

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



A European Portrait of a Sindhi Dignitary

Probably English, Last quarter of the 19th century

Oil on canvas

63cm high, 50cm wide

Stock no.: A4597

A portrait of a sitting gentleman wearing a large brown fur-trimmed coat on top of a red-patterned choga with a green lining. His waist is wrapped with a lungi of woven green, orange and red silk. He is wearing a tall black topi without a design or colourful brocade. He is holding what appears to be a silver container. This portrait may in fact depict Shahani Dayaram Gidumal, otherwise known as Rishi Dayaram. He was a distinguished scholar and was known to be the 'godfather' of Sindhi Hindus. Dayaram alongside Mitha Ram and Jethmal established the D.J. Sind in Karachi. He later laid the foundations for the N.H. Academy at Hyderabad Sindh. He also founded several 'Nari Shalas' (institutions for women). The legacy of his staunch advocacy for women can be seen by the humanitarian work done by the Seda Seva Society. Gidumal was an astute scholar of Sindhi, Persian, Arabic and English literature. His success can be tracked from winning the Ellis Prize at the beginning of his career and later many of his works such as Lashes for the Mind (1923-29), Essence of Bhagavad Gita (1893) and his biographies are still relevant today.