

ANALYSIS OF THE PASHTO LITERARY HISTORY (Beginning to 19th Century)

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ABSTRACT:

The study of Pashto literature discloses the fact that Pashto in written form is lagging behind or the historical background of Pashtoon poets is not as ancient as the Pashto language or the Pashtoons are. But one can easily estimate the antiquity of Pashto literature through studying the work of Pashtoon poets and writers because without having any literary background the writers and poets of that language may not produce mature literary work. As the first poet of Pashto, Amir Kror has said:

*"I am the brave, there is none like me in the whole world.
Neither in Hind, Sindh, Takhar nor in Kabul & Zabul,
There is none brave like me."*

This inception of the Pashto literature and poetry is an evidence of antiquity of the Pashto poetry but it also shows that a considerable portion of Pashto poetry consists upon (Razmia) Narrative (war related) poetry. In Pashto poetry along with Razmia (war related) poetry, the religious thoughts are also ostensible.

It is why that all the Pashtoons embraced Islam simultaneously and they cut their all relations with the past. For the reason the history of our ancestors starts from the advent of Islam.

In the very first period the chieftains like Amir Kror and Malik Yar Gharshin and the saints like Bait Nika and Bakhtiar Kaki were also there. Their mystic thoughts and hymns become the basis of Pashto literature".

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(Baryalai: 2000) There people mostly related to south Pashtoonkhwa. We can, therefore, rightly say that this area is the birth place of Pashto literature as well as Pashtoons. All the poets of the first period, who played a leading role in Pashto poetry, were from this region. These poets include "Bait Nika, Shaikh Kharshboon, Ismail Sarbani, Shaikh Taman Kakar, Malik Yar Gharshin, Zarghuna Kakar and Dost Mohammad Kakar. Second period includes Allah Yar Afridi, Abdul Latif Achakzai and Peer Mohammad Kakar." **(Insha: 2003)**

In the last period of the old poetry Peer Mohammad Kakar compiled his Dewan (collection of a poet) "the same was published in 1327 AH, with preface by Abdul Rauf Benawa from Pashto Tolana". **(Insha: 2003)**

In spite of having such old tradition, the literature of South Pashtoonkhwa rather the entire Pashto literature remained passive for a long period of time due to some disturbing circumstances prevailing at that time. The folk poetry and poets kept continued their journey and denied the pressure. Folk poetry was properly sung in local concerts which are named Bandars. This Bandari poetry has its own traditions and tries to make its foundations, firms. Poets of the folk poetry remain in touch with the people through their poetry besides language. There is long list of the Pashtoon poets consisting upon the poets of deserts and those of chamber of Khan-e-Kalat. Among those dirge elegy of Captain Abdur Rehman is very famous which he wrote as a tribute to Nooruddin Mengal. In Shorawak, Dost Mohammad Khan and Mir Afzal Barech, in Kohlo, Khudai Rahim Zarkoon and in Loralai Mula Din Mohammad Kudezai were folk poets. They were writing and saying the poems against the British rule. **(Baryalai: 2000)** In Bandar poetry the religious and metaphorical aspects seem to be dominant.

In love of spiritual and religious people many poems were said which can be termed as supernatural. In addition varied forms of romance may also be witnessed, whether that is real or metaphorical / Figurative.

The reason of dominance of religion in Pashto poetry is that the Bandars (concerts) were mostly held in Hujras (Taliban's residences) attached the mosques of the village, in South Pashtoon Khwa. Normally at night, the Taliban, youngsters and poets from the surrounding villages and mosques would come and hold Bandar (concert). These Bandars gradually extended to the Hujras (guest rooms) of the village. Since then Pashto language took breath from the same places because in all other places it was almost banned.

The independence movement brought awareness in the people and awoke them from deep slumber. This was the time when in four corners of the Pashtoon Mother land. The modern Pashto literature got its inception.

In South Pashtoonkhwa the period of modern Pashto literature started. When Abdul Rehman Kakar published his book "Da Pashtana Khobuna" (Dreams of the Pashtoon) in 1934. (Insha: 2003) This was the time when foundation of progressive writers in the sub continent was properly laid down, and people whole heartedly extended their cooperation to them. Especially those people who were playing the front line role in the independence movement were related to literature and journalism. In promotion of Pashto literature, journalism has played a very significant role.

In the history of journalism in Balochistan, the first news paper was "Istiklal" by Khan Abdul Samad Khan Shaheed that was published as a weekly from 1938 to 1947". (Insha: 2003) Major portion of that newspaper was in Urdu while a very small place was given to Pashto. Some time only one poem used to be in Pashto. Any how that paper was actually bi-lingual (Pashto-Urdu). Haji Jan Mohammad Ustrani and Abdul Khaliq extended their assistance to the newspaper in the shape of written materials. (Hameedullah: 1995) For publishing of this news paper Khan Shaheed and Yousuf Aziz Magsi established their own printing press.

