulah did not sever the threads of negotiations and ultimately concluded a treaty with the English on 9 February 1757 securing to them the villages promised by the *farman* of 1717, freeing their goods from all kinds of duties and permitting them to fortify Calcutta and to establish a mint there.[2] The treaty thus reestablished the English in Bengal and secured to them all the commercial and military advantages they wanted. The reason for Sirājuddaulah's conciliatory attitude was his fear of Aḥmad S̱ẖāh Abdāli's reported advance towards Bihar.

Clive on the other hand, was toned down by the arrival of the news of the outbreak of war with the French (The Seven Years' War) and he feared that if he did not conclude a treaty with the nawab there might be an alliance between the latter and the French. From the point of view of the English the treaty of 9 February was purely a temporary expedient. They knew quite well that in order to establish their authority

1. *Hill*, vol. III, pp. 38, 39, 310.
2. *Hill*, vol. II, pp. 215-217.

in Bengal they had to overthrow Sirājuddaulah as well as to oust the French. Clive and Watson had taken positive steps towards the accomplishment of the first objective, but the arrival of the news of war with the French made it imperative to accomplish the second objective first. In fact immediately after the conclusion of the treaty of 9 February the English turned their attention to the French and decided to attack their settlement at Chandarnagar. At this point Clive made a dexterous move which was calculated to facilitate both the ousting of the French and discrediting the nawab. Clive sent Watts and Umichand to Sirājuddaulah's court asking for his support for, or at least his connivance at, the proposed English attack on Chandarnagar.[1] This placed the nawab in a predicament. If he agreed to the English proposal he would be discredited for having himself violated neutrality within his own dominions and the expulsion of the French would have been more than guaranteed; if, on the other hand, he disagreed, he would be accused of being unfriendly towards the English, or, even of being in complicity with the French. As would be seen presently, before long Clive hurled both these latter allegations against the Nawab.

In the few weeks that followed Sirājuddaulah made earnest endeavours to enforce neutrality within his dominions between the English and the French.[2] In a desperate mood he even asked his deputy, Nanda Kumar, "to assist the French with all his force, in case the English should attack Chandernagore, or if the French should attack the English, to assist them in the same manner, that there may be no quarrels or disputes in this country."[3] The English, however, bought over Nanda Kumar for a sum of ten or twelve thousand rupees.[4] They bribed the Nawab's secretary and chief of his intelligence es and thus succeeded even in tampering with his corresence.[1] Indeed the web of bribery and treachery and ption had been woven so extensively that it became extredifficult for him to pursue a strong policy. Whenever he ed to send an army to enforce neutrality the Séths and eral of the *diwans* at the court exercised their influence and prevented the Nawab from doing so on the ground that "it was the part of prudence not to irritate" the English.[2] At that point of time he was also much handicapped by the reported advance of Aḥmad S̲h̲āh Abdāli towards the frontier of Bihar. In order to resist this menace Sirājuddaulah even sought the help of the English.[3] This predicament of the Nawab naturally encouraged the latter. In the meantime a fresh contingent of troops arrived from Bombay on 5 March by the ship *Cumberland*.[4] This removed all hesitation from the mind of Clive who began his march towards Chandarnagar on 8 March and laid seige to it on the 14th. The nawab at last succeeded in sending an army under Rai Durlabh Ram and Mīr Madan, but before their arrival at Chandarnagar the French surrendered and signed a capitulation whereby they were obliged to leave Chandarnagar and to place all their factories in Bengal at the disposal of Admiral Watson and the nawab.[5]

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[1] Extract of a letter from Colonel Clive to the Nawab, 22 February 1757, *Hill*, vol. II, p. 236.

[2] See *Hill*, vol. II, pp. 229-30, 231, 236, 240, 245-46, 264, 268-69.

[3] Watts to Clive, 18 February 1757, *Hill*, vol. II, p. 228 ; also Clive to Secret Committee of the Company, 22 Feb., 1757, *ibid.*, p. 240.

[4] Watts to Clive, 18 Feb., 1757, *op. cit.*

After the capture of Chandarnagar Clive peremptorily demanded Sirājuddaulah's assistance and "strict alliance" in driving the French "root and Branch" out of Bengal.[6] The nawab, being constantly haunted by the threat of Abdāli, for which he had deployed his best troops under Raja Ramnarain on the Bihar frontier, sought to appease the English by dismissing from

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1. Law's Memoir, *Hill*, vol. III, p. 191 n.
2. Law's Memoir, *ibid.*, pp. 197-99.
3. Sirājuddaulah's letter to Watson, *Hill*, vol. II, p. 242.
4. Orme, *Military Transactions*, vol. II, pp. 142-43 ; also Law's Memoir, *Hill*, vol. III, p. 271.
5. *Hill*, vol. II, pp. 292-93.
6. Clive to Pigot and to Sirājuddaulah, 29 March, *ibid.*, pp. 303-304.

his court Jean Law, the French representative. Sirājuddaulah refused, however, to grant permission for the passage of two thousand of the Company's troops by land to Patna in order to pursue and capture Law and other Frenchmen who had joined him.[1] Clive now began to accuse the nawab of complicity with the French and was determined to replace him by a nominee of the English. On 23 April, 1757, the Select committee of the Fort William officially adopted the resolution to overthrow Sirājuddaulah.[2] The latter was now also accused of failure to carry out the provisions of the treaty of 9 February, although Clive himself had admitted a month earlier, on 29 March, that the nawab had "already performed almost every article of the treaty ; paid Mr. Watts the three lakhs of rupees ; delivered up Kassimbazar, and all other factories, with the money and goods therein taken."[3] The nawab had also previously ordered for the restoration of the 38 villages near Calcutta to the Company and for allowing them to coin money at Calcutta.[4] Along with making this accusation Clive entered into a conspiracy with the Seth brothers, Rai Durlabh Ram, and Umichand to bring about a *coup d'etat.* At the suggestion of the Seth brothers Mir Jafar, the Nawab's *bakhshi* (Paymaster) was tipped, for Mir Jafar, along with two of his supporters, Mirza Amir Beg and K̲hādim Ḥusain K̲h̲ān, promised to back the *coup d'etat* move with the soldiers under their command. Between 1 May and 3 June the terms of the agreement between Mir Jafar and the English were formulated. Some difficulty was caused by Umichand who demanded, on threat of divulging the plot to the nawab, a 5 per cent. commission on all the nawab's treasures. Thereupon Clive had a second copy of the agreement prepared containing a promise of a reward of 20,000 rupees to Umichand and the signature of Watson forged on it by Clive

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1. Watson to Sirajuddaulah, 19 April 1757, and Clive to Sirajuddaulah, 20 April 1757, *ibid.*, pp. 345 and 348-49.
2. *Hill*, vol. II, p. 368.
3. Clive to Pigot, 29 March 1757, *ibid.*, p. 303.
4. Watts to Fort William Select Committee, 10 March 1757, *ibid.*, p.278.

himself. By the real agreement Mir Jafar undertook to secure to the Company not only the advantages which were guaranteed them by the treaty of 9 February, but also, *inter alia,* (a) to deliver to the English all the Frenchmen in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, "with all their goods, Factories and effects" ; (b) to pay an indemnity of 100 lakhs of rupees to the Company, 50 lakhs of rupees to the Europeans, 20 lakhs to the Hindus and 7 lakhs to the Armenians for their losses on account of Sirājuddaulah's capture of Calcutta ; (c) to put Calcutta and the whole country lying to its south "under the perpetual government of the English" and not to erect any fortification below Hugli ; and (d) to "enter into an alliance with the English offensive and defensive against all enemies whatever, either country powers or Europeans", and to pay the expenses of the Company's army whenever its assistance was required by the nawab.[1]

In the meantime the nawab, somewhat relieved by the news of Abdāli's departure from India, ordered Mir Jafar to proceed with an army towards Plassey in order to check the English if they meant to march northwards in their attempt to haunt down the French. As the conspiracy was not yet ripe Clive thought it advisable to allay the nawab's suspicion by withdrawing from Chandarnagar.[2] Mir Jafar, on the other hand, promised a further 52 lakhs of rupees to Clive and his other colleagues in order to hasten the *coup d'etat.* The final agreement, after being signed and sealed by Mir Jafar, was delivered to Clive on 10th June 1757. Three days later Clive sent an ultimatum to Sirājuddaulah charging him with failure to carry out his treaty obligations and demanding that Mir Jafar, Jagat Seth, Rai Durlabh Ram, Mir Madan and Mohan Lal be asked to judge whether the nawab had been faithful to his engagements.[3] At the same time Clive ordered his army to march towards Murshidabad. The nawab marched towards Plassey to

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1. *Hill,* vol. II, pp. 383-85.
2. Clive to Sirajuddaulah, 2 May 1757, *ibid.*, p. 372.
3. Clive to Sirajuddaulah, 13 June 1757, *Hill,* vol. II, pp. 405-407.

meet Clive where, on 23 June, the latter won the battle not by bravery but by the treachery of Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh Ram and others who did not even engage their troops against the English. Sirājuddaulah fled towards the north presumably with a view to making a junction with his loyal troops stationed on the Bihar frontier. On his way, however, he was caught by a partisan of Mir Jafar and was assassinated on 2 July by Mir Jafar's son Miran. Before this, on 29 June, Clive crowned Mir Jafar as the new nawab of Bengal.

Thus was established the English protectorate over Bengal. The English had indeed rationalised their collusion with the Hindu elite and Mir Jafar principally on three grounds : (a) that Sirājuddaulah was dishonest and oppressive upon the English : (b) that he intrigued with the French which meant that he would break the treaty with the English "on the first occassion" and (c) that the Bengali people had become dissatisfied with him so that a revolution would have come in any way.[1] These allegations are obviously fallacious. Sirājuddaulah did not oppress the English nor did he plunder their wealth even after his seizure of Kasimbazar and Calcutta. On the contrary he more than once reiterated that he had no intention to expel the English from Bengal and was willing to reestablish them only if they agreed not to abuse their trade privileges and violate the sovereignty of the nawab. In fact it was the English who had far outstripped their privileges and, with a view to establishing their political sway, had begun to fortify their settlement even against the nawab's specific orders to desist from so doing, and had also defied him by giving shelter to political offenders. As has been indicated above, these fortifications were not necessitated by the fear of the French, but by a desire to bring about a "revolution" in Bengal for which purpose the English had contemplated, even before Sirājuddaulah's accession, to effect a junction with any hostile section of the

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[1] Fort William Select Committee Proceedings, 1 May 1757, *ibid.*, pp. 370-371.

