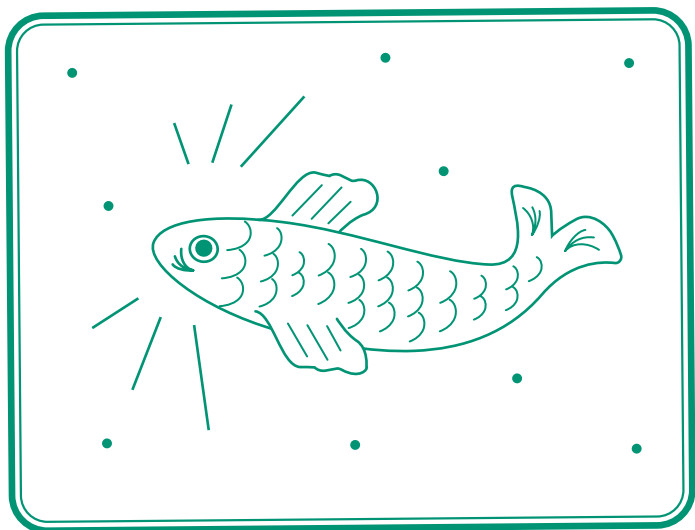


OUR WATERY RELATIONS



ہمارے

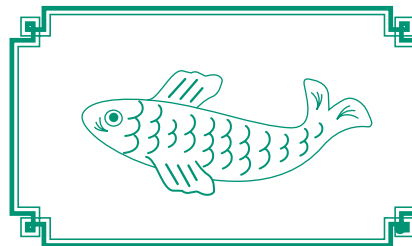
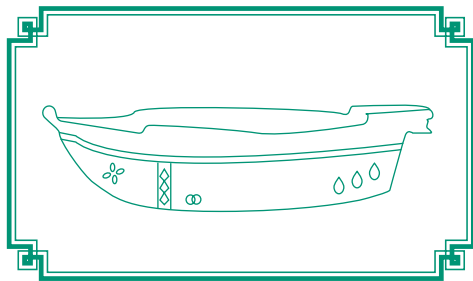
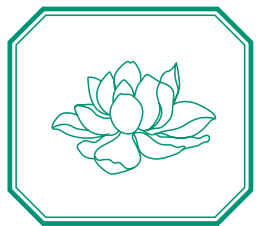
شہر سیال

