Literary Heritage of Khyber; Past and Present

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Introduction

When I was faced with the prospect of taking up a research project in Literature my instant and natural reaction was to investigate the literary heritage of Khyber. Khyber is my native land and my home and the milk of Khyber still circulates in my veins, although I have turned my back on it, as it were, for the last about twenty years, to have settled in Peshawar. But this physical migration has hardly affected my spiritual attachment to Khyber, and I have always felt strongly drawn towards it by the ties of strong tribal instincts, which I feel to be my second if not the first nature. The occasional social events of births and deaths take me back to my ancestral village, in the lap of the bleak but imposing mountains, on the Khyber highway, near Landi Kotal, the focal point of the Khyber pass. I still mingle and rub shoulders with my villagers and cousins, without the least hint of alienation, although life has put us on divergent paths on the road for survival. I still slip back into their idiom with delightful ease, and to articulate their distinctive dialect is a real pleasure. And with this I am once again a part and parcel of their social paradigm. Their culture is also rich in literature. I was associated with the Khyber School of literature right from my school days, back in the fifties. What if not a poet or writer myself, I attended their literary gatherings with religious regularity. It was back in the heady days of the nineteen-thirties, long before I was even born, that a group of local poets and writers agreed to be meeting on regular basis, in a tea shop of the then Landi Kotal Sarai, to be listening to the fresh kalam of each other. (this brings to mind the London coffee House literary gatherings of the eighteenth century writers like Addison, steel, Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith). The moving spirit behind the formation of this group was Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari, by then a recognized poet, playwright, prose writer and a Pir of sorts. The other poets or writers of this group were Malik Saida Khan Shinwari, Akram Farooq, Basir Shinwari and Haji Maruf Khan.
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**President:** Lalazada Nazer Shinwari.

**Vice-President:** Murad Shinwari.
Another election of the Jarga in 1998 selected the following cabinet:

**Patron:** Lalzada Nazer Shinwari.

**President:** Murad Shinwari.

**Vice-president:** Riaz Shah Afridi.

**G.Secretary:** Aslam Tasir Afridi.

**J.Secretary:** Kalim Shinwari and Amir Haidar Shabgir Afridi.

**Press Secretary:** Hashim Khan Hashim Afridi.

**Treasurer:** Manzoor Cheshti Afridi.


The general body of the Jarga consist of the following also:


The progenitor of this School, Hamza Shinwari, was also the subject of the Ph.D. thesis that I had submitted to the University of Peshawar in 1990 and had got it approved and obtained my degree on it. Many scattered pages of that thesis also thread the story of that School. In this connection I have met almost all the poets and writers of this school and have interviewed most
of them - some of the present research was but a review of my findings of some ten to fifteen years ago when I had to properly pigeonhole all those vary many writers and their works. However, it was now felt that in the mean time much water had flown under the Bridges, also eroding much fertile soil from the hills. Hams Chinaware died in 1994, leaving the School to his successors. He was closely followed by the untimely death of Khyber Afraid, a promising poet of the future. The older generation of the School is already on the wane, overtaken by senility and a sense of withdrawing into their shells for the ultimate hibernation. However, their place is being taken by a shoal of young fry, forever on their swift, restless fins. Whether they will keep up the dignity and prestige of the School is yet to be seen. It is, however, highly gratifying to see that some of the younger upholders of this School are deeply committed and keenly devoted to the cause of literature and the preservation and advancement of this now almost sixty-years old School. And among the very many poets and writers of this School, there are also some playwrights and prose writers, trying to maintain the tradition of Hams Chinaware, who has tried almost every genre of literature.

In connection with the present research I also ventured in the Valley of Tirah in July the year before last, in the hope of digging up some material for the project. On this tour I was accompanied by three or four of my ex-students from as many Afridi clans. They were actually my escorts to conduct me through the land of my forefathers, for going alone would be foolhardy on my part to take the risk. The next problem was trudging the rough terrain for miles on foot for which the only alternative was to hire and ride a pony, a more repulsive proposition. However, we landed in the Aka Khel area, which lies on the south-east of the Tirah Valley proper, where we stayed for three or four days and nights to take off our fatigue. The only redeeming feature of the life or culture of the are is the self-less and unobtrusive hospitality of those people. They never get fad up with any number of guests for any duration of time, whom they will have no stone unturned to entertain with-better food and better accommodation than they will enjoy themselves.

In Aka Khel area there were two very old Madrassas, now moribund, but whose stock of books were ill-preserved in crumbling, moth-eaten racks. We took out all the rusty, crumbling manuscripts. They were mostly theological treatises in Arabic or Persian. Some were positively written in Tirah by the heads or some teachers of the Madrassas. The people whom we met were the grandchildren of the founders of those Madrassas. In one Madrassa, we
were told that students came to study there from as far away as Bokhara in Turkistan and Delhi in Hindustan and that there would be a number of students, studying there all the time. In another Madrassa we were told that some students would also have befriended gins, who would play with them in off times. Along with old Persian-Arabic manuscripts the Madrassas had also preserved some exquisite illuminated manuscripts of the Holy Quran. Whether they were written at Tirah or brought from outside could not be ascertained. But their preservation was sadly inadequate. They were already partly devoured by the moths or white ants and in another decade or so they would be a heap of dust. And the idea of giving them to some library to preserve on scientific lines would not be acceptable to the owners.

However, we trudged the Tirah Maidan for nearly a month, discovering one or two other collection of books of this or that Alim or Maulvi Sahib, they being books of the same nature and description. We decided that we should leave them to some religious scholar to sift and benefit from. Our concern was literature, whether Pashto or even Persian and not religious literature of the sort that we came across there. We were, however, pointed out one or two poets in some remote corner of Maidan. But how to contact them was the question. But then had they been poets of any repute their fame would already have trickled down to Landi Kotal, a sort of cultural centre for the entire Khyber. Since they were anonymous was decided to leave them anonymous.

And with this I will concentrate on the exploration of the subject i.e. the literary heritage of Khyber, on which there is more than enough sources and material. I only hope that I will do justice to it in the process of documentation, interpretations and execution.

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Chapter 1

The Khyber

Colourful flowers have blossomed
On the moor of Pashto literature;
It is time to look around
And enjoy the colours and smells
The spring lingers on in Khyber Hamza,
Many a bud seem to be flowering.
——— Amir Hamza Shinwari

With the advent of Hamza Shinwari (907-1994), as a poet, prose writer and playwright, around nineteen thirties \(^1\), the Khyber became the epicentre of Pashto literary activities. There gradually emerged a galaxy of budding poets, prose writers and playwrights all over the Khyber, all groomed by Hamza Shinwari. A healthy and honourable literary tradition ultimately took deep roots, acknowledged all over Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its reverberations could be heard from the Oxus to the Abasin, giving a sense of pride to some while mothers simply envied it. The literature produced in the Khyber since then has its own distinctive features or a flavour of its own. This literary movement ultimately crystallized into the School of Hamza, after its founder

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\(^1\) To be exact it was in 1936, when, on the direction of his Murshid, Syed Abdul Sattar Shah, Bacha Jan, the Budding Hamza gave up writing in Urdu in favour of Pashto soon to be acclaimed the greatest living Pashto poet.
and guru, or The School of Khyber Literature, as it blossomed there. The following distinctive features of the School might be mentioned at the outset.\textsuperscript{2}

- Adoption of the Ghazal form.
- Pakhtoonwali; reflection of the Pashto code of life.
- New and ingenious constructions.
- Full of conceits, paradoxes and quibbles.
- Clever and subtle use of comparison and contrast.
- Use of repetitions and refrains.
- Novel figures of speech
- Tassawuf\textsuperscript{3}
- Dynamic and moving rhythms and refrains.
- Fewer but effective meters.
- Originality of style and substance.
- Simplicity, ease, flow, freshness, spontaneity, sweetness and sustained appeal
- Strong affinity to music and an overall musical tone.
- Temperate and mild in nature; free from extreme or wild emotionalism.
- Use of comparatively purer and idiomatic Pact; free from Persianization and Arabacization.
- Deep philosophical and mystical problems wrapped in apparent simplicity and straightforwardness.
- Deep adherence to the seventeenth-century pioneering tradition with hardly any experimentation or renovation.

\textsuperscript{2}This list, with slight modifications, has been copied from my own Ph.D. Thesis on Hamza Shinwari: Life and Works, Peshawar University, 1990.

\textsuperscript{3}Islamic mysticism
CHAPTER 1. THE KHYBER

• Mainly poetry-oriented with scant attention paid to non-poetic forms of literature, like prose, dramas\textsuperscript{4}

• Entirely uninfluenced by Urdu, Persian, English or any other foreign language or literature.

• Strong universal appeal despite clear cut local touch.

• Still a living and a creative entity despite the demise of Hamza Shinwari for quite some time now.

But this does not mean that Hamza Shinwari was the only luminary on the horizon of Pashto literature and Khyber the only place in Pakhtoonkhwa where Pashto literature found this unique flowering. The same period gave mushroom growth to equally great writers, elsewhere in Pakhtoonkhwa. As pointed out by Javed khalil, there sprouted more than a hundred literary societies (Jargas or Tolanas)\textsuperscript{5} in the Frontier Province alone while extensive Pashto literature was being simultaneously produced all over Baluchistan and Afghanistan as well. In this way, the number of contemporary Pashto writers would literally run into hundreds, with some of them equally great in their own right. In fact, the Khyber School can be looked upon as a part (though an important and leading part) of this twentieth-century renaissance in Pashto literature. This renaissance was preceded by a general decadence and degeneration of about three hundred years, of the “The Dark Ages” of Pashto literature, during which poor Pashto was relegated to the language of hell and its speakers were pushed into the inaccessible mountains.

Rahman Baba has summed up the plight of the poor Pakhtoons in the following couplet:

(Due to the callous oppressive officials,
The home, the tomb and Peshawar are all equal) (Rahman)

But some three hundred years later Hamza felt bold enough to declare:

(The enemy brand it the language of hell,
To heaven will I go with Pashto) (Hamza)

\textsuperscript{4}Except for Hamza Shinwari and a couple of his followers, no other Khyber poet has written any prose or drama.

\textsuperscript{5}Pakhto Adabi Tolane Au Jarge” (Pashto literary circles and Societies), Nov-Dec, 1988, p.43.
This period needs to be probed to visualize what preceded the twentieth-century renaissance and why did the dark curtain fall to eclipse the course of Pashto literature and culture for about three hundred years.

In order to see this period in its proper perspective we must turn to an earlier religion-political controversy called "The Roshanite Movement". The founder of this movement was Bayazid Ansari (1535-1609) also called Pir Roshan (the enlightened Pir) but branded Pir Tarik (the dark Pir) by his vehement adversary Syed Ali Tarmezi (called Pir Baba), with a strong antagonism and animosity towards each other. The Roshanite Movement gave impetus to mystic poetry in Pashto literature on the one hand and a conscious urge for freedom from the Moghuls on the other. The Movement produced a number of creative works in both prose and poetry.

Pir Roshan was basically a Sufi (mystic) and his creed clashed with that of Akhun Darweza (circa 1570), a vice-regent of Hazrat Ali Tarmezi (Pir Baba), now his shrine in Buner). The former stressed the esoteric aspect of religion (or Tariqat), while the latter insisted on exoteric aspect (or Shariyat). Although partly political, this movement was given mainly a religious colour and the two equally powerful religious leaders carried on a war of wits better still, a battle of books. The gauntlet was thrown by Bayazid Ansari with his book, Khairul Bayan (a useful account), which was promptly answered with Makhzan-ul-Islam (treasure of Islam) by Akhun Darweza.

This spiritual as well as intellectual feud was taken up by others, the disciples and family members of the two accomplished Pirs, even long after they were dead themselves. But the Roshanites seem to have provided a far superior array of poets and prose writers than their worthy adversaries. In this process Pashto literature was enriched beyond expectations.

Among this gallery of distinguished poets and writers we may mention Murza Khan Ansari (died 1617) He was a grandson of Pir Roshan and the first poet to consciously sing of Sufism in Pashto poetry. It is from him that mysticism in Pashto poetry is actually traced. Mirza Khan was living in Tirah as indeed Bayazid Ansari himself had taken refuge there and the family seems to have stayed there when Pir Roshan would leave it occasionally for...
seeking converts among the other tribes.

The other adherents of this School were: Arzani (lived in the middle of the seventeenth century), Qadar Dad (a young man in the middle of the seventeenth century), Mukhlis (birth and death untraceable), Mian Dad (lived towards the end of the seventeenth century), Warakzai (lived towards the end of the eighteenth century). They were all great poets in their own right and each has left a Diwan (collected works). They have written in the mystic tradition of their illustrious forebear, Pir Roshan.

This School or Movement was the culmination or climax of an historical evolution when the centuries-old oral and folk literature was gradually superseded by a written literature of a very high and everlasting calibre. It was during this period that Pashto was heavily Persianized and Arabicized with wholesale borrowings from both there “classical languages”. Not only was Sufism properly introduced into Pashto literature for the first time, but at the same time, the most suitable verse form, Ghazal was also greatly polished and perfected. “This mixture of patriotism and Sufism in Pashto literature starting with the advent of Islam and flowering through the Roshinite period, gradually filtered through the evolutionary stages and when it reached perfect, it gave birth to Khushal Khattak on the one hand and Rahman Baba, Abdul Hamid and Ali Khan, on the other”.

With Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-689) we step into a raging renaissance in Pashto literature. It would be no exaggeration to call Khushal Khan a whole period in Pashto literature, with a typical style and a distinctive school of thought. He stands at crucial cross-roads. From this turning point Pashto literature has been given a new direction and an entirely new outlook and a local orientation to be the guidance and inspiration of the subsequent generations of Pashto poets and prose writers. “with his poetic effusion he gave light and vigour to an otherwise dormant and dark age, notwithstanding the illumination of Pir Roshan and his followers”. the Pashto language had

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7 Persian was not only the official language but also the language of learning and scholarship while Arabic was the language of religion and liturgy. Together they have left the deepest imprint on Pashto language and literature.

8 This Ghazal form was borrowed from Persian by both Urdu and Pashto. But with the passage of time and shift in taste in became so naturalized that most of the indigenous forms were virtually replaced by it. It was also adopted to Pashto music and was associated with a sign of culture.

9 Roohi Adab, Nawaz Tair, pp 290-91.

Khushal Khan was not only a poet but most of his life he was also fighting against the mighty Moghul Empire in India. In the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jehan he fought on the side of Aurangzeb against Dara Shikoh. Aurangzeb was, however, defeated by his brother at Samugarh. He withdrew the Jagir granted to Khushal Khan by Aurangzeb.

Unlike his predecessors, Khushal Khan chose Pashto and Pashto alone for the transmission of his powerful thoughts in both prose and poetry although he was equally, if not more, at home in Persian, in which he has also done some poetry. He seems to have consciously turned to Pashto to give it a lustre and splendour of its own to make it more than worth the attention of subsequent poets and writers to help it hold its own against the onslaught of the all-pervading Persian. However, this Persian influence is not easily and entirely shaken by his close contemporaries or successors like Rahman Baba (1651 - 1710) and Abdul Hameed (1671-1732).

