


Political Stability as A Major Concern in Pashtun Women's Poetry

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ABSTRACT

Much of human emotions are expressed via poetry and other literary genres, but when it comes to women in Pashtun society, we lose their voices. Afzal Raza believes Pashtun women cannot speak about their pain, misery, or other feelings (Raza). As women could be persecuted for writing poetry in Pashtun society, much of the folklore poetry was anonymized by female speakers. Recently, the New York Times reported about several young girls set themselves on fire after they were caught reciting poetry to an FM radio from home (Griswold). Reading about women casualties in their poetry, Raza shall be accurate in saying that Tapa or Landay (two-verse poetry) is the ancient form of poems created mainly by women that still exists as its writer is unknown but has its female speaker for us to understand it. To study Pashtun women and their poetry, Tapa or Landay is the primary source to begin (Raza).

Keywords: *Pashtun Women, Poetry, Concerns, Call for rights and status.*

Introduction to Pashtun Women's Poetry

Poetry Magazine published numerous Landay in their collection. The publishers believe Landay is the most basic source to hear Pashtun women. On the other hand, it is famous poetry in Afghanistan. In their collection of Landays we read about women's current concerns. These concerns include peace, social injustice, forced marriages, education, political instability, moral man, poverty, and national unity. For instance, the Poetry Magazine has collected the following Landay:

You sold me to an old man, father!

May God destroy your home, I was your daughter. (Poetry Magazine)

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I will explore women's socio-cultural concerns through my research in detail. Shortly, in this two-verse poem, we read that the speaker is a young girl who complained and cursed her father for his decision about her marriage to an older man. It will be discussed how arranged marriages take place in Pashtun society in detail in the following pages. Anyhow, Professor Afzal Raza believes that women's part in Pashto literature could be found in folklore; women could help the folkloric poems to survive for thousands of years. (Raza)

To prove women's wit and wisdom, both Raza and Poetry Magazine compiled on Pashtun Women Landays based on the poems' themes and subjects.

Themes: Patriotism

Even if, I live a miserable life ahead

I would not stop my beloved to join war for the country (Raza)

The following Landay is believed to be attributed to an Afghan folk hero, Malalai, a Pashtun poet. Poetry Magazine stated that Malalai was an Afghan warrior who fought alongside the commander Ayub Khan to defeat the British at the Battle of Maiwand on July 27, 1880.

I'll make a tattoo from my lover's blood
and shame every rose in the green garden.

We can read several concerns in the above poem as *Poetry Magazine* compiled. "Its themes: war — jang; a woman's pride in her lover's courage and in his willingness to sacrifice himself for homeland — watan; love — meena; separation — biltoon; grief — gham, are the five most common currents that run through these poems." *Poetry Magazine* shed more light on the poem tattoo is mentioned in this poem, which was common for Pashtun women to receive in order to avoid evil looks. The magazine claimed that baby girls are much less likely to be tattooed these days, as the practice is considered superstitious and un-Islamic. The faces of older Pashtun women, however, are dotted with these rough-hewn circles, moons, and flowers: living reminders of another time. (Poetry Magazine)

As earlier claimed by Raza that, Landay is poetry sung by women with mostly female speakers, I would like to present some examples based on the following categories.

Patriotism

If my life is in vain

I will not stop my beloved to go to war for the country

که تور اوربل مي ميراتيږي

په وطن جنگ دی جانان نه منع کوم

Excuse to meet the beloved

May you are the flower at the bank of river

So I can smell you when pretending take water from the river

خداي دي د رود غاري گل کره

چي د اوبو په بهانه درشم بوي دي کرم

Condolences

If you are bothered by my beauty

I will sleep on the ground till I became pale

چي په بنايست مي خفه کيږي

نور به د زمکي خوب کوم چي زيره شمه

Rain

Rain, slow down

There is no shelter on my lover

بارانه رو رو پري وريږه

به مسافراشنا مي نشته دالانونه

Trust

I trust my lover

If road is to tough, he will reach me out

زما په خپل لالي باور دی

(Raza) که د چروپه خوکلار وي رابه شينه

Apart from folkloric poems called Landai or Teppa, we are now on the journey to explore those poetry written by Pashtun women and have been documented. Despite constant typing errors, Professor Afzal Raza wrote a very important book in the name of Pinza Shami (Five Candles).

