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ĀBŠŪR RŪD

ĀBŠŪR RŪD "salt river." The name *ābšūr* is very common in Iran for those rivers with a high salt content. Salt may generally arrive from two sources: firstly, from minerals of the soil which are transported to the surface by the upward direction of groundwater and by soil-water evaporation due to the arid climate of most of Iran (see Kavīr); secondly, from soluble salts washed out of geological salt-bearing structures (salt plugs), which are common for many parts of Iran. Most of the rivers derive their high salt content from this source. Two examples may serve for clarification.

1. Ābšūr Rūd in eastern Azarbaijan, a small northern tributary of the Āǰī Čāy (which drains the great Tabrīz basin). The Ābšūr Rūd has a comparatively small drainage area: it, like t Āǰī Čāy, crosses an area of Miocene clays and marls with large amounts of salty components. Analogous to the discharge rhythm of the Āǰī Čāy, the peak of its annual discharge is the late spring (April, May) as a result of winter precipitation and the melting of the snows.

2. Ābšūr Rūd in Lārestān, which drains part of the Bandar ʿAbbās hinterland. Its high salt content, like that of many rivers in southeastern Iran, derives from the open structures of salt-plugs. This river has a distinctive discharge rhythm. During 1970-72 at the gauging station Galūgāh (28°08' north latitude, 55°32' east longitude), covering a drainage area of about 8,000 sq. km, the river usually showed scarcely any discharge and was more or less dry; but toward the end of Bahman, 1349 Š./January, 1971, it had a remarkable flow-off of more than 440 cu m/day (25 Bahman 1349). The following year likewise was characterized by episodic discharges. Except for a few days in Dey, Bahman,

and Esfand/January-March, when there were considerable discharges (25 Dey 1350: 314 cu m; 10 Bahman: 106 cu m; 28 Esfand: 928 cu m), the river was usually dry. Besides periodic winter rains, deriving from Mediterranean cyclones, there may be summer precipitation as annual occasional effect of the Indian summer monsoon.

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