With Rahman Baba we arrive at the perfection of Pashto Ghazal so much so that he can be compared to the great Persians like Hafiz and Saadi. Rahman Baba can be said to have left the deepest imprint on Pakhtoon psyche, social, intellectual as well as spiritual life. His verses have acquired proverbial currency and a universal appeal to both the initiate and the novice or the scholar and the lay man, at the same time. “His effusions are of a religious or moral character, and chiefly on the subject of Divine Love. But there is a fiery energy in his style, and a simplicity which will be vainly sought for amongst the flowery and bombastic Persians.”

The following couplet with give a glimpse of the delicacy of his art:

(silent with a hundred tongues of a bouquet
I am vocal sans words like fragrance. (Rahman).

Abdul Hameed, like Rahman Baba, was a Mohmand by origin but of a different élan. According to Raverty: “He is a typical poet of the Afghans

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11 Persian masters like Hafiz and Saadi. This has been shown by Dost Muhammad Kamil in his study of Rahman Baba. However, he is a typical Pakhtoon with proverbial purity of diction, with all the Persian influence on his thoughts and imagery.

12 Selections from Pashto Poetry, Raverty, p.1.
- the Shaikh Saadi of Pashto language and literature and the beauty of his compositions is fully acknowledged, even among a nation so rich in poets as the Pathans, by whom he is styled “Hameed Mushigaf” (Hameed the hair-splitter). His poetry though generally of a moral tendency, and breathing contempt of the world and its vanities, and tinged with Sufi doctrines, still abound in deep sensuous pleasure. Unlike Rahman Baba, he is sometimes strongly drawn to the corporeal love which borders on undisguised eroticism. In this strain he resembles the spirit of Khushal Khan Khattak. However, it is the flight of his imagination, the delicacy of his art, along with the natural flow of his diction that has given him a unique place among the masters of Pashto literature. Like Khushal Khan and Rahman before him, Hameed too is considered the leader of a distinctive School of Pashto poetry.

Most of Abdul Hameed’s poetic paraphernalia like metaphors, similes and symbolism seem to have been borrowed from Persian and Arabic, but at the same time, he has affixed to it his own peculiar stamp of Pashto usage and Pakhtoon culture. It would not be out of place here to quote Hamza Shinwari on Pashto Ghazal. He maintains: “Perhaps our poets did not merely imitate Persian Ghazal but they molded it into Pashto spirit or image. Because Persian Ghazal is just poetic effusion, there is no touch of a local colour in it. If Persian Ghazal is translated into another language then no reader can easily guess the language in which it was originally written. On the contrary, although Pashto poets have been inspired by Persian literature, they have added the Pakhtoon spirit or colour to their creations. They have coloured Ghazal according to their own peculiar environment and temper. Now, if Pashto Ghazal is translated in any other language, any reader can easily not only feel but positively see it to be the work of some Pashto poet. (Roohi Adab, 85). Let’s look at the following couplet from the point of view of the above assertion:

(I will not bear the Moghal attitude of your rival
If I am truly engendered by a Pakhtoon mother). (Hameed)

Another feature of this period was a feudal system which was superimposed upon the essentially democratic spirit of the Pakhtoon tribes by the imperialist Moghuls. This system was effectively introduced among the tribes of the plains, under the pragmatic policy of Divide and Rule. The hillsmen were however, peripheral to this unnatural stratification of the highly

13Selections from Pashto Poetry, Raverty, p.85.
individualistic and egalitarian spirit of the Pakhtoons. For the orderly and peaceful management of the Pakhtoon areas, the Moghuls had created Khans, Nawabs, Arbabs, Sardars and powerful feudal lords of various hues and descriptions. This class was make the intermediary between the peasants on the lower rung of the ladder, on the one hand, and the ruling overlords, on the other. This arrangement, in turn, gave rise to an incessant class struggle, the echoes of which can be heard in all the poets of this period. The half-religious Roshanite Movement was the first to raise its voice against the oppressions and injustices of this degrading, repressive system.

In this dark period of turmoil and confusion it was but natural for the sentient Pashto poets to withdraw into their shells and turn to renunciation, resignation, asceticism, pessimism, escapism and fatalism. They were all haunted by the sinister shadows of a bleak future. This strain is common, without exception, to all the poets of this period, including Khushal Khan Khattak, notwithstanding his forceful, revolutionary disposition and his lifelong courageous struggle against the mighty Moghul Raj of the time. This couplet of his shows his indomitable resolve to fight it out with the Moghuls:

(I girded my loins for the honour of the Afghan,
I am the chivalrous Khushal Khan of the time). (Khushal)

Yet this period of wild commotion and confused life-patterns and continually shifting values has given to Pashto literature not only a revival and a hazy heritage but also a fully blossoming renaissance which is yet to be equaled or even fully explored. This renaissance which had started with Khushal Khan Khattak can be said to have terminated with Ahmad Shah Abdali (1712-1773), when Pashto literature was overtaken by a progressive degeneration till it lost every vestige of its former glory. More than a hundred poets can be listed between Ahmad Shah Abdali and the end of the nineteenth century; but all this point to the fact that the latter poets have not been able to maintain the florescence and freshness, the originality and richness, simplicity and directness, vigour and flow and the inexorable speed and tempo of their worthy predecessors. There is a gradual decline in which the poetic sublimity has been imperceptibly replaced by a pathetic mediocrity. The Ghazal form which had shouldered the best poetry of the renaissance period, although

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14On the death of Nadir Shah Afshar in 1747, Ahmad Shah Abdali (a soldier in Afshar’s army) declared Afghan independence at Qandahar. He was also a great Pashto poet in his own right, with a Diwan (collected works) to his credit.
somehow kept alive and kicking, was once again effectively edged aside by
the popular musical and ageless folklore forms like “Tappa,” “Charbaita,”
“Nemakai,” and “Badalla”. The sun appears to have set on the high mountains
of a great age, while the down of another, an equally respectable age, is
nowhere in sight. It is yet to arise and reveal the tattered and mutilated
poverty of Pashto literature.

It was Hamza Shinwari, from Khyber, who bridged with a mighty imagi-
native stride the yawning centuries of Pashto literature. He successfully cap-
tured the sparkling originality, the unbounded exuberance and the unyielding
vigour of Khushal Khattak; the ease and flow, directness and lucidity, moral
order and divine Love of Rahman Baba; the delicacy of thought, sensuous
tendency, and hair-splitting ingenuity of Abdul Hameed; the deep parochial
verve and typical Pashto imagery and symbolism of Ali Khan and the down-
right humility and phenomenal patriotism of Ahmad Shah Abdali. He also
has encompassed and scaled the entire panorama and pageant of this past
Pashto literature and has captured and depicted the Zeitgeist i.e. the spirit
of that classical age which badly needed a revival and a poet like Hamza,
with all his literary and spiritual trappings to give it a powerful impetus and
a flowering future.

Being born there, although living most of the time in Peshawar and under-
taking a number of journeys through the vast Indian subcontinent, Hamza
Shinwari reared his roost in Khyber. But looking at the historical and
geographical features of the area the question will always beg an effective
and convincing answer as to why this flowering of Pashto literature should
take place in a barren, craggy and physically inhospitable Khyber instead of
some culturally and agriculturally more fertile part of Pakhtoonkhwa. Per-
haps there may simply be no logical answer to such a question although the
question will still stay very pertinent and relevant. It may be that perhaps
literary tides follow their own inexorable laws like those of the rise and fall
or great civilizations. If not to be accounted for as a freak of nature, if not
a joke, and if an answer must be found for the question, then the geography,
history, sociology, anthropology, mythology and folklore of Khyber must be
closely reviewed together for a possible answer to this million-dollar question.
Somewhere, there may be some hint to this effect yet buried deep under the
debris of ignorance and superstition. It will need careful investigation, if not
actual excavation here and there to unearth the facts.
1.1 The Geographical Features Of Khyber

The Khyber is bounded on the north by the Kabul River and the Sufaid Koh; on the east by the Peshawar Valley; on the south by the Aka Khel Territory and Orakzai Agency; and on the West by Afghanistan. Its total area is approximately 545 km and population 4,500,000 (although no proper census has been held there at all). Its terrain is most rugged, barren and arid. If the hills had any forestation in the past, today they are completely denuded by their reckless use and the subsequent soil erosion and adverse climatic changes. Interspersed among these dry and parched hills are narrow and shallow valleys inhabited by the local population, some of them living there from time immemorial while most of them would be subject to seasonal migrations to the more temperate plains in the unbearable winter. These valleys are irrigated by scant, intermittent rains and snow fall, and cultivated for food and fodder.

On the north-west of the Khyber lies the larger and more fertile valley of Tirah, the original home of all the Khyber tribes. Cut off from the rest of the civilized world by any road, railway or air link, and without any vestige of modern civilization it is a sort of no man’s land ruled (or misruled) by the indigenous people themselves, under the age-less law called Pakhtoonwali (the Pakhtoon code of conduct), effected by Sharishta or a Jarga system, involving the tribal elders as the judges as well as executioners of their rulings.

This vast and at places extensively cultivated area, bounded by pockets of alpine forests, utterly lacks any internal communication system either. At best it is cress-crossed by mule-tracks, and pack animals are used for the transport of goods from place to place, and long and tedious journeys are trusted to the power and perseverance of human feet and their supporting muscles. The indigenous people lead the most primitive life under pathetic poverty, inhuman ignorance and biblical simplicity. They live in strong and well-fortified mud-houses, built at respectable distances from each other, with high towers (incidentally called Tarai in Pashto) to defend themselves not only from the vagaries of nature and ferocity of wild life, but also the

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15 These figures may be far from being exact and at best, just approximations because so far, the Khyber has neither been mapped nor measured nor any census held there.

16 Khyber is described as a thickly forested area, a little earlier than living memory. Baber is said to have hunted a Rhino there.

17 Agriculture is fast disappearing from all over Khyber, due to scanty precipitation and lack of snow fall, even on the high hills.
treaclery of the Tarbur (cousin). The whole tribal set up suffers from a centuries-old tradition of internecine feuds, in which the cousin is usually the worst enemy. An oft-quoted proverb says: “Even if your cousin is your right hand, chop it off.” The valley has thick alpine forestation on the higher reaches and fertile plains in the laps of hills irrigated by natural springs or seasonal floods or the Bara River, which is a perennial source of irrigation in its delta. With the passage of time, the pressure of population gradually increases there and together with the economic significance of timber trade they pose a serious threat to the remaining, meagre forestation there. However, due to sheer physical hardships, the valley is still thinly populated, also necessitating seasonal migrations to the warmer and more fertile Peshawar Plains.

Back at home also they depend for supply of articles of daily necessity mainly on Peshawar, which they carry on their mules, all the way through the rugged hills. Their economy depends upon agriculture, timber trade, live-stock and dry fruit. They grow their own food and vegetables but for tea, sugar and cloth etc, they depend on external supply. The people of the valley have also recently taken to transport and business in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

They Khyber is inhabited by the Afridi, Shinwari, Shillmani and Mullagori tribes. The Afridi is a more preponderant tribe occupying 80% of the Khyber area. Their original habitat was the Tirah valley but they have also spilled over into the Khyber Pass, Jamrud, Bara and Darra Adam Khel areas. It is sub-divided into eight clans (called Qaum by themselves), with each of these clans bigger than some of the other Khyber tribes. The Shinwari is a smaller tribe living around Landi Kotal and Landi Khana and straddling the Pak-Afghan border (or the Durand Line). It is originally an Afghanistan tribe, living in eastern Ningarhar, the Khyber Shinwaris being a spell over of that tribe from Ningarhar. The Shilmanis and Mullagoris are still smaller tribes, living on the northern tip of the Khyber plateau. While the Shilmanis live in the foothills of the famous Tatara peak, on the Kabul River, the Mullagoris live in the hills beyond the Warsak. The Mullagoris have also

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18 Tarbour literally means cousin but due to a long tradition of inter-family feuds, it has acquired the connotation of ‘enemy. Another noun of the same root is ‘trabgani’ (enmity). As a second nature, a Pakhtoon never trusts a cousin and considers him as a potential enemy, if not really one already.

19 In the process many families have succumbed to the strong attraction of the Peshawar valley and have permanently shifted there.

20 Economically, it is still the most backward area.
started exploiting the marble deposits of their hills which are fed to a number of marble factories not only in and around Peshawar but as far as Karachi. This has boosted their standard of living and they are comparatively much better off.

There is usually inter-tribal and intra-tribal animosities and feuds but they always find themselves united against a common foe. Their strong preservation instinct always prevail over their primitive tribal savagery. They are also always armed to the teeth, not only for self protection but also for instant aggression if necessary. Traditionally, there is no check on their keeping and carrying arms. They are not subject to any arms license from any authority. In this regard, as in almost every legal sense, they are an authority unto themselves. Inter-tribal marriages are not also uncommon although clan or sub-clan or inter-family marriages are normally preferred. They are in favour of as many male children as they can beget; and joint family living is still the rule rather than the exception. There is growing interaction and integration among these tribes and clans with the passage of time. They no more look upon each other as aliens or usurpers of each other’s pieces of lands or cattle, or denying each other passage through their respective territories, or being simply foes and Dushman. The modern economic imperatives and communication facilities and an over-all pragmatic approach to life have made them respect each other’s existence.

All these tribes speak different but mutually easily understandable dialects of the same language- Pashto or Pakhto. Their Pakhto is akin to the hard, eastern Yousafzai Pakhto rather than the soft, western Pashto of Kandahar; the two main dialects being separated by the hard [kh] and the soft [sh] sounds. These people are mostly illiterate but they enjoy music and literature. The musician and the poet are often confused.\footnote{It was Ghani Khan (a versatile elder poet and philosopher and an octogenarian contemporary of Hamza Shinwari) who said that the Pakhtoon loves music but hates the musician. This hatred might have its roots in the social class differences of the Aryan ancestors of these tribes. All the artisans, including the musician (who also devised or improvised poetry to go with his music) were not the blue-blooded Pakhtoons (who were the landed gentry). The artisans were given fixed share in the seasonal produce. However, the Pakhtoons also play their Rabab and Mangai (the clay pitcher) in their Hujra (Common House). Even the strong Islamic taboo or injunction has not mitigated their love of music.} Perhaps in the beginning there was no clear demarcation between the two- the person who composed songs and the one who sang them. This would, according to their
elemental logic, amount to one and the same thing. It was Ghani Khan, a prolific poet from Hashtnagar, who said: “The Pathan loves music but hates the musician”. As the musician was associated with social inferiority and an object of hatred, the poet cleverly distanced himself from his despicable cousin and thus the existence of poet on his own right, enjoying social equality, if not actual superiority by dent of his art and craft, among his other and vastly superior cousins.