Mr. Raza concluded in his book that Ulfat Begum Dard was a "famous" poetess of the Pakhtu language of her era. She was born in Nawi Kalay of Sawabi District in Peshawar in 1952. The source adds that after her parents' earlier death, Ulfat Begum had no choice but to hold the family together and sooner took the responsibility of bringing up her brothers and sisters. It appears Ulfat Begum wrote several poems about her feelings of losing her parents a lot earlier than she could expect. In one of her poems, it says:

I always kept the glory of this garden
Candles died; I turn my heart into torch
Ay, my life what will be your ending

The one I was thinking of gardener turn out to be hunter (Raza 80)

Contrary to Ulfat Begum's exposing her feelings about her life Selma Shaheen says it is not simple to unveil Pashtun woman. It requires much time, energy, and study to know what these women have been going through and what they have been thinking of. Selma Shaheen states in one of her poems as follows:

No one can read me
I am complicated like a book
to some I appear shore
to some ocean
ما هيڅوک لوستی نه شي
زه مشکل غوندي کتاب يم
چا ته ساحل ښکاره شم
چا دپاره زه درياب يم

In her book 'Life Lover,' Sayeda Hasina Gul wishes for peace in the region where no bullet shall be shot, and no girl is persecuted for family honor. The following poem suggests that in Pashtun communities, many lives are taken for family honor. Surprisingly, Pashtuns are Moslems. Justice and court are clearly described in Islamic teachings. Marriage by consent is recommended in Islam, while marriage by force is not legal. If any party commits it, he/she should be punished with two years in jail, and Nikah is broken.

Another year has passed
I had dreamed it
I had wished

in the entire year
that there is no dezz
no bullet
from revolver
or a gun shot
in this year
a man should not be killed in his pool of blood
and there is no girl murdered for honor (Gul, Zwand Parasta 19)

Wars in the region are as old as forty years, beginning with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Much of the Pashto poetry is written to praise the peace and despise the war. In the following poem, Hasina Gul is asked why there is no peace in Pashtuns territories despite prayers and songs devoted to peace.

War
Neither with my song
nor with my prayers
God knows
Where it has been hidden?
Years have passed
I haven't heard from peace

جنگ

نه په سندرو زما راغله

نه د زړه په دعا

خدای خبر

دا په کوم یو گوټ کښې د دنیا پټه ده؟

کلونه وشول

(Gul, Zwand Parasta 35) زه د سولې نه خیرنه شومه

Full of imagery, 'Fresh Hope' is written by Sayeda Hasina Gul. The speaker of her poem has been waiting a long time to see peace in the country and nearby regions. Pashtun territories have been a yard of bloodshed for the past four decades. Peace and stability are one of the biggest social and basic concerns that Pashtun women poets devoted their big part of writing to.

Fresh hope
I am at the doorstep of my life
sitting
looking forward to
my hair got white
I have no tooth in my mouth
But I have one hope
in my heart is still fresh
that peace should come

I am looking forward to peace (Gul, Zwand Parasta 36)

It has been tragic for people in the region because of blood and instability, which cost humans and women their freedom of movement, education, and other social rights that an ordinary person can exercise. What a war-like region looks like, Hasina Gul provides an image and explanation in her following poem.

It has been a tragedy
Everywhere there are funerals, and candlelight vigils
In the country, both sides of the borderline
The flames and gun powder are in powerful mod
War got forty years old
But
Never ended
وير دی
خای په خای دی فاتحي، جنازی
وطن کښې لږ او بر دا اور او د بارودو زور دی
جنگ د څلویښتو کالو شو
خو

چرته ختم نه شو (Gul, Zwand Parasta 55)

Through their poetry, women raised their voices against bloodshed in the region, specifically in Pashtun territories. In the past forty years, Afghanistan witnessed two invasions. The Soviet Union invasion and NATO invasions both caused damage to Afghanistan, and then terrorism hunted Pashtun areas in Pakistan. We read poetry themed with peace and stability. The

following poem by Hasina Gul explains the exhaustion of its speaker from experiencing thousands of ways to be brutalized.