A COLOURING & ACTIVITY BOOK
BY KARACHI LAJAMIA



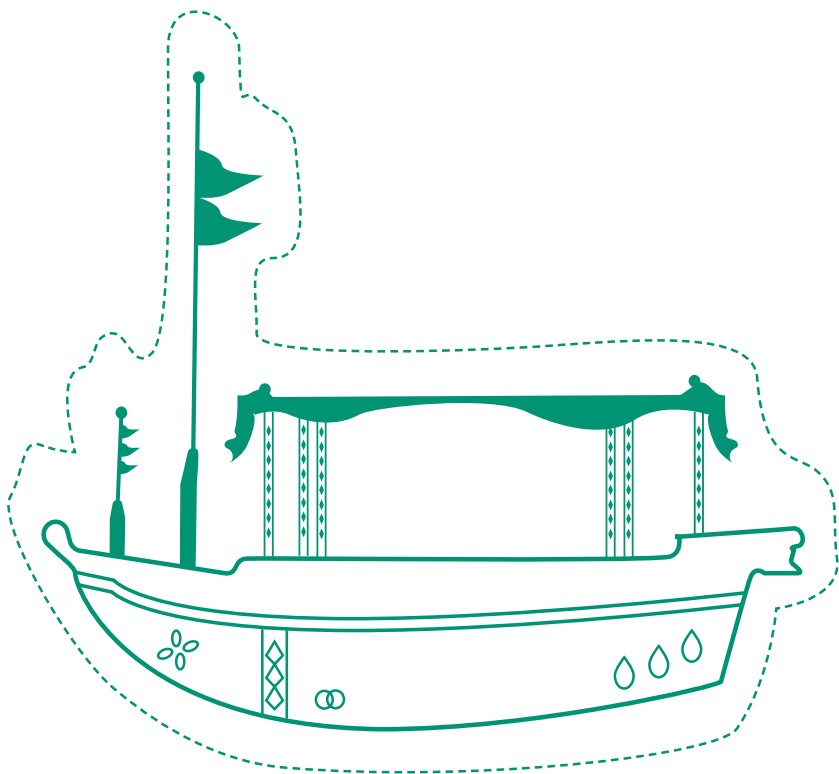
THE RIVER

This is the River Indus, also known as Sindhu or Mehran. The river Indus is sacred, often called Badshah Darya or Darya Shah. We believe that the river is not only a body of water, but also a spirit. The river is everywhere. The river has no boundaries.





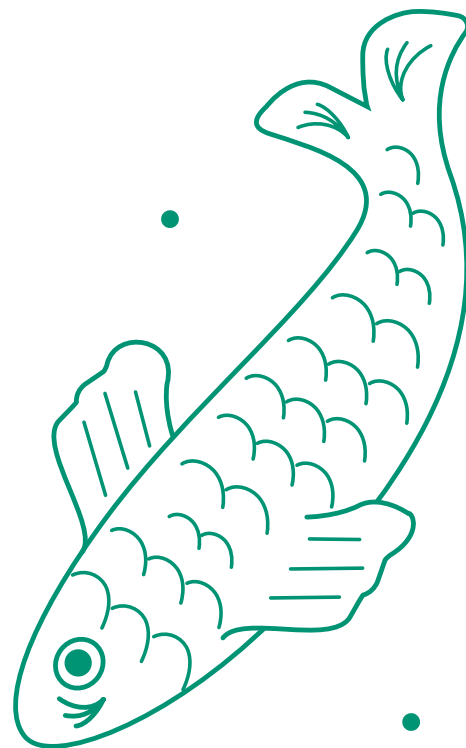
THE BOAT



This is a Bedi, or a boat. One of our prayers is ‘*Samandari Sarkar, beda keyo paar*’ — God of the seas, help my boat cross over. Fishers decorate their boats with flags and adorn them with paint and patterns. Draw patterns to decorate the boat. Cut along the edges. If there is a destination you wish to reach, release this boat in your nearest body of water while chanting the prayer above.



THE FISH (PALLA)

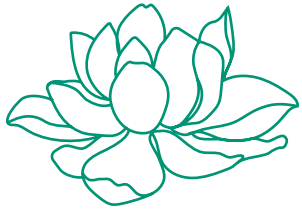


This is a Palla — one of the most sacred fish of the Indus River. The Palla is unique because it swims against the flow of the ocean, from the sea into the river, to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Khwaja Khizr, our river saint. It is said that the fish is a dull grey when it begins its journey. By the time the fish reaches the shrine it is a sparkling gold, its scales polished by the force of the waves it swims against.

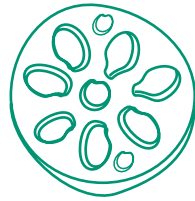


THE LOTUS

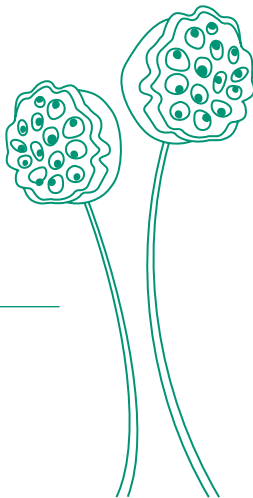
The lotus is our sacred flower. The Indus is a muddy river. In its flows it carries a rich silt that is perfect for the blossoming of the beautiful lotus flower. The lotus flower with its many layered petals is a metaphor for the ever unfolding nature of the universe. It is the national flower of Sindh and we make use of every part of the flower, from its root, to its stem, to its pods and blossoms. The flower is also the seat of our patron saint Jhoolay Lal.



Flower = offering



Root = curry



Pods = fruit

Stems = silk



THE SAINTS

Jhoolay Lal is the patron saint of the river, also known as Amar Lal or Udero Lal. Jhoolay Lal means the beloved who sways. It is said that when the saint was a baby, the invisible river spirit it always rocked his cradle, like a boat swaying in the waves of the river. Fishers often see visions of Jhoolay Lal even today in different places along the Indus. He is seen seated on a lotus carried by the Palla fish.



