

## THE ORIGIN OF PUSHTU LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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The most important language spoken in the province of N.W.F.P. is Pushtu. It is considered to be one of the earliest branches of the original Aryan language. It has two Principal dialects: hard (Pakhtu) and second soft (Pushtu). The hard Pukhtu is spoken by the North Eastern tribes of the province known as Bajaur, Swat, Buner of the Arfidis, Orakzais, Shinwaris, Bangash and Turis, while the Khattaks, Wazirs, Marwats and other tribes towards the South West speak the softer are known as Pushtu dialect. The Pathan tribes of Zhob and other parts of Baluchistan close to Qandhar also speak the soft variant.

Taking in view, the literature of different languages of Pakistan, especially the Pushtu literature can not be ignored. According to Raverty, "the Pathan language, taking all things into consideration, is very rich in literature". The poetry of this language is richer than its other literature and contains excellent material on varied subject of human learning.(1)

Recent researches conducted in the field of Pushtu literature show that Pushtu literature is sufficiently advanced from the pre-Islamic period.

Amir Keror wrote his poetry in the second century of the Hijra on the eight century A.D. These claims appear doubtful, and it is clear that development of the language as literature advanced after the advent of Islam.

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The earliest prose work "Tazkiratul Aulia" was written in 612 A.H. by Sulaiman Mako. Another important prose work of Shaikh Mali, who instituted the "Vesh" system for the Yusufzai is also a work written in prose.

According to Raverty, another prose work had been written by Shaikh Mali after the end of the 15th century.

"Khair-ul-Bayan" another book had been written by Bayazid in 949 Hijra. Akhund Darweza, who was contemporary of Bayazid, wrote "Makhzanul-Islam". Akhund Darweza also wrote "Sarah" perhaps in 1550 A.D.(2) But the most-notable contribution to Pushtu prose and poetry was made by Khushal Khan Khattak, Rehman Baba, Abdul Hamid and the members of Khushal Khan's family.

#### **KHUSHAL KHAN KHATTAK**

Khushal Khan Khattak was the best and the most celebrated poet of Pushtu prose and poetry. He was born in 1613 A. D. and died at the age of seventy eight in 1691 A. D.

Khushal Khan son of Shabaz Khan, was the chief of Khattak tribe. When his father was killed in a battle with Yusufzai, he was succeeded to the chieftancy of his tribe. The chief of Khattak, tribe Khushal Khan, has been justified and called, "a man of the pen and sword".

He was a prolific writer and his literary work has a great variety of themes and subjects, containing a wealth of ideas and artistic beauty.

His poems and prose writing usually bear the mark of his personality, lending them the originality of thought. His prose is simple and direct, and in addition to the value and importance of its contents, it is interesting and gives us much pleasure as information.<sup>(3)</sup>

According to Raverty, "Khushal Khan wrote both in Pushtu and Persian on medicine ethics, religious jurisprudence, philosophy, pharmacy and also on autobiography".

His poems cover a wide variety of subjects, love, war, the chase, nature, religious devotion, and political affairs. In spite of this, treatment of his themes is realistic, and for this he is almost unique among the Pushtu poets.

Khushal Khan wrote a number of books as *Divan*, *Fazal Nama*, *Baz Nama*, *Swat Nama*, *Sihatul Bayan*, *Firaq Nama*, *Dastar Nama*, *Bayaz or Diary*. Khushal Khan did not give only great literature but also many literary personalities, he is also the father of many poets.

The literary talent in Khushal Khan Khattak's family was surprising. Among them, his daughter Halima was a poetess, his sons Ashraf Khan, Abdul Qadir Khan, Sadar Khan, Sikander Khan were poets of considerable merit as can be judged from their poetical works, which are extant.

Afzal Khan, the son of Ashraf Khan, was also a poet. A few of his poems are extant but his history of the Pathan *Tarikh-i-Murassa*, remains one of the best sources of information. Qazim Khan, the son of Afzal Khan, was also a poet. He wrote under the poetical name "Shaida".<sup>(4)</sup>

**REHMAN BABA**

Rehman Baba was Ghoria Khel who lived a secluded life in his native village, Deh Bahader. His poetry conveys the message of religion, moral motives and mystic love of life. His ideas and words are sublime, sweet and full of grace. His poems are touched with sufi mysticism and also had preached the brotherhood of mankind.

**ABDUL HAMID**

Abdul Hamid was contemporary of Rehman Baba. He belonged to village Mashogagar. In fact he too was really a cultivated mind. Hamid seems deeper than the other contemporaries. In the beauty of language, flight of thought and depth of feelings he excels both. He was called the "heir splitter" because he was too refined for his contemporaries. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that Hamid is considered a great poet than either Khushal Khan or Rehman Baba.