Nawab's subjects. The allegation of the nawab's intrigue with the French is also misleading. He made sincere efforts to enforce neutrality between the French and the English, but Clive, taking opportunity of the nawab's preoccupation with the Abdāli menace, aggressively attacked and captured the French settlement of Chandarnagar. Sirājuddaulah's helplessness compelled him to disgorge this violation of his territorial integrity but he refused to allow the English to haunt down the French. It was at that time that he appears to have written to Bussy, the French general, to come to the rescue of the French in Bengal.[1] This was cited as the proof of Sirājuddaulah's intrigue with the French. Evidently the Nawab's action was an aftermath of the English aggressiveness. By starting hostilities against the French in disregard of the nawab's specific orders to maintain neutrality within his dominions the English had in effect declared war upon the nawab himself and the latter was obviously justified in taking steps to protect the French as well as the integrity of his own territory. Before all this, however, the conspiracy to overthrow Sirājuddaulah was well in progress. Lastly, the alleged hatred of the subjects towards the nawab really refers to the attitude of the Hindu elite who, for reasons noted earlier, were bent upon putting an end to the Muslim rule. In fact the alliance of the Hindu elite with the English was the most potent factor in bringing about Sirājuddaulah's fall. The promptness with which he had dealt with Ghasiti Begam and Shaukat Jang suggests that the nawab did not really lack courage and resolution, as has sometimes been supposed. His subsequent vacillation and weakness in dealing with the English can only be explained against the background of the betrayal and conspiracy of the Hindu nobility. Thus his apparent negligence in driving the English out of Bengal after his capture of Calcutta was due mainly to the concealment of their real attitude and military preparations from his view by Manikchand, the governor of Calcutta who, on the contrary, helped and encouraged them in all possible ways, and at last collusively allowed them to recapture Budge Budge, Thana and Calcutta. After this the nawab had to recognise the *fait accompli* by the treaty of 9 February 1757, especially in view of the pressing danger of Aḥmad S͟hāh Abdālī's threatened invasion. Similarly, on the eve of Clive's attack on Chandarnagar the nawab was determined to resist him by force ; but this time Nanda Kumar, who was entrusted with this job, betrayed and joined hands with the English. The other Hindu nobles, such as Jagat Seth, Umichand and Rai Durlabh Ram did their best at the court to prevent Sirājuddaulah from taking up a strong policy against the English. In fact the conspiracy against him was already in embryo about that time. The Hindu nobles and their agents almost paralysed the administration by divulging to the English every state secret. Thus even the nawab's correspondence was tampered with and his above noted letter to Bussy was intercepted. The nawab had indeed come to know of the conspiracy against him ; but the web of treason and treachery with which he was now entangled made it impossible for him to take action against anybody because he could trust nobody. Instead he made frantic efforts to save the country's independence by presenting a united front against the English. For this purpose he touchingly appealed to Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh Ram, Jagat Seth and Umichand, all of whom promised their help only to betray him at the hour of need. Thus the English determination to be the masters of the political situation by any means and the Hindu elite's eagerness to overthrow the Muslim rule made Plassey inevitable. Mir Jafar's role was equally ignominious, but he was really a pawn in the game of politics played mainly by the Hindu nobility and the English. He represented only the degenerate section of the once powerful Muslim nobility who had gradually been pushed into the background since the time of Murs͟hid Qulī K͟hān. It was this absence of the counteracting influence of an active and strong Muslim nobility that left the field practically open for the Hindu elite. Even if

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[1] *Hill*, vol. II, pp. 313-314.

Mir Jafar did not join the conspiracy, or even if he was deposed and arrested by Sirājuddaulah, the situation would not have turned in favour of the nawab. The Hindu elite, and more particularly the English, would not have remained contented until they had brought about the end of the Muslim rule. That is why both of them abandoned Mir Jafar when he could no longer serve their pupose. "Bengali dissensions", rightly observes Spear, "had avoided the necessity of proving European military superiority by hard fighting as in the south...."[1] The full import of the battle of Plassey was not realised by Mir Jafar, nor perhaps by many others of his time. But looking back at that event from today it appears that Sirājuddaulah tried to be just to both the English and the French companies, to himself and to his own country. "Whatever may have been his faults", to conclude with Malleson, "Shirajuddaulah had neither betrayed his master nor sold his country. Nay more, no unbiassed Englishman, sitting in judgement over the events that passed in the interval between the 9th February and the 23rd June, can deny that the name of Shirajuddaulah stands higher in the scale of honour than does the name of Clive. He was the only one of the principal actors in that tragic drama who did not attempt to deceive."

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1. *The Oxford History of India*, third edition, (Reprinted 1964), p. 469.

SLAVERY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BENGAL
(1757—1785)

Zakiuddin Ahmad

Slavery as an almost 'universal element in the social and economic structure of all ancient civilizations'[1] existed in India from time immemorial as an old universal institution 'sanctioned by custom, tradition and religion'.[2] Its broad principle is clearly visible as early as the period of the institution of the caste system among the Hindus by which he 'Sudras' were declared 'Dasas' or hereditary servile caste and were suffered to remain in the lowest stratum of Society as bondsmen to the superior orders of the Hindu community.[3] The Mahabharata proclaimed the vanquished as victor's slaves.[4] Besides, the Hindu law books recognised fifteen variations of slaves.[5] Hindu slavery however was of a humane form ; manumission was commended and the

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1. R. Coupland : *British Anti-Slavery Movement,* p. 8. London 1933.
2. A. K. Chattopadhyay : *Slavery in the Bengal Presidency under East India Company's Rule,* 1772-1843. Preface, p.v. (unpublished London Ph. D. Thesis 1963).
3. *Bengal, Past and Present,* vol. II, No. 3 (Slavery Days in Old Calcutta by Syud Hussain) p. 271.
4. A. N. Bose : *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India,* p. 408. Calcutta 1945.
5. Commonwealth Relations Office (C. R. O.) Bengal Criminal and Judicial Consultations (B. C. J. C.) No. 50 L. P. 15 March 1816. Answer of the Hindu Pandits to the questions of Sadar Diwani and Nizamat Adalat. Also.

(a) Parliamentary Papers of the House of Commons (P. P. H. C.) 1828, vol. XXIV, pp. 7, 315.

(b) J. H. Harington : *An Elementary Analysis of the Laws and Regulations etc.* vol. III, p. 743 f.n. Calcutta, 1817.

(c) W. H. Macnaughten : *Principles and Precedents of Hindu Law,* vol. I, pp. 114-118. vol. II, pp. 273-274. Calcutta, 1829.

Arthashastra laid down regulations 'appreciably milder', and in many ways 'more liberal' than the sanctions of religious law books.[1] Slave markets and slave trading do not appear very general in the Hindu period, although,

> '...in the early centuries of the Christian era...there was a trade in slave-girls between India and the Roman Empire in both directions.'[2]

The coming of the Muslims in India gave the existing system a 'fresh and strengthened lease of life.'[3] The *Koran* and the Hadith acknowledged slavery, though manumission was applauded and tender treatment of slaves was enjoined upon the votaries of Islam.[4] In conformity with the religious injunction slaves in

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1. A. L. Basham : *The Wonder that was India,* p. 152. London 1954. It is interesting to note that Megasthenes declared that there were no slaves in India. For Kautilya's laws on Slavery :
   (a) N. C. Bandyopadhyay : *Kautilya or An Exposition of his Social Ideal and Political Theory,* pp. 210-214. Calcutta N.D.
   (b) K. P. Jayaswal : *Manu and Yajnavalkya* : a comparison and contrast : A treatise on the basic Hindu Law, pp. 208-210, 257. Calcutta 1930.
2. Basham : *The Wonder that was India,* p. 153.
3. *Bengal, Past and Present,* vol. II, No 3, p. 271.
4. For Muslim Law on Slavery :
   (a) *The Koran Interpreted* (English translation by A. J. Arbery) vol. I, ch. II, pp. 51, 58, vol. II, Ch. XXIV, p. 50, ch. Xc. p. 339. London 1963.
   (b) Charles Hamilton (Edited and translated) *Thd Hedaya or Guide,* vol. I, Book V, ch. I. p. 420. London 1791.
   (c) Harington : *Analysis,* III pp. 744 f. N.
   (d) *Reports Law Commissioners and Evidence on Slavery in the East Indies,* (R. L. C.) 1839-1841. vol. II, pp. 379-385. Appendix VIII (Remarks by J. C. Sutheland).
   (e) Mirza Bashir Ahmad ; *Islam and Slavery,* pp. 3, 6, 8, 14-15, Lahore 1935.
   (f) H. U. W. Stanton : *The Teaching of the Quoran,* p. 66. London 1919.
   (g) W. H. Macnaughten : *Principles and Precedents of Mohammadan Law,* pp. 65-66, 312-313. Madras 1860.

a Muslim house were accorded more comfort, latitude and privileges. Consequently, unlike their counterparts in Hindu Society slaves in a Muslim community could rise to a very high rank and some of them actually held the reins of power in Delhi and Bengal.[1]

In Islam a free Muslim (in theory) could not be a slave. Hence, the prisoners of war provided the bulk of the slaves. The Muslim kings of India had many slaves. Firuz Tughluq maintained a regular department of slaves. To quote his panegyrist,

> '...in the city and various fiefs there were 180,000 slaves ...About 12,000 slaves became artisans of various kinds, and 40,000 worked as military guards to Sultan'.[2]

In addition, there was a regular trade in slaves from other parts of Asia, and from East Africa came the Habshi slaves, who for a time, became a powerful element in the Deccan and Bengal.[3] When therefore the Europeans came to India they found slavery a commonly accepted institution.

The rise of the East India Company as the supreme political power in Bengal did not augur any change for the established order of things. They were rather chary of tampering with the time-honoured social practices and institutions ; their cardinal principle of policy was to 'abstain, as far as possible

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(h) S. Vesey - Fitzgerald : *Muhammadan Law* - an abridgement according to various schools, pp. 51, 98-99. Oxford 1931.

(i) R. K. Wilson : *Anglo-Muhammadan Law*—a digest, p. 612. London, 1930.

(j) R. Levy : *The Social Structure of Islam*, pp. 75-81, Cambridge, 1962.

(k) A. S. Tritton : *Islam*, pp. 137-189, London, 1962.

(l) Syed Ameer Ali : *The Spirit of Islam*, pp. 258-267. London, 1961.

[1] The Slave kings of Delhi and Murshid Quli Khan in Bengal are fine examples.

[2] Shams-i-Siraj Afif : *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 341. (Elliot and Dowson vol. III) London, 1871.

[3] Malik Ambar and Mahmud Gawan in the Deccan were both Habshi slaves. In Bengal several Habshi slaves seized power and ruled like independent kings.

from interference with the beliefs and customs of the Indian peoples, and slavery had been maintained for ages past in India by Hindu usage and as by Moslem law.'[1] Besides the Company itself profitted from the slave trade.[2] As Carey points out,

> '...Slaves were regularly purchased and registered in the Kutchery or Court-house, and in 1752,...each slave paid a duty of four rupees and four annas to the East India Company for such registry.'[3]

The sources of slavery in Bengal during the Company's rule were both internal and external. The Indian Law Commission enumerated eight sources of slavery, *viz.*,

(i) The sale or gift of children by their parents or other natural guardians.
(ii) The sale of children and adults by their mothers or maternal relations.
(iii) The sale of wives by their husbands.
(iv) The self-sale of adults.
(v) Marriage or co-habitation with slaves.
(vi) Kidnapping.
(vii) Importation.
(viii) Birth.[4]

Famine, kidnapping and importation however provided the major portion of those 'human chattels'. The famine of 1769-1770 wrought great havoc in Bengal. Major Rennell wrote,

> '...The poor wretches have been dying in the streets for Hunger, so that it is supposed that 300,000 labouring People have perished.'[5]

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1. R. Coupland : *East Africa and its Invaders*, p. 204, Oxford, 1938.
2. For the Company's active part in slave trade see C.R.O. Despatches to Bengal No. 2. 22 February 1964, para 9 ; 21st November 1764 para 8 ; 15 February 1765 para 6.
3. W. H. Carey : *The Good Old Days of Honourable John Company*, vol. I, p. 465. London, 1906-7. Also *Calcutta Review* vol. 18, No. 35 p. 311 (Calcutta in the Olden time).
4. *P.P.H.C.* 1841. vol. XXVIII, pp. 11-12. for details pp. 11-20.
5. C.R.O. Home Miscellaneous Series (H.M.S.) 815. Rennell to Rev.