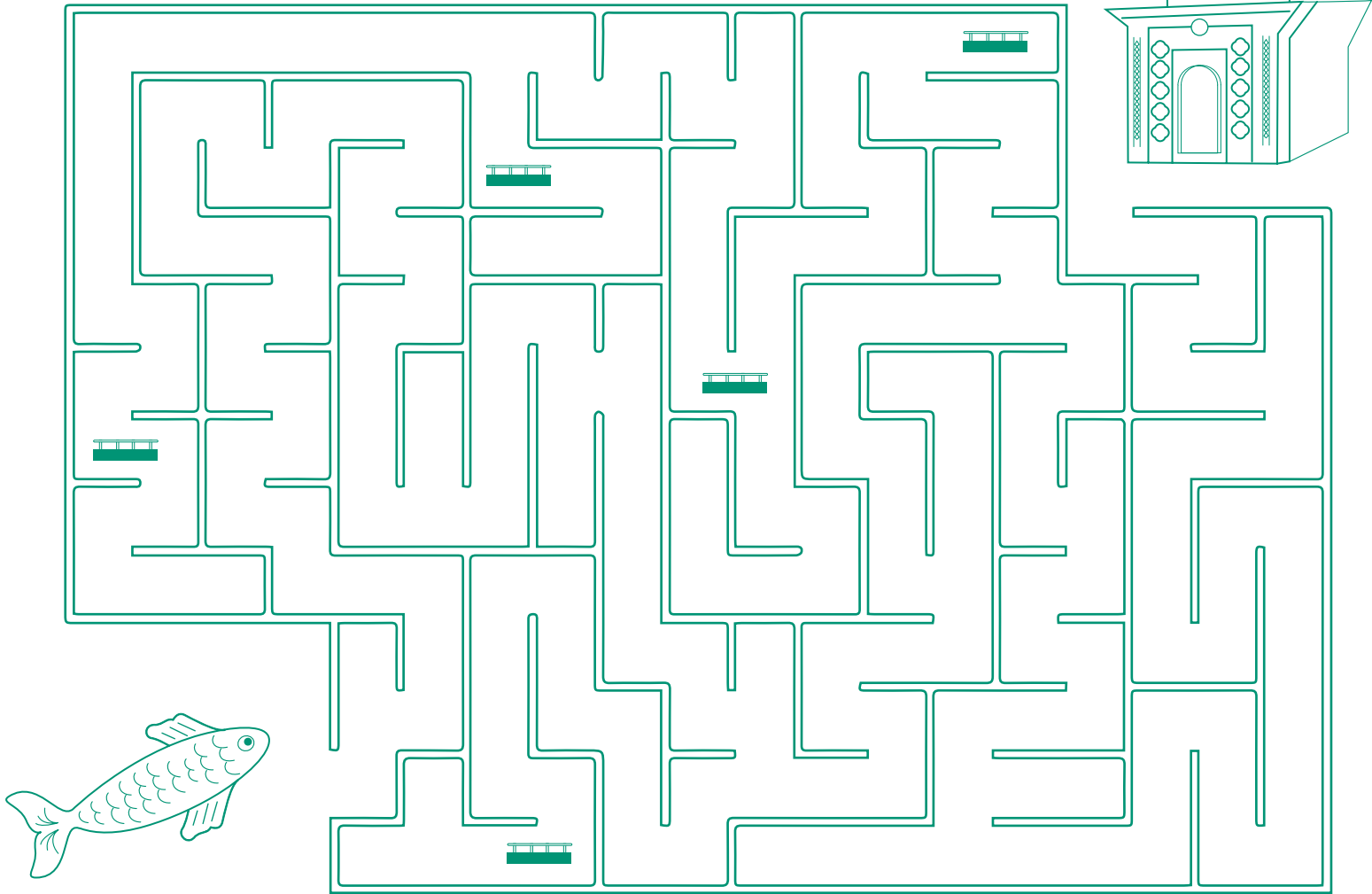
Jhoolay Lal is an avatar or an incarnation of Khwaja Khizr - the water saint of the larger Islamic world. The shrine of Khawaja Khizr is located on a small island in the Indus River, in the city of Sukkur. This is where the Palla fish go to make their pilgrimage.