1.2 The Khyber Pass

Shafi Sabir has maintained that: “No one knows when Khyber got its present name, but this much is certain that “Khyber or Khaiber” is a word of the Hebrew language and it means a palace or a castle. One view is that it got its present name in the past because it enjoyed a strategic importance as a fort. But usually by Khyber is meant the Khyber Pass. It starts at Jamrud and, leading via Landi Kotal, terminates at Landi Khana and Torkham. The stretch is 32 miles”. However, there is also a place called “Khyber” in Saudi Arabia and halfway through the Khyber Pass there is a charming little mosque, in a deep gorge, by the side of a perennial stream of clear, sweet water, called Ali Masjid. And a local legend maintains that the fourth caliph of Islam, Hazrat Ali, had visited this spot and fought against a pagan woman called, “Khyberai Bibi.” There is a huge bolder perched precariously in the middle of a steep incline. They say that this rock was thrown at him as he was praying, but he caught hold of it and tucked it up there. This may be an incredible legend but the question remains as to why there should be two Khybers at such a distance apart. Either the Jews, to whose language, Hebrew, Shafi Sabir has traced the term Khyber, originated here and took the name with them to the Middle East or vice-versa. The local legend also corroborates the theory that the Pakhtoons are Israelites, and that they may be the lost tribe of the Jews. As far as the local language Pashto is concerned, the word or term “Khyber” carries no clear cut meaning it. Khyber is just a meaningless, if not colourless, abstraction and a name and nothing more. Perhaps with the actual meaning may be associated the prehistory of this area and the people now living in it, which is not actually our concern here. We will leave it to a more competent historian or archeologist to unravel the mystery or dig out the truth. Perhaps time will take care of such an inquiry.

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22 The Story of Khyber, Muhammed Shafi Sabir, p.6.
The Khyber is one of the most important passes of the world. Its history is the history of the India-Pakistan subcontinent and Central Asia. For centuries it served as a convenient gateway to India, right from the Aryan hordes to the Greeks, the Parathions, the Mongols, the Iranians, the Cushions, the Huns, the Persians, the Moghuls and the Afghans. All through the past in-terminable centuries the Khyber has seen the dust raised by the armies of successive, invading and marauding races, passing through its gorges and defiles, with its granite crags resounding with the clangs of their arms and the thunder of their horses’ hooves. It would only revert again to its majestic and mysterious calm and peace when the din would be over and the dust would settle on their tracks. Perhaps there would hardly be any worthwhile local resistance against such mighty, imperial forces surging ahead in their blind pursuit of conquest and destruction, or simply plunder and loot. The local people would simply disappear among the high inaccessible mountains only to climb down again when the last soldier would have turned the bend. But it is also on record that at times they would levy tolls in lieu of safe passage through the treacherous Pass which many invaders preferred to pay instead of entangling with these wild, guerrilla tribes.

There have also been backward movements through the Khyber Pass by the Mauria Dynasty of India (327-190 BC), when their zealous monarchs like Kanishka and Ashoka made it a mission of their life to spread the teachings of Buddhism as far as Bamyan, Balkh, Bokhara and Samarqand. The Khyber still has its due share of Buddhist monuments and relics. The stone foundations of a vanished stupa are still there near Ali Masjid, on a low hillock by a stream, very much visible from the road. Now somebody has raised a mud-house structure on the top of it, preferring the open and sunny hill top to the suffocation of the nearby caves from where he ultimately must have come out, like some wild burrowing animal. A little ahead, there is a partially damaged but still very imposing stupa at the village Sultan Khel. Around this stupa there are a number of archaeological sites exploited by the local people for statues, coins and all kinds of other relics. Opposite the stupa and across the road, part of the village Mabi Khel seems to be raised in places on the stone foundations of Buddhist times. In and around Landi Kot-tal and Landi Khana also there are traces of unexplored archeological sites.

\[23\] About 20 percent of the Buddhist statues and other relics in Peshawar museum have been excavated from the village Sultan Khel in Khyber. That is where the famous Buddhist Stupa is also situated which is still partly intact.
So far the local people were not interested in the excavation and exploration of such archeological sites. They were rather averse to even thinking of them as these were pagan relics. But with the increasing commercial importance of Gandhara artifacts and other archeological relics, the religious prejudice has been toned down by pragmatic considerations. Hence such sites are no more safe from pelfriges if not outright plunder.

The north-westward march through the Khyber was also repeated or attempted by the Sikhs from the Punjab. A one-time tributaries of the throne of Kabul, they were marching on Afghanistan itself, like the Maurian Emperors of more than two thousand years ago. They too were imperialists of sorts if not propagating any particular religious or spiritual doctrine. They, however, faced a tough resistance from the local tribes who ultimately crushed them at Jamrud, at the mouth of the Khyber Pass.\footnote{There is a Sikh fort at Jamrud, founded by a general of Ranjit Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa in 1834. According to Shafi Sabir, “He intended the fort to be a guardian of the Khyber Pass but soon it became his grave”. The Sikhs called it ‘Fateh Garh’ (victory fort) but it stayed as a mocking symbol of their defeat at Jamrud.} The last Sikh outpost in the shape of an imposing fort at Jamrud, with high and strong mud-walls, still stands there to bear a silent witness to their demoralizing defeat at the hands of the Afghan army.\footnote{The British had two expeditions to Kabul. The first, in 1836, proved a complete disaster, in which the entire retreating British army was annihilated. The second expedition, in 1878, was in revenge of the first one. They triumphantly made it to Kabul once again. They replaced the fugitive ruler, Sher Ali Khan, by his weakling son, Yaqub Khan, who was made to cede certain strategic Afghan territories to British India, under an unequal treaty at Gandumak. These territories were, later on, demarcated in the Durand Line in 1893. The Khyber Pass, as almost all the strategic passes from Chitral to Balochistan (2250 kms) happened to be on the wrong side of Afghanistan.} The commander-in-chief of their advancing armies, Hurri Singh Nalva, is buried there in the fort, because he would have been killed there. This defeat also weakened their position in Peshawar and back at home in Punjab and precipitated their ultimate elimination from the scene by the British Indian forces which brought the short-lived Sikh rule in the Punjab and parts of the present NWFP (which was then an insignificant appendage of the Punjab province) to an abrupt end.

After annihilating the Sikhs from the scene, the British Indian Empire was practically on the threshold of Afghanistan and the Pakhtoon tribes of the present NWFP (this are was declared a province in 1901). Nervous at the Franco-Russian intrigues in Persia and their siege of Heart (1836), the British Indian forces of the Indus Army marched on Kandahar via the Bolan...
Pass, to replace Amir Dost Muhammad Khan by a more faithful ally, Shah Shujaul Mulk (1803-1809 and 1839-1841), as “the rightful heir to the throne of his ancestors. With the capture of Ghazni and Kabul, he was proclaimed the king of Afghanistan. This out-right British invasion of the country (1839) only reinforced the Afghan sense of unity and cohesion. Within months a revolt broke out at Kabul, and the entire British Indian Army of some 8000 strong was put to the sword and completely wiped out. This was put down to “Auckland’s Folly.” This was followed by a punitive expedition in 1942, under general Pollock, when Afghanistan was once again invaded by the British Indian Army, this time with a far more formidable might. This attack was simultaneously carried out through both the Bolan and the Khyber Passes and the two columns ultimately converged on Kabul. In the wake of this conquest Dost Muhammad Khan (1842-1863) was reinstated as the Amir and the country was evacuated in the same month.

As a result of Lord Curzon’s “Forward Policy”, the British insisted on three broad principles in relation to Afghanistan and her eastern strategic passes:

- The foreign relations of Afghanistan must be submitted to the British control.
- The eastern and southern strategic passes must be controlled by the British Indian Army.
- British India must have a permanent mission at Kabul.

Since these were repulsive conditions for the people as well as Afghan monarchs, they were constantly resisted at the cost of not only a throne and crown but incalculable human and material sacrifices. Once again the country was invaded by the British Indian Army to overthrow an allegedly pro-Russian Amir, Sher Ali Khan (1863-1879). His son and heir, Yaqub Khan, was compelled to sign a treaty with British India at Gandumak(1879), ceding all the principles of the “Forward Policy”. The country was then left in the hands of Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901) and the British forces retreated. However, by 1919 the situation had undergone such a dramatic change that Amir Amanullah Khan (1919-1929), a grandson of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, was in a position to go to open war against British India for the restoration of completely sovereignty. The tottering British India concluded a treaty with him at Rawalpindi in August,1919, under which Afghanistan was recognized as an absolute sovereign state.
The clamour and turmoil of the Anglo-Afghan war had to adversely affect life at Khyber as it was the only strategic Pass constantly used for the forward and backward movements of the invading and retreating British Indian Armies. Charles Miller in his book Khyber maintains:"The Indian Government and Whitehall thought that if the Pathans fell short of expected standards as a British subject, the Frontier itself loomed large in imperial geopolitics because, for at least seven decades during the nineteenth century, it was seen as a vestibule for a Russian invasion of India via Afghanistan. For this reason alone, the Khyber and other trans-Indus passes shared equal strategic importance with Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. Thus to leave the Pathan destiny in other hands was unthinkable." [p.119]. It appeared that unlike the numerous other invaders of the subcontinent, the British meant business. They were not easily thwarted but then the Pass and the territories around it were not to be presented to them on a silver platter either. The active forward move of the mighty British Empire into the tribal belt alarmed the tribesmen, who feared that the British were out to destroy their cherished independence. Their reaction took the form of a great tribal uprising in 1897, involving the entire tribal belt from Malakand in the north to Waziristan in the south. A series of sporadic battles were fought throughout the tribal belt between the ill-equipped tribesmen and the well-disciplined, seasoned British Indian Army. But despite the colossal British Imperial might and its myth of invincibility, they failed to subjugate the primitive tribal people with all their carrot and stick approach. They remained at loggerheads with these tenacious tribesmen for quite a long time and led quite a number of expeditions against them.

For the local tribes however, it would be life as usual, a semi-settled, semi-nomadic life, unmindful of economic imperatives and disregarding social or even cultural considerations as long as their survival and their independence were in jeopardy, they could put up with any hardship of life. They would be tending their herds, cultivating their terraces or patches of clearings in the plains, in the lap of valleys, irrigated by natural springs or intermittent rains. Their staple crop would be wheat, barley and potato ; they would hardly be growing any vegetables, as they would never be vegetarians. Diary products would be in abundance to supplement their meagre food resources. Their other occupation would be cutting wood for fuel and particularly burning for heat during the severe winter months, and the surplus would be taken down to the market at Peshawar, to sell for a handful of coins, to be spent on some other domestic necessity. Their next most perpetual occupation would be
making ropes, baskets and even shoes from the wild dwarf-palm, growing abundantly on the hills. The more adventurous and daring among them would occasionally accompany a caravan either bound for Kabul or down to the mysterious depth of Hindustan. Their own ponies would be packed with something to sell there and bring back some much-needed articles of domestic use. A few would now and then try their luck and trust to their mettle to carry out either a covert or even broad day-light dacoity in down-country cities and towns, whose prosperity would beg this treatment at the hands of the starving tribesmen from the hills. This would be corroborated by the story of Ajab Khan which is only too well known to repeat here. And, of course, lifting of each others cattle would be a common routine among most of the tribesmen.

In this way they maintained their grudging independence and the perpetual guardianship of the historic Khyber Pass. Wherever possible, however, they have put up strong resistance against any intruding, alien army, and have fought with religious zeal. While effectively blocking the Sikhs at Jamrud, they gave a tough time to the British Indian Army, on its way to and back from the repeated Afghan expeditions. Their most effective strategy, in absence of deterrent weapons, would be to roll down huge boulders from the hill tops to crush the armies passing through the gorges bellow. Of course, that would be at the time when the ultimate weapons of war were the rusty sword and the cumbersome shield and sometimes the ineffective arrows shot from wooden bows., Also throughout the British administration of the Khyber, what with the strong fortification of the levy, the militia, the army and the powerful political paraphernalia, the tribesmen never lost an opportunity to attack the weak spots of the administration here and there; whether it was to block a road for dacoity, stop and loot a train, or ambush a small army detachment and attack it for the rifles, or even storm a piquet or the quarter-guard of the camp for the capture of magazine.

Similarly, they never allowed a Moghul caravan or convoy to pass through the Khyber in peace. It was invariably attacked and hellishly harassed and, at times, utterly routed and defeated. The Khyber provided not only occasional opportunities for such activities, but also a great deal of revenue from the tributary towns and villages that lay along its length.

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26 They still enjoy this internal independence. Even the writ of Pakistan does not apply there. However, the guardianship of the Khyber Pass has now been relegated to the Pakistan army, over and above the Khyber Rifles. With the passage of time, there is more reliance on and integration with Pakistan.

27 There are at least two famous defeats of the Moghul convoys at the hands of the local Khyber tribes: one at Ali Masjid and another at Landi Khana. Both were crushing defeats.
ional refuge and safe haven to Pakhtoon rebel leaders, like Bayazid Ansari and Khushal Khan Khattak, fighting against the mighty Moghul Empire; they were readily provided with strong tribal lashkars to make it a common cause against a common foe. Whenever Khushal Khan was cornered by the Moghul hordes, he took to Tirah to call on the reliable support of Aimal Khan and Darya Khan and their ever-ready lashkar to fall back on the pursuing Moghul armies. And similar was the case of Bayazid Ansari, long before Khushal Khan Khattak. In Tirah he found a large number of converts to his mystic creed. These enthusiastic disciples would leave no stone unturned to help their leader in adversity and take arms against the forces of bigotry and slavery. His family was provided a permanent home in Tirah and his progeny was subsequently looked upon as bonafide Tirahwals if not Afridis too. That is why we count his grandson, Mirza Khan Ansari, among the earliest Khyber poets, because he lived and wrote his poetry there.

However, the dying decades of the nineteenth century had confronted the tribals with the threat of an outright British onslaught followed by a stern administration. They had tenaciously resisted the Moghul Imperialism so far and the succeeding British Imperialism was not to be allowed to snatch away their centuries-old independence. Having crushed the Sikhs at Jamrud, they were in turn to be crushed by the much superior British might. The tribals were unwittingly caught in the web of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in the sub-continent. They were in the heart of the area where the tragic drama of the Great Game had to be inevitably staged. The mounted columns of the British Forward Policy had to trample them down in order to subdue Afghanistan and the weakling Muslim principalities beyond Oxus. This Forward Policy and its occupational imperatives caused a simultaneous and universal uprising in the entire tribal belt from Malakand in the north to Waziristan in the south. In the process of quelling this uprising the British Army also at last “lifted the veil” of the so far unmolested and inaccessible Tirah Valley in 1897. Tirah was as it still is, the common home and the ultimate refuge of all the Khyber tribes. It was also used as a base for the incursions in the settled territories of the plains, not only to terrorize the plain-dwellers but also to plunder their property. To teach these unruly tribes a lesson, Tirah itself was attacked and invaded from the south where some Orakzai areas had already been occupied in Hangu and the Samana mountain top. From there the British expedition reached the Aka Khel area in Tirah proper where a
number of houses were demolished and herds of cattle and pack animals and other household property confiscated. Of course the expedition would have faced scant opposition from the ill-equipped tribals, who would simply have vacated their houses and disappear in the alpine jungles around. However, it is interesting to record the atemement of Col. Younghusband who recalls the Tirah skirmishes. He says: “The Afridis may be driven all day like mountain sheep but when the night begins to fall and their tired pursuers commence of necessity to draw back to lower levels for food and rest, these redoubtable foes rises in all his strength, with sword and gun and huge boulder hurls himself like a demon on his retiring enemy”. Beyond the Serhai Kandaw (literally the oak hillock), on the northwest of Aka Khel area, there lay the heartland of the Tirah Valley, called Maidan (or plain), the original home and habitat of all the Afridi clans. It is from there that they have ultimately fanned out into the other territories like Landi Kotal, Jamrud, Bara, and Darra Adam Khel, of their present occupation. The British forces pursued the fleeing Afridis right up to their doorstep, in their ancestral habitat, beyond the bleak chain of inaccessible mountains. After quite some destruction and an ample show of strength, they retreated back to their base in the plains, perhaps to take up another such expedition against some other rebel tribe. Although this devastating expedition seriously injured their tribal pride, but whether it crushed the tenacity and resolve of the Afridis is a million dollar question.

