

The Earliest Centers of Pashtu Literature

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Abstract: *Pashtu is one of the Asian ancient languages such as Old Persian, Avesta and Sanskrit. Pashtu language seems to be a separate language between Iranian and Hindi Languages and have relation with Avesta and Sanskrit languages. We don't have any text or evidence of Pashtu language before Islam. However, after Islam only a few poems were found in Ghor, Mountain of Kasay, and Multan, where Pashtun tribes were ruling. Pashtu literature which is found in those three centers (Ghowr, mountain of Kasay, and Multan) is very simple and didn't include any complex themes. Most of the poems themes were about honor, pride on military activities, love with family and nation.*

Keywords: Ghowr, The Mountain of Kasi, Multan, Amir Karor, Hamid Lodi, Shaikh Bitni

1. Introduction

If we talk about Pashtu classical poetry, we should know that before Islam the form of Pashtu Literature was existed in different orthography, which is recently not existed. Even if it was written down on stones, still it would need experts to recognize it. It is also because of the laziness, inconsideration and reckless of Pashtuns and foreign invaders that made way to destroy the old literature and history of Pashtuns.

Till now, the evidences that we received are in the form of poetry which can be found in three Centers, but many things were written in old period as well which are also not existed anymore. The only evidence of Pashtu Literature is in three Centers (Ghowr, The Mountain of Kasi and Multan), Patta Khazana and Tazkir-ul-Awlia.

The Earliest Centers of Pashtu Literature

Researchers believe that in 150 BC Pashtu Language had the capability to write a book in it. A set of poetry of a few languages is found in an old Temple (Mander), located in Rajasthan province of India. In that set of poetry there were a few poem of Pashtu. Roshan Lal Malothra informed us from the existence of that set of poetry. He said, the set of Pashtu poetry which is written in Hindi orthography, is seem to be structured as similar as the form of "Pashtu Landy". This poetry is about specific prayers.

This Poetry is not analyzed yet, but after the analysis of these poets it will make it clear that when this poetry is written? Whose poetry is this? The form of orthography made us believed that this poetry is written before Islam. (Shirzad, 2014 p.70)

Also, Daryush an Iranian Hakhmanshi tribe famous king, who ruled from 522 to 484. By his command, a written stone was found on the mountain of Baghstan. There is an epic written in the fourth line and 63/64 clause. Doctor Moyeen, the teacher of Iran University introduce us the three line of that epic.

- 1) Ne arika ahum
 - 2) Ne drau ja na ahum
 - 3) Ne zura ka ra ahum
- (Habibi, 2005 p. 320)

These lines made clear the existence of Pashtu language before Islam and it's similarity with other languages.

A few part of Pashtu literature were mixed with those ancient languages or old Pashtu were too similar with old Persian. Even making a little deference in Pashtu could lead to make that old language.

When somebody study the evidence of old literature which are received recently, it seems that these old evidence are existed in the centers where local government and tribal authorities of Pashtuns existed. Pashtuns possess the political power there.

Before we talk about the existence of Pashtu literature in those centers, we should not forget about the Loykan royal family of Ghazni which was existed in 8th century. The areas from Gardez to Zabulistan were under their control. They also had a very good relationship with local royal families. The older man of Ghazni Loykan family named Joyer, who lived nearly in 738. The power of this family was eradicated by Sabtgeen (976). According to Abdul Hay Habibi's research, Loykan family seems to be related with Khelji Pashtuns. These Khilji Pashtuns were living in the areas of Zabulistan to Ghazni and still living there.

We have received a Pashtu poem of Loyek of Loykan family. The speaker of the poem is unknown. This poem is taken by Abdul Hay Habibi from Sultan Sakhi Sarwar's hand written book.

pə zəmi razna xaxed loyek loyāno bālə loya
kəx tor be brārlom (bəlom) mahala tāzew pə wala

The interpretation of the poem:

When the superior of Ghazni Loyek were forcefully converted to Islam, another Loyek sent this letter from Kabul which can be interpret as follow.