**AHMED SHAH ABDALI**

Ahmed Shah Abdali is known in the history as one of the greatest conquerors. He was the founder of Afghanistan. Ahmed Shah wrote a number of poems in Persian. He had a collection of odes in his native Pushtu. His poems are full of pleas for God's mercy for his sin and prayers for strength to overcome the temptations of his body.(5)

According to Pakistan Year Book 1975, the evolution of Pushtu literature can be divided in to five distinct periods:

1. The first period begins with Amir Karore and

covers nine centuries from 576 A.D. to 1600 A.D. during which Pushtu prose was more popular than poetry.

2. The second period begins with Bayazid Ansari, who founded his own sufi school of thought, and gave Pushtu prose and poetry a new and powerful tone. He and his disciples enriched the Pushtu language and literature by writing several books in prose.

3. The third period is perhaps the most glorious for Khushal Khan Khattak as the central figure of this period. He introduced new form and modern trends in Pushtu literature. The Persian Ghazal, Rubai and Masnavi influenced the Pushtu poets and writings of this period. This period was dominated by poetry, but prose also held an important place. Romantic stories and versified fictions gained popularity towards the end of the third period and this popularity was maintained with certain modifications of standards, throughout the fourth period and even continued in to the fifth.(6)

4. The fourth stage reached in the evolution of Pushtu literature came to a close with the death of warrior king and poet Ahmed Shah Abdali. Comparatively, the prose of this period has a better claim to literary genre than to its poetry.

5. The fifth period begins with the dawn of 20th century. The literature of this period of flux and emotional stress and strain found expression in a variety of new forms. In this period the young poets enriched the poetry with new idealism. The younger generation of the poets carried forward the legacy of these early poets and writers with great enthusiasms.

## FOLKLORE

The Pathan by nature enjoys a good story and joke. Even during his normal day conversation, the Pathan is apt to throw his whole soul into what he says, the nightly gatherings of the youngsters especially at the "Hujra" to hear the stories of princes and bravery of the Pathans; the tribal feudals play an important role in these stories.

Pakistan consists of different areas inhabited by people speaking different dialects; each dialect has an abundance of such songs. There are no other people in the world who are such ardent lovers of songs as the Pathans are.

Pathan-music has many forms of poetry in which *Tappa*, *Chahar Baita*, *Loba*, *Neemkai Badal*, *Bughtai* are important:

a) *Tappa*, the earliest form of poetry, was never ignored. This folk song is sung at all hours and places. Its theme centres round the emotion and the experience of the heart of man. It is also full of wit and humour, and is the most popular among the ploughmen and shepherds. They sung it too.

b) *Chahar Baita* is the Pathan's common-room song, sung in a chorus. One person sings the first verse and the others repeat it. It is always sung in such a lively way that the audience are at once enthralled and begin to dance in joy.(7)

In Pathan society, the women do not lag behind. They participate in wedding and family gatherings and sing folk songs. *Tappa* and *Chahar Baita* are popular songs among men but *Neemai* and *Loba* are sung by women.

*Riddles* are another common past time, sung especially among the children. These *riddles* are very much like the ones in vogue in the frontier.

*Ballads* are as popular with the Pathans as stories. *Ballads* often tell of the acts of bravery of fore-fathers of a particular tribe or family. Proverbs are also very interesting in Pushtu language.

The art of music is not highly developed. Their musical instruments are the *drums*, *rabab*, and *surna*. Their music is fast, noisy and string.

#### DANCES

The Pathan dancers are famous in the whole world. But what is usually known as the Khattak dance, is common to several of the tribes.

The Hazara tribes, Mahsuds, Wazirs in the North West Frontier Province are the best dancers. Apart from the normal dances there are the *Bulbula*, *Kumbhar Danda*, *Mashaul Sword* dances, which are also popular.

The "*Kumbhar dance*" is celebrated in marriage ceremonies and "*Bulbulla*" just an expression of the exacerbate feelings. In the "*Mashaul*" dances whose fascination is of great loveliness, the men carry two sticks which beat against those of the man in front and the man behind as also against each other as they move round in front and in their circle, round a huge bonfire.

This dance is actually a battle dance. Though the *Khattak* dance is most frequently a recreational performance of Pathan troops, it is occasionally performed in tribal villages.

Most of the Pathan's women know dancing, and dance at such an important occasion as marriages, circumcision and the birth of male child. They play dancing we can say that the Pathan is so much lover, and their dancing some times attains a high level of excellence.

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