We are Pakhtuns – both sides have witnessed funerals

Funerals after funerals we have seen

Like a red rose I saw my heart wounded

In the pool of blood, I saw the body of both sides

It was Abraham sacrifice but I was being slaughtered

In the history of my lifetime, I saw Eid like this

يو پښتانه په لروبر مو جنازي وليدي

په جنازوپسي مو ډيري جنازي وليدي

د سور گلاب په شان مي غوند د زره پرهر وليدو

په وينو سرو كي مي وجود د لروبر وليدو

هم قرباني د ابراهيم وه خو هم زه قتلېدم

ما د خپل ژوند د تاريخ داسي هم اختر وليدو

(Gul, Las ki Mi Sta Las Way 74 - 75)

This piece of poetry by Hasina Gul adds to the region's complaint about war and bloodshed. One of Pashtun women's basic life and societal concerns is peace and stability. The following poem asks how long it will take for the bloodshed to end: “How long the flames of gunpowder – Will leave scares on my bright forehead.” War has been taking so many lives in the region. In her poem, Hanifa tells us there are many new graves of youth in the graveyard. More new graves mean war is still going on. It is not only the war taking lives; extra judiciary killing is staggering. Peace is one of the primary concerns of Pashtun women. The following poem is a painful story of ongoing conflict and bloodshed: The Moazin calls the dead to come to the mosque – Our mosque is ruined, and our people have no altar. Hanifa Zahid wrote beautiful poetry. Compared to other women poets, Zahid is much positive, but she also expresses her disappointment there in this poem. 'The ship of my hopes will not arrive to the shore (safely) – Zahidah! Uselessly you are looking for shores. (Zahid 151)

The disappointment comes from the destruction caused by the ongoing conflict, and Hanifah Zahid, as a woman poet, mourns the destruction of Afghanistan, asking who did so. Much of the poetry by women poets in the region is about peace and stability. Naturally, the four

decades-long conflict in Afghanistan damaged all sectors of life. It shook the foundation for peace in this region. After all, poets felt this damage, and they wrote about it.

How badly my beautiful flower garden has been burnt

Look at my county

Who has turned my parental residency into smoke?

Look at my country

څنگه لولپه شو بڼایسته بڼکل کلشن زما

وگورئ وطن زما

چا لوگی کر دا د پلار نیکه مسکن زما

وگورئ وطن زما (Zahid 158)

Armed conflict ruins villages and cities. Afghanistan has been experiencing decades of wars, which left the country with no infrastructure. Since 2001, the international community contributed enormous assistance to Afghanistan but could not change the country for the better because of corruption. Among the significant contributors is India, which spent millions on Afghanistan's infrastructure to make this country self-sufficient. However, there is one core part that Afghans should do: political stability. Because of no political stability, we read that infrastructures are ruined, as Hanifa wrote in her poem: 'Museums are sold, books are looted – Highways got damaged; mosques destroyed.' And because of witnessing all this destruction, the poem's speaker, whose first person point of view is in pain: 'Myself is set on fire.' The poem continues, and we read about more damage, unemployment, poverty, orphans, and Afghans' humiliation by their own hands.

Look at poor grooming in the streets

How spoiled were they, and how orphans they became?

How my noble people got humiliated

Look at my country (Zahid 159)

Meanwhile, another Pashtun woman poet Asma Ikhlas is looking for a solution and wondering if parenting went wrong. 'Something went wrong with parenting –something wrong with patriotism.'

Or we are God cursed people

That we, sisters and brothers happy apart from each other (Ikhlas 51)

The misery of people in Pashtun society has many factors. One of them that we read in women's poetry are foreign invasion, lack of national unity and patriotism, lack of education, and many more, but this is the first time our attention is drawn to the most important factor that can cause damage to the society.

One of the most potent poem pieces is the following stanza by Hanifa Zahid. The speaker of the poem hears nothing good or promising but war over and over. As a human, she expects some good moments and nice conversations where people talk about flowers and love. However, unfortunately, there is nothing like that happening. Meanwhile, it reveals the speaker's dismay by wondering whether people would prefer discussion over physical confrontation. Let's read the poem.