During the famine children were sold by starving parents for prices varying from four rupees to twelve annas.[1] As Muhammad Reza Khan on 15 August, 1789 wrote to Cornwallis,

> '...In time of famine...poor men...surrender themselves and their children to some wealthy person for a small consideration or none at all, in order that their lives might be saved.'[2]

One contemporary deed of sale shows one Charu Bewa selling herself in 1177 B. S. (1770-1771 A. D.) to Raja Gurudas (son of Maharaj Nandakumar) because of starvation.[3] Several documents of the early and late 18th century set forth examples of self-sale and sale of children because of *Annakashta* (hunger) and reason not specified. In 1127 B. S. (1720-1721 A. D.) one Parvati Dasi sold her six year old daughter for three rupees to save her from extreme hunger.[4] In the same way in 1133 B.S. (1726-1727 A. D.) Ramakrisna Sarma, his wife Haripriya and son Jugiram sold themselves for 21 rupees.[5] Likewise in 1134 B. S. (1727-1728) Muchiram Changa, Pancha, Baru, Tapi and Kali sold themselves to one Jayakrisna Guha for 11 rupees.[6] Similarly in 1161 B. S. (1754-55) Sadaram Sudra, Ramadhan Sudra, Vasiram Sudra, Madhavi and Ratani gave themselves up to Sobharam Guha for 21 rupees during the famine (*Maha-durbhiksha Annariin upahati.*)[7] In 1191 B. S. (1784-85). One Aurva Dasi sold herself with her children for 25 rupees.[8] One example shows one Pandit Das selling himself, his wife, son and daughter in 1193 B. S. (1786-87)

Gilbert Burrington, Dacca 1 Sept. 1770 ; An account of the sufferings of the people is ably portrayed by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay in his novel *Anandamath.*

1. Report Law Commissioners etc. (R.L.C.) 1849-41. pp. 32-35.
2. Quoted by S.N. Sen : *Off the Main Track*, p. 68, Calcutta, 1944.
3. S.C. Shastri : *Maharaj Nandakumar Charita*, p. 232, Calcutta, 1305 B.S.
4. *Bharatvarsha* (Journal) Pratham varsha, 1320 B.S. No. 3, p. 403.
5. B. C. Putatunda : *Nutan Vanger Puratan Kahini*, p. 153. Barisal 1323 B.S. also J. N. Gupta : *Vikrampurer Itihās*, p. 328, Calcutta, 1316 B.S.
6. *Navya Bharat* (Journal) 1327 B.S. Sravan Issue pp. 181-183.
7. S.R. Mitra : *Types of Early Bengali Prose*, pp. 88-89, Calcutta, 1922.
8. K. N. Majumdar : *Dhakar Vivaran*, p. 106. f. n. Calcutta, 1316 B. S.

all together for 8 rupees because of debt. (*riin upahati*)[1]

Another important source was kidnapping and seizure by violence. An interesting example of procuring slaves by means of force is recorded by Warren Hastings. In his letter to M. Taggert dated Calcutta, 14 June, 1763, Warren Hastings recounted a complaint preferred against Taggert, by one Munee that the former had,

> '... forcibly seized her son, a Boy of 12 years of age and compelled the Father (after having given him 300 Lashes) to sell the child for 48 rupees.'[2]

Cases of kidnapping were however, more general. According to Warren Hastings,

> '... the practice of stealing children from their Parents and selling them for slaves, has long prevailed in this country, and has greatly increased since the Establishment of the English Government in it ... Numbers of children are conveyed out of the country on the Dutch and specially the French Vessels, and many lives of Infants destroyed by the Attempts to secrete them from the Notice of the Magistrate,'[3]

In 1774 Khan Jahan Khan, Faujdar of Hoogly, put Antony, one 'black portuguese' in confinement for having carried away several women by force in a boat.[4] In 1785 Motte and Maxwell, Superin-

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1. K. N. Majumdar : *Maimansingher Itihās*, p. 128 f. n. Calcutta, 1906. A sad picture of sale of children by parents is presented by Lakshman Bandypadhyay, a contemporary poet in 'Kushadhvajer Pala.' Herein Kushadhvaja's mother becomes senseless at the thought of parting from her son and the boy comforts his mother with these words,

   'I am sold, no escape is there
   Take heart mother weep not in vain
   Sold I am ; And father hath me sold'

   T. C. Dasgupta : *Prachin Bangla Sahityer Itihās*, pp, 352-353. The translation is mine, Calcutta 1951.
2. British Museum (B.M.) Add. Mss. 29097 f. 101.
3. C.R.O. Bengal Revenue Consultation (B.R.C.) 17 May, 1747 Governor General's Minute to the Court of Directors bearing the same date.
4. C.R.O. Calendar of Persian Correspondence vol. IV, No. 857. 25 Feb. 1774.

tendents of Police wrote to the Committee of Revenue of the capture of a boat-load of children, who, they believed, were 'stolen or improperly procured' by miscreants.[1] The practice continued even later. In 1787 the Superintendents once again in a letter to Lord Cornwallis dated Calcutta 31st August, 1787 informed him of the apprehension of

> '...twenty persons...who have been stolen or improperly seduced from Dacca.'[2]

The Calcutta Gazette of 2 June, 1791 gave details of twenty-seven 'unfortunate wretches...who had been kidnapped' but were rescued by Hewitt.[3] Kidnapping of girls for illicit purposes by the agents or *gomastahs* of Zamindars was also common.[4] It went on unchecked for long in the very heart of Calcutta. The Calcutta Christian Advocate of 24 August 1839 reported that,

> '.. the practice of enticing away young native widows and of kidnapping and purchasing young destitute native children is daily carried to a considerable extent in Calcutta.'[5]

Importation of Habshi slaves was another prolific source. Emasculated Abyssinians were employed in the harams of the aristocratic Muslims. They were therefore much in demand. Even after the reduction of his stipend Nawab Mubarak-ud-daulah had 19 Negro slaves in his pay.[6] It is noted that in the list of expenses incurred by the Company for the entertainment of Mir Jafar, the former spent Rs. 500/- on a 'Coffree boy.'[7]

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[1] C. R. O. B. R. C. 26 October, 1785 Enclosure to L. R. 416 Thomas Motte and Edward Maxwell to William Cowper 26 Oct. 1785.

[2] B. R. C. 20 Sept. 1787.

[3] W. S. Seton-Karr : *Selections from the Calcutta Gazettes*, vol. II, p. 291. Calcutta 1868-1869.

[4] C. R. O. Bengal Public Consultations (B. P. C.) 9 March 1792. James Rees to Edward Hay. Sulkey 6 March 1792.

[5] Quoted by D.R. Banerji : *Slavery in British India*, pp. 54-55. Bombay 1933.

[6] Add. Mss. 29093. Nizamat Accounts N.P. N.D.

[7] Rev. J. Long : *Selections from the Unpublished Records of Government*, p. 149 f. n. Calcutta, 1869.

Even as late as 1830, the Nawab of Oudh chose to buy several African slaves in preference to jewellery and other articles to the value of four lakhs.[1] Advertisements for Habshi slaves was a regular feature in Hickey's Bengal Gazette (1780-1781). The Arab merchants were the principal importers of this human cargo.[2]

Besides, slaves were imported from Bengal. In this export traffic, the Portuguese and the Mags[3] had earned an unrivalled notoriety. Bands of Mags and Portuguese pirates gathered in the Sundarvans and frequently haunted the neighbourhood of Akra, Budge Budge and Calcutta.[4] In 1769 John Reed reported,

> 'These Ravagers have lately appeared in great numbers on this Coast and, carry away the Inhabitants daily from different parts.'[5]

The Southern parts of Bengal suffered perennially from the depredations of these Mag buccaneers who plundered the area and carried off the inhabitants into slavery.[6] In February 1777 they forcibly took away as many as 1800 men, women and children to Arakan. The Mag king chose from among them for his slaves 'all the handicraftsmen and most useful persons amounting to about one-fourth of the whole number. The rest he returned to the captors who conducted them, by ropes about their necks to a market and there sold them for seventy rupees each, according to their strength, abilities etc.'[7] Of the Portuguese M. Day Collector of Dacca, in a letter to William

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1. Supplement to the India Gazette, Monday 21 June 1830. Also C.R.O. Tracts 148 p. 34 (Slavery and slave trade in India).
2. B. Hjejle : *The Social Policy of the East India Company with regard to Sati, Slavery and Infanticide,* (1772-1858) ch. VII, p. 85 (unpublished Oxford D. Phil thesis 1958).
3. *Mags* : *The original inhabitants of Arakan.*
4. K. K. Datta : *History of the Bengal Subah,* p. 499. Calcutta, 1936.
5. *Bengal District Records* (B. D. R.) Chittagong vol. I, pt. II, No. 91. p. 69. Reed to Kelsall. Islamabad 13 January 1769. Calcutta, 1923.
6. Add. Mss. 29210. *History of the Mags,* f. 61.
7. Asiatic Miscellany vol. I, p. 316. (An account of Arakan written at Islamabad (Chittagong) in 1717 communicated by Major R. E. Roberts.

Cowper, Acting President, Committee of Revenue, in 1785 referred to a regular trade in slaves established between one low-caste Portuguese of Dacca and those of Calcutta, Chinsura and other foreign settlements. He considered that the scarcity of grain and consequent distress forced the inhabitants to sell their children as slaves.

> '...the poor and the lowest class of people, to secure to themselves a subsistence, are reduced to sale of their children, and many hundreds have been purchased ; I find, in the interior part of this district, by persons deputed from this place by the aforementioned people, and immediately dispatched for Calcutta and its evirons, they are, for the most part, landed in foreign settlements, from whence, I am given to understand, they are embarked in vessels to different parts ; at this time, many boats are between this and Calcutta by the Sunderbunds, loaded with children of all ages. The honourable Mr. Lindsay, who arrived on Friday last, informed me that he met above a hundred.'[1]

The French and the Dutch also participated in this trade. The slaves were conveyed out of the country on Dutch and especially French vessels.[2] Nor were the English less active. In 1773 Warren Hastings proclaimed,

> 'That every convicted felon and murderer not condemned to death by the sentence of the Adahlut and every criminal who has already been sentenced to work during life on the roads, or to suffer perpetual imprisonment, be sold for slaves or transported as such to the Company's establishment at Ft. Marlborough.'[3]

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1. B. R. C. 9 Sept. 1785 enclosure to L. R. No. 311 Day to Cowper, 2 March 1785.
2. B. R. C. 17 May, 1774 G. G.'s Minute to the Court.
3. B, R. C. 3 August 1778 ; also Harington : *Analysis* 1 pp. 301-2 ; M.E. Monckton-Jones : *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, 1772-1774, p. 331 Oxford 1918 ; D. N. Banerjee : *Early Administrative System of the E. I. C.*, p. 498 f. n. Calcutta 1943.

Slavery thus was pretty universal. Slaves were used both for domestic and agrestic purposes. Household slaves 'formed the woof and members of the master's family the warp of the fabric of Indian domestic life'.[1] Every respectable family, every opulent person retained household slaves.[2] In Calcutta the majority of the Muslims, Armenians, Parsees and Jews employed slaves for domestic use.[3] Female slaves usually served as concubines.[4] Aristocratic Muslim families kept Habshi eunuchs as custodians of their harams.[5] Abyssinian slaves were greatly in demand. Frequent advertisements for them appeared in Hickey's *Bengal Gazette* and other newspapers in the 1780's.

