

**By Jan Mahmmd**

The poet-politician gave a new meanings and form to Balochi poetry. The concept of freedom and sovereignty were beautifully portrayed. He opposes Balochistan losing its independence.

The degrading poverty .His poetry is the greatest manifestation and the most profound expression of the Baloch political and social approach since the early thirties .His exhortation to the Baloch to up hold their tradition is a clear sign of the deep-rooted hatred felt towards the new political dispensation.

His poems soon turned to popular slogans and were the subject of discussion by the elite.

Mir Gul Khan Naseer was the greatest revolutionary poet in Baloch literary history. His work embraced some fifty years of his life. He participated in the Baloch struggle for national independence and remained behind bars for several years from 1941 to 1979. He was a socialist by inclination and opposed the tribal system and its attendant injustices. His contribution to Baloch political awareness is overwhelming. Mir Gul Khan Naseer considered himself destined to guide the people towards social awareness and the achievement of their political rights. He assigned himself the task of educating the youth for the great cause for which he suffered immensely during his lifetime.

He was uncompromising, honest and respectable. As far back as November 1936 he composed a poem praying that he might have courage and strength to awaken the people from ignorance, so that they would be able to find a proper place among world nations once again. The poem, which is in Urdu, shows his determination for a lifelong struggle in a cause, which was very close to his heart<sup>6</sup>.

Mir Gul Khan Naseer is an institution in Balochi poetic history. His message is impressive. It circles round the Baloch and their history. His works portray a deep hatred for Pakistan and its institutions, which he regarded as corrupting and degenerating in substance and nature. The new generation of revolutionary poets has been greatly influenced by his philosophy. I have not attempted any translation of his work for the simple reason that none of his poems can be singled out for omission for the purposes of this chapter. A separate treatment would be required if Mir Gul Khan's poetry were to be analyzed in the context of the Baloch national struggle and its impact on youth.

Mir Gul Khan Naseer is the author of many books on Baloch history and traditions. His poetic work includes three books: Gul Bang, Shapgerouk and Grand, Gul bang, published in 1952, contains fifty-one poems. His second publication, Shapgerouk was printed in 1964. It includes forty-three poems. The Grand appeared in 1971 and contains some seventy poems. Mir Gul Khan had a prolific pen and a philosophical mind. His treatment of the Baloch social and traditional ethos depicts a high sense of history and culture. His poems describe the Baloch and their country in a true historic perspective. Mir Gul Khan was the product of agonizing socio-political conditions. He saw the British Raj in Balochistan, a brief period of Baloch sovereignty and ultimately Balochistan losing its independence and merging into a newborn state. British rule perfected a tribal system molded to the requirements of an alien rule, with the sardars exploiting the Baloch masses. The pre-independence era was also the period of the Khan's oppressive rule with the connivance of his British masters. The short period of Baloch independence from August 1947 to' March 1948 witnessed conspirational maneuvers against the Baloch, culminating in the merger of their state into Pakistan. The post—1948 years are the time of constant struggle to gain some sort of political and social rights. Mir Gul Khan Naseer participated actively in the process and his attitude was clearly shaped by these events.

The periodic uprisings and deep discontent among the Baloch after 1948 are by no means an isolated

phenomenon. It is fairly common in Balochi literature and folk traditions. Disapproval of the accession to Pakistan was widespread. The Khan is greatly hated. This hatred is widely depicted in folk literature as well as in poetry. To quote a single instance, a cartoon was carried by Balochi, (Karachi) in December 1957 showing the Khan of Kalat prostrate before the Pakistan authorities, asking for privileges. The cartoon is captioned” Dream, this is your luck. Our ‘Khan-e--Muazim’, do not dream for the power (and respect) of previous days”

Since the ‘great betrayal the Baloch poet watches every event with distaste and expresses his resentment for the socio—political set—up. The opposition to the accession of the Khanate to Pakistan was upheld and his hero Abdul Kareem Khan, the brother of Khan of Kalat, Ahmed Yar Khan, is regarded as one of the great patriots.

In 1958 came the first encounter with the Pakistan Army, when Mir’ Namrouz Khan and a few others revolted and took to the mountains. Apparently they were aggrieved because of the arrest of the Khan of Kalat by Pakistan’s army in a pre-dawn attack on his residence in Kalat on 6th October 1958; but the causes were deep down. Mir Namrouz Khan and his followers were clearly against the Khan’s decision to accede to Pakistan, and when the Khan showed a semblance of authority by demanding certain rights, they readily pledged their support. The Insurgency had, however, wider repercussions.

Leadership of that uprising was in the hands of petty tribal notables, and in some cases they behaved in a manner prejudicial to their professed aims; still they were regarded as heroes by the masses. In certain places many people were harassed by elements claiming contacts with the Yaghis, the rebels, sometimes alienating people in the Makkuran region; but as a whole the people considered them the upholders of their pride and self—respect. Baloch literature during and after this period is full of praise for them. The pattern then changed, and the educated class played a greater role in 1973-77 uprising. This event has been regarded as the beginning of the Baloch ‘Liberation Movement’.

Every Baloch in all walks of life supported the ‘movement’, which was so popular with the people that the Pakistan government decided not to trust the local people and brought in on a massive scale, army officers seconded to the civil services, to hold the administrative assignments in the province. By 1975—76 almost every district head was an army officer or a civil servant from the Panjab and North West Frontier Province.

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