"Alas! Idol of Loyek is Buried in Ghazni, Loya lost their superiority, don't support Nazian (Arab) I will sent you the army". (Shirzad, 2014 p.23)

The result which is taken from the linguistic analysis of this poem indicate that in the beginning of Islamic period, the Pashtu in the east side were similar with Pahlway language.

After the interpretation of Ghazni Loykan Pashtu poem I will return to the main purpose of the three major centers of Pashtu Literature which established Pashtu Literature in the earlier centuries of Islam. The earlier literature of Pashtu which we received is established in the following three centers.

1. Ghowr

Ghowr is the ancient and historical place of Afghanistan where series of rulers lived in that area. Many of those kings had a very important part in spreading of Islam. Sar-e-pul, Faryab, and Badghes provinces are located in the northeast part of this province. East and west part of this province is bordered with Herat province. The capital of this province is Chaghcharan City which is 38666 km. the altitude of the capital is 2250 meter. (Aryana encyclopedia, 2013 p. 289)

Ghowri Pashtuns are very important branch of Aryaye which came to Afghanistan with other tribes. They were living with their brotherhoods in old Aryana. These tribes and people create the basic of that nation. East branches of them were living in Partia. From old ages, the Soryan of Ghowr was very famous and before Islam they were ruling on their tribal. (Zadran, 2018 p.121)

Pahstuns and Tajik tribes live in Ghowr province. Sultan Ghowry village, Sultan Alaudin village, and historical temple of Jam are important ancient places in Ghowr.

Word Ghowr is derived from (Gar) which mean sun. The rulers of Ghowr are the descendant of Shansab who are originally Sory Pashtuns. Sultan Razia, the ruler of Hindustan belong to this Province.

The evidence related to literature which we have, indicate that the literature which came exist is established from these places, where Pashtuns rules. Among these centers or these ancient places, Ghowr is the first or major center. Also, Ghowr is the historical part of Afghanistan where Amir Karor lived among these local kings. Makhzan Afghan and other books such as Qazi Ataullah (Pashtu History), Sheer Muhammad Gandapori (Khurshid Jahan), and Hayat Khan (Hayat Afghani) claimed that Ghowri or Ghowriakhel is Pashtun tribe who lived in Ghowr. In Kand Bin Kharkhbon Bin Sarhban descendant named Ghowri is mentioned, whose original name was Shaikh Ibrahim. He was born in Ghowr, that why he is called to be Ghowri. His descendant is still called Ghowri or Ghowriakhel. (Shirzad, 2014 p.25)

Afghanistan famous historian Mir Ghulam Mohammad Ghoobar mentioned in his book (Afghanistan wa Nigahi ba Tarekh/ Afghanistan and a look on its history) that by the passing of time Ghowr ancient language left its place to a few local accents and Pashtu. And by the repeated immigration of Pashtuns the Pashtu language become very common there. Before Islam Two brothers named Soor and Saam, were ruling in Ghowr. The elder Soor was a local king and the younger Saam was chief of army.

The named of Ghowr Soori royal family ancestor was Shansab (Green/Blue Horse). His father name was Kharank. He converted to Islam in the times of Hazrat Ali. He is

considered the king of Ghowr. Shansab's son name was Amir Polad who gained his ancestor pride once again. By the time when Abu Muslim Khurasani exile Beni Aumia kinglets from Khurasan and stand by Abas side., Amir Polad exiled Ghowr armies by support of Bin Muslim and try his best to keep the kingdom of Abas safe. (Hewadmal, 2000 p. 28)

Pata Khazana is another origin of Pashtu literature history. Pata Khaza book was written by Dawod Khan in 1729 in the court of Shah Hussain. Mohammad Bin Dawod Hotak book (Larghoni Pokhtana) which was written in 1446 by Shaikh Katta Matizai and Mohammad Bin Ali Albasti book (Trekh Soori) which was written in 1252 claimed that Amir Karor was the son of Amir Polad, who was the king of Ghowr in Mandesh in 756.