In 1930, the political movement started and at that very time, due attention was paid towards education, literature and media / press. Khan Abdul Samad Khan Shaheed and Yousuf Aziz Magsi left ever lasting impacts over the political, literary and cultural history of this region. They both were progressive minded and against the British rule. (Baryalai: 2000) We can say that modern Pashto literature is the revival of Khushhal Khan Khatak school of thought. This thought was promoted by progressive minded people in South Pashtoon Khwa as they did so in other regions. There people were having either sort of relationship with independence movement.

There were two school of thoughts in Pashto literature, during the first period namely Razmia (war related) and religious. The same schools do exist in the modern Pashto dissuasive literature. Though in modern literature the resistive poetry kept itself aloof from Khushal school of thought but Mula Salam Ashezai is the only poet whose poetry is much more similar to that of Khushal thoughts. At that time when movement for independence was moving forward, all the nations were striving for independence, Pashtoon nation also stood with them in the battle for independence. The implications of the movement reached the British Balochistan.

The Bandar poetry (cited above) which was having religious as well as secular aspect, now turned to dissuasive poetry. In this resistant dissuasive poetry the poetry of Salam baba is ostensive. He was producing target oriented poetry. He used his poetry as a weapon against the British rulers. The Britishers also felt it and put his invake poetic collection (Dewan)

“Sosan e Chaman” on fire. Mula Salam was the first revolutionary and reformer poet of the second decade of the last century, who severely criticized the British rule. He was arrested and his book was forfeited and then put on fire in 1933. **(Baryalai: 2000)**

The British rulers tried to replace Pashto by Urdu in Pashtoon belt. That is why Urdu was declared to be official language. With the coming of Britishers speaking of Urdu language increased at once. Along with the judicial proceedings and official documentation the medium of instruction in the academic institutions was also declared to be in Urdu language. It was Afghanistan because of which the English empire focused their attention on frontier areas of Balochistan. Urdu a specific plan they started establishing Urdu medium schools and working for the promotion of Urdu language. **(Nasir: 2000)**

Reason may be that Pashtoon as a whole stood against the Britishers and resisted them by weapons as well as their writings. Britishers made the Pashtoon areas battle line, due to which Pashtoon badly suffered. Salam Baba made it the focal point of his poetry and projected Amanullah Khan as modern leader of the Pashtoon nation. Amanullah Khan announced freedom from English rule.

Salam Baba raised his voice against the English empire in that way verses of Salam Baba have not been translated. Besides saying dissuasive poetry Salam Baba, being a religious scholar did not leave the religious aspect untouched. In accordance with the custom of the time he wrote out the legal and other issues in Talab-e-Mazhab. Poets of the South Pashtoon Khwa were not only active in dissuasive poetry but they have played a very significant role in all the other kinds of the poetry.

Abdul Ali Akhundzada, Hafiz Khan Mohammad and others played a leading role in this regard. In spite of being religious scholar, Abdul Ali Akhundzada wrote very beautiful romantic songs and poems. His poetry has no match in flow and simplicity while using similes and metaphors he made his poetry beautiful. **(Kakar: 1974)** He was the person who saved “Pata Khazana” (The hidden treasure) of the Pashto literature and then handover it to Allama Abdul Hayee Habibi.

Abdul Ali Akhundzada was well well versed in Arabic and Persian languages. This is why one can feel a touch of melody in his poetry. Melody is considered to be the characteristic of these two languages, and romance is observed both in real and figurative form in his poetry. He was also mindful about bandari poetry. Hence a beautiful combination of both kinds of the poetry is visible / seen in his verses.

Sahibzada Hameedullah says about him that “Abdul Ali Akhudzada is the first poet who united the two schools of thought, Kandahar, Peshawar and Pishin”. (Hameedullah: 1995) He wrote poems in Persian also. He was follower of Pir Muhammd Kakar. Many other poets have contributed in poetry and literature of this period. In Bandari poetry every one of the poets has some contribution. It may rightly be said that Bandari poetry was the starting point for most of them.

Syed Muhammad Rasool Faryadi is another famous poet of this school. Focusing the history of Bandari poetry which expands from South Pashtoon Khwa to the Pashtoon dominated areas of Afghanistan. He earned a good name in Bandari poetry. (Arif: 2000) His poetry is multi dimensioned. One can see different colors in it including romantic, religious and dissuasive. He picked up whatever he liked and included in his poetry. His poetry has no specific color. It is also considered to be the affect of Bandari poetry. In addition to Bandari poetry, he has also given a significant place to sonnet, Ghazal and poems in his poetry rendering sincere and valuable services to the Pashto literature played a pivotal role in making his prominent literary personality. He has given priority to ode saying and lyric. (Gohar: 2002) It can be concluded that Pashto literature in South Pashtoon Khwa carries the impact of bandari poetry through out the stages of its development. No poet could save himself from there implications, even that could be seen in the middle ages also the same can be witnessed in modern literature.

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