WANTED

A COFFRE Slave Boy any person desierous (Sic.) of disposing of such a Boy, and can warrant him a faithful and honest servant, will please to apply to the Printer.[6]

WANTED

Two Coffries who can play very well on the French Horn and are otherwise handy and useful about a House, relative to the Business of a Consumer or that of a Cook, they must not be fond of Liquors. Any Person or Persons having such to dispose off, will be treated with by applying to the Printer.[7]

Like advertisements for 'a fine Coffree boy' adept in the 'business of a butler, kidmutgar and cooking' were not rare.[8] Slaves were moreover sold by public auction along with other

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1. W. Adam : *Law and Custom of Slavery in British India,* p. 1. London 1840.
2. R. L. C. 1 p. 317 ; W. Hamilton-*Hindoostan,* 1 p. 105 London 1820.
3. B. Hjejle : *The Social Policy* etc. ch. vi, p. 71.
4. P. P. H. C. 1832 vol. II, p. 453.
5. R. L. C. II p. 31. App. 1, Evidence of W. C. Blaquire.
6. Hickey's *Bengal Gazette* No. XLVIII Saturday 16 Dec. 1780 also Nos. XLIX,LI,
7. *Ibid.,* No. XXXIII, 1 Sept. 1781 also Nos. XXXIV-XL.
8. Carey : *Good Old Days,* 1 p. 467.

articles. Of the numerous notices, it is worth while to quote a few.

> CALCUTTA, June, 14, 1782
>
> On Tuesday next the 18th instant will be sold by Public Auction by Mr. William Williams, at his Auction-room near the Court house...three Coffree Boys, two of whom play the French Horn...[1]

> To be SOLD by PUBLIC AUCTION.
>
> By Mr. ARNOT, at his Auction-room
>
> On Wednesday the 26th of January (1785)
>
> Four Slave Boys. Brandy in casks and bottles. A variety of goods not cleared out, the lots to fall upon the first purchaser.[2]

The Englishmen of this period bought and sold African slaves, and according to Busteed went on for breeding of them for slave markets. An indecent and rather vulgar advertisement for 'three very handsome African ladies of the true sable hue' between 'twenty or twentyfive' years of age for marriage with three of their own countrymen led him to subscribe to this view.[3]

Agrestic slavery was likewise very common and it was again a legacy from the past. It existed in ancient India[4] and under

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1. *The India Gazette*, 15 June 1782 No. 83.
2. *Ibid.*, vol. V, No. 219, 24 January, 1785.
3. H. E. Busteed : *Echoes from old Calcutta*, p. 136 f. n. London, 1908. It must be pointed out here that Busteed misquotes the advertisement. It is found in Hickey's *Bengal Gazette* (August 25, 1781) No. XXXII and also in subsequent issues (Nos. XXXIII-XXXV) The advertisement is for two such ladies. Other descriptions however fit in. For advertisements for Coffree boys also see
   - (a) *Bengal, Past and Present*, vol. II, No. 3. pp. 273-274.
   - (b) *The India Gazette* : 17 March 1781 (No. 18)
     7 Sept. 1782 (No. 95)
     15 Nov. 1783 (No. 157)
     5 April 1784 (vol. IV, No. 177)
   - (c) *The Calcutta Review*, vol. 35, No. 69 p. 217 (Calcutta in the olden time)
4. D. R. Chananah : *Slavery in Ancient India*, p. 4 Delhi, 1960.

the Mughals it was much in vogue in Eastern Bengal.[1] Under the Company as well it persisted. In Dacca 'it existed from the early days of the Company's rule'[2] In Sylhet agrestic slaves were in general use.[3] They were attached to all family estates and were transferred with the estates.[4]

To all those slaves, domestic or agrestic, usually humane treatment was accorded. Colebrooke noted that the agrestic slaves were treated,

> '...more like hereditary servants or like mancipated hinds than the purchased slaves.'[5]

Werren Hastings considered, slaves in Bengal were 'treated as the children of the families to which they belong (ed)[6] The Indian Law Commission testified :

> '...In general, the slaves are well-fed and clothed, humanely treated and contented with their lot ; instances of cruelty and ill usage are rare and the correction which they receive at the hands of their masters is moderate.'[7]

The Hindus as a rule treated their slaves with consideration, and kindness to them was enjoined by Islam.[8] But cases of cruel treatement are also on record. William Jones in his 'Charge to the Grand Jury' on 10 June, 1785 referred to the death of

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1. Chattopadhyay : *Slavery in Bengal*, p. 93.
2. R. L. C. 1 p. 137.
3. B. R. C. 12 July 1774 L. . No. 281. Hastings to Barwell 12 July, 1774.
4. B.C.J.C. No. 44, L.P. 24 March 1816. Magistrate Hayes to the Court of Directors, Dacca, 10 Feb, 1816 ; also R. L. C. II, p. 11, Appendix 1. Evidence of R. H. Mytton, Magistrate of Sylhet.
5. H. T. Colebrooke : *Remarks on the Husbandry and Internal Commerce of Bengal*, p. 79, Calcutta 1884.
6. Add. Mss. 29076. f. 121. Progs. Comittee of Circuit, Krisnanagar, 28 June, 1772.
7. R.L.C. 1, p. 38. For a similar opinion also see Bartle-Frere : *Abolition of Slavery in India and Egypt* (The Fortnightly Review (New Series) 1883) p. 356.
8. H. A. Stark : *Calcutta in Slavery Days*, p. 1. Calcutta, 1917.

a slave girl whom her master Osborne, a European, had beaten.[1] Further in this period, several advertisements of absconding slaves appeared in the *Bengal Gazette, Calcutta Gazette* and other newspapers.[2] It goes without saying that the cruel and harsh treatment meted out to them was the sole cause for this. In his *Sandwip Report*, Jonathan Duncan also noted the 'most oppresive acquisition of slaves in Sandwip.[3] William Jones as well spoke of the cruel treatment of slaves,

> ' ..I am assured from evidence, which though not all judicially taken has the strongest operation on my belief, that the condition of slaves within our jurisdiction is beyond imagination deplorable ; and that cruelties are daily practised on them, chiefly on those of the tenderest age and the weaker sex.'[4]

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1. Lord Teignmouth (Edited) : *The Works of Sir William Jones*, VII, pp. 14. London 1807.
2. Seton-Karr : *Selections from the Calcutta Gazette*, 1, pp. 45, 66. 7 June and 22 Dec. 1784.
   The Bengal Gazette, 1781, Nos. I-VI.
   The Calcutta Gazette, 1781, Nos. 51-58.
   The India Gazette, 1781, Nos. 61-63, 85.
   1783, Nos. 161-162.

   The most interesting advertisement is published by Haji Mustafa, the celebrated translator of the *Siyarul Mutakkherin* on 16 March 1782 in the *India Gazette*. It refers to the elopment of two slave girls whom he purchased at Lucknow for 1500 Rupees. They belonged formerly to the *Zanana* of Shuja-ud-daulah, Nawab of Oudh. They eloped with Zoraveer, his Khansama, who himself was worth Rs. 2,000/-. It gives the description of the truants thus,

   > '...The Women are tall, well-looking, and in the prime of life ; one is fair, the other of a golden hue. Zoraveer is a small, puny, thin, pock-pitted, slender, meagre, fellow, of about 32 ; the eyes large, the body square, the visage meagre and round, the chin smooth, the whiskers small and the colour dusk olive.'
   > (*The India Gazette*, 16 March, 1782, No. 70).
3. B. R. C. 1 August 1780. Duncan's Report. 16 Sept. 1774 p. 1311.
4. Teignmouth : *Works of Jones*, VII, p. 15, Charge to the Grand Jury, Calcutta, 10 June, 1785.

What was the British official reaction to slavery in Bengal ? Firstly it was apathy or indifference and finally granting a legal recognition to the existing institution. The British Government, for its part, primarily sought to maintain old laws and institutions and established customs and usages so long as they did not in any way injure their interests.[4] It is necessary at this stage to look back to the history of Bengal from 1757 to 1772 to get an appraisal of the much criticised slavery regulation of 1772.

The period between 1757 and 1772 in Bengal was one of organised anarchy—'universal and unlimited.'[1] Four dethronements of pliable Nawabs, gradual whittling away of their scant resources and several major military campaigns characterised the period. The acquisition of the Diwani by the Company in 1765 was no change for the better. The Company followed a policy of inaction, indifference and non-interference, while the Nawab lacked power to enforce his decisions. In consequence, the native officers of the Company, the Nizamat, and the Zamindars made hay by committing a variety of atrocious crimes with no check whatsover.[2] Further, Mir Jafar's disbandment of 80,000 soldiers[3] and the dismissal of the numerous armed retainers of dispossessed *Zamindars* made the problem of unemployment very acute and subsequently swelled the number of lawless bandits. The ruinous revenue demands of Mir Kasim and the English procedure of renting land to the highest bidder destroyed many Zamindars and helpless, many of them took recourse to robbery as a means of earning a livelihood. As early as 1767 George Vansittart found Zamindars 'winking at the robbers' retreat'.[4]

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[4] A. F. S. Ahmed : *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal,* p. 100. Leiden 1965.

[1] A. M. Davies : *Warren Hastings Maker of British India,* p. 83. London 1835.

[2] The Sixth Report of the Committee of Secrecy (1773) p. 301.

[3] J. C. Sinha : *Economic Annals of Bengal,* pp. 51-53. London 1927.

[4] Mss. Bodleian Library, Oxford. George Vansittart Papers (heretofore G. V. P. Dep b. 68 f. George Vansittart to Lt. Collins, Midnapore 8 Dec., 1767.

Again in 1769 he noted that 'the chatra zamindar' gave protection to 'Dwanry mull' a Chuar chief who had been 'guilty of many devastations in the Bishenpore districts.'[1] The practice was also in vogue in Sylhet[2] and Rangpur.[3] Gradually it increased so much that scarcely a dacoity occurred 'without a landed proprietor being at the bottom of it'.[4] In addition to all these, there were the ravages of the Fakirs and the Sannyasis.[5] Bengal thus in the later half of the 18th century presented a spectacle of utter lawless society. There were reports of villages

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1. *Ibid.*, f. 134 ; G. Vanisttart to Captain Mauve, Midnapore 19 Feb. 1769.
2. The Sylhet District Records, vol. I, No. 58, p. 41. Calcutta, 1923. R. Lindsay to John Shakespeare. Sylhet, 4 Sept. 1778.
3. B. D. R. Rangpur vol. I, pp. V-VI, John Grose to Becher. Rangpur 20 April, 1774. Calcutta 1914.
4. W.W. Hunter : *Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 96, London 1868.
5. For an account of the ravages of the Fakirs and the Sannyasis see

(a) Add. Mss. 28974 f. 74. *Bengal Secret Consultation* (B. S. C.), 10 March, 1773. Letter from Dacres, Lawrell and Graham. Dinajpur N.D.

(b) Add. Mss. 29105 f. 35. Letter to Court, 15 January, 1773, para 13 ; also see f. 56. Letter to Court, 1 March, 1773 para 16.

(c) B.D.R. Rangpur, III, No. 362, p. 233.

(d) *Documents and extracts Illustrative of the British period in Indian History*, pp. 95-96. W. Hastings to Josias Dupre, Ft. William, 9 March, 1773. Calcutta, 1912.

(e) T. Banerjee : *The Administration of Criminal Justice in Bengal from 1773 to 1861*, pp. 32-33. Unpublished London Ph. D. Thesis 1955.

(f) J. M. Ghosh : *The Sannyasis of Mymensingh*, Dacca N.D.

(g) *Ibid.*, *Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1930.

(h) J.C. Price : *Notes on the History of Midnapore*, vol. I, pp. 117-120. Calcutta, 1876.

(i) Narahari Kaviraj : *Svadhinatar Sangrame Bangla*, pp. 49-23. Calcutta, 1961.

