

The Revolutionary Aspect of Pashto Tapa

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Abstract

Tapa is the oldest and most popular form of Pashto folk literature. It is Tapa which has remained the most useful source of expression of sentiments of Pashtuns especially female folk. Tapa has given place to many subject i. e social, religious, romantic, political, cultural etc. In this paper I will seek to highlight its revolutionary aspect with examples.

Folk songs reflect the very internal feelings, emotions and sentiments of a particular area or locality therefore its universality and emotional effects cannot be ignored. These songs keep honesty, sincerity and truthfulness. Tapa or landay is the oldest and most popular form of Pashto Literature having significance role in Pashto Folklore literature. Pashto Tapa is the mirror of Pashtun society, civilization and culture, reflects its very way of living. No such example is available in any nation's history. Tapa or Landay consisted of one and half lines and each Tapa is called an essay as a whole. In other words we can say that like different stanzas of Ghazal, Tapa also narrates precise essay and each subject of a Tapa is presented as a whole. Tapa enjoys a world of emotions, sentiments, hopes, ambitions, dreams and inspiration. According to Dr Anwar Ul Haq "Pashto Tapa is the most popular, most attractive and lovable form of Pashto literature". Tapa keeps honesty, sincerity and truthfulness. It is the mirror of Pashtun society, civilization and culture, reflects its very way of living. No such example is available in any history of the other nations. Tapa or Landay is the one and half stanza and each Tappa is called an essay as a whole. In other words we can say that like different stanzas of Ghazal, Tapa also narrates precise essays and each subject of a Tapa is presented as a whole. Tappa enjoys a world of emotions, sentiments, hopes, ambitions, dreams and inspiration. According to Dr Anwar Ul Haq "Pashto Tappa is the most popular, most attractive and lovable form of Pashto literature".

There will hardly be a pashtun who does not remember one or two tappa. One of the important aspects of Pashto Tapa is that no one can claim as its creature nor its date of creation is known. The singer may be male or female but largely Tapa is sung by women.

Pointing out the life of Tapa, the author of Khurshed-i- Jehan says "in the army of Sultan Mehmood Ghaznavi a Pashtun Commander called Malik Khalo who resided in the nearby area of Gomal Pass, when the army reached nearby Gomal Pass, the beloved of Malik Khalo sung this Tapa,

چې د خالو لښکرې راشي
زه به گومل ته د خپل یار دیدن له ځممه [1]

When the army of khalo will reach Gomal, I will go to Gomal to meet my beloved”

This Tapa has been given place in a book "Patta Khazana" by Abdul Haye Habibi. It is believed that this Tapa is round about 1000 years old. One of the important aspects of Pashto Tapa is that it is colored by different features of human life. It covers religion, romance, history, politics and different social subjects. It is one of the bad lucks of Pashtun society that it has been passed through different revolutionary and conflicted stages.

Arsala Khan remained a closed enemy of the British. He used to be always involved in clashes with them and consequently was martyred. His belongings were destroyed by the enemy and his family was put in hot water. His daughters were brought before General Robert and at that moment someone sung this tapa,

د ارسلا خان کجیرې لونی
اوس د ډپتی په مخکښې ځی سرتور سرونه [2]

The beautiful daughters of Arsala Khan are brought naked head before General Robert. A Pashtun warrior named Raham Dad Khan belonged to a village called Kopar in District Mardan. He had taken part in a war against British at Kopar. When the war was ended, he came back to home with wounded body when saw by one of the females, she sung this Tapa,

رامداد دې دا ځلې خدائے جوړ کړي
که دوباره په کوپر جنگ وي مړ دې شنه [3]

May God gifted Ramdad with health if there is a war again, he may die once again but after fighting gallantry

But Raham Dad died of severe wounds and then the female sung this Tapa,

رامداده څیرې گریوان راشه
په کوپر راشه جینکی دې یادوینه [4]

Oh Raham Dad comes once again in war tearing clothes; the virgins of Kopar stand to well comes you.

When a Pashtun warrior was put to death by his opponents, a Tapa was sung,

فیض محمد غازي ئې مړ کړو
که د اسلام په زړه ئې کېښودل داغونه [5]

Faiz Muhammad Ghazi was killed in war which is a great lose to Islam In 1895 when the British attacked Chitral, a pashtun woman raised the slogan,

چرته لندن چرته چترال دے
بې ننگي زور شوہ انگرېزان چترال ته ځينه [6]

There is no comparison of London with Chitral. Dishonor is in lowest of its display, therefore British arriving in Chitral.

Tribal belt is the area wherein different famous freedom movements took places. The women folk of the area always used to insist their male counterparts toward Holy War Like,

ځان د وطن په شمع څار کا
چې پتنگان دې زیارتونو له راځينه [7]

Scarify yourself for the cause of your homeland. Nightingales will fly over your tomb to show their respect for you.

جانانه جنگ نه په شانۀ شي
چې د همزولو راله رانه شي پيغورونه [8]

My Beloved, don't retreat in war, otherwise my companions will ashamed (Peghor) me for this very act of dishonor

In the year 1898 when the British occupied Malakand, they have deployed Maj. Dean as Political Agent. He was a clever person so he planned to impressed and oblige the notable, prominent personalities of the area by offering them perks and benefits. The British went through an agreement with the people and obliged them to support the government politically, and to consider the enemy of the government as their own. Those who were strong opponents of the Government were still in struggles to harm the government. In 1897 when the independence movement against the British was getting momentum and the British were applying their utmost power to sabotage the independence movement, in those days someone sung this Tapa,

توتې توتې په تورو راشې
د بې ننگي اواز دې رامه شه مئينه [9]

I will accept your body cut in parts by the enemy but I will never accept your dishonor and retreat in the war.

په ملاکنډ ئې تويې چل کړې
تر رنگ ماله پورې ئې اوشيندل گلونه [10]

British using cannons to destroy Malakand, their Gun powder coloring Rang Mala in red color.

Likewise many more such Tapas were sung in the context of war in Malakand which highlights the role of females in motivating and encouraging the youngsters toward Jihad (Holy War).

Pashtuns are freedom lovers by nature. They have great regards and respect for their soil and people. They wish and desire to strictly abide by the rules of the unwritten constitution called Pukhtunwali. Although they might feel pain in personal in accepting the codes of Pukhtunwali like, Ghairat (Honor), Path, Nang, Nanawati, Nangyali etc but will never compromise on the principles of Pukhtunwali and can never afforded any damage or disrespect to this very constitution. Some time it happens that their internal emotions, feelings, sentiments compel them to cross the limits of Pukhtunwali. Those sentiments might be the result of their internal hate, love; quarrels, honor, killings etc. and such sentiments are highlighted in Tapa.

Tapa is usually sung in very simple and understandable language. Tapa is free of any impact and influence of other languages. It is unique in its form, in structure and the way it is performed.

Most of the parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are barren and harsh solid similarly its inhabitants inherit qualities of hard working, sternness, strong, tough, hard in physics and straight forward. They always ready to scarify their belongings, children and even their own selves for the protection, defending their homeland and for the very rights of their people. Pashtuns consider Puhktunwali as parallel to their religious ideology. Hence Pashtuns are human beings so sometimes they intentionally or unintentionally cross the borders of Pukhtunwali and their disloyalty with Puhktunwali is usually expressed in Tapa. What is prohibited by Islam is actually prohibited by Pukhtunwali. It is Pashto Tapa which enjoys most dramatically characters of folk life. Pashtun woman enjoys more vital role in disseminating Pashto folklore teachings. A French Philosopher Waltier says” The first learning place for a child is his or her mother lap. Mother’s lap and the home environments in which a child opens his or her eyes truly called the first ever learning and educational institution. It is woman who always use to be hit and targeted by the so called customs and traditions despite this discriminative act, she always ready to accept the worst ever punishment by the society for not having obeying these rules but still she firmly abide by these rules in vigor. She always uses to respect the values and norms offered in form of the codes of Pukhtunwali. It is said that usually Tapa reflects the very internal emotions, feelings and sentiments of Pashtun woman so most singers and creators of Tapa are female as compared to male counterpart.

Pashtun woman can rightly be called as the compendium of Haya therefore she cannot express openly what does she feel internally. Since Tappa keeps no creator, no history therefore for a Pashtun woman, Tapa is the best platform to express her feelings.

خدایه په خه گناه کړېږم
لکه ستي په سرو لمبو کښې ناسته یمه [11]

Oh My Lord, what sin I have done. Why I have been thrown in to flames without assigning reasons.

Pashtun woman does not like coward children, she always wish and desire to have brave and gallant offspring she says,

خدايه بې ننگه زوې رانکړې
که ئې ديدن پسې پنده په سترگو شومه [12]

I pray to Allah to bestow me with a brave kid. I don't want and pray for a cowered one provided if I lose my eye sight.

In the end I would like to say something about the usefulness and importance of Tapa. This is one of the realities that in past whenever religion lost its grifth on the society, it gave place to nationalist ideas and nationalism goes parallel to nature. If we speak about Islam, it is the only religion which provides a comprehensive guideline and way of life for its believers. Islam demands to abide by its basic principles. Those elements of nationalism not contradictory to Islamic principles are called Islam in itself. Folklore literature of a nation can be called the real asset of that very nation. Pashtun as a nation has a very rich folklore history took birth thousands years ago. Tapa is called the most important and integral part of Pashto Folk literature. It is Tapa which gave recognition to Pashto folklore literature. Nowadays like other forms of Pashto literature, Tapa also losing its value and identity but the role it has played in past cannot be ignored and without reference to Pashto Tapa no debate no history of Pashto folklore can be comprehensive and conclusive one in all respects.

References

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