Unlike the rest of the invaders of India and Central Asia, who used the Khyber Pass as a convenient passage and a short cut, at times paying meager tolls to appease the local tribes, the British, however, meant business. Realizing the geo-strategic importance of the Pass, they were bent upon annexing it at all cost. For this purpose they made permanent roads, railways and lines of communications to facilitate the movement of their armies. They also built cantonments, forts, towers and piquets for the permanent stationing of their multiple forces to guard the Pass. During the Second Afghan War (1878), the Khyber was the first to be declared an Agency, with the appointment of a political agent, directly responsible to the Viceroy at Delhi, and with offices at Peshawar and Landi Kotal.\textsuperscript{28}

With these developments, the British followed a general policy of pacification and appeasement towards the tribes. An internal militia—The Khyber Rifles— was raised from among the tribes for keeping local peace and

\textsuperscript{28}Peshawar was the winter while Landi Kotal was the summer headquarters of the Khyber Agency as they still are. Both these offices are in their respective cantonments.
guarding the Khyber Pass. Also for the purpose of policing the area, a local levy—The Khasadar Force—was established. Only the Khasadars and not the army or militia, could directly deal with the tribes and go to the villages for summons etc. At the same time, for the purpose of dealing with the local tribes, a representative class called Maliks, was also created. Even village elders were recognized as intermediaries between the government and the affairs of their villages or clans. Recruitment in these multiple forces, the roads and railways contracts and construction works offered tremendous employment opportunities to the poor and penniless local tribal. The Maliks and elders were given handsome annual and even quarterly subsidies (Majib). The lands requisitioned for roads and railways and other government concerns were taken against cash annual payments. In this way, the British brought about a socio-economic transformation of the local tribes.\textsuperscript{29}

Settled and subjugated to some extent, they were not completely tamed, whether it was desirable or not. They were left with a real sense of internal independence and their centuries-old Pakhtoonwali or Riwaj or Sharishta (traditional tribal law) intact. It was not tried to be replaced by the introduction of the English or Roman law, as was done all over the rest of the Indian sub-continent. They were spared the agonies of litigations, trials, convictions, imprisonment and even executions. Their own Jarga system was considered a better dispensation.

This period also coincided with a general prosperity particularly among the tribes living in Khyber, Jamrud, Bara and Darra Adam Khel. There was a gradual increase in the volume of trade between the then British India and Afghanistan, mostly carried out by these tribal. Transport was mechanized and instead of pack animals, lumbering trucks were plied between the two countries. It facilitated the quick movement of trade and a fair means of income from it to the tribesmen. In this way, the tribals were provided hundred present employment opportunities. While on the one hand their standard of living improved tremendously, on the other hand they started interacting with the outside world and this also improved their standard of life or living. Their dress manners, living conditions and social manners were drastically changed for better. They evolved a better culture. While

\textsuperscript{29}It will require a separate article to review this socio-economic transformation. The tribes gradually gave up a primitive, medieval life for a fairly modern one. They left behind a centuries-old barter system and got involved in money economy. Collective labour (Ashar) was replaced by paid labour (Ojrat). The old feudal system was being Shaken to the foundation in a slow, evolutionary process.
previously they would be hundred present illiterate, now they started schools in their areas. These schools gradually grew into high schools and even colleges, with the result that a fair percentage of their children became not only literate but some of them turned into scholars and writers. They also developed a taste for literature not only in Pashto but also in Urdu and Persian. And they ultimately started creating their own literature in Pashto most of which was set to music (to the ubiquitous Rabab and Mange), to be sung in their Hujras, on the celebrations of social occasions like marriages, Kozhda (engagement), births, Sunat (circumcision), or just for entertainment and refreshment. This combination with the living traditional music of their poetry popularized and even glorified the poets. It gave them a pride and urge to improve and polish their poetry. With this some poets soon crossed the folklore or romantic threshold of popular taste or appeal to inter the domain of high philosophy or the mysterious world of mysticism. Such poets can now be classified with our classical antiquity.

1.3 The Literary Perspective

In order to understand the emergence of the Khyber School of literature, at the dawn of the twentieth century, we must delve deeper in the hoary past in order to arrive at the genesis of Pashto literature itself and then follow its ups and downs and its ultimate flourishing in Khyber. However, it must be made clear at the outset that one should never begin at the beginning, for the beginning invariably leads into the merky territories of Oral or Folk literature, without any sharp boundaries drawn between literature, music, rituals, riddles, proverbs and a hotchpotch of cultural conglomeration. And this kind of “literature” can be said to have neither a beginning nor an end.\textsuperscript{30} Pashto folk and Oral literature is at best timeless and universal; it is as old as the language itself that embodies it. Since we deal here with a particular area and its written and recorded literature, the Oral and Folk literature will have to be ignored.

\textsuperscript{30}The Oral and Folk literature still very much flourishes all over Pakhtoonkhwa. It has not yet been completely replaced by a sophisticated, written literature. One reason for this may be the universal illiteracy, coupled with a primitive life-style and general taste of the people. The general lack of literacy, reflected in the general apathy towards Pashto language itself, is also a serious handicap in the development of meaningful, written literature. No serious literature can be produced in a void where hardly anybody can read and write.
Pashto literature is divided into convenient periods. The earliest period spans over 139 H/728 AD and 771 H/1360 AD. The well-known names of this period are: Amir Karor, Sulaiman Maku, Malik Yarghushtan, Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Shaikh Mati, Baba Hotak, Beet Baba and Akbar Zamindari. But their scant and very elementary writing are now relegated to an historical interest in the march of Pashto literature. It is the second period of Bayazid Ansari (Pir Roshan) and the writers of his School that has given Pashto literature some diversity, vigour, veracity and identity. The poets and prose writers of this period were also well-versed in Persian, Arabic, and Hindi languages, and they have profusely borrowed from all these languages, as it would be the need of their Pashto. They also consciously introduced Tassawuf or mysticism in Pashto literature. As they were never patronized by any court, they turned to the court of Allah for guidance and grace. They took ecstatic pleasure in songs of Tauheed (Unity Of God) or wahdatul Wajud (the unity of being or pantheism).\footnote{There are two fundamental schools of Sufism: ‘Wahdatul Wajud’ founded by Mohayud Din Ibnul Arabi and ‘Wahadtul Shuhud’ founded by Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi respectively. According to Hamza Shinwari, there is no fundamental difference in their basic belief. Their differences are only verbal and terminological. Hamza has devoted a whole volume to this controversy. The book is in Urdu, entitled, Wajud-wo-Shuhud, 1970.}

1.3.1 Bayazid Ansari (Pir Roshan) In Tirah

Due to some differences with his father, Qazi Abdullah, Bayazid Ansari left his native village, Kanigoram, in Waziristan and lived in Dawar territory for some time. From there he shifted to Tirah where he lived Mastiara. Here he was given a warm welcome by the Tirah tribes of Afridis, Bangash and Orakzai.\footnote{Since Pir Roshan was opposed to the Moghul Empire (like Khushal Khan after him) he was driven to the hills. He chose to live in the inaccessible Tirah to avoid the Moghul might. The onslaught on his mystic creed was carried on by Syed Ali Tarmezi (Pir Baba) and his more-loyal-than-the-king disciple, Akhun Darweza. To this day it is suspected that there was Moghul machination in the defamation of Pir Roshan by Pir Baba. Similarly, the Moghuls pestered Khushal Khan with his own son, Bahram Khan, and the treacherous son made no secret of his Moghul connections.} This encouraged him to announce the founding of a mystic order, the Roshania sect, which attracted numerous converts or adherents and Bayazid was acknowledged as an accomplished Pir (spiritual leader). This overwhelming response from the tribals to the call of his spiritual discipline might have urged Bayazid to found a theocratic state in this area of geostrate-
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gic importance. Soon he started organizing the tribes, imposing taxes and
stakes and giving a practical shape to a virtual independent state in the tribal
territories. This alarmed not only the Moghul Empire in India, the thrones
of Shahinshah Akbar at Delhi and Mirza Muhammad Hakim at Kabul, but
also the local Pirs and religious leaders. His activities were a direct threat to
both the secular and religious set up around him. Bayazid also visited the
local tribes of the plains like Khalil, Mohmand, Daudzai, Gagyani, Yousafzai
Toyi and Safi, who all paid homage to him. However, while the Moghul
forces started pursuing and persecuting him, the opposing Pirs branded him
as a heretic. This was the beginning of a long, protracted struggle which
ultimately ended with the defeat and an anonymous death of Bayazid.

The mission of Bayazid Ansari at Tirah proved to be more of a political
than literary nature. Whether ha has directly inspired any local poet or
writer is not known, as it is not known whether there already were any poets
or writers at Tirah at the time. Still the religious zeal and literary genius
of Bayazid must have inspired a lot of the local tribals and the ones with
literary or poetic talents would have found great encouragement from this
living institution. However, the progeny of kept up the tradition of writing
mystic poetry at Tirah, even long after the death of Bayazid himself.30.

1.3.2 Khushal Khan Khattak At Tirah

Like Pir Roshan and his progeny, Khushal Khan Khattak was also repeatedly
driven to Tirah for refuge. But, it seems, he was more concerned with the
Moghul threat than with the growth of literature there. Instead of poets, if
there were any there at the time, he gathered around himself tough fighters
like Aimal Khan and Darya Khan and their ever-ready lashkar to face any
eventuality. We, therefore, have no record of Khushal Khan’s influence on
the Khyber literature. He could have inspired, while alive, a number of poets
and writers, as he continues to do even after three hundred years. He has
rightly claimed about the Khattaks;

(If they would sit for a while by the side of Khushal
These Khattaks of the hills would all be turned into poets).
(Khushal)
His influence is there all right on the “Grand Chateau Family.” But a similar influence is not traceable in the Khyber. However, Khushal himself seems to have been fascinated by the physical charms of the Afridi damsels. The following oft-quoted poem corroborates it.

Both fair and rosy, too, are the Adam Khel Afridi maids;
Indeed, amongst them, all sorts of pretty lasses there are—
With large eyes, long drooping lashes, and arched eyebrows—
Honey lips, rosy cheeks, and moon-like faces, too, have they.
Small mouths, like unto rose-buds, teeth regular and white—
Their heads round, and covered with dark curls, of amber redolent.
Their bodies soft and sleek, and like an egg, so smooth and glossy—
Their feet diminutive, their heels round, their hips prominent.
Thin stomached, broad chested, and small waisted—
In stature, straight, like the letter alif, and of complexion fair.
Although my peregrinations may, like the falcon’s, be among the hills;
Still, many pretty plump partridges my quarry I have made.
Young and untaught, or old and trained, the falcon seeketh his prey;
But more scientific, and more unerring, is the old bird’s swoop.
It is either the water of the Landdaey river, or of the Barah stream
That tasteth sweeter, and more delicious, than Sherbet in mouth.
The hills in the Matari Pass shoot straight up into the sky;
And one’s corpulence soon diminisheth, climbing and ascending them.

Along with the Adam Khels into the Tirah country I came;

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33 The, ‘Grand Khattak Family’ refers to Khushal Khan Khattak and his progeny. A number of Khushal Khan’s sons and grandsons happened to be equally great poets and writers. Hence this collective name.
And having dismissed them to Khwarrah, with regret I returned.
Love’s affairs O KHUSHHAL! Are fraught with fire to excess;
For shouldst thou conceal the flame, the smoke thou still wilt see.
(Taken from Raverty’s SELECTIONS FROM PASHTO POETRY)
A PASHTO - URDU - PERSIAN POET FROM KHYBER

1.3.3 Josh Malihabadi

From the beginning
Having stepped into this valley
Afridi will stay steadfast
To the very last. (Qasim Ali)

In a Pakistan Writers’ Guild Mushaira, held at Karachi in 1958, Hamza Shinwari came across Josh Malihabadi. He felt that Josh was a virtual Pathan tribesman minus the Pashto language and the Pathan’s crested turban. At this Josh claimed that his ancestors belonged to the Malikhel sub-clan of the Afridi Adam Khal tribe. His grand father was called Sarbiland Khan and with this he recited the following extempore couplet in Urdu:

(Even now when the morning breeze comes from Khyber
It brings the sound of the heart-beat of my grandpa). (Josh).

This awakens us to the rude realization of the intellectual drain from Khyber, through the ages. This feeling is further intensified by the discovery of Qasim Ali Khan Afridi, although it may be gratifying to know that apart from Pashto, he has done his best poetry in Urdu and Persian.

1.3.4 Qasim Ali Khan Afridi

Qasim Ali Khan belonged to the Sultan Khan clan of Adam Khel tribe, living in Durra. His grand father, Neknam Khan migrated to Hindustan in 1119 H / 1708 AD, either because of domestic enmity, or driven by poverty to try his luck there as a solder of fortune. His father, Burhan Khan eked out living in various parts of northern India and ultimately settled in Kolhar, Farakhabad. Apart from Afridis other tribals had also settled there. The
Nawabs of Bangash had established their own principality in Farakhabad. As brave soldiers, these tribals were readily recruited by the various Nawabs and Maharajas, through the length and breadth of Hindustan.

Although given good, solid, traditional education, with good grounding in theology and literature, Qasim Ali Khan also adopted the life of a soldier which took him to Deccan. When he returned after a long time, he joined the service of East India company at Shamsabad. After leaving this service he seems to have dedicated the rest of his life to the pursuit of literature and from his writings, particularly his Pashto Diwan, it seems that he was inclined towards asceticism.

Qasim Ali Khan has written a number of books in both prose and poetry in all the three languages then spoken in India i.e. Pashto, Urdu and Persian. Some of his works are preserved by the British Museum Library, while a manuscript of his Diwan is there in the Islamia College Library. In his autobiography, Afridi Nama, he claims to have written six books at the age of thirty nine. These books are:

- Diwane Afridi. (Pashto)
- Khwab Nama. (Pashto)
- Diwane Afridi. (Urdu)
- Afridi Nama: which also carries a list of equivalents of Pashto, Persian, Hindi, Kashmiri and English vocabulary.
- Shafaat Nama: Which carries a list of the names of the spiritual leaders of the Qadiria Order of tassawuf. It carries some hymns and panegyrics also.
- Risala-e-Afridi : (Persian) It is a commentary on the condition of his family and tribe.
- Risala-e-Tassawuf : Which is on the principles of mysticism. Not mentioned in the above list.

Qasim Ali Khan was born in 1183 H / 1772 AD. And died either in 1221 H / 1805 AD or 1231 H / 1811. He was born in India and died there. He writes in his autobiography somewhere that if permitted by life he would visit his ancestral home at Darra Adam Khel and write its account too. But apparently this was not granted to him.
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This Afridi Nama can also be looked upon as an important historical document as it is a first-hand record of the political currents and cross-current of the time. It describes the mutual rivalries and petty skirmishes of the countless Nawabs, Rajas and Maha Rajas of the time and their helplessness against the expansionist designs of the British East India company. It even records the various articles, terms and conditions of some important pacts and treaties. In this way, it is an unprejudiced and reliable source of historical information of the time.