In that village, there is noise of stoning

I hear nothing of flower and dew

Today, the gun's language is popular

Who will accept the language of pen

په دغه كلي كي د كائود ويشتلو شور دی

هيڅ پکيني نه اورم د گل او د شينم خبري

نن په نړۍ كي پرمختللي د توپک ژبه ده

(Zahid 158) په چا به ومني په څوکه د قلم خبري

How long will it take for Afghanistan and the region to be peaceful? Asma Ikhlas is asking. As we read in the news, peace is deteriorating in the region. It requires enormous efforts to make all parties agree to a common cause. A common cause is the region's prosperity, but as political tension is always high in the sub-continent, peace in Afghanistan also depends on its eastern neighbors. NATO's invasion of Afghanistan did not make Afghanistan a more peaceful country, but it gave birth to more violence and extremism. Anyhow, local people pay the price. And, as we read earlier, when there is war, life is not improving, and the question is how long it will take for the peace to be restored: 'How much? Every day, I will be crying –

how long? I will be crying everyday'. As the poem develops, it says there is no sign of peace because gun is still a popular toy in the region because men are still not soft in their hearts to prefer peace over armed conflict. 'so far, there is war and gun – so far, every heart is tough' (Ikhlas 58 - 59).

Pashtun territory lies in the middle of south and central Asia. It connects important parts of the world where their natural resources are in central Asia and the continent's population is in south

Asia, also called the sub-continent. In the past one hundred years, Pashtuns' territories have been home to three superpowers' invasions, and the latest one was the NATO invasion that started in 2001 and ended in August 2021. Because of foreign invasion, life did not improve for Pashtuns; infrastructures were damaged, education was misleading, and war shadowed every aspect of life. Asma Ikhlas covered the entire story in the following stanza, which claims many sacrifices for peace. However, the misery of war is still upon people: 'Anywhere there is instability, it will be on this soil – And where there is disrespect, it will be on this soil' (Ikhlas 91). In the meantime, Asma calls for change as other Pashtun poets. As the poem develops, we read: 'Change is needed, light is required for our land – to be peaceful, Ikhlas! We want that world'.

بدلون پکار دی زمونږ خاورې له رڼا پکار ده

(Ikhlas 145) چې په کښې امن وي اخلاص هغه دنيا پکار ده

KaYenath, another young poet, explains why there is no peace yet and supports Asma in her call for change. In the following poem, we read that there will be no peace because of gun culture. There will be peace when men give up on guns, and foreign invasions are no longer happening. We read: 'As gun powder and gun is dominating – hopes for life have been washed in dirt' (Tanha, De Mini Kainat 78). Living in one of the most geopolitical geography, Pashtuns experienced enormous violence. Because of these hurdles and instability, no good governance occurred in Pashtun territories. As the poem develops, it further provides an image of misery and a sad environment: let's read the following poem.

How you will feel the sweetness of peace

Where there is too much talks about wars

KaYenath! No one have ever laughed

Well, there is too much talks about sobbing

څه به د امن له خوړو خبر شو

چې د جگړو، خبرې ډیرې کیږي

کاینات، چا هم خندا ونه کړه

(Tanha, De Mini Kainat 94) بس، د سلگو خبرې ډیرې کیږي

And a moment of a life lived in peace is appreciated by women poets as we read a piece of poem by Farishta Bahar: 'Thanks, that Eid passes without bloodshed – Everyone has set to live a life.' The speaker of the poem asks if there is no war anymore as she sees the white doves

return to their homes and fields. 'Truly, Afghan became liberated of war – As the doves return to life' (Bahar 35 - 36). Farishta Bahar criticizes male poets for writing about women's hair while the absolute misery of Pashtun people is not addressed. Let's read the poem as follows:

I keep my Zulfi (long hair) open, I don't do hair-nots
 This liar is writing on my hair- nots
 Mothers became Boori, girls widowed, and we are called terrorists
 Wondering! Who will write on Pakhtoons (Bahar 43)

زلفې خورې ساتم کمځۍ مې چرته جوړې نه دي
 دا دروغژن مې په کمځو باندې لیکنه کوي
 مېنډې شوې بورې پیغلي کوندي لاتر هګر یادیرو
 رښتیا به څوک په پښتنو باندې لیکنه کوي

Saba Rasooli, a Pashtun women poet, published several books. Tah Ranghli (translated in English as 'You never visited me') is one of the most exciting books. One of her poems in this book is the following stanza, asking who has been involved in wars. In women's poetry, we read several metaphorical names for the killers. These names include gun seller, warmonger, bloodsucker, hunter, and many others. Saba Rasooli is questioning the identity and origin of those killing people. Let's read the stanza:

Who has killed the children of my country?
 They killed the parents and mothers widowed
 Who has bombed the mosques?
 Who have spray acids on beautiful girls?
 دا څوک دی چې یتیم یې کړ او لاد مې د وطن؟
 پلرونه ترینه وژني ځوانې میندې کونډوي
 دا څوک دی چې هم ولي جو ماتونه په بمونو
 (Rasooli 33) دا څوک دي چې تیزاب ورپاشوي په ښکلونجونو؟

At the same time, Lyma Derman expresses her feelings about peaceful life as the poem develops; it adds: 'If there was peace, I will be doctor – you will be my security guard.' And if peace creates political stability, the speaker of the poem is willing to carry on her books and school. 'Lymah! To become a culture here – That I mostly carry book with me' (Derman 15).