(j) *Rangpur Sahitya Parishat Patrika* (Journal) 1317 B.S. vol. V, Special Number History of Sherpur, pp. 79-80. *Majnur Kavita* (Poem on the exploits of Majnu Shah, Chief of the Fakirs) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay however paints the Sannyasis, as a band of dedicated Hindu patriots in his novel *Anandamath*.

being daily plundered and travellers frequently 'robbed and murdered.'[1] In 1769 J. Reed and T. Lane wrote to Verelst that

> 'the Dauks were stop'd by Decoits between Dacca and Luckipore.'[2]

The Supervisor of Birbhum, Bishnupur and Pachet acquianted Richard Becher with concern,

> '...of the continual complaints and Proofs I daily receive of the Depredations made in different parts of this country by parties of Dekoits.'[3]

John Crose wrote that Rangpur was swarmed with Decoits who had committed 'numberless Thefts and Murders' and had become 'a Terror to the Country'.[4] George Vansittart as well noted that Dinajpur was 'much infested with Decoyts.'[5] In his letter to Becher, William Rook, Supervisor of Jessore painted a still darker picture,

> '. several of the purgunahs dependent on Issoufpur, and the Mahmoud Shahy District are so much infested with Robbers, who travel in large parties from three to four Hundred in number that many of the inhabitants of the different villages where they have resorted have left their Houses and fled to the other parts of the Country for their more immediate security. These Banditti have committed great slaughter among the poor Wretches in this province, and after plundering their habitations have set fire to them, and marched to the next Town which they have treated in the same manner, not to mention the authority they assumed in making collections in the purgunnahs they

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1. *Bengal Press List Series*, II, vol. II, p. 9.
2. B.D.R. Chittagong vol. I, pt, II, No. 113, p. 81. Reed and Lane to Verelst, Islamabad 15 June, 1769.
3. Letter copy Book of the Resident at Darbar, vol, II, p. 3. A. Higginson to Becher, 9 Sept. 1770.
4. Proceedings of the Controlling Committee of the Revenue, Murshidabad (P.E.C.R.M.) vol. I, p. 194. J. Grose, Supervisor of Rangpur to Becher, Rangpur, 31 October, 1770 for a similar view, B.D.R. Rangpur 1, No. 93, p. 78.
5. G.V.P. Dep. b. 69. f. 128. G. Vansittart to Becher, Dinajpur 14 October, 1770.

> passed through, which they have done to a very considerable amount'.[1]

Many of those dacoits were robbers by profession.[2] Their depredations were such

> '...that we cannot trust a Sum of Money to an Aurang without an Escort nor do Europeans pass unmolested: These Plunderers have Hircarrahs from every Quarter attending our Durbars, No Public step therefore can succeed against them, they have the arliest (sic) Intelligence of every Motion, and evade them by Flight... The Sunderbunds are usually infested with these Depredators.'[3]

The plunderings of the dacoits[4] were heightened by the ravages of the organised bands of Fakirs and Sannyasis and the constant piratical raids of the Arakanese and the Mags. The trouble became acute because of the fact that the police force was sorely inadequate and the supervisors could not give the Ryots any protection whatever.[5] Several English Officers, however, with the scant means at their disposal, endeavoured to suppress the robbers. George Vansittart, for example, in 1767 directed that

> '...whatever Houses the Robbers have (if any) in my limits shall be destroyed'[6]

and in 1770 even appointed

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1. P.C.C.R.M. III, p. 110 ; Rook to Becher Mureley, 28 January, 1771 ; also cf. his subsequent letter 55 March, 1771. P.C.C.R.M. V, p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 20. G.G. Ducarel, Supervisor of Purnia to Murshidabad Council, 18th February, 1771.
3. *Ibid.*, V, p. 317. James Harris, Supervisor of Dacca to S. Middleton, Dacca 24 June, 1771.
4. For more details of their depredations in 1771-1772 see P.C.C.R.M. III, p. 27 ; P.C.C.R.M. IV, pp. 20, 38 ; P.C.C.R.M. V, pp. 65, 71-72, 89, 27, 178, 263, 369 ; P.C.C.R.M. VI, p. 77 ; P.C.C.R.M. VII, p. 225 ; P.C.C.R.M. VIII, p. 43 ; P.C.C.R.M. IX, pp. 78, 160 ; P.C.C.R.M. X, p. 8 ; P.C.C.R.M. XI, p. 182 ; P.C.C.R.M. XIIZ, p. 33.
5. P.C.C.R.M. IV, p. 38. J. Grose to Murshidabad Council, 28 Feb. 1771.
6. G. V. P. Dep. b. 68 f. 3. G. Vansittart to Lt. Collins. Midnapore, 5 December, 1767.

> 'one Imam-ul-deen Havildar Robber Catcher in the districts of Dinajepore.'[1]

But these isolated efforts bore little or no fruit. To make things worse, in December 1770 Faujdars were recalled from several districts.[2] And the Company's troops, in their turn, ravaged the country 'on their march through villages.'[3] Of the depredations of the Sepoys John Grose wrote :

> '...Sepoys who are allowed to range the country...are the very people who commit the greatest outrages, for being in a manner under no country or regulation, embibe (Sic) a false notion that the Coat and Muskit which they carry are a perwanah for committing such acts of violence as best suit their purpose, and consequently they omit no opportunity of plundering the poor people, and are in fact much worse than the Dakoits, who are now so great a pest to this country.'[4]

In such circumstances Warren Hastings was appointed Governor to cleanse the Augean Stable. 'A confused heap of undigested materials, as wild as chaos isself'[5] lay before him. But he was not the man to falter or waver. He grappled with the situation as only a man with his resolution could, and determined to bring order and uproot lawlessness. His endeavour was to provide 'Security of private property' for that was 'the greatest Encouragement of Industry.'[6] But without extirpating the dacoits this was impossible to achieve. The panacea to Warren Hastings' mind therefore lay in the promulgation of a Draconic law, for the

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1. *Ibid.*, Dep. b. 69 f. 99. G. Vansittart to J. Grose, 9 July, 1770.
2. Chattopadhyay : *Slavery in Bengal*, p. 10.
3. *Bengal Press List Series*, II, vol. II, p. 9.
4. B.D.R. Rangpur I, pp. VII-VIII. Grose to Becher 1 Sept. 1770.
5. G.R. Gleig : *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, vol. I, p. 316. London, 1841.
6. Forrest : *Selections from the State Papers of the Governor-General Warren Hastings*, vol. II, p. 268. Hastings to Court, 3 Nov. 1772. Calcutta, 1890.

> '...Dacoits in Bengal are not like the Robbers in England... They are Robbers by profession and even by Birth... Wretches who have placed themselves in a state of declared War with Govt.'[1]

The remedy, he thought, was the public execution of the notorious offender and enslavement of all the members of his family. On 15 August, 1772, the Regulation, the fruit of his painstaking research was proclaimed,

> '...Since Experience has proved every lenient and ordinary remedy to be ineffectual that it be therefore resolved that every such Criminal on Conviction shall be carried to the village to which he belongs and be there executed for a Terror and Example to others and for the further prevention of such Abominable Practices, That, the villages of which he is an inhabitant shall be fin'd According to the Enormity of the Crime, and each inhabitant according to his substance, and that the Family of the Criminal shall become the slaves of the state and be disposed of for the General Benefit and Convenieuce of the people According to the Discretion of the Government.'[2]

The Committee of Circuit under his guidance regarded enslavement as a sort of boon for the children of the wretched dacoit.

> '...The Ideas of Slavery borrowed from our American Colonies will make every Modification of it Appear in the Eye of our Countrymen in England a horrible Evil. But it is far otherwise in this country. Here slaves are treated as the children of the families to which they belong, and often acquire much happier state by their slavery than they could have hoped for the enjoyment of Liberty.'[3]

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1. Add. Mss. 29076, f. 120. Progs. Committee of Circuit (P. C. C.) Krisnanagar, 28 June, 1772.
2. *Ibid.*, 113. P.C.C. Kasimbazar. 15 August, 1772. Also Progs. of the Governor-General and Council at Ft. William respecting the Administration of Justice etc. (published) pp. 30-31. London, 1774. J. E. Colebrooke-Supplement to the Digest, p. 7. Calcutta, 1807.
3. Add. Mss. 29076. f. 121, P.C.C. Krisnanagar, 28 June, 1772.

To Warren Hastings this then appeared to be the only remedy. 'The peace of the country, the safety of the lives of the people, and the protection of private property...objects of too great importance', necessitated, in his view, 'a terrible punishment.'[1] But there was another factor, no less important, which had been lost sight of. A practical man, he was not oblivious to temporal gain. The money profit out of the sale of such victims, as such, was no small consideration.

> '...The Dutch would gladly buy them...Let them and their families be sold as our new Law Directs.'[2]

The Company thus in a word, 'legalised, perpetuated and administered the traditional Muslim and Hindu Laws of Slavery in India.'[3] The legality so granted to slavery had been vehemently attacked. The argument that slaves were better treated in Bengal than elsewhere and hence the enslavement of families of dacoits was virtually a great favour shown to them, had met bitter criticism from William Jones,

> '...This is the most specious argument for despotism which all Despots use.'[4]

Adam went a step further. The authors of the regulation he called, 'heartless monsters' and observed,

> '...I do not recollect to have met with any example of legislation in modern times to be compared with this for inhuman, cold-blooded, atrocious cruelty.'[5]

The regulation though aimed at suppression of robbers in Bengal failed to achieve anything substantial since it could not prevent *Zamindars* from harbouring the dacoits. This necessitated

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1. Add. Mss. 29133 f. 610. Warren Hastings' letter dated Chinsura 28 June, 1773. The name of the person addressed to is not given.
2. *Ibid.*, f. 609. Hastings' letter dated Chinsura 28 June, 1773.
3. Chattopadhyay : *Slavery in Bengal*, p. 218,
4. Mss. Orme Collection, O.V. 41. No. 13. f. 98. Marginal note by William Jones on the printed letter from the Governor-General and Council at Ft. William to the Court of Directors, dated 3 Nov. 1772.
5. Adam : *Law and Custom of Slavery*, p. 39.

another proclamation in 1782 as a supplement to the regulation of 1772.

> '...And it is hereby declared that if any Robbery be committed the Zamindars to whose district the Robbers appertain or in whose District the Robbery (Sic.) shall be committed according to the Circumstance of the case shall be made to refund the amount. But if any Zamindars shall either Commit or Connive at any Murder, Robbery or other Breach of Peace and it be proved against him he [shall] be punished with death. And if any Zamee[nder] shall refuse or neglect to obey any order issu[ed] under the Authority of Government he sh[all] be punished as the Nature of the case and the Degree of the Crime shall require.'[1]

Thus through several harsh measures the Government tried to eradicate Lawlessness and in that attempt accorded slavery a legal status. But although slavery was thus granted a legal recognition, the Administration was not to tolerate kidnapping and sale of children as slaves. In 1774 Warren Hastings noted that the kidnapping of children went on unabated and had 'greatly increased since the establishment of the English Government.'[2] He found it 'repugnant to the particlar precepts both of the Koran and the Shastra.' Accordingly a regulation was issued in 1774 forbidding kidnapping of children or their sale as slaves without the execution of a deed. The regulation was promulgated on 17 May, 1774 and read as follows :

> '...That every Person who shall forcibly Detain or sell any Man, woman or child, as a slave, without a cabowla or Deed attested in the usual Manner by the Cauzy of the Place where the Slave was purchased by Proprietor, or who

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[1] B.D.R. Rangpur, II No. 350. p. 249. Extracts from the proceedings ...... Foujedarry Department 29 June, 1782. It was followed by still another regulation on 12 August, 1783. See B.D.R. Rangpur III, No. 108. p. 70.

[2] B.R.C. 17 May, 1774 G.G.'s Minute to the Court bearing the same date.

> shall decoy away or steal any children from their Families or Places of Abode shall be punished as the Law to which he is Amenable shall direct.
>
> That from the 1st day of July 1774...no person shall be allowed to buy or sell a Slave, who is not such already by Former legal purchase, and any Cauzy who shall grant any Cabowla after that date for the sale of any slave whatever, shall be dismissed from his Employment and such Cabowla shall be invalid.'[1]

Soon after the promulgation of the regulation, the Provincial Council at Dacca wanted to know whether the children of slaves would be given protection in view of the fact that the established custom throughout Dacca district was to 'keep in Bondage all the offspring and Descendants of...Slaves.' The Council feared that their sudden emancipation would inflict great financial loss and destroy the acknowledged proprietary right of the owner.[2] Hastings weighed the argument well and found that agrestic slaves were generally in use in Sylhet and the frontier. He gave his verdict

> '...We are of the opinion that the Right of Master to the children of slaves, already their property, cannot legally be taken from them in the first Generation, but we think that this Right cannot and ought not to extend further, and direct that you do make Publication accordingly.'[3]

Copies of the letter were sent to the Calcutta Committee of Revenue and the Provincial Councils. But Hasting's fond hope of resisting kidnapping never materialised. In the 1790's kidnapping was rampant. In May 1785 a boat load of slaves was stopped by the Police.[4] In the same year M. Day, Collector of Dacca

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1. B.R.C. 17 May, 1774 L.S. No. 213.
2. B.R.C. 28 June, 1774 L.R. 351. Dacca Council to Hastings. 20 June, 1774.
3. B.R.C. 12 July, 1774 L.S. No. 281. Hastings to Barwell 12 July, 1774. Also for a similar view C.R.O. Bengal Letters Received (B.L.R.) vol. 13. Letter to Court 18 Oct. 1774 paras 22-25.
4. B.R.C. 26 October, 1782. L.R. 416. Thomas Motte and Edward Maxwell, Superintendents of Police to Cowper, 2 March, 1785. W.W. Hunter-Bengal MSS. Records. vol. I, Fo. 959. London, 189'.

reported a notorious traffic in children lately established between low caste Portuguese of Dacca and those of Calcutta, Chinsurah and other European settlements in Bengal. He informed that he had put under confinement several miscreants with whom he had discovered 42 children for sale. As preventive measure he proposed a search by custom masters of all boats coming to Calcutta and its neighbourhood so that the culprits could easily be apprehended.[1] The Committee in its turn ordered Day to seize and prosecute the offenders and submitting the proposed measures of resistance for approval asked Governor-General Macpherson,

> '...to stop the pernicious trade...which is also as inhuman as it is illegal.'[2]

The proposals were readily accepted by Macpherson who directed that in future

> '...utmost diligence should be used to prevent the trade of Children being earried out.'[3]

Above, we have described the British official policy towards Slavery in Bengal. What is most astonishing in this narration is that while Warren Hasting's slavery regulation of 1772 is justly under heavy fire, his solicitude for stopping kidnapping of children and alleviating the distress of the progeny of slaves has been very conveniently forgotten. To sum up, the Government policy between 1765 and 1785 had two cardinal aims in view. In the first, it was to give protection to the populace groaning under a variety of oppression, safeguard private property and eradicate lawlessness. This the English sought to achieve, regardless of any humane consideration and with monstrous cruelty as is evinced in the regulation of 1772. But alongside the British also promulgated a regulation for the abolition of kidnapping and nefarious commerce in children. While then, we deprecate the regulation of 1772, we may as well appreciate the splendid effort with which Warren Hastings so nobly endeavou-

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1. B.R.C. 9 September, 1785. Enclosure to L.R. No. 311. Day to Cowper, 2 March, 1785.
2. B.R.C. 9 September, 1785. Cowper to Macpherson 14 March, 1785.
3. R.L.C. I, p. 309.

red to put an end to the villainous traffic in children.

It remains now to examine the extent of slavery in Bengal. The institution was universal, for, slaves were used both for domestic and agrestic purposes and even Europeans possessed them.[1] It is not possible to give statistics in our period for we do not have any but two contemporary authorities throw much light on the point. Sir William Jones in 1785 gave out that he had slaves whom he 'rescued from death or misery' and pointed out unerringly,

> '...Hardly a man or a woman exists in a corner of this populous town, who hath not at least one slave child, either purchased at a trifling price or saved perhaps from ...death.'

The sale of children, he noted in anguish, was an open practice,

> '...many of you, I presume have seen large boats filled with such children coming down the river for open sale at Calcutta'.[2]

Less famous, but perhaps more meticulous, Jonathan Duncan in his Report, had a more appalling story,

> '.. This unfortunate Raw of Mankind bear in Sandwip a larger proportion to the other Inhabitants than perhaps in any other district in the Province ; there being hardly a House-Holder, however otherwise indigent, that has not at

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[1] The Bengal Public Consultation provides evidence to this fact. For example, in 1766 in the list of effects lost with the late Captain John Rose at Comar (in Bakerganj) mention is made of 4 slaves valued at 240 rupees.

(C.R.O. Bengal Public Consultation (B.P.C.) 24 February, 1766). In 1771 one Mrs. Peach on her journey back home was allowed to take away with herself two slaves on giving an Indemnification bond for them (B. P. C. 12 Feb. 1771) also H E.A. Cotton : *Calcutta, Old and New*, p. 98. Calcutta, 1907.

K. Blechynden : *Calcutta, Past and Present*, p. 160. London, 1905.

[2] Teignmouth : *Works of Jones*, VII, p. 17. Charge to the Grand Jury, 10 June, 1785.

> least one, and the majority many in their Families...I have been assured that the late Rebel Chowdry had more than fifteen hundred slaves heads of Families and whom he distributed in separate Houses which he allotted them to live in.'[1]

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1. B.R.C. 1 August 1780 *Duncan's Sandwip Report,* 16 Sept. 1779. pp. 1310-1311.
V.A. Narain : *Jonathan Duncan and Varanasi,* p. 7, Calcutta, 1958.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PAKISTAN MOVEMENT

Md. Abul Khair

President Roosevelt came into contact with the Indian problem at a time when the Pakistan movement had entered a crucial stage and had attracted the attention of the world. The danger of the Japanese invasion of the subcontinent and the contemporaneous 'Quit India' movement launched by the Congress Party had created considerable trouble in the minds of the Allied leaders who feared that India might become an easy prey to Axis aggression. Although Soviet leaders did not make any attempt for the settlement of the Indian problem, President Roosevelt, England's other principal ally in the Second World War, took considerable interests in the solution of the problem and incidentally expressed his attitude toward the Pakistan movement.

President Roosevelt was keenly interested in the independence of the subcontinent. In a despatch to the British Government in January 1941, American government suggested that granting of self-determination to the Indians would strengthen the nationalist forces of the subcontinent against a possible Japanese aggression. President Roosevelt and his advisers believed that the minority problem of the subcontinent (i. e. the Pakistan Movement) might be temporarily shelved and that an agreement on the right of Dominion Status for India within a specified period after the War would pacify the Indians.[1] Roosevelt raised this question also during the historic Atlantic Conference with Churchill.[2] President Roosevelt put further pressure on the British Prime Minister for the solution of the Indian problem after America's direct participation in the Second World War following Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.[1] Churchill obviously did not like this 'American interference' in the affairs of the British Empire. Moreover, he felt that Americans had no knowledge of the complexities of the Indian problem. He recorded in his Memoirs :

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[1] *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers.* 1941. vol. 3, pp. 177-178 (Hereafter cited as *Foreign Relations*).

[2] Elliot Roosevelt, *As He saw It.* (New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946) pp. 37-38.

"The concern of the Americans with the strategy of World War was bringing them into touch with political issues on which they had strong opinions and little experience. Before Pearl Harbour, India had been regarded as a lamentable example of British imperialism but as an exclusive British responsibility. Now that the Japanese were advancing towards its frontiers, the United States government began to express views and offer counsels on Indian affairs."[2]

In reply to Roosevelt's letter asking for the solution of the Indian problem, Churchill wrote that he was very eager for the solution of the political problem of the subcontinent and that he could not do anything in this respect because of the difference of opinion between the Congress and the Muslim League, the two principal political parties of the subcontinent. He explained that the Muslims under the leadership of Jinnah were committed to the establishment of a seperate state for the Muslims and that the Congress Party was uncompromisingly opposed to the partition of the subcontinent. He further contended that the Congress Party was very unpopular with the Muslims who contributed the main elements of the Indian army so that he could not make any settlement with the Congress Party alone which would antagonise the Muslims and would thus result in the alienation of the Muslims from war efforts.[3] In support of his contention Churchill sent a few relevant extracts from the speeches of Jinnah and other Muslim leaders. "Americans were familiar with the Hindu attitude. I thought it right to let them see the Muslim point of view," he wrote in his *Memoirs*.[1] The strength and importancce of the Pakistan movement was thus explained by Churchill (This does not necessarily mean that he supported the Pakistan scheme. He merely indicated the complexities of the Indian problem).

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[1] *Foreign Relations*, 1942. vol. I, pp. 608.

[2] Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 4. *The Hinge of Fate* (ed. 1951) pp. 188-189.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 194-195.

This was attested also by the despatches sent a little later by Louis Johnson, President Roosevelt's personal Representative to India.[a] But Roosevelt still attached little seriousness to the Muslim demand for a separate state in the subcontinent. His reflections on Churchill's letter bear testimony to the fact that he believed that the Pakistan movement was only a passing phase. He compared, erroneously as events were to prove, the unwillingness of the Muslim majority areas to stay within a United Indian federation, to the separatist tendencies among the American states just after their independence which resulted, in the establishment of a loose confederation. He felt that the Pakistan movement would die out in course of time just as after about a decade the thirteen American states (earlier known as Thirteen Colonies) shook off their local patriotism and established a more perfect union by the constitution of 1787. On March 10, 1942, the day before Churchill announced the British Government decision to send the Cripps Mission to India, Roosevelt sent him a long cable on the Indian problem. He said that he had tried to consider it from the point of view of history and had gone back to the inception of the United States government with the hope that the "injection of a new thought to be used in India might be of assistance" to Churchill in the solution of the Indian tangle.[8] He contended in this cable that during the American Revolution the Thirteen Colonies had set themselves up as separate sovereignties under a temporary government with a Continental Congress—"a body of ill-defined powers

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6. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
7. *Foreign Relations*, 1942, vol. I, pp. 630-631.
8. Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History*. (New York, Happen, 1948) pp. 511.

and large inefficiencies." Following the war, a stop-gap government was formed under the Articles of Confederation and this continued until real union was achieved under the constitution of 1787. Roosevelt then suggested a somewhat similar process for the Indian subcontinent—the setting up of a government to be headed by a small group representative of different religions, geographies, occupations and castes ; it would be representative of the existing British Provinces and Chamber of Princes and would be recognised as a temporary Dominion Government. This representative group would be charged with the duty of considering the structure of the permanent government of India ; such considerations to extend for a period of five or six years or at least until a year after the end of the present war. In the meantime the temporary government would exercise executive and administrative authority over public services such as Finance, Railways, Telegraphs etc. "Perhaps some such method with its analogy to the problems and travails of the United States from 1783 to 1789," Roosevelt continued, "might cause the Indian people to forget past hard feelings, realise the danger of Japanese aggression, and the advantages of peaceful evolution as contrasted with revolutionary chaos." Roosevelt, however, was careful not to offend the imperial pride of the British Prime Minister and concluded his cable with the self-effacing note. "This is of course none of my business and for the love of Heaven do not bring me into this though I do want to be of help."[1] This long cable made little impression on Churchill. Perhaps he agreed only with the concluding part where Roosevelt had said that this was none of his business. The draft proposal sent with Sir Stafford Cripps does not appear to have been influenced by Roosevelt's "injection ' of new idea on the Indian problem. Nevertheless Roosevelt remained fascinated to his proposed solution of the Indian problem. When the failure of the Cripps Mission was cabled to Roosevelt by Churchill, the former again suggested that a temporary government similar to the Articles of Confederation would be the proper solution of the Indian tangle.[1] It is also interesting to note that this repetition of the suggestion was made after the contents of the Draft Proposal were made public (as a matter of fact, a copy of the Draft Proposal was sent to Roosevelt even before it was given to the press). This Draft Proposal, it may be recalled, expressly accepted the principle that any province or provinces might opt out of the proposed Indian Union. We may therefore conclude that Roosevelt still favoured the idea of a United India and was not wholly satisfied with the principle of partition as provided in the Cripps Proposal. Roosevelt's suggestion on this occasion was couched in so strong language as to indicate that he believed that Churchill was not at all sincere in his efforts for the solution of the Indian problem.[2] But the latter still remained unimpressed by Roosevelt's idea and although he had profound respects for President Roosevelt, he felt that the idea was a sheer madness. As he recorded in his *Memoirs* published five years after the death of President Roosevelt :

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 512.