7

THE JOURNEY

When the Kotri Barrage was built on the Indus River in 1954, it obstructed the passage of the Palla fish from the sea up to the river. For the next few decades, they were only able to travel when the barrage gates would be opened. Now the gates remain closed all year around, but somehow the fish always find their way to the shrine.

Help the Palla fish find its way to Khwaja Khizr's shrine!



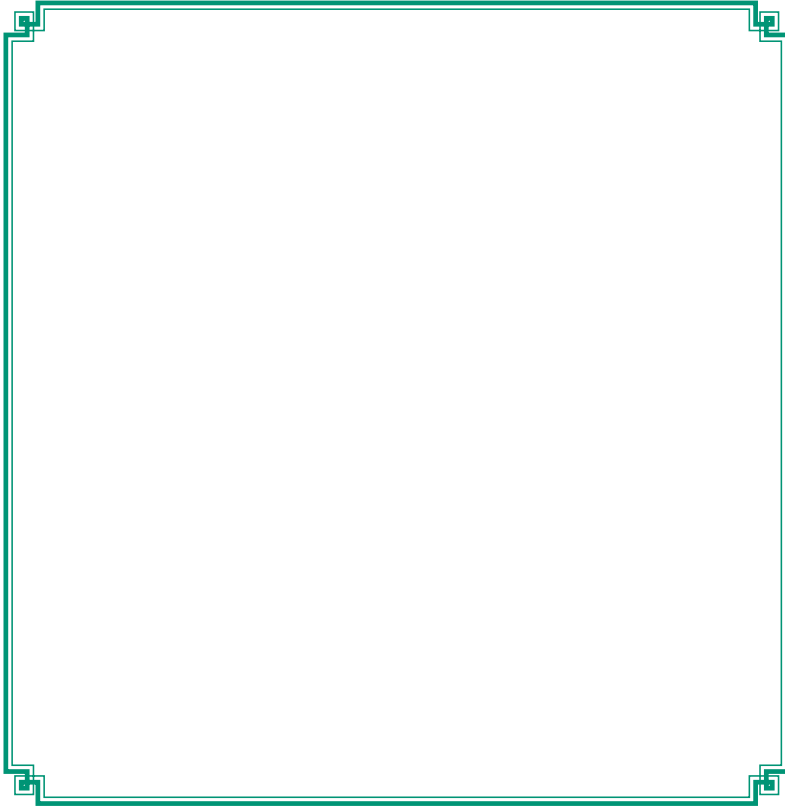


AN OFFERING

When fisherfolk set out on their boats, they always start with an offering. It is through this offering that they receive permission to sail and fish in the river.

They mash their roti/bread into a ball—adding ghee and sugar—and offer it to the river, to the fish, and to the saint. ‘*Hi tawhanji amanat aabe.*’ This belongs to you, Khwaja Khizr. This ritual keeps them connected with the sacredness of water. This gesture of giving is founded on care, love and reciprocity. We must sustain the fish, so it can in return sustain us. Besides the sweet dough offered by fishers, people also offer flowers, bangles, lamps and toy boats to the river.

What would you like to offer to the river? Draw a picture:



AN INVOCATION

The Indus River has many names and speaks many languages. The river is ever present and ever living. One of the ways we bring the river to life is through ritual. Repeating, invoking and calling out the river in its many names is one such ritual. Practice invoking the river by writing its name in Sindhi, English and Urdu.

سندو

سندو

سندو

Indus

Indus

Indus

محران

محران

محران



OUR WATERY RELATIONS

Hamare Siyal Rishte was the title of a course facilitated by Karachi LaJamia in 2021 with the help of the Pakistan Fisherfolk forum and Sindh Indigenous Rights Alliance. The course set out to connect with and learn about the sacred coastal and riverine geography of Karachi, ongoing movements in defense of the landscape, and the ancient ecological knowledges fostered alongside it.

Hamare Siyal Rishte by
Karachi LaJamia

Designed by
Rose Nordin

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