Education is a fundamental human right, and Afghan women have shown enormous improvement in the past twenty years. Millions of girls went to schools, though it cost them their lives, but they never gave up; Lyma Derman wrote in another poem that the blood of our children is cheaper than why they are killed. No one has ever been held responsible. As Saba Rasooli asked who has been involved in bloodshed here, Lyma Derman has similar complaints: 'Red blood is flowing on foreheads, King! – The blood of our children is cheap, King!'. As the poem develops, it asks the authority to visit the affected to understand the situation better.

Very a short time, pay a visit to your country

Sixty huts are destroyed, King (Derman 57)

سري ويني بي په تندو باندي رواني دي پاچا

ز مور د بچو ويني څه ارزاني دي پاچا

لر سر دي د رعيت ځمکو ته خير دی نن بنسکاره کړه

شپيته داني کودلي دلته وراتي دي پاچا

And if there is peace and stability, everything will go well because people will have the opportunity to live a life and make better decisions, and better decisions will include that he will give my hand to you. But, if there is no peace, people will doubt their past and that nothing good will happen. In women's poetry, we read many wishes related to peace restoration. Peace has been deterred since the Soviet Union invasion in the 1970s. Since then, there has been no steady peace in the country, and life has not changed for people as there is no peace, people's health is worsening, though the speaker of the following piece of poem is hopeful and assure her lover/fiancé that no need to worry and everything will be all right: 'You don't worry, don't think so hard – My father will agree if there was peace' citation. Similarly, Muzdah Baran is worried that there is no peace. If there is no peace, she will not be able to enjoy herself and will not be able to celebrate Eid. As it says:

In gun culture and in gun powder's flames

How will be I joyful for the Eid, my dear

توپک توپک ماحول او د بارودو سرو لمبو کي

!زه څنگه به اختر ته خوشحالي کوم کلابه (Baraan 18)

Further, in detail, Muzdah Baran exposes the insecurity in the country. It is not only the capital where people don't feel secure and safe but the eastern part of the country, which was never insecure and known for its stability and peace. The poem's speaker hints that men are fighting

over power. Many of Pashtun women poets are from eastern Afghanistan. We read about their affection for the entire country, particularly eastern Afghanistan, which is beautiful. Let's read the following lines by Muzdah Baran in her book Salty Rain.

What to say about insecurity in Kabul
Nangarhar has got wounded, my gentlemen
Power lovers believe in power
They are sick after Sultanate, my gentlemen
واک پرست اوس په چوکي ایمان راوری
!سلطنت پسي بیمار دی محترم
د کابل د نا امنیو به څه وایم
(Baraan 19) ازخمی شوی ننگرهار دی محترم

Earlier, we read that some of the poets were asking to know why there has been no peace and stability, but other poets took it as a war between literacy and illiteracy. These poets believe there has been bloodshed in the country because education has not been improved, and only one of four in Afghanistan can read and write. Some poets address this issue and believe education will solve the problem. Education can enlighten Afghan brains and start thinking about peace as their priority. Mazda writes the following verse, and she is happy for being victorious over the gun which symbolizes war and bloodshed: 'Gun in your hands, and pen in my hand – Thanks, my pen was not defeated in this war (Baraan 25). Another woman poet, Nabila Wafa, offers a solution for the ongoing conflict in an angry tone, saying that blood can't be washed by blood and that if there is negotiation between parties - peace and stability is possible. As the poem develops, we read: 'Wars cannot solve it – One meeting of negotiation is the solution.

دا خبرې په جنگونو نه حل کیږي
(Wafa 29) د دې یوه مرکه یو مصلحت حل دی

Much of the poetry written by Pashtun women is dedicated to peace. We read their desperate calls and are looking forward to experiencing peace in the country as Baran wrote in this poem: 'When would you bring the news of peace in the country – I am dying, I lost my breath.' As the poem develops, the speaker has lost her eyes sight because of the sorrows and sheds tears for peace and stability in the country: 'My eyes are taken out, and darkness never went out our home – We all will be blind by the time it is down (Wafa 47). Meanwhile, Parveen Mahal, a

Pashtun woman poet residing in London, wrote several poems. She has her Facebook page too. In one of her poems, she calls for mercy from God as war breaks between two opponents. Let's read the piece of the poem as follows:

Arrows are shot from everywhere

Mercy, O Lord!