Seeing my condition in love,
Majnoon could all but say:
I am going towards the city,
You stay in your wilderness.(Qasim Ali)

1.3.5 The Poets Called Akhuds

In his book, Da Khyber Adab, Murad Shinwari also falls back on Folklore and Oral literature from the end of the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. He mentions a strange convention of poetry contest or poetic declamation, when a poet from a tribe would challenge another poet from the same or a different tribe for the recitation of extempore versification (for you wouldn’t call it poetry anyway). The event would be heralded by a loud beating of the drum and the shrill blasts of a trumpet. The poets would face each other at the appointed time and place, surrounded by the villagers as their audience and judges. One poet would recite an extempore line and the other would instantly complete it into a neat rhyming couplet, with a complete idea. The villagers would mock, jeer, growl or laugh as demanded by the occasion, and their cheers or jeers would punctuate the versification. However, the one who failed to meet the obligation would slink back to his village, licking his wounds like a defeated dog while the winner would be raised to shoulders and taken to the village in an excited process like a Greek hero. Those poets (now the specie is all but extinct) were called Akhunds and their poetry would be sung to music. They were mainly patronized by the tribal lords as they would be adept in the art of entertainment. Murad has related the story of one particularly indefatigable

34Da Khyber Adab, Murad Ali Shinwari, pp.47-58.
Akhunds called Najeebullah, whose fame and fad had spread right up to Peshawar if not beyond. These poets would be virtual clowns, accompanying a party of musicians and relating funny anecdotes in the interval. They would provide dramatic element to music sessions. Hence they can be looked upon as the medieval tumblers, jesters, clowns if not the actual bards.

1.3.6 The Nineteenth Century

Poets are, however, found in Khyber at the turn of the nineteenth century. There was a particularly well-known poet called Mira, at Jamrud, in the middle of the nineteenth century. He was closely followed by Tura Baz Shinwari from Landi Kotal. At about the same time, an elderly brother of Hamza Shinwari, Yar Muhammad Shinwari (1886) was also writing poetry. Saidan Shah Afridi (1897 - ?) was also a poet of the same period. At the dawn of the twentieth century we have poets like Haji Muhammad Amin Khan Shinwari (1905 - ?), Akhtar Muhammad Shinwari (1908 - ?) and Khisro Afridi (1927 - 1949) . These poets mostly wrote Ghazal and Charbeta (a poem with four lines and a refrain, sing with music). Murad Ali has therefore catalogued them as folk poets as they catered to the popular taste of poetry sung to music. Their poetry is topical and highly romantic with sensuous and aesthetic appeal. Indeed Khisro Afridi among these poets, is still extensively sung, having the widest (if not the wildest) possible appeal. However, like the popular English Medieval ballads, the literature of this period has been fossilized in music and songs, as none of it was published, or perhaps even written down. None of it is available now even in manuscript form; and their families are reluctant to share any record of these poets with any prying researcher or collector or connoisseur of literature. Their work, if any yet left intact, is bound to perish with the passage of time.

Apart from poetry, so far there has been no trace of any other literary genre. Most of these poets themselves were illiterate, deprived of even the elementary mosque education. Prose was unknown to them and drama was yet to be introduced and novel was to be borrowed from English through Urdu. Throughout the three hundred years, from the end of the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century Pashto literature was mainly poetry-based. And poetry is there in abundance, both sublime and ridiculous. This brings us to Hamza Shinwari and his School or the Khyber School of Pashto

\[35\text{Ibid, pp.50-52 “Hamza Shinwari: A Brief Biography”}\]
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literature. According to Dr. Rajwali Shah Khattak, “The vision or dream that Khushal Khan Khattak had seen three hundred years ago found fulfillment in the twentieth century in Hamza Shinwari, who could be considered the rightful inheritor of the great Khan and the renaissance that we trace from him.”

Ruminating on the School of Hamza, Dr. Aminul Haq from Mardan has reached this conclusion: “When God Almighty wishes to preserve a nation or its language and literature from the abyss of extinction, He creates such people in that society, from time to time, to enrich and invigorate its culture and civilization. Such people in Pakhtoon society or Pashto language were Pir Roshan, Khushal Khan, Abdur Rahman, Abdul Hameed and Ali Khan. The same mission is now being fulfilled by Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari.”

1.3.7 Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari

(Has fame resounded there
When I visited Peshawar
I was looking for Hamza
In desolate graveyards). (Hamza).

Born at Landi Kotal in 1907, Hamza was put in collegiate School at Peshawar at the age of five or six. Soon he developed an obstinate apathy to School and withdrew into his miserable shell for the entire span of some eight or nine years of his School life. His father had rented a Balakhana at Dabgari street, Peshawar city. His frequent visits to this place would provide him some relief from the suffocating School atmosphere. One day when he came to the place, his elder brother took him too the theatre. This was his first experience of the theatre and its glittering and jingling, make-believe, magic world. It turned his plastic mind and affected him so deeply and so thoroughly that from then on he made it a mission of his life never to miss the theatre again. He was so infected by this insidious or invidious virus that he crammed up all the dialogues of those crude, pristine plays. With this he was hopelessly taken to acting, seeing himself now in the cast of a clown and now a hero. This juvenile interest in the theatre and the world of films and acting propelled him to try

37Dr. Amin-ul-Haq in Za Au Hamza, Abdur Rahman Lugai Kakakhel; p.174.
his luck at Bombay, the then subcontinental Hollywood. Although this long
tour of great expectations turned out to be a complete misadventure, yet
he was by no means demoralized and in 1920 succeeded in getting a role
of a dacoit in a silent movie called The Falcon, made by the Punjab Film
Company, Lahore. However it was in 1941 that his craze for films found
complete fulfillment in making the first-ever Pashto film, Laila Majnoon, in
Bombay, in collaboration with Rafique Ghaznavi. Later on he wrote scripts
for two more Pashto films, Paighla (the virgin) and Allaqa Ghair (the tribal
territory). Both were filmed at Lahore during the sixties. Hamza had left
school in 9th class to join some service in the Political Department, only to
leave it after some time for assisting his father in his railway construction
contracts. After some time he joined a railway service, again to leave it for
the tour of Bombay, in search of a role in some theatrical company or film.
He was also married soon after leaving school, in order “to tie him to a pig”
as they say in Pashto.

1.3.7.1 Initiation In Mysticism

By the thirties he was deeply entrenched in Sufism. About his initiation in
this esoteric discipline he has said some where: “I stepped into this Hairatabad
(wonderland) in 1930. I was not consciously inclined that way before. It
would be more true to say that I have not come here of my own accord but
have simply been dragged to it.” But once entering these enticing portals he
then lived there for good, unruffled by the ups and downs of life or the push
and pull of his own base nature, demanding sensuous and carnal pleasures.
Soon he carved a niche for himself in the awesome temple of mysticism to
be venerated more as a Murshid (spiritual mentor) than one of the greatest
of Pashto poets. Perhaps the credit of it all goes to his far-sighted Shaikh
(spiritual guide) who dragged him to the path of Salook (spiritualism) in the
very formative years of his young and restless life, which was but poised for
a leap in the void, unmindful of hell or heaven. We can not but appreciate
his practical wisdom in first advising Hamza against his own will, to take
to Pashto literature instead of Urdu, as was his wont, and then formally
initiating him in the eternal lore of mysticism to add yet another and more
subtle dimension to his vastly promising and fecund life.

Hamza took formal allegiance at the hand of Syed Abdus Sattar Shah

\(^{38}\)Meri Zindagi, 1976, p.76
(lovingly called Bacha Jan) in the Chishtia Nizamia Order. Bacha Jan lived in the Dabgari Street, Peshawar City, where his house (which Hamza would call Astana) was always thronged by the devotees of Tariqat (esotericism). On his death in 1954 Hamza started acting as his Khalifa (successor). Later on Hamza wrote his memoirs which were published in Urdu in 1969, under the title, Tazkira-e-Sattaria. It was translated in Urdu by Tahir Bokhari, a disciple of Hamza. Its Pashto original was not published.

1.3.7.2 Poetry And Kindered Literary Activities

Perhaps Hamza was a born poet. He started writing poetry when he was in 6th class at school. In the beginning he thought that perhaps poetry was a bye-product of literacy or an extension of the simple ability to read and write.. Another misconception that he also suffered from then was that if one was to write any poetry it should be in Urdu, as if Urdu was the language of poetry and poor Pashto the language of hell; or perhaps Pashto was never considered fit for poetic expression. It was in the twenties that he started writing Urdu poetry which a senior student, Maulana Abdul Qadir (later the founding director of Pashto Academy, Peshawar) would correct for him. I shall quote here a part of one of his Urdu Ghazals, leaving it untranslated with the hope that it will be understood as it is:

It was in 1937 that a Pashto literary society called Bazm-e-Adab was established at the house of Syed Abdus Sattar Shah, with the active patronage of the enlightened Pir. Apart from Bacha Jan himself its founding fathers were Syed Rahat Zakheli as its president, Hamza Shinwari as its vice-president and Bad Shah Gul Niazi as its General Secretary. After some time the Presidentship was entrusted to Hamza Shinwari to look after its affairs right upto 1950 when it was merged in a larger society called Ulasi Adabi Jarga.

This Bazme-e-Adab was perhaps the first ever Pashto literary society of its kind in the entire Frontier Province. It started holding Pashto Mushairas not only in the city schools but also at the Shrine of Rahman Baba. These Mushairas soon became very popular and the annual Rahman Mushaira was turned into an Urs to be celebrated with great devotion. It was in 1940 in one such Mushaira that Hamza Shinwari was given the title of Baba-e-Ghazal, when he recited the Ghazal of which the following two couplets have been taken:

(I am invited by the Raqib.
It may only be a trap for revenge.

Your dark eyes are bent on my heart.

The Moors are again poised for storming the Kaaba) (Hamza)

For a number of years this society actively worked for the revival of Pashto letters. Its scope expanded with the passage of time. A time came when a larger and more representative society or circle was visualized to accommodate poets and writers from the entire province.

It was in 1950 that the Bazm-e-Adab was finally merged into the Ulasi Adabi Jarga. The moving spirit behind this august Jarga was Sanobar Hussain Kakaji with Hamza Shinwari and Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil as its vice-president and general secretary respectively. Its membership also swelled and consisted of Qalandar Momand, Ajmal Khattak, Mir Mehdi Shah, Wali Muhammad Toofan, Fazli Haq Shaidea, Saiful Rahman Salim, Afzal Bangash, Latif Wahmi, Hussain Khan Soz, Ayub Sabir, Farigh Bokhari, Raza Hamdani, Qamar Rahi and a number of others. Apart from promoting poetry this Jarga also paid equal attention to the promotion of Pashto prose. It also held regular criticism sessions to groom the younger generation of poets in this vital side of literature. It held regular sessions at the Balakhana of Kamil in Khyber Bazar, Peshawar City.

Hamza was also the first major poet to have consciously created and carefully sustained a pervading literary consciousness throughout the Khyber and even beyond. He raised a fresh crop of young, talented poets who were soon to yield a rich literary harvest, ready for export to Afghanistan and the rest of the Pashto-speaking world. Since then most of those poets have established themselves in their own right. Most of them have published their collections of poetry and prose works. Their songs from the radio, television, films and the local musicians are a source of perennial joy. I intend to write a separate, and slightly more detailed note on each of them towards the end.

In the preface to Hamza Shinwari’s Ghazawoone (Yawning; a collection of poetry) Qalandar Momand maintains, “The poetry of Hamza Shinwari is not confined to him alone; it is the poetry of all the contemporary Ghazal writers; their expression, construction, style, imagery, and even their diction have all been influenced by the Ghazal of Hamza. So, if the poetry of Hamza is to be discussed, it will necessitate the discussion of all the contemporary poets, which is a difficult task.”

Similarly, comparing Hamza to a lighthouse for the

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39 An article on Hamza Shinwari by Qalandar Momand, The Frontier Post, Peshawar
coming generations of poets and writers. Noor Muhammad Zigar has written: “It is a law of nature that every age is provided with such personalities as can determine the standard and keep the wheel of evolution turning, whenever a society reaches a stage of evolution when the previous standards no longer hold good then a new sage emerges. Only the one with the enlightened mind, high thoughts, strong morals and good manners is selected from among the entire society for its guidance. Such a person is usually a symbol of unity and universality and his influence transcends all the barriers of caste, colour or creed. Though localized by necessity, his art and thought can benefit the entire human society. Apart from his own time, such a person can be like a lighthouse for the coming ages. Hamza has also been compared to a huge tree with its roots deep down in the classical tradition, its trunk a source of strength for the present age, while its tender, high boughs and the flowers and fruit therein are a symbol of hope and nourishment for the posterity.

1.3.7.3 Contribution To Pashto Prose

As compared to poetry, Pashto prose is rather poor. Many of our great writers, of course with a few fortunate exceptions, have paid hardly any heed to this equally vital branch of literature; they have hardly ever wandered from the ever-green pastures of poetry into the arid zone of prose. But on the contrary Hamza has written more prose than poetry, with great diversity and equally great depth. Starting with stories and essays, he soon stepped into mysticism from where he took the bumpy highway to philosophy. He has also written a novel, two volumes of travelogues, a biography and an autobiography. There is hardly any aspect of life and literature that he might have left untouched. In the beginning he used to write, essay, stories and short stories which used to be published in various magazines including the prestigious Nan Paroon (now-a-days) which used to be published from Delhi during the second World War. Later on they were collected and published in a miscellany called Zhawar Fikroona (deep thoughts). In 1937 he published his major work on mysticism under the title Tajjaliat-e-Muhammadia (the refulgence of Muhammad). It can truly be called a compendium on Sufism. Like the Kashful Mahjoob of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh, it can be a textbook on Islamic mysticism. In 1957 he published the account of his tour of Afghanistan, Nawe Pakhtoon (New Pakhtoon) and in 1958 he published

(Hamza Supplement), 24th November, 1989.
a novel called Nawe Chape (new waves). These were followed in 1959 by a treatise Yaw Shir (one couplet) on the following couplet of Khushal Khan.

\[ \text{(I observe the same face in every thing} \\
\text{that disappeared in His over-creation) (Khushal)} \]

In 1962 he published his first major work in philosophy called Zhwand (life), and published its Urdu Version Insan Aur Zindagi in 1964. In 1967 he published the accounts of his pilgrimage to Makka with this verse as its title:

\[ \text{(Even a my way to Hijaz} \\
\text{I go with-Pakhtoon caravans (Hamza).} \]

In 1970 he published the Urdu version of the memoir of his Shaikh, Syed Abdus Sattar Shah. It was written in Pashto but he got it translated in Urdu by Tahir Bokhari. The Pashto version has not yet been published. Round about the same time he published another philosophical treatise called Taskheer Da Kavinat (the conquest of the Universe). In 1970 he published Wajud Wa Shahud (the essence and the apparent) in Urdu. This is a detailed commentary on the letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, commonly called Mujjadid-Alf-e-Sani. In 1976 he wrote his autobiography in Urdu, entitled Meri Zindagi (my life) on the repeated requests of a friend, Kanwar Muhammad Azam Ali Khan. It has not been published so far. The original MS lies with Syed Anis Shah Jilani in Sadiqabad, Punjab. In 1980 he published Ana Aur Ilm (Ego and Knowledge) in Urdu, its Pashto version was published in 1982. It was called Insani Ana Au Poha (Human Ego and Knowledge).