"I was thankful that events had already made such an act of madness impossible. The human race cannot make progress without idealism, but idealism at other peoples' expense and without regard to the consequences of ruin and slaughter which fall upon millions of humble homes cannot be considered as its highest or noblest form. The President's mind was back in the War of American Independence and he thought of Indian problem in terms of thirteen colonies fighting George III at the end of the 18th century. I, on the other hand, was responsible for preserving the peace and safety of the Indian continent at a most critical period of history. This was no time for a constitutional experiment with a period of trial and error to determine the future relationship of India to the British empire."[3]

Whatever may have been his feelings, Churchill knew that

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1. *Foreign Relations*, 1942. vol. 1. p. 637.
2. Churchill, *Memoirs* vol. p. 195.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 194-195.

he was very much dependent on the Americans for the prosecution of the War against the Axis Powers and hence adopted pleading tone in his reply to Roosevelt's remonstrance by saying : "You know the weight which I attach to everything you say to me, but I did not feel I could take responsibility for the defence of India if everything had again to be thrown into the melting-pot at this critical juncture."[1] Indeed, the Indian problem was the only subject on which the normal broad-minded and cordial attitude which prevailed between Churchill and Roosevelt was stopped cold. Churchill would never concede that any American, however great and illustrious a friend, had any right to make suggestions as to what he should do about India.

Although Churchill characterised Roosevelt's suggestion as madness the proposal made by the Cabinet Mission on behalf of the Labour Government, in 1946, bore close resemblance to the suggestions of the American President. This proposal, it may be recalled, provided for a confederation of three units with the right of the units to secede after a period of ten years. It may be that this provision for secession, not immediately but after a period of ten years, was inserted in the hope that after a decade the Pakistan movement would subside and that Muslim majority areas might be persuaded to stay within the framework of one Indian federation (All the three members of the Cabinet Mission were known to have been sympathetic towards the Congress party). As we have already noted President Roosevelt's proposal was based on similar expectations that separatist movement would die out in India after a period of five or six years.

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

ON THE NORTH-WESTERN BOUNDARY OF THE ORIENTAL REGION

K. Z. Husain

Introduction

There is some controversy regarding the north-western boundary of the Oriental region. In the accompanying figure I have shown some of the more important boundary lines, suggested by different authors from time to time, in addition to the new boundary line proposed in the present paper. Thus, it can be seen that Sclater & Sclater (1899), while dealing with mammals, suggested a line along the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges. Although they did not give any details in the text of their papers, yet it appears from the maps accompanying their papers that they included the areas on the south, south-east and east of the line with the Oriental region. But in doing so they also included the "narrow low-lying strip of desert-country between the Persian Gulf and the central plateau of Persia" with the same region. Elwes (1878), in the course of his otherwise brilliant study of the distribution of birds, made a suggestion which was self-contradictory and therefore misleading. For example, in the text of his paper he mentioned the Indus as the boundary-line between the Oriental and Palaearctic regions, but in the multi-coloured map accompanying his paper he showed Sind and Rajputana up to the base of the Aravalli hills with the paler tint of the same colour with which he showed his "Mediterraneo-Persic Sub-region" of the Palaearctic region, and he did not give any explanation for this. Wallace (1876) was the first to take into account the entire vertebrate fauna, and he showed the Indus as the boundary-line thereby excluding from the Oriental region the narrow strip of low land lying between the Indus and the Baluchistan plateau.

For some time there was no fresh suggestion regarding this, and prominent workers like Sharpe (1893), Lydekker (1896), etc., generally followed Wallace in principle, But, towards the beginning of the twentieth century Blanford (1901) put forward a very different but important idea. He also considered the entire vertebrate fauna, and divided the then "British India" into several zoogeographical "tracts", one of which was "Punjab tract" consisting of the Baluchistan plateau, Sind, Cutch, lower Punjab and Rajputana up to the base of the Aravalli hills. Blanford regarded this "Punjab tract" as a part of the Palaearctic region, and therefore removed it from the Oriental region.

No new suggestion has been made by any one since Blanford's time, and zoogeographers have been following either Wallace or Blanford. But considerable amount of work has been done on the taxonomy, distribution, and ecology of animals and plants as well as other related subjects (see the references), during the last 60 years or so, which undoubtedly has great bearing on the relationships of different zoogeographical regions.

It should be clear by now that the area involved in the present discussion consists of Baluchistan,* Sind, lower Punjab and Rajputana up to the base of the Aravalli hills. The climate, vegetation, and physical features of these places are too well known to need repetition; moreover, these can be found in any standard text book on the subject concerned.

In the present paper I have attempted to throw some light on the zoogeographical relationships of the area mentioned above to find out the approximate location of the boundary lines between the north-western part of the Oriental region and the adjacent part of the Palaearctic region, on the basis of fresh information available to us. My arguments are based mainly on the avifauna, but other elements of the vertebrate fauna are also discussed in so far as they refer to the examples cited by Blanford.[1]

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* The political divisions mentioned in this paper refer to those that existed before 1947. This is being done purely for convenience, because the ranges of distribution of animals referred to in old works, in terms of provinces, districts, etc., are different from those existing today.

The Avifauna

Excluding sea-birds, there are 169 resident species of birds in the 'Indus Plain' (which here includes the plains of Sind, lower Punjab, and Rajputana up to the western base of the Aravalli hills). Similarly, there are 171 species in the 'Baluchistan plateau' (which here includes 'British Baluchistan,' and the Kirthar-Sulaiman hill ranges). 90 of these species are widely distributed in the Indus plain, Baluchistan plateau, as well as in the rest of the Oriental and Palaearctic regions, and therefore they must be excluded from further consideration, since they would not serve any useful purpose in the present discussion. Of the remaining birds of the Indus plain, 68 species (40%) are widely distributed in the peninsular India, but they do not occur in the Baluchistan plateau. Similarly, of the remaining birds of the Baluchistan plateau, 70 species (41%) are widely distributed in the Palaearctic region, but none of them occur in the Indus plain or peninsular India. There are only 11 species (6%) which are Palaearctic in their relationships, and occur in the Baluchistan plateau as well as in the Indus plain and not further east.

Thus it is clear from the above analysis of the avifauna, that the birds of the Indus plain are quite distinct from those of the Baluchistan plateau, and that, while the birds of the former are predominantly Oriental in their relationships, those of the latter are Palaearctic. Therefore, from the ornithogeographical point of view at least, the Baluchistan plateau, as defined here,

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1. I am grateful to Dr. H. K. Yosufzai, Professor and Head of the Department of Zoology, University of Dacca, for constant help and encouragement, and to Dr. E. M. Cullen of Oxford with whom I have discussed various points through correspondence and received valuable suggestions. (I also wish to thank my wife for going through the final script and correcting the typing mistakes).

should be regarded as a part of the palaearctic region, and the Indus plain, contrary to what Blanford said of the Oriental region. As regards the presence of 11 palaearctic species in the Indus plain and not further east, there should not be any misunderstanding. The climatic and other conditions of the Indus plain are so similar to those of the Baluchistan plateau that it is quite natural, as Ticehurst (1922) also pointed out, that the Indus plain would possess some typically Palaearctic birds which may or may not occur in the rest of the Oriental region. But, as mentioned before, it is very significant that in spite of climatic similarity, 40% of the birds of the Indus plain do not occur in the Baluchistan plateau, and 41% of the latter are not found anywhere east of the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges.

Regarding the location of the boundary-line, Wallace suggested the course of the Indus. This would mean, as pointed out before, the exclusion of a narrow strip of plain, lying between the Indus and the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges, from the Oriental region, whose avifauna is actually very similar to that of the rest of the Indus plain. Moreover, the Indus is not a stable feature. There is evidence that even in the third century B. C. the Indus flowed more than 80 miles south and south-east of its present course discharging its water in the Rann of Cutch which was then a gulf of the Arabian Sea (Wadia, 1957). Therefore, the approximate location of the boundary line should be as proposed in this paper, i. e., from Karachi north-east along the eastern base of the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges to the gorge of the Indus in the Himalayas.

We may now have a look at the examples cited by Blanford. He mentioned 16 genera of birds which are found in the Palaearctic region and "Punjab tract," and not further east. This was one of the strongest arguments for exclusion of this "tract" from the Oriental region. But a closer and fresh analysis of these genera, in the light of the recent field and taxonomic findings, leads us to a different conclusion. For example, only three of these Palaearctic genera, which are monotypic, extend from the Baluchistan plateau to the Indus plain. These are, *Alaemon* (*Certhilauda*) found in Sind and Cutch, *Ammoperdix* in Sind up to the river Indus, and *Caccabis* in the 'Salt Range.' Even these three resident genera are not widely distributed in "Punjab tract." The remaining 13 genera (only 16 species) are not resident anywhere on the east of the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges; they are only winter visitors from the countries to the north. there are many other winter visitors from the north which spread out all over the Oriental region, especially peninsular India. Besides, there are other species like *Petronia xanthocollis*, *Nectarina zeylonica*, etc., which are resident in peninsular India, but are summer visitors to lower Punjab etc. (Whistler, 1949). Thus, the non-resident birds are usually not a reliable evidence for deciding the zoogeographical status of an area, especially when the evidence derived from the resident birds is a contrary one.

Other Vertebrate Elements

Mammals

Blanford mentioned six genera of mammals as being found in "Punjab tract" and not anywhere else in peninsular India. But according to the latest check-list by Ellerman & Morrison-Scott (1950), three of these genera, namely, *Allactaga*, *Acomys*, and *Ellobius*, which are widely distributed in the Palaearctic region, have one species each extending to the Baluchistan plateau up to the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges only. Of the others, *Ovis* has two species only in the Baluchistan plateau of the "Punjab tract" and in Kashmir, northern Punjab and Sikkim, and all these places belong to the Palaearctic region; *Capra* has three species in Baluchistan, Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges and in Kashmir; and *Equus* has one species with natural distribution from the Palaearctic region to Nepal, Sind, and Cutch.

Thus, the genera of mammals mentiond by Blanford are also confined mostly to the Baluchistan plateau of the "Punjab tract".

Reptiles and Amphibias

Blanford listed 18 genera as being found in "Punjab tract" and not in the rest of peninsular India. However, according to the latest work (Smith, 1931-43), 8 of these genera occur only or mainly in the Baluchistan plateau with just three extending as far east as the Indus. The remaining 10 genera are fairly large, but have only 25 species in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Their pattern of distribution may be summarised as follows : 15 species are found in the Baluchistan plateau with only one extending up to the Indus, two species occur outside the "Punjab tract" as well, e.g., in the northern United Province, and there are only 8 species which are common to the Baluchistan plateau and the Indus plain and they do not occur further east. The explanation for these 8 species is the same as given earlier for 11 species of birds.

Aquatic Vertebrates

No further analysis is necessary for the aquatic vertebrates including fishes than the one given by Blanford himself. According to Blanford, if the aquatic vertebrates of the Iudus and the Ganges are alone considered then the whole of the Indus Plain would have to be regarded as a part of the Oriental region.

Conclusion

In the light of the analysis and discussions made above, we may come to the following tentative conclusions :

(a) The avifaunas of the Baluchistan plateau and Indus plain as defined here, are quite distinct from each other ; and the same seems to be true of the other vertebrate elements as well.

(b) While the birds and other vertebrate elements of the Baluchistan plateau are predominantly Palaearctic in their relationships, those of the Indus plain are closely related to the Oriental fauna. Therefore, the Baluchistan plateau should be regarded as a part of the Palaearctic region and the Indus plain of the Oriental region.

(c) The narrow strip of plain lying between the Indus and the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges is faunistically very similar to the rest of the Indus plain. This should also be included with the Oriental region. Therefore, the approximate location of the north-western boundary of the Oriental region would follow a line from Karachi north-east along the eastern base of the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges of the gorges of the Indus in the Himalayas.

Summary

The views of the different zoogeographers regarding the north-western limit of the Oriental region have been reviewed. The avifauna and other vertebrate elements of Baluchistan, Sind, lower Punjab and Rajputana up to the base of the Aravalli hills have been briefly analysed in the light of the recent findings. It has been shown that the Baluchistan plateau including the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges is faunistically a part of the Palaearctic region, and the Indus plain including the plain of Sind, lower Punjab and Rajputana up to the base of the Aravalli hills, of the Oriental region. The new boundary-line of the north-western part of the Oriental region follows a course from Karachi north-east along the eastern base of the Kirthar-Sulaiman ranges to the gorge of the Indus in the Himalayas along which the faunas of the Palaearctic and Oriental regions show steeper transition.

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OBSERVATIONS ON SOME BIRDS OF EAST PAKISTAN

(Including the description of a new subspecies)

Haroun-er-Rashid

The mudflats and sandy beaches along the sea-coast of East Pakistan are fascinating places for watching a great variety of waders in winter. Greenshanks, red shanks, plovers, curlews, great blue herons and a number of other species are plentiful. Come March however and the long flight north has already begun. By May the spots alive with running or wheeling of flocks in winter are empty and desolate. On the mudflats near habitations only the ubiquitous (and may one say, monotonous?) paddy bird stalks its somnolent way. It seems as if all the winter birds are gone. But no : On the mudflats remote from big seaside villages a considerable number of curlews seem to stay on throughout the year. Smythies (*Birds of Burma*) seems to think these are all immature birds, presumably on their first migration South. It is true that wherever these curlews gather in flocks (of upto 20) they are invariably immature birds. But I have seen fully grown birds in the middle of summer. A couple of full-grown curlews were seen in August, 1963 on the western side of Sonadia island. Again in July, 1965, a fully grown bird was sighted by me at the confluence of the Paira river and Bogi khal in south Barisal. The questions that arise are firstly, whether some mature curlews normally summer along our coasts, and secondly, whether there is any possibility of their breeding here.

Another coastal bird that raises some questions is the Black-tailed Godwit. This migrant is not a common bird in winter, like the curlew. A pair was however seen in early August, 1965, at Kuakata, on the sea-face of south Barisal. These were either very early migrants from the north, or else they had spent the summer on our coast. Observations along the coastal areas of East Pakistan are so few that we still have a lot to learn about what goes on there.

Along the coastal areas of southern Chittagong district very large flocks of red-breasted Parakeet are to be seen in October and November. They are said to breed on the Muranja Taung and Wayla Taung hill ranges. But for these two months they roost among the Um or Golpata palms (*Nipa fruticans*) which are grown in clumps along the numerous tidal inlets. The reason for this is that the rice grown along the foothills ripens in late October and these parakeets take full advantage of that. They can be seen raiding the rice crop in large flights, some of which have over two thousand birds. The sight of one of these large flights wheeling and swooping in unison is really remarkable. Observation of these parakeets show that the immature male and female resemble each other for the first nine months. Thereafter the breast of the male acquires a plum colour and the black bill changes to red. This change takes three to four months.

A collection of some birds was made by Mr. Hussain and me in the Cox's Bazar area in February, 1963. We also managed to collect three male specimens of the yellow-backed Sunbird. Measurements, colouring and breeding season suggest that these are probably a new subspecies of yellow-backed Sunbird, (*Aethopyga Siparaja*). The sub-species that is supposed to be found throughout East Pakistan and most of Burma north of Rangoon is *Seheriae*. The type locality for this is Seheria, Borabhum, on the borders of West Bengal and Bihar. This sub-species can be recognised by (i) the green tail, (ii) the central tail feathers being 15 to 20 mm. longer than the lateral ones, (iii) the wings being under 60 mm. in length, (iv) the olivegreen abdomen. Moreover, in Assam (and Sylhet in East Pakistan) they breed in May, June and July. In southern Burma and Thailand the subspecies is *Cara*. The type locality is Tenasserim. The main differences from *Seheriae* are that it has (i) the tail metallic purple, (ii) the central tail feathers only 4 to 8 mm. longer than the lateral ones, (iii) the abdomen grey, very slightly washed with olive, (iv) the breeding season in January and February. The Sunbirds collected in Chainda forest, near Cox's Bazar, resemble *Seheriae* in having (a) a green tail, and (b) wings under 60 mm. in length. On the other hand, they resemble *cara* in having (c) the central tail feathers only 5 to 10 mm. longer than the lateral ones, (d) the abdomen grey, washed with olive-green, and (e) the breeding season in February. The deduction about the breeding season was made after dissection, when the testes were found to be very enlarged, obviously in preparation for breeding. It may be mentioned here that in climate and vegetation the south-eastern part of East Pakistan has far more in common with southern Burma than with the drier uplands of West Bengal and Bihar. After consideration of the various differences and resemblances I feel justified in nominating those birds tentatively into a new subspecies : *terglanei.* Of course much more material is needed to firmly establish *Aethopyga siparaja terglanei* (nom. nov.) and it is hoped that in January or February, 1967 some more collection can be made in the Cox's Bazar area.

The coastal ranges of Cox's Bazar and Chittagong are backed up farther east by a series of north-south aligned ridges that become higher as we go east. Most of the first six ridges are in East Pakistan. Another six ranges to the east we reach the central range, the main watershed, of the Arakan Yomas (known there as the Chin hills). Mount Victoria is the highest point in that central part. The mountain ridges within East Pakistan are almost wholly in the district of Chittagong Hill Tracts. One of the most interesting aspects of these hills is the virtual absence of the House-Sparrow(*Passer domesticus indicus*) and the House Crow (*Corvus splendens splendens*). These two birds are very common in nearly all other parts of East Pakistan. Right up to the very base of the westernmost of these ranges they are ubiquitous. But suddenly they are no more. The bigger, graver and one may say, more dignified, Jungle Crow (*Corvus macrorhyncos*) takes over from its more domestic cousin. As for the Sparrow it seems to be replaced partially by various members of the *Ploceidae.* This is strange because the Sparrow is so adaptable, so pugnacious and so tenacious. If it is really a commensal of man why does it not penetrate these hills ? People have been living on these hills for a long time and one could expect either the House Sparrow or the Tree Sparrow *(Passer montanus)*. Mysteriously (at least for the present) both are absent over the greater part of the area. Field investigation into the reasons for the failure of these species to establish themselves is most desirable.

The Wagtails are amongst the most common winter visitors to East Pakistan. Soon after coming down from Tibet, China and Siberia they scatter all over the province. As the time of departure draws near they seem to congregate in increasing numbers in certain areas, which probably serve as take-off bases. Such an area is the large marshy land around Tengra Tila, near Chhatak, in Sylhet district. In April and May, 1964, I observed almost all the sub-species of Wagtails that come into East Pakistan in that area. All the birds observed were changing into the breeding (summer) plumage. Two sub-species however had changed more or less fully to the summer plumage. One was *Motacilla alba alboides*, a sub-species of the Pied Wagtail. Several of these could be seen with the back completely black and no trace of white on the throat. The other was *Motacilla citreola calcarata*, a sub-species of the Yellow-headed Wagtail. Many of these were seen with the back black and the whole head and breast yellow. Some of these however had not changed to the full, summer plumage. Unfortunately the exact date of their emigration could not be observed. Here again is a field open to research students since most Wagtails do not change to full summer plumage before leaving wintering areas.

South-east of the big expanses of low marshy land around Tengra Tila (which is three miles from the base of the Khasi Hills) we come up to the higher areas of Sylhet. In this region of dense vegetation one of the most common bird is the Blue-throated Barbet. The continuous *Kutrr-Kutrr-Kutrr* call of these Barbets in the heat of the after-noon is one of the characteristic features of eastern Sylhet. In the more densely populated parts one may stand in-between two villages and hear a dozen of these very vocal birds calling from all around. Yet, and here we have another of those gaps in our knowledge, it is strangely absent from most of the adjacent areas to the west and south. It is rarely heard north of Mymensingh town, but to the south it seems to be completely absent though the country is very suitable for it. As far as is known this Barbet has not been seen or heard near Dacca. In over three years of observation I have not seen it in Comilla, Noakhali or Chittagong district. Most curiously it is again common in the western-most part of East Pakistan—in Chapai Nawabganj subdivision, most of which was formerly a part of Malda district, and is now in Rajshahi district. The Blue-throated Barbet is fairly common in the large mango orchards of Nawabganj and I have also heard it near Rajshahi. Why should it be absent (or very scarce) in the whole range of country between eastern Sylhet and western Rajshahi? The types of trees and the thickness of the vegetation are both suitable (presumably) in the whole of East Pakistan, but it is a strangely local bird.

Another example of local distribution is the Jungle Babbler. This is essentially a bird of fairly dry areas, i. e. with 40 to 60 inches of rainfall. In East Pakistan its distribution seems to be governed both by the rainfall and the soil. It prefers areas with less than 75 inches of rainfall and a soil that dries quickly. A large area in the western part of East Pakistan has less than 75 inches of rainfall but the Jungle Babbler is not found everywhere. It shuns the lower damper areas. It is found as far east as Dacca and Pubail, both of which places have 75 inches of rainfall and reddish clays that dry out fairly rapidly. Further east it is completely absent. In fact the eastern edge of the Madhupur Tract (pleistocene terrace with reddish clays) is a sharp limit to this species and it does not re-appear in the high land of the wetter east.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. S. M. Hasan., Professor of Islamic History, Chittagong College.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, M. A., Ph. D. (London), Senior Lecturer in
Arabic and Islamic Studies,
Dacca University.

Dr. Mohar Ali, M. A., Ph. D., Senior Lecturer in History,
Dacca University.

Dr. Zakiuddin, M. A., D. Phil. (Oxon), Senior Lecturer in History,
Chittagong University.

Dr. Md. Abul Khair, M. A., Senior Lecturer in History,
Dacca University.

Mr. Kazi Zakir Husain, M. A., Reader in Zoology,
Dacca University.

Mr. Harun-er-Rashid, C. S. P.

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