Our skirt is set on fire

Mercy, O Lord!

As the poem develops, it says people are living their life. They are busy with daily activities, and there is no room for war. And war is not invited. The war caused misery and tragedy for people in Afghanistan, so it is no longer considered a solution. We read in Malal's poem: 'Our sheep in deserts are thirsty – Our kids at home are hungry.' And because of the difficult light, the shepherd has been experiencing bad days. 'The lips of our shepherds are rough – Mercy, O Lord!' (Malal 7)

ز مور رمي په بيديا تري

ز مور بچي په كاله وري

د شپنوشوندي مو سپوري

خير وكري يا الهي

Spogmai Khoram has published an excellent booklet of her poems named Sta Yadoona Kitaboona, translated into English as Your Memories My Books. Spogmai pointed out the problems of Pashtun society, one of which is war. Earlier, we read that Afghanistan has been home to foreign invasion. Whenever there is a government in power, a foreign invasion takes place. When the foreign invasion takes a pause, civil war begins. Recently, NATO withdrew its troops in August 2021. Since then, security has been improved, but the war has been the trauma of almost all Afghans. Spogmai complains about this in the following lines of her poem.

Here, there are stories of noble man

Here, there are stories of sorrows

From the city to village

All are the stories of Bomb

د محترم كيسې دي

دلته د غم كيسې دي

له بناره كلي پوري

(Khoram 7) ټولې د بې کيسې دي

In the meantime, Spogmai Khoram is hopeful that even if there is war and no peace. People can help each other to understand that peace is life. Peace and political stability are vital. No human can't ever live a life in war and conflict. Peace can be taught to people as Spogmai puts it in her lines: 'We will motivate minds for peace – I spray these colours on minds

ځهنونونه به نور سولې ته ليواله کړو صاحبه

(Khoram 54) ځهنونوباندې شيندودغه رنگ داني داني

Extra judiciary killing is one of the significant concerns we read about in Pashto women's poetry. Much of the poetry calls for stopping, and instead of revenge, forgiveness is preferred. One may ask what those extrajudicial killing sounds like. Spogmai Khurram gives us an entire image in her following stanza. It says that even if there is no reason apparently why someone has been murdered, the murdered was reckless. Let's read the following lines:

It was the story of honor

It was the story of war

He killed his brothers

It was hashish addiction

خبر د ننگ وه

کيسه د جنگ وه

ورونه يې مړه کړه

(Khoram 100) نشه د بنگ وه

Wakhka Amil also complains about insecurity, informing us that Eid was not joyful because it was not peaceful: 'I passed my Eid crying; it was quite ugly – This year Eid has passed full of war' (Aamil 3). As the poem develops, it explains that not only the speaker of the poem had a sorrowful Eid but also everyone had a bad day: 'In every image, there is weeping, Oh man! – The houses of these people are ruined – oh man!'. More imagery in this poem gives us an image of the scene of misery and pain. It is one of the most dreadful poems I have ever read in Pashto women's poetry. Let's read the poem as follows.

In graveyards, there are sounds of the deed

They are the souls of sad – oh man!

You see my broken self and torn cloths

There is no assurance and laugh only – oh man!

Look at all Pashtun living regions

Precious blood has been so cheap – oh man!

Still, I regularly shed tears when it is night

So far, my tears are shed – oh man! (Aamil 9)

After this dreadful poem and painful scene, man has been called to stop fighting the war that has no harvest but misery upon people. The following piece of the poem is more joyful. It makes the reader hopeful that the call for peace can be answered by men, who is the only character in this entire dilemma.