1.3.7.4 Translations

Hamza has translated the entire Dewan of Rahman Baba in Urdu Verse. It was published by Pashto Academy in 1963. Then he did Pashto verse translations of Allama Iqbal’s Armaghane Hijaz and Javed Nama. They were jointly published by Pashto Academy, Peshawar, and Iqbal Academy, Karachi, in 1964 and 1967 respectively.

1.3.7.5 Contribution To Pashto Drama

The drama of Hamza is radio drama. When the radio station was opened in Peshawar in 1935, along with Abdul Mazloom and Samandar Khan Samandar, Hamza Shinwari was one of its pioneers in dramatics. Da Weeno Jam
(bloody cup) by Aslam Khattak was the first play to be broadcast from there. Hamza had played the role of the judge in that play. Soon he wrote his first play, Zamindar (the farmer) for radio. This was followed by hundreds of plays and features over a life-long association with the radio. According to Farooq Shinwari, Hamza has written four hundred plays for the radio. Hamza himself would modestly put it at more than a hundred. The irony is that most of those plays are now simply lost as he would hand in the original manuscript, hoping that the radio-wallas would be keeping a record. But having shifted its premises twice since then the radio establishment has simply “misplaced”, if not actually burnt or sold in junk, all the valuable old record. Safur Rahman Syed has dug up some sixty names of the plays of Hamza, from the old diaries of the radio. But they are just names and no more. However, by a happy stroke of good luck the following manuscripts of his plays have been preserved.

- Ahmad Shah Abdali
- Akhtar Mo Mubarak Shah (Eid Greeting).
- Dva Bakhilan (two misers).
- Fateh Khan Rabia .
- Guman Da Eman Zyan De (doubt under mines faith).
- Khan Bahadur Sahib.
- Khushal Khan Khattak .
- Khaisto.
- Matali Shair (the poet of proverbs)
- Maimoona.
- Muqabila (competition).
- Qurbani (sacrifice).
- Spansare Peghla (the Spinster) and
There is also the MS of Khukale Bala (the beautiful bogy) which is a translation of Agha Hasher Kashmiri’s Urdu Stage Play, Khoobsoorat Bala. Some of his plays like Da Damano Khar (city of the professional Singers) and Da Charsiyan Badshah (King of the Hashish Smokers) were also recorded by a gramophone company in Delhi, whether by His Master’s Voice or some other company we will never be able to ascertain, nor probably will ever retrieve from the dust of oblivion those obsolete, round plastic discs called records. This recording was first done at Peshawar and then at Delhi.

The following is by no means a complete list of Hamza Shinwari’s published works. And this is beside his equal amount of unpublished works.

1.3.7.6 POETRY

- Da Khyber Wagne (the Khyber Breezes), first edition, Kabul, 1968.
- Da Zrha Awaz (Voice of the heart), first edition, Peshawar, 1951.

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40 All these plays are in manuscript form. The plays Hamza have not been published.
1.3.7.7 PROSE

- Ana Aur Ilm (Ego and knowledge), Urdu, first edition, Peshawar, 1980.
- Meri Zindagi (autobiography) Urdu, MS, 1976.
- Tajjaliate Muhammed (the Refulgence of Muhammad), Pashto, first edition, Peshawar, 1937.
- Taskheer Da Kayenat (the conquest of Universe), Pashto, first edition, Peshawar, nd.
- Wajud Wa Shuhud (the essence and the manifest), Urdu, first edition, Peshawar, 1970.
- Zhawar Fikroona (Deep thoughts), Pashto, first edition, Peshawar, nd.

We will review below some of the other poets of the Khyber School. As we will see, some of them have already established themselves as poets and writers of some stature, with significant and enduring contribution to Pashto literature. They are no more known with a reference to Hamza Shinwari; they have evolved an individual style of their own, to be known and regarded on the strength and weakness of their own merit. As we will see below, most of them have proved their worth by doing ample justice to their calling. It
is another thing that collectively we lump them under the Khyber School of literature. But then they too would be proud of their being part and parcel of this preponderant tradition.

1.3.8 Mohammad Akram Khan Farooq Shinwari

(Like the sun he shines in the sky of poetry. Why further describe Farooq when so evident). (Farooq).

One of the earliest and the greatest poets and the closest to Hamza Shinwari is Muhammad Akram Khan Farooq Shinwari. Apart from being a great poet Akram Farooq was also a dramatist and a keen critic. He is considered an authority on Hamza because he himself is a poet and writer of equal standing. After receiving the traditional religious and Persianised education first from Qayamuddin Khadim in his village and then from some Qazi in a Thakhtbai village, he started writing poetry in 1935-36. He was one of the first Landikotal poets to be attracted to Hamza Shinwari, who was considered a poet of a far higher stature by that time. Their acquaintance turned into a lifelong friendship. About his relationship with Hamza he writes in his Bayaz (MS of collected works) "When I have opened my eyes in the world of literature and have come to know about the various formalities without which poetry can not hope to endure, I am convinced that it is all because of Ostad Hamza Shinwari. A glance at my earlier poetry will reveal what I mean. I needn't further extol him."41

Apart from writing poetry Farooq also used to be writing plays for the radio. His play Afimi (the opium addict) became very popular. He was also an active member of the Bazm-e-Adab as well as the Ulasi Adabi Jarga and participated in all those Mushairas held at the shrines of Rahman Baba and Khushal Khan Khattak. Here we will quote just two or three couplets from his poetry:

(Why wonder at the differences among people. The same branch gives off Flowers as well as thorns). (Farooq).
(The mirror would only show you to you. The beloved is but a step on the way to yourself). (Farooq).

41Preface to Hamza Shinwari’s Ghazawoone, p. 3
Where now is the kingdom of Aurangzeb? Didn’t he leave behind all his treasures? But look at the poetic treasure of Khushal. It has spread on the east and the west). (Farooq).

1.3.9 Nazer Shinwawri

Would that I were even a cripple
But on my way to the beloved
Rising and falling, but rising again.
(Sorry for you trouble, The angel of death.
The one I was dying for, Just came by chance). (Nazer Shinwari)

The next worthy poet of this School is Lalzada Nazer Shinwari whom Murad Ali would call the Socrates of the Khyber. Hamza himself refers to him as "The teacher of the younger generation of poets," as it is mainly he who corrects their poetry and looks after the brood. He is Hamza Shinwari’s nephew (sister’s son), hence Hamza looks upon the disciples of Nazer as his (Hamza’s) grandsons. Hamza believes that Nazer is the next greatest poet of the school. Although basically illiterate, Nazer has deeply read not only Pashto but also Urdu literature. In this sense he is a self-taught prodigy and a self-made poet, second only to his great uncle, Hamza Shinwari. We will quote here one or two of his verses:

Nazer has also published his first collection of Ghazals and Rubaiyats under the title Mazal (Destination). His poetry has uniform simplicity and sweetness, although wrapped in apparent philosophical idiom. Unlike Hamza, he neither a mystic nor a philosopher; he is all but a poet. Having no unearthly, high sounding pretensions, poetry for him means, in the words of Wordsworth, “a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.”

His expression is romantic and his love is, unlike the divine love of Rahman Baba, very much worldly and sensuous. And like Hamza Shinwari, his language the purest and sweetest Pashto. At the same time he seems to have an ear for metre, rhythm and the resultant melodey and music. Hence his poetry is widely sung with music.

42Da Khyber Adab, p.20
(With ignorance for a companion,
This escort itself becomes a danger).(Nazer).
(Make new scabbards for your old swords.
Give new titles to the old chapters of your history).(Nazer
(Some evil eyesight may fall on you.
For God’s sake don’t laugh on the way).(Nazer).
Why do you ask Nazer
About the beauty of his beloved;
Where is the concept of colour
In the consciousness of a blind?

1.3.10 Murad Ali Shinwari

(A mendicant used to live here.,
Do you remember, Peshawar!?).(Murad Ali)

Murad Ali is the most qualified, the most well read and the most well informed poet of this School. He has the most forceful and the most attractive personality and a typical life and literary style among all the older and even the younger generation of poets. He can be said to be a bridge between the now sharply defined generation gap. He is the sole son of Hamza Shinwari and has been attracted to poetry and literature from a fairy young age. He can be said to have inherited poetry, if not some Jagir, from his great father, and it is very much there in his veins. He is a poet, prose writer, dramatist as well as critic. Unlike his legendary father, he is not a prolific writer, but whatever little he writes, he writes it with considerable ease, charm and authority. He is drawn to new experiments in Pashto literature. He is therefore in favor of translations as well as adopting the canons of the Progressive Writers from Urdu literature. Unlike his father there is no attraction in Sufism for him; he simply ridicules the mysterious art (or sciences) of alchemy and apothecarianism, and philosophical riddles have no appeal for him. He is a modern, practical man and has a pragmatic approach to literature. His poetry is partly nationalistic but mainly romantic. Unlike his father, who is called the father of Pashto Ghazal, Murad has been strongly drawn to Nazam. His eternal Nazams are about the most valuable contribution to our
literature. His Nazams like “YOUN” (exelsure), “ADE PAKHTO” (mother Pashto), “TATARRA” (a peak in the Khyber), “DAULAT KAKA”, “RAHMAN BABA”, “SHAHEED” (the martyr) and “DA DOST MUHAMMAD KAMIL PA MRHENA” (on the death of Dost Muhammad Kamil) are considered a landmark in Pashto literature.\footnote{In writing Nazam Murad Shinwari is second only to his illustrious father, Hamza Shinwari}

He has also translated some poems of Tennyson, particularly “The Lady of Shallot”, (it is not surprising that of all the English poets Tennyson should appeal to him most) and Shakespeare’s MERCHANT OF VENICE in Pashto. Lately he has been drawn to the Radio, T.V. and the film world. For a time he was a permanent employee of the radio as a script writer. Simultaneously he wrote a large number of songs for the T.V. and Pashto films. One feels that Murad Ali has not fully exploited his unbounded genius.\footnote{This is a common feeling about Murad Shinwari that he could have been a prolific poet and writer which he has failed to be.} However, he is still as active and as productive as ever. He is like a live, rumbling volcano, erupting every now and then with a molten lava of prose and poetry. Here we will give two or three examples from his immortal works:

(Being a Pakhtoon,
Your love turned me into a Moghul.
When you ambush the Khyber.
I pass through the Tatara). (Murad)
(Where one is afraid of ones own shadow.
What to do with such a village.
Where thieves are sentinels), (Murad)
(He is crazy after knowledge,
And can not rest in peace,
Once again he will have undertaken,
Some other piece of research.
I am watching the zigzag paths,
Of Khalil and Mohmand for him,
That Kamil will return one day,
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With layers of dust all over him,
With hair crusty and unkempt,
With his shirt wide open in front,
With the lost book of Shaikh Malli,
In his eager grasp). (Murad)

1.3.11 Khyber Afridi

(They get lost in the book of your face,
The entire Shinwari, Afridi and Mullagori tribes). (Khyber)

His real name is Syed Ahmad Jan with Khyber his pen name and Afridi his tribe. He belongs to the Kuki Khel clan of the Afridi tribe. Along with Khatir Afridi he is the most popular poet of this School. In the beginning he used to be more close to the Guru or Baba i.e. Hamza Sahib, than any other poet, so much so that this closeness used to be grudged by some of the other poets, who would consider it a sheer monopoly, infringing on their own rights on the great man. However, of late he seems to have undergone some transformation, which has resulted in a conspicuous distance between the Guru and the Shagird. Hamza himself would now ascribe this long closeness to a profound misunderstanding on his part.45

Khyber is equally impressed by Nazer Shinwari, the unfailing teacher or guide of the younger generation of poets. Among the old poets he has been impressed by Khushal Khan Khattak. Lalzada Nazer writes about him, "Khyber is the forth in my fold of disciples, the other three being Qayyum Kausar, Misri Khan Khatir and Ahmadzai Qasir. In the beginning he would send his poetry for correction by letters. Then we met. Then he became a teacher at Landikotal and we would often meet. I have trained many students both before and after Khyber but the milestones that Khyber has passed in his onward march of poetry are as yet beyond all the rest of my brood. It will not be an exaggeration if I claim that Khyber can now be counted among the greatest Ghazal writers in Pashto".46 Khyber Afridi died in 1995 of kidney failure. He was hardly forty years old, and at the peak of his poetic power. In his life time he had published a prose account of

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45 This Hamza has said in one of his diaries.
46 Lalzada Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal by Kalim Shinwari, 1989, p.46
the Khyber poets called Angaza and a collection of poetry called Garzandi (turns). Some of his poetry has been posthumously published by his family. He has left a large amount of unpublished poetry. Here we will give two or three examples from his memorable poetry:

(Inside they were laughing at me,
I was laughing at them outside) (Khyber).
(Alone with you in this awesome forest of Gurgur grove.
This Pakhtoonkhwa I shiver with fear). (Khyber)

1.3.12 Khatir Afridi

(Khatir, your beloved lives in the Khyber.
May the entire valley be overgrown with the Syrian rue). (Khatir).

Perhaps Khatir is the most well known poet of this School as far as folk music is concerned; he alone is the most widely sung poet whether here in the Frontier or there in Afghanistan. May be his poetry is sheer music as music was his most favorite hobby along with poetry and gardening.\(^\text{47}\) He has said somewhere:

(By sowing seeds of flowers.
I am growing beloved’s of the Bulbuls),(Khatir).

Like Keats Khatir died young, He was hardly thirty years old when he died of consumption or T.B. Also like Keats he can be set against our Shakespeare i.e. Hamza Shinwari, not because of his actual output but because of his poetic promise and literary potential. or may be in anticipation of early death he has simply blurted out all the best in him. His Diwan (collection of verses) has been posthumously published by the Tatara Pashto Adabi Jarga (Tatara Pashto literary circle), Khyber in 1987, compiled by Muqaddar Shah and Fazle Rabbi Qais. It has 114 Ghazals, 26 Nazams and a miscellany of other poetry. It was published in May, 1987 and must have sold like hot cakes for its second edition was brought out in the following month i.e. June 1987. I don’t know of any other book having such a supersonic sale (if I may borrow this aviation metaphor). A Diwan of Khatir was also said to have

\(^{47}\text{As quoted by Khyber Afridi in his Da Khyber Angaze, 1982, p.30}\)
earlier been published from Kabul. Hamza Shianwari writes about Khatir, "Poetry was in his blood but the guidance of Nazer kindled fire in it. I have also guided him repeatedly. He would go to Mushairas with us. Khyber Afridi used to tease him. From appearance he did not look like a poet but when he would start reciting his Ghazal, the spectators would feel as if a colourful stream was flowing". 48

Writing about the humour of Khatir, Khyber Afridi writes, "If Khatir had concentrated on humour his contribution to Pashto literature would have been still more healthy and full of vital tonics. Whatever the cease-fire that Nazer would so painstakingly effect among Murad, Qasir, Khyber and Khatir, it would be violated at the first opportunity". 49 This refers to their attacking each other with the sharp arrows of their humorous poetry, with the best tradition of the Roman gladiators, with their bleeding wounds being thoroughly enjoyed by the cheerful spectators. Khyber has drawn a graphic picture of Khatir in the following way:

**Height:** Hardly four feet.

**Colour:** Dark, pale, gray.

**Eyes:** Average (bordering on largeness),

**Lips:** Thin, dry, parched.

**Forehead:** 2 1/2" x 1 1/2"

**Dress:** Shalwar Kamees, waste coat, turban, Peshawari chappal. 50

The face of Khatir had been dried by the winds of time and his heart drained by the leakage of love. He defied change for ages. He was like a wooden statue. He didn’t have much blood in him. At last, on 22 August 1970 his heart was broken by the world. Vomiting the palmful blood, he became cold and stiff in death. 51 Here we will give two or three examples from his most quotable poetry:

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48 Hamza Shinwari in his preface to the Divan-e-Khatir, compiled by Muqaddir Shah Muqaddir and Fizle Rabi Qais, Peshawar, 1087, p.11
49 Da Khyber Angaze, op cit, p.31
50 the turban and chappal would somehow add to his height
51 Da Khyber Angaze, op cit, p.32
(You will have seen yourself
In one colour in the mirror;
Come and see for yourself
How you appear in every Ghazal of Khatir).
(What if I am more leaden with your grief,
A bough never breaks under the flowers ).(Khatir).
(Death and separation came together,
Should I opt for this or this??) .(Khatir).
(The way you look at me,
As if you don’t look at me .
The shaft of your slanting sight
Goes straight through my heart).(Khatir).
(People have lost their heads for it .
Khatir hopes for a kiss by the asking).(Khatir).