Amir Karor captured Balashtan, Khesar, Tamran, and Barkoshak forts and other parts of Ghowr. His kingdom has two capitals Mandesh and Zamindawar. Ibrahim Atai has written in his book (Helmand da Kaltor pa Saha ke) that in winter seasons the capital of Amir Karor was Zamindawar, where he made a castle. He was hunting and poetry there. (Atayee 2010 p.116)

Zamindawar is derived from two words Zon(sun) which refer to English word sun, and Dawar which mean place. It is written in Behqi History:

In 652 Zamindawar was captured by Arabs. Many people were killed from both sides. The number of dead of Arab army reached to Four Thousands (4000). Abdurahman Bin Samra was the chief of Islamic army, who was the governor of Sestan after Rabi Bin Ziyad Haris. Arabs gained a lot of booty, among those they gained the Idol of gold which eyes were made of rubies from Ghowr temple. At that period, the people of Ghowr worship the sun. (Reshad, 2007 p. 43)

The first poet of Pashtu language, whose first poetry is available is the poetry of Amir Karor which is spoken in 756 year in Ghowr.

Zə yəm zmaray pər de neṛəy lə mā atəl nəsta
 Pə hend wo senol wo pər taxār wo pər kābəl nəsta
 bəl pə zābəl nəsta lə mā aləl nəsta
 ɣašay də man me je bərexnā pər mercaməno bānde
 Pə žobla yonəm yar Yāləm pər təxtedəlo bānde
 Pər mātədəno bānde lə mā atəl nəsta
 Zəmā də bariw pər xol tāwiḡi hask pə nəmanj wo pə wiaṛo
 də ās lə so me mjəke reḡdi ɣərona kāndi lataṛ
 kəṛəm eywādona awjār lə mā atəl nəsta
 zəmā də tore tər špol lānde day herāl aw jarom
 ɣəṛj wo bāmyan wo taxār boli nom zəma pə odom
 zə pežandoy yem pə rom lə mā atəl nəsta
 pər marwa zəmā rašay lone dāri daxən ra cəxa
 də harirod pər cəndo zəm təxti pəlan rā cəxa
 rapī zaṛn ra cəxa ləx mā atəl nəsta
 də zaranj soba me də turi pə məx sur wəkṛəo
 pə bādārəy me loṛaway də kāhol də sur wəkṛəo
 stər me tərbur wəkṛəo lə mā aləl nəsta
 xpəlo wəgəfo lara lawr wo perzoyena kawəm
 doy pə dādina xə bāməm xə ye rozna kawəm
 təl ye wadəna kawəm lə mā atəl nəsta
 pər loyo Yəro me waynā dəromi nə pər jando pə tal

narəy zəmə də num me boli pər darij stāyiwāl
pə wərajo špo meyašto kāl lə mā atəl nəsta
(Hotak, 1729 p.34)

As Amir Karor lived in Ghowr, his poems are spoken in Ghowr as well. In this poem, he mentioned his Conquests, victories and glories (honours). The poem consists many old words and literary compositions of pashto language. Recently those words have no usage.

The effects of other languages cannot be seen in the poem because it is written in pure Pashto. It is clear from the poem that Pashto language remained pure from the combination of other languages in the period of Ghowries.

2: Kooh Kisi

From the view of history, Kooh Kisi is the second center for creation of Pashto literature. Like Ghoor province, the slopes of Sulaiman mount is one of the oldest living places of Pashtuns that long before the majority of Pashtuns were living around the mountain.

In some other books, the name of Sulaiman mountain is also called Kooh Kisi and it is still being called Kooh Kisi by most of the Pashtuns. Since the Pashtuns settled around this mountain, they had to have literature, too. And oral verbalism or curtsey is also present on the slopes of this mountain. Hundreds poets were born and trained in the slopes of this mountain that among those poets, some of them are mentioned in Tazkeratul Awlia and Puta Khazana. (Shirzad, 2014 p30)

Professor Abdul Shukoor Rashad said in his book (Geghrafaiyee Yadakhtona): the length of Sulaiman mountain or Kooh Kisi is 600 kilometers and has widened up to Baluchistan. This mountain is divided into two parts and Samkani, Zadran, and Urghoon are located between them. Wazir is in the east of the mountain that it is called Waziristan and it connects with the mountain in the section of Cotel Boolan. Waziristan is located between the two parts of the mountain near to Kowaita, Pekhin, and Boolan.

It's written in other place:

The mountains between Helmand and India frontiers are called Sulaiman mountains and a big Notion is living in the east and west part of this mountain which is named Afghan. And they say that they are Pashtuns. (Reshad, 2007, p. 392)

According to Ustad Rikhteen: its theme or form or text is similar to ancient European poems. As in Rikwaida, in their love for God they mentioned the purity, power, and multiplicity of the prayers. Among the poets raised on the slopes of the mountain, Shaikh Betni can be mentioned who was living in 800 AD.

One of Shaikh Betni's prayers in the Tazkeratul Awlia is Sulaiman Makoo that locates at the head of old or ancient Pashto poetry and points to some things that are related to Aryan ancient thoughts.

Loya xodāya loya xodāya
Stā pə mena pə har jāya

yar walār day drənāwi ke
Tola Žəwi pə zāri ke
dā wagəri der kṛe xodāya
loya kxodāya loya xodāy
dəlta ləg zəmoğ orloal day
oṛ korḡay day woṛ borjal day
mena stā moğ mešta yəo
bəl də čā pə mlə tələ nə yo
da pāləna stā da xodaya
loya xodāya loya xodāxā
(Makoo, 2000 p.18)

In the prayers of Saikh Betni, devine love is expressed in simple and fluent terms and these prayers are known as the origin and beginning of mystical thoughts in Pashto literature. In his prayers, love for man and human values are also evident. He complains about the loneliness of his time environment and wants his environment to be beautiful to humans. Probably, at that time a large number of people were killed by alien rape, and he wrote this poem in order to express a greater interest in the human population. It is noteworthy that in the ancient history books, in addition to Shaikh Betni, Shaikh Ismail and Kharekhtoon are also mentioned.

3: Meltan

Meltan is the third center for creation of Pashto literature. Most historical books testify that Pashtuns migrated to different parts of India for various reasons that the immigration started from the beginning of the Islamic ages. Pashtuns lived there. They gained land and abode, and because of their zeal and wisdom, the rulers and kings took them there, making the head of emirates and government, and later became the ruler and king of India over time.

Doctor Hewad Mal has written about this: in the western parts of Panjab and Meltan, including Pashtoons, Shaikh Hamid Loudi was appointed by the Bahoor Rajas and Panjab as the rulers of Meltan and Laghman during the (980 AD). And Rajas Jesbal raised his anxiety on the western frontiers under the Pashtoons government. In this way, during the second half of the tenth century, the basis for the rule of the Loudis in Meltan was laid by Shaikh Hamid Loudi. Similarly, in the Islamic era, Pashtuns accessed to power in some parts of India and also in some parts of Panjab, Meltan, Pakhtunkhwa, and Afghanistan. Meltan was the center of their kingdom.

The dynasty of this kingdom continued in the Loudis dynasty in Meltan. When Shaikh Hamid Loudi died, his son Nasar Loudi accessed to power and then Nasar's son dawood Loudi was appointed as the ruler. This royal period lasted until (1041 AD) in Meltan.

We know two poets of Shaikh Hamid's parents that only two pieces of poetry are remained from them to us. The first poet is Nasar Loudi son of Hamid Loudi and the second one is Shaikh Razi Loudi that he is Hamid's nephew.

These two poets are introduced by Puta Khazana from the book of Keeled Camrani that Camran Khan has quoted or taken it from Ahmad Ben Saeed's book (Akhbarul Loudi). Mohammad son of Hotak writes about this in his book or

work (Putā Khazana): Camran Khan has quoted about the Meltan Loudis' kingdom from Ahmad Loudi's book in (1629 AD). Ahmad son of Saeed Loudi has written a book in (1287 AD) that its name was (Elamul Loudi Fel Akhbarul Loudi). Mohammad son of Hotak believed that the book was kept by Camran and he has used in his works. (Hewadmal, 2000 p. 36)

Writer of Keeled Camrani book was Camran Khan and he was one of the five sons of Sado Khan from Sadozayee nation. Sado Khan was born in 1558. Ahmad Shah Baba was one of his sons. Camran Khan was one of the famous elders of Kandahar which was killed in a war in 1643. All the contents of Keeled Camrani have not been obtained, and only Nasar Loudi's and shaikh Hamid Loudi's is quoted by Mohammad Hotak in Pakhtunkhwa. (Tayer, 1979 p.40)

As it is mentioned in Putā Khazana, when Hamid Loudi became the king of Meltan, he sent his nephew Razi Loudi to Pakhtunkhwa to preach for infidels or nonmuslims about the Islam religion and guide them to accept the best religion (Islam) which finally, lots of people accepted it. It is said that Razi Loudi heard a news about his cousin Nasar Loudi that Nasar Loudi has turned away from his religion and disbelieved to his religion anymore. Then, Razi Loudi wrote the following poem in the form of letter and sent it to him.

də elhād pə lor de trapləp
groh de zəmoğ wəkorāwə
moğ ronəlay pə zyārəna
tā pə tor wətorāwə
larjən wale grohedəlay
če de goxe āṛawə
haya groh de wəs aṛa kəṛ
če plaro de rənāwə
ludi stā pə nāmə spək šo
kə har co mo drənawə
naşra nə ye lə kahāla
ludi nə ye pə kāwə
zəmoğ rarā da stā də groha
də wraj loy pə rəṛāwə

This letter was sent to Nasar Loudi from Pakhtunkhwa by Razi Loudi and Nasar Loudi replied . . .

Də lhād pə tor toran yəm
Zə Larjən xo molhed nə yəm
Zə mā dəxna hase torā kəṛi
kə mohed də daxnd yəm
lə eslama nə trapləma
torāno cəxa pə toraploəyəm
groh me haya larjənay day
wəs ham kroṛ pə larjəna yəm
də eslām pə hask ba jaləm
wa torāno tayarə yəm
də lodi zoy sonati yəm
də hamid lə lowaṛ kəhālə yəm
torānay dəxn če wāyi
zə lə groha pə aṛa yəm
dā ye tor tāse dro hawi
zə momin stāse pə tələyəm
də doxano waynāwe mə yaḡa
zə lodi yma xo zə yəm

In the above poem, first, Shaikh Razi Loudi said to his cousin that you disbelieve to your religion anymore. Have you turned away from your religion? But Nasar Loudi answered him gently. It was written that I believe to Sunat. I believe strongly, deeply, and completely to our religion (Islam). These are accusations or blames and they are all our enemies' conspiracies. I was a Muslim, I am a Muslim, and I will be a Muslim. These are all accusations or wrong speeches.

These two poems are in the form of debate and discussion or have the form of a dispute or chat that have been exchanged for letters. And those are dedicated to defending this sacred religion of Islam and following the Mohammad's tradition. There are some grammatical and oral terms or structures which are not being used in Pashto slangs now.

Zulmai Hewadmal has expressed many facts about the above poems. He writes that the family of Loudi Melton was opposite to Sultan Mohammad Ghaznawi. Or they had competitiveness with another and Ghaznawis were always attacking on Meltons until Ghaznawian won to eradicate Loudis' kingdom. These slanders or accusations were completely unjustified until they were used as a pretext for war. Although, both the family of Melton and Ghaznawi were Muslims, then, how could one Muslim attack another. So, these were the pretexts or slanders that They wanted to attack each other. (Hewadmal, 2000 p. 36)

When we see Nasar Loudi's answer in the letter. He replied that I am also one of you, and I will follow our ancestors' way. Melatn is one of the oldest place of India that Pashto literature is created there. Then, most of Pashtuns went to India and settled there. Besides, lots of facilities and ways were paved to Pashto literature.

2. Conclusion

We discussed and showed three centers for creation of Pashto literature in the previous discussion that the first Pashto works were created or made in these centers in the first centuries of Islamic era. At that time, the majority of Pashtuns were living in this place. Ghoor, Kooḥ Kisi, and Melton were the three centers that Pashtoons had local government on these places or centers, and or they lived under their own tribal system.

The works or artifacts of these centers are in close proximity to ancient literature and the poetic metaphors follow the Pashto language itself. These poems do not express the subjects and the thoughts, but rather demand that the time and consideration be given to the Pashtuns position and be proud of their war records.

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