Pakhtanu! War is enough – peace songs are required

Love is needed – and love songs are needed

People build mosque? schools and Mihrab

For us, we need vast graveyards

پښتنو! جنگ بس دی د سولې ترانې پکار دي

مینه پکارده بل د مینې زمزمې پکار دي

خلک جومات جوړی؟ ښوونځي جوړی محراب رغوي

مور ته دي ځمکوکي اوس لوبې هديرې پکار دي

We read Afghan patriotism in Pashto women's poetry. Much of the poetry is dedicated to national unity, peace, prosperity, and patriotism. As the war took millions of lives in Afghanistan, there is a call for the awakening of men in women's poetry who should accept that war can parish them forever. In women's poetry, we read that Pashtun man should wake up and think twice about what he has been up to. We read two lines by Spogmai, who wrote dozens of poems despising war, bloodshed, and foreign invasion: 'One day, you Pakhtun will wake up and protect yourself – Not always, there will be America here, dear' (Aamil 25). America as the leading country of coalition forces in Afghanistan under NATO ended in August 2021.

Kainat Tanha, like any other Pashtun woman poet, prefers peace over war and turmoil. In her poem, she prays that the war vanishes forever: 'Peace is better, wars shall vanish – These killing guns should go away. Representing people in Afghanistan using the we pronoun as the poem's speaker asking for peace, Tanha is very clear about war being ugly and peace being loved.

We want peace and harmony in our country

Cruelty and brutality should end (Rahmani 106)

Amil, as earlier complained about conflict in the country, tries to end her life as she can, but it is not her turn to leave this world as she puts it: 'Last night, I was wishing my death, death didn't show up – Last night, I had so much pain, I didn't eat this pill' (Aamil 27). War is stressful, everyone is stressed and traumatized, and life expectancy is way shorter than in many countries neighboring Afghanistan. We read several Pashtun poets who are psychologically discouraged and less willing to fight as the Afghanistan war exceeds four decades in a row.

When there is any explosion take place and I visit the hospital
Young, young people are killed - and funerals are coming, dear Haji
There will be a day – there will be no Pashtun race
The graveyards are extended to cities, dear Haji (Aamil 31)

ای دلته ته چې بم والوخي روغتون ته چې زه ورشم
تنکي، تنکي گلان مري، جنازي راخي حاجي
يو ورځ به داسي راشي د پښتون نسل به نه وي
ښارونو ته قابو دي هديرې راخي حاجي

Last night, people heard the explosion took place in the city. Again, people were reminded that war has not ended, eliminated, or slowed down but is still going on. Again, people are preparing to hold funerals for their loved ones who just died in the explosion. Zeb Yousufzai is a Pashtun woman poet from Peshawar reporting a dreadful situation about the bomb explosion she heard last night. Let's read the poem as follows:

Last night, bomb blasted in down town
Again, more deeds were added to graveyard
Many became widowed, many Boori, and children orphans
Once again, the house of my heart attacked (Yusufzai 92)

د ښار په چوک کښې پروڼ بيا دهماکه وشوله
په مقبره کښې بيا د مرو اضافه وشوله
ډيرې شوي کوندي، ډيرې بورې، يتيمان شو بچي
د زړه په کورمې بيا د نوي غم حمله وشوله

Peace is vital to live life. In women's poetry, we read about long wars in the country running the country. People from Afghanistan travel abroad, observe life abroad, experience peaceful moments, and learn that life is beautiful only in peace and that Amil writes peace is obligatory.

If you want peace, you should advocate for it and invest as much time and energy as possible in waging war. Let's read the poem as follows:

Efforts for peace is obligatory, peace is vital
For peace, I go home to home – I am like this
Lord! The word peace is adorable – we ask for peace
Lord! I ask for peace angels – I am like this
سولي ته كار كول واجب دي، سوله بڼه ضرورت
سولي ته كور په كور جرگي غوړمه داسي ښه
!خدايه ! د امن نامه بشكلي ده مور امن غوړو
(Aamil 67) خدايه! د امن فرښتي غوړمه داسي ښه

The following poem is short but rich in meaning, explaining the situation in Afghanistan and the entire globe, racing to wage wars and selling their weaponry. Afghan people experienced overwhelming violence in the past, and they understand the value of peace. Every ordinary Afghan is a peace analyst and a poet as well. We read one of the wealthiest poems in terms of meaning and language.

I live in era of gunpowder
In flames, brutal era
In fear, in hell era
اوسمه زه په بارودی دور کښي
لمبه لمبه ستي ستي دور کښي
(Yusufzai 103) په ويره ويره دوزخی دور کښي

Rona, another woman poet, writes that war is still ongoing. The darkness and horror of war and the fragile peace cannot be trusted. It is hard to express feelings or be hopeful to love someone for the rest of their life because the future is uncertain because of the war. Without peace, we can't make plans because we are uncertain of our future, and our estimates will never meet our hypothesis. Afghan people always have a plan. We read this plan in the following two lines as it says, 'how can we love' because there is no guarantee that one fulfill his/her promises in love, which requires a lot of commitments and sacrifices. Life shall be normal to afford a relationship in all aspects.

When war ends? I am wondering
Darkness has dominated light – how can we love

بی له جنگو کله خلاصیږي ده رونا حیرانه

(Rahmani 46) تیاره خوره په سپین سبا ده مینه څنگه وکړو

Shafiqullah Rahmani collected several poems written by women in his book *Nargisi Wagmai: English Alternative, Daffodil Breezes*. In this book, one of the poems by Roya Niazi explains the disappointment of the poem's female speaker who hears explosion. And, these explosions are not fireworks on some holidays and celebrations, but these explosions are life-taking, signaling that conflict has no ending in Afghanistan. As the poem further develops, it questions the patriotism of Afghan men who don't care about the country, and the only thing that matters to men is their selfish and personal interests.

Now there is no sound of Bulbul and Baura*

Everywhere there are the sounds of bombs

No one cares if the country is destroyed further

Everyone is after their selfish desires

Niazai says don't hurt mothers

Everywhere they lost their children – and melancholy

اوس د بلبل اود بورا اواز چمن کې نشته

په هره خوا کې د بمونو اوازونه دي ټول

دې ته څوک نه گوري چې ولې دا وطن وړانيزي

هر څوک کړي خپل مطلب پوره دا حالتونه دي ټول

وايي نيازي گوري د ميندو ازارونه مه اخلی

(Rahmani 48) ټولې شوي بوري هر طرفته فریادونه دي ټول

It is challenging for Afghan people to conclude who their allies – those calling themselves our allies invaded Afghanistan caused overhearing casualties and misery. Afghans now understand that any country can extend their hands for handshaking, but they will stab you from behind, opposite to Afghan norms. Afghan political and cultural norms are to announce allies and foes publicly. But the rest of the world poisoned you in burfi. We read all this in the following poem by Zarpari. Many of these young women poets wrote poems dedicated to the country's peace and political stability carefully, wisely, and beautifully. Let's read the poems as follows:

Our foes say they want peace in our country

I see this peace jeopardized by our foes

Zarin says don't be deceived by the enemies

In their presence, I see the destruction of our country

رقیبان وایي دي هیواد کي مونږه سوله غواړو

زه دغه سوله د رقیب له خوا برهم وینمه

وایی زرین چي د دینمن په خوله ونه غولیری

(Rahmani 51) د دوي په شتون کي زه تاوان گوره د چم وینمه

Shukrya Niazai is another woman poet who also wrote about war, which has no end. Instead, it is everywhere. The poem can be read: 'In the country, everywhere there is agony – In my heart, I have many Ah! and sighs'. Afghan women exhibited intense patriotism in their poems. We read earlier in a poem by Zaitoon Banu, who claimed that women have heard and, in their hearts, have better wishes than men. And, that poetry about war is painful to read and so savior that it can sick or depress the reader. Let's read the rest of the two lines of the entire stanza by Sukrya as follows:

Our country is fire – Afghans are burning in it

Niazai! Beneath our every step there are thorns

وطن کي خور د ماتمونو ټغر

زړه کي مي اه او اسويلي پراته دي

وطن شو اور پکي سوخيري افغان

(Rahmani 84) نیازی قدم لاندې اغزي پراته دي

Afghanistan is a country of unexpected political turmoil. It has a dramatic political history that amazes readers and fascinates them. Much of the history we read in Afghanistan sounds like a Bollywood action movie. Students read the history of Afghanistan in schools and universities, and people are aware of the instability in the country. And women poets included these sudden turns in their poetry. Similarly, Amil refers to the unexpected Afghanistan in her poems, believing that everything is possible.

In the country any game is possible

Be careful, never introduce yourself powerful

I am reminded of the death of my mother (the sorrow)

Again, my aunt told me stories:

Guns, bombs, red flames, and gunpowder

وطن کي هره لويه سرته رسي

پام دي وي مه کوه د زور کيسي

ماته زما د مور غم بيا تازه شو

راته نن بيا وکړلي ترور کيښي

(Aamil 24) پوپک، بمونه، سرې لمبې بل باروت

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