1.3.13 Sahir Afridi

Sahir Afridi is also a well sung poet of this school. His name is Zinat Shah and like Khyber Afridi, he belongs to Jamrud. They are also exact contemporaries and even class fellows. But unlike Khyber, who was a Shagird of Hamza, Sahir claims to have been self-taught in the art of poetry. His poetry is mainly romantic and he has also chosen Ghazal for the expression of his muse. Most of his poetry has been published in a book called " (the foot ornament). Although he claims to be having no teacher, to be doing poetry on his own; to be his own teacher, as it were, yet he seems to be visibly influenced by Hamza Shinwari. About Hamza he himself writes:

(After putting forehead on the door frame of Hamza.
People came to know of the songs of Sahir) .(Sahir).

He has started writing poetry since 1957 when he was a budding young student at Jamrud high school. Since then he has been regularly writing poetry. Like that of Khatir his poetry is full of music and widely sung. His poetry has also found its way to the radio and T.V. The local musicians also
fondly sing his songs. Kalim Shinwari writes about him, "Although Sahir has not held the hand of any teacher (sought guidance from no one) in the intricate paths of Ghazal, yet he has carved for himself a distinctive place among the Ghazal writers from Jamrud. If conditions were favorable for him he would contribute a great deal to the Pashto literature". His poetry is like this:

(The spring departs from the garden.
In the noise of falling leaves
Lets be going Sahir.
After burning all desires) (Sahir).
(If you remember, Sahir,
I remember them too.
There is just a faint memory
Of the stories of our love). (Sahir).
(Perhaps some one has
Again undone the tresses,
When this fragrance
Seems to have spread around). (Sahir).

1.3.14 Noor Mohammad Zigar Afridi

Noor Muhammed Zigar Afridi was born in 1928 in Chak No. 7, Multan. He is the younger brother of Amir Muhammad Saghir Afridi. He was educated upto 8th class in government high school, Peshawar. His education was discontinued due to young marriage and his life was disjointed by the death of his young wife, who left for eternity after a mere two years of their married life. He was strongly drawn to poetry or poetry can be said to have been in his blood like the rest of all the Khyber poets. In 1946 he was recruited in the Khyber Rifles Militia where he came into contact with Muhammad Omar Seemab and Murad Shinwari. Through them he was introduced to Hamza Shinwari and his extended and enticing literary circle. Since he was a bird the same feathers, soon he was sucked into the local literary mainstream. This

\[\text{Da Khyber Leekwal op, cit, p.55}\]
left an indelible mark on his on his budding genius. Poetry provided him not only solace but an escape from the scars of an unfulfilled love but also a positive mission in life and a suitable media for the propagation of his message. If on the one hand there is deep pathos in his Ghazals, on the other hand his Nazams are full of vigour and reminiscent of the Pakhtoon glory. Like a true practical soldier, he is proud of his preponderant Pakhtoon heritage and takes Ahmad Shah Abdali for his hero. He translated the hereditary fighting instinct in his blood into martial poetry. Like Ovid he also sings "Of arms and the men". Along with poetry Zigar later on also started writing prose. He has written stories and a novel. He is the exact contemporary of Murad, Khatir and Khyber and has been able to attain the same stature. Hence some examples from his poetry:

(I would have put it on your door step .
But this skull is full of Pashto, dear .(Zigar).
(When I became a disciple of Hamza .
I became a teacher of the world.(Zigar).
(Why did you forget your iconoclastic habits,
Why rusted the Abdali sword in the scabbord).(Zigar).
(You wanted to somehow
Generate the world of your love ,
Otherwise, sweet God; 53
What is so sacred about the wheat?) ..(35).(Zigar).
( When the nightingale saw dew on the flower,
The spring brought soft tears to his eyes). .(Zigar).

1.3.15 Qayyum Kausar Afridi

Qayyum Kausar Afridi was also a young poet of eminence and promise. He was the exact contemporary of Khyber, Khatir and Sahir. But for the last thirty years he has paid scant attention to poetry. Perhaps he also believes with Akram Farooq that "poetry and poverty go hand in hand", as if they

53 Wheat was the forbidden fruit that caused the fall of Adam for his disobedience to partake of it.
are but brother and sister or that "one doesn’t live by poetry alone". Khyber Afridi has described him in these words, "He is jolly, cheerful, hardworking and sagacious plays Sitar and Banjo; understands the ups and downs of music. He is an artist, painter and even a sculptor. He writes good Ghazal, Nazam and even prose. He is a born artist but economic considerations have dampened his immense enthusiasm. He has also studied for some time at Islamia College".\(^{54}\) He was also a disciple of Nazer Shinwari and a close friend of Khatir Afridi and Khyber Afridi and all the poets and writers of that now graying generation. His best Nazam is “Da Tirah Da Lam Naqsha” (the scene of the Tirah expedition). In this Nazam an Afridi tribesman girds his loins and picks up his sword to participate in the famous Tirah expedition of 1878. His little son doesn’t understand his Papa’s going like that. The poem is like an extended lecture, charged with emotions and brimming with honour and chivalry, about an honest father to an innocent son. The poem has a tragic ring for the father is sure not come back alive from this bloody expedition. However, he can be succeeded by his son in carrying out this unequal and cruel war of national independence.

(As you are a baby, it is my turn,
But remember tomorrow will be your turn
You will inherit the responsibility of the tribe,
You are better dead than disgraced.
Tell your mommey "I am going to papa"
My dear son, am going to an exciting game).(Kausar).
(O morning breeze, when you blow
Towards my flowery beloved
Also take along every wish of Kausar)

1.3.16 Ihsan Zaheer Afridi

Ihsan Zaheer Afridi is another poet from Jamrud and a contemporary of Kausar, Khyber and Khatir. He is famous for writing Nazams with a marked local touch. He has also published his Diwan under the title Lambe (flames). By now he is the highest qualified member of this school as he claims to have

\(^{54}\)Da Khyber Angaze op, cit, p.39
attained a doctorate degree from London where he stayed for some five years after graduating from the Punjab University.

Like Qayyum Kausar, he was a prolific writer in the beginning but for some time now his output has slowed down if not dried up altogether. His poetry is like this:

(My heart becomes restless like mercury
When I remember the days of my youth).. (Zaheer).

(My heart aches with a wound,
Only faithfulness can cure it.
But where is the medicine?)..(Zaheer)

1.3.17 Jadran Muntazir Afridi

Jadran Muntazir Afridi is also a well known poet of this school. He belongs to the Afridi territory of Tirah and has been educated upto the primary level. Born in 1937 he has been drawn to poetry from a very young age. Khyber Afridi writes about him, "He started writing poetry from 1955. He can write Nazam, Rubai, Charbaita and Qita etc, but like the rest of the Khyber poets he has paid more attention to Ghazal. He has published a book of poems under the name "Da Tirah Wagme (the Tirah breezes) in 1971. His second book containing some fifteen hundred (500) poems, was ready for publication when it was gutted in a fire in the Bara Bazar. in 1980". However in 1993 he published his collection under the title Kulyat-e-Muntazir. This couplet will give an idea of his poetry:

(The eyes of Rahman were opened by love
Those who say that a lover is blind are blind). (Muntazir)

In the introduction to the Da Tirah Wagme Hamza has written that, "This is the second edition of the collected poems of Muntazir. In these poems nearly every aspect of life has been touched upon. It is not because this collection contains beautiful Ghazals, it has also its share of moralism and precepts. The reverberations of Nationalism can also be heard throughout these poems. It is hoped that it will be given due consideration and the

\textsuperscript{55}Da Khyber Angaze op, cit, p.53
labours and art of Muntazir will be fully acknowledged. Here we will give some examples from his poetry:

(Our Shalwar Kamees has been replaced by a suit,
The hems of Pakhtoonkhwa were never like this) (Muntazir).
(Would that the entire gathering .
Were illuminated by my refulgence
If only like a candle,
I were burning with a bright light) (Muntazir).
(Welcome scholars and experts,
In literature, mysticism and philosophy) (Muntazir).

For the sake of brevity we will skip the rest of the older generation poets although they all had had their share in founding and sustaining the school of Hamza or the Khyber school of poetry. Sadly now this generation is gradually disappearing leaving the stage for a younger generation of poets most of whom struggle hard for a firm foothold in the precincts of this august school. For some of them it may even be the question of establishing their very identity. But the mooring is there. The seas have been charted. The course has been already set and the ship of the Khyber school is in full steam. The task of the younger generation has been considerably lightened. Things have been simplified and clarified. The Light House is still there to guide the new navigators. The torch lighted by the older generation before half a century ago, has been still burning. The trail blazed by the earlier sages still leads to the domain of meaningful, indigenous literature. The path has been cleared of all sorts of bushes; obstructions have been removed, pitfalls have been filled up and regular milestones have been provided. The highway to poetry has been spread with Persian carpets. Now it is not only a fun but also an honour to walk on it, although it is difficult to add to it. It is said that each age has its peculiar taste, that is why there is a shift in literary conventions from time to time; that is why new movements arise to supersede the older ones. The dust of time buries the foundations of older cultures and civilizations. But nature constantly renews itself. There is new growth on the buried foundations of older generations. Ruins are covered by carpets of grass. New flowers pop up among new weeds. Even rivers change their

\footnote{Da Khyber Leekwal op, cit, p.73-74}
course in the course of time; forests are denuded of trees; the soil eroded to make new plains for new cultures to grow on. The flora and fauna of a given area, over a given period of time, constantly shift and rotate. This is how nature perpetuates itself, all the time coming out with its infinite variety. But sometimes this change seems to have been arrested by some invisible force. The same order is meticulously perpetuated; the same atmosphere is made sure to prevail; the same flowers are grown the year round, the same smell accompanying them with same profusion. They shoot up the same thorns to prick the same nightingales. In this way a semblance of endurance and eternity is created (or simulated would be a better word) even on the shifting sands of time, an illusion of permanence and indestructibility reflects in every grain of sand.

To come out of this ethereal reverie, the younger generation of poets have kept rather too closely to the beaten track to be easily distinguishable from their worthy predecessors, except by the accident of recent birth. Through them one comes across the same undisturbed continuity. It is like the same flow of the river Abasin which the Aryans might have come upon more than three thousand years ago and which we also see all the same today. It is true that we have now fettered it in one or two places, making little puddles of artificial lakes on its swift surface by making earth filled or concrete dams in its dizzying path. But on the whole it has kept its majestic flow from the Himalayan peaks to the smooth expanse of the Indian ocean. Our younger poets have turned out to be similar slaves of a centuries old tradition (even the tradition of Hamza is more than half a century old). There is hardly any deviation from either the style or the substance of the older generation. Like the older generation, they too have been drawn to the Ghazal form, with here and there a Nazam or two thrown in, being on the same worn-out themes of patriotism or Pakhtoonwali. However, their poetry sometimes have all the qualities of a good, enduring poetry. If they conform closely to the school, they can at the same time be said to be in search of perfection and fulfillment. The school of Hamza or the Khyber school is the continuation and a combination of the same old seventeenth century schools of Bayazid Ansari and Khushal Khan Khattak. Yet Hazma not only revived the twin schools in one but also gave them a new vigour and a new direction. He gave both of them a future at the same time. Now the present generation of writers, who would be expected to look after the future of the school, only happen to be retrospective and tradition bound. They are as much a part and parcel of the present of the school as all the writers of the older
CHAPTER 1. THE KHYBER

generation. May be then perhaps a school must consume many generations of writers before it undergoes even a little change. But if it did change then it would be a different school, with another nomenclature. The present school will have become a part of history.

Here we will take up some of the younger generation of poets one by one to see their individual worth as also to establish their worth and see them in the general context of our school. It would not be out of place if we were at the same time comparing them to their worthy predecessors whose shadow may still be too thick on them to shake. Perhaps the growth of the younger generation might have been only stunted to some extent by the overbearing presence of the older generation which is still not only alive but also potent and productive. These big Banyan trees would make it impossible for any undergrowth to prosper and attain full maturity even as their birth right. Perhaps some of the younger generation of poets might be suffering the negative influences by the older generation. But since they are in the race they must be conscious of the law of "the survival of the fittest" and must be exerting themselves not to be overshadowed and turned into wild weeds. In some of them we come across ample poetic promise along with an urge for self assertion and a hazy or half cooked idealism. Or may be another generation may be more favorably and more properly distant to perceive the difference, if it must have been taking place right under our nose, for some time one simply fails to see the jungle from the trees. Now lets turn to our young saplings one by one and look at their characteristics.

1.3.18 Engineer Shahzad Khan

By a common consent Engineer Shahzad Afridi is considered about the best poet among the wild growth of the younger generation of poets. Born in 1954 Shahzad has done mining engineering from Peshawar and works as an engineer. His Guru, Nazer Shinwari writes about him: "He has deep study of Urdu and English languages. He looks at every aspect of life with a philosophical eye and comes out with his philosophical opinions. His study and interest revolve around books on philosophy and literature. His ideas are modern and progressive. He is a staid, sincere and ingratiating person. He is strongly drawn to humanism. He has been writing poetry since 1976. His early poetry is simple and sweet; but his later poetry has become more and more philosophical and therefore more difficult. In the beginning he used to write more poetry but of late his tempo has slowed down to more objective
or purposive and creative poetry". According to Kalim Shinwari, "Mr. Shahzad belongs to that coterie of the literary group who want to blaze a new trail in both Nazam and Ghazal. It is this pursuit that has created difficulty in his poetry. In fact the modern poet is faced with this difficulty at the conclusion (or perfection) of the classical Ghazal. One can rightly expect from a bright and progressive poet like Shahzad that if he kept it up he can create a new style in Ghazal"(40). Here we will give some examples from his poetry.

(In fact we can not describe Reality,
There will be diverse discussion of Unity). (Shahzad).
(All that unsaid with all the noise,
How silently said by the eyes!). (Shahzad).

1.3.19 Kalim Shinwari

The next important poet of the younger generations Kalim Shinwari. He is the second son of Ostad Lalzada Nazer Shinwari. Born in 1964 he has been educated upto 10th class and now serves as a teacher in some local school. He is a young energetic man with great promise. Poetry he seems to have inherited from his great predecessors; it is very much in his blood. He has started writing proper poetry since 1977. These days he is also the secretary of Da Khyber Adabi Jarga (the Khyber literary council) He has published an account of the Khyber poets Da Khyber Leekwal, under the auspices of the above Jarga, in 1988. Like all the rest of the writers of this school, he has also started with the traditional forms of Ghazal, Rubai and Qita. He has also written plenty of prose by way of introducing the Khyber writers. The promise is there, Kalim seems to be equally serious and one rightly feels about him that a great poet is in the making. Here we will give two or three examples from his poetry:

(A song of life, you are life in universe,
Why is this silence in your voice then?). (kalim).

(Don’t despair with the spreading darkness,

57 Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op, cit, pp.98-99
58 Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op, cit, pp.99
My every tear is a bright burning lamp)...(Kalim).
(What one does upto death is but
Preparation for the journey). (Kalim).
(If you don’t see those eyes any more,
Don’t despair, the tavern is at hand) ...(Kalim)

1.3.20 Riaz Afridi

Riaz Afridi is the next worthy poet of the school. Born in 1961 he has done
B.A. and at present teaches at Landi kotal high school. He also studies for
M.A. in Pashto. He is widely read in Pashto literature and philosophy. In
poetry, like all the rest of the brood, he is a student of Ostad Lalzada Nazer
Shinwari who writes about him: "He has keen interest in Pashto literature,
particularly poetry and still more particularly Ghazal. He is enlightened and
progressive minded. He also reads philosophical works in Urdu. His poetry
is also infected by the virus of Philosophy. He is a poet of great promise".59
His poetry is like this:

(The lot of the poor and down trodden,
Did not change at all
Although the world repeatedly rolled in wealth) . .(Riaz).
(The secret of evolution was never found,
Philosophies have been chasing but a concept) . (Riaz).

1.3.21 Shafiq Shinwari

Shafiq Shinwari is also the elder son of Ostad Lalzada Nazer Shinwari and
elder brother of Kalim. Born in 1952 he started writing poetry from 1975.
He was a poet with immense promise, in fact a guiding star for the younger
generation of poets. But he was sucked in business with his muse ignored for
a long time. Murad Shinwari writes about him, "It is regrettable that there
being no dearth of poets in the Khyber; as they say you can find one under
every stone; the majority of them are illiterate. Even the few literate ones
have no interest in general study. That is why the Khyber did not produce

59Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op, cit, pp.137-38
any worth while poet. In the beginning Shafiq did vibrant and vigorous poetry. If on the one hand there was colourfulness in his poetry, on the other hand his poetry had the perfection of both Nazer and Hamza. I had said somewhere about him that his poetry was older that him.\(^{60}\) His poetry is like this:

\[(\text{Neither will I regain the domain of Ahmad Shah,})\]
\[(\text{Nor will I ever see an indigenous Afghan king.})\ (\text{Shafiq}).\]
\[(\text{Every one must quit this earth,})\]
\[(\text{The force of nature snaps friendships;})\]
\[(\text{If flowers wither and candles burn,})\]
\[(\text{Don't cry Bulbul, the moths also turn to ashes.})\ (\text{Shafiq}).\]
\[(\text{Surrounded by friends in prosperity,})\]
\[(\text{I am but left to face adversity alone.})\ (\text{Shafiq}).\]

1.3.22 Kohat Khan Zakir Afridi

Kohat Khan Zakir is also a promising poet of the younger generation. He made his debut as a poet of note with the publication of his collection under the title of Nawi Fikroona (new thoughts) Belonging to the famous Zakhakhel tribe he was born in 1949 in a small village called Wali Khel. Educated upto 8th class he started writing poetry from 1970. He too is a disciple of Ostad Lalzada Nazer Shinwari who writes about this poet with an individuality: "He writes poetry for some years now and comes to me for corrections. Although writing scant poetry yet he has all the qualities of a true poet. He neither follows the tradition nor depends upon the thoughts or style of others. He has his own individual style. Some of his Ghazals are so attractive that they appeal directly to the heart."\(^{61}\) Here is a specimen of his poetry:

\[(\text{With the dart of your dark eyes in my heart,})\]
\[(\text{Even my days are nights what to say of dawn.})\ (\text{Zakir}).\]
\[(\text{Not caring for worldly palaces.})\]
\[(\text{An ascetic, I live in abstinence.})\ (\text{Zakir}).\]

\(^{60}\)Murad Ali in Da Khyber Leekwal op, cit, pp.93-4
\(^{61}\)Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op, cit, pp.84-5
1.3.23 Manzoor Afridi

Manzoor Afridi is also a serious poet of this school. Born in 1949, he has been educated upto matric. At present he is an operator in the telephone department. He is not only a born poet but also a born musician. To him poetry is music and music poetry. He is also fond of singing and has a sweet voice. In fact he is called Sehgal by the Khyber poets and musicians. Ostad Nazer writes about him: "He is attached to the Chishtia order in Sufism and deeply interested in any discussion of mysticism. He is almost in love with music. By nature he is kind hearted and humble. He writes occasionally but writes well. He writes lyrical poetry using sometimes nationalistic Pakhtoon symbols. He is always after new thoughts and new concepts and ideas. His Ghazal is nearly perfect and he can be counted among the best poets from Jamrud". His poetry is like this:

(There is the destination, heart,
Let's be off to it straight-away.
Not minding the rough ground,
Gorge, ravine or gully). (Manzoor).
(I am a Pakhtoon and live a free life.
With the sword of equality in my hand). (Manzoor).

1.3.24 Abdul Azim Nazar Shinwari

Abdul Azim Nazar Shinwari is the scion of the most venerable religious family of the Khyber. Son of the spiritual divine Haji Gul Mubarak, Nazar was born in 1965. Having received intensive religious education, Nazar has been a teacher at present. He is also the chief organizer of Ahle Sunnat Wal Da’wat in the Khyber Agency, crusading against the tide of Wahabism. He is also strongly drawn to Sufism and, like Hamza Shinwari, follows the doctrine of Wahdatul Wajud (the unity of essence). Hamza writes about him: "Mr. Nazar is a distinctive poet of Ghazal. I have read most of his works and have reached the conclusion that he is not only already a worthy poet but can also contribute a great deal to Pashto literature. I say this because Nazar is not

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62 Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op, cit, pp.108-9
only a poet but also a scholar. In this way he can create a distinctive place in Pashto literature for himself. Here we will quote two of his couplets:

(This age is rather free from restrictions. Customs and traditions only mar its spirit). (Nazar).
(For God’s sake consider my love to be true. It is not always proper to be swearing about it). (Nazar).

1.3.25 Fazle Rabi Qais

Fazle Rabi Qais is another energetic poet of this school from Jamrud who, according to Kalim Shinwari, has devoted two third of his precious life to the promotion of Pashto literature. There is hardly any literary gathering or Mushaira where Qais is not present not only physically but also spiritually. Born in 1960 he has been educated upto 10th class. Like most of the rest of the Khyber poets he can be said to have poetry in his blood. His poetry is mainly romantic and with a strong under current of Pakhtoon ethos. Along with Muqaddar Shah Muqaddar, his greatest contribution to Pashto literature is the compilation and publication of the collected works of Khatir Afridi. But for their dedicated efforts and the benign patronage of Pir Yaqub Shah (the then P.A. Khyber), the sparkling exuberance of Khatir would still be shrouded in obscurity. His highly endearing works ought have been published earlier. However, it is still not too late. The Pashto speaking world owe it to the enterprise of this pair of young poets from the Khyber to revive the imperishable Khatir. Here we will give one or two examples from the poetry of Qais:

(When I was reminded of your old stories, Songs gushed out of my consciousness). (Qais).
(How many times had I demolished it, I wonder at the wall rising yet higher). (Qais).

1.3.26 Qandahar Afridi

Qandahar Afridi was born at Maidan in Tirah in 1957. He is also an enthusiastic follower of the Khyber school of poetry. His Ghazal has a distinctive

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63Hamza Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op, cit, p.221
flavour and a stark simplicity. We will give one or two examples from his poetry.

(My sight is not less sharp than your eye lashes,
Don’t hide your face in the armour of the scarf). (Qnadahar).
(Please God give no wings of pride,
Even though the candle of love can burn them). Qnadahar).

1.3.27 Jamal Khan Nasir

Jamal Khan Nasir is drawn more towards nationalistic poetry than the traditional romanticism in Pashto Ghazal. He is a disciple of Ostad Nazer who writes about him. "Born in 1952 he has been educated upto 8th class. He has been writing poetry for the last three or four years. In this short period he has perfected his Ghazal to the extent of an experienced hand. He writes mostly Ghazal. He has understood the nature of Ghazal so well that he can be said to have acquired his own distinctive style. His poetry is deep and meaningful".\textsuperscript{64} His poetry is like this:

(They are not asleep
But intoxicated with ignorance ;
I want to change the destiny
. Of youth with knowledge). (Nasir).
(What is more exalted than love.
The harbinger of happy life in life) (Nasir).
(People chatter incessantly,
I search for thoughts in silence ). (Nasir)

1.3.28 Mohammad Aslam Taseer Afridi

Muhammad Aslam Taseer Afridi is another young but comparatively more qualified poet of the Khyber school. Born in 1962 he has been educated upto M.A. He has been writing poetry for the last nine or ten years. He is keenly interested in literary activities and hardly misses any worth while function.

\textsuperscript{64}Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op,cit, p.182
His style and diction reflect the distinctive characteristics of the Khyber school. He is also one of the keenest members of the Khyber Adabi Jarga, of which he is usually entrusted the responsibilities of the secretaryship. He is extremely popular among the younger generation of poets.

For some time now Taseer has become a more active member or worker of the Khyber Adabi Jarga. These days he has been acting as its general secretary which is indeed a great honour for young and energetic poets like Taseer. Recently he wrote the constitution for the Jarga and got it approved from the general body. He is very particular and methodical about recording the minutes and keeping the record of the multifarious activities of the Jarga. Hence a specimen of his poetry.

(Once again the exploiting forces
Have caught Pakhtoon by the throat
What a sense of honour is this !.
When he is not moved by this shame) (Taseer).

(It seems that my hut of affection
Is being demolished again .
Again the sky is thundering with merciless fury) (Taseer).

1.3.29 Zahoor Shinwari

Zahoor Shinwari is also a post graduated student of this school. Born in 1963 he is now M.A. in Pashot. He writes poetry since 1979. He is also president of the Tahrek Ittehad Qabayal (movement for the tribal unity), Landi kotal branch. In this way he is a political poet or a poet with politics for a hobby. Ostad Nazer writes about him: "He is extremely interested in poetry and is sensitive like the other poets. Towards the end of 1985 he made such strides in Ghazal that he more than made up his previous shortcomings. He also writes Nazam. He is also brimming, if not bristling with nationalistic feelings." 65 His poetry is like this:

(Pathans are used to Hardships,
Chains and prisons are but their lot). (Zahoor).

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65 Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op.cit, p.156
(What is the need of such a system
Which neither satisfied the nation nor individual). (Zahoor).

1.3.30 Nisar Ahmad Nisar Afridi

Nisar Afridi must also be mentioned as a promising poet of this School. Born in 1962 he is educated upto 10th class. He is also a disciple of Ostad Nazer who writes about him: "He belongs to a respectable, learned family, with Habibullah Khan and Qayyum Kausar as his grandfathers. He must have inherited poetry from his illustrious forebears. He has crossed the initial stages of learning the art of poetry and can now be said to have stood on his own feet. The delicacy of his thoughts sometimes result in ambiguity. But he is bound to return to simplicity and lucidity". His poetry:

(What the hell is let loose
With a kiss of the eye sight;
If sweets are available so freely,
One might as well have them). (Nisar)
(Come and see deep into my eyes
So that you see my beloved there). (Nisar).

1.3.31 Yar Hussain Sahil Afridi

Yar Hussain Sail is already a poet of stature among the younger generation poets of this school. He was born in 1948 and has been writing poetry from an early age. He is keenly interested in literary activities and Mushairas. He seems to be deeply influenced by Khisro Afridi, the legendary folk poet from the Khyber. Two of his collections, Jazbe Aw Walwale (gushes of passion) and Da Saar Tiga (the tombstone), are ready for publication. They will be a valuable contribution to Pashto literature. Hamza Shinwari writes about him: "Sahil is also among the younger generation of poets whose poetry I am going to briefly discuss. I will quote his following poems to show that he has done full justice to Ghazal. His Ghazal is not entirely objective, he also has a great deal of subjectivity."

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66Nazer Shinwari in Da Khyber Leekwal, op.cit, p.149
(When the beloved laugh beautifully
They skilfully snatch the hearts) (Sahil)
(Her look of love brings a smiling spring
By the mere turning of her beautiful eyes). (Sahil).
(The lamp of my hopes will be lighted at last,
I am not scared of waiting in the dark). (Sahil).

Hamza himself is very much conscious of his influence over the poets of the younger generation although his authority was disputed by certain poets over a number of years. He was called undemocratic and dictatorial if not an outright praetorian. In a letter to Ayub Sabir he writes in this connection, "The grace and spruceness of my Ghazal is there in the Ghazal of the younger generation of poets. If any one consciously writes now with Pakhtoon symbolism, his Ghazal will inevitably have the colour of my blood. Anyhow I can not say this about the progressive writers. To see what I mean look at the following couplet by Qalandar

(By reaching the lips
My sighs become sobs
My fearless desires
Come again and again). (Qalandar)

I am not against progressive literature. I consider progressive literature to be a name full of the secret or expediency of socialist literature. I am neither against any person. The Olasi Adabi Jarga was broken up by this unnecessary wrangling and antagonism. sometimes I wonder that I must have some personality when I am so much opposed".  

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67 Ayub Sabir in Za Aw Hamza, op. cit, pp.207-10
Chapter 2

CONCLUSION

“In the beginning there was darkness. Then God said: Let there be light and there was light” Similarly, with the birth of Hamza Shinwari light was shed or showered on the dark literary landscape of Khyber. In fact what we call literature was born in Khyber with the birth of Hamza and he put Khyber on the literary map of the world. With him or in him the centuries-old folk literature of the area suddenly crystallized into an ultra-modern School of Khyber Literature. This School was soon recognized throughout the Pashto-speaking world, from the Abasin to the Oxus. The School engendered and fostered a number of now well-known poets and writers all molded in the image of Hamza. They founded literary societies and circles and started holding Mushairas and literary sessions. They created a far-reaching literary consciousness throughout Khyber, and even beyond, which acted as a seed-bed for the future flowering of literature there. The result is that if previously Khyber was known for its historic role as an invincible, strategic Pass, now it also equally known for its worthy contribution to Pashto literature.

The literature produced in Khyber is Pashto literature as Pashto is the only language spoken throughout Khyber. Although all the tribes speak different dialects of the same language, yet their literature appears to be in a uniform language, free from local dialectical peculiarities. As a matter of fact their literature conforms to a sort of “standard Pashto,” spoken throughout the NWFP, irrespective of the multiplicity of regional or local dialects. The literary Pashto of the area closely conforms to the Yousafzai dialect, the other major dialect being the Kandahar dialect; the two dialects being separated by the hard [kh] and the soft [sh] sounds. These writers may speak any dialect in their tribal context but when they come to writing they leave their
dialect differences behind and conform to a standard Pashto.

The Khyber literature is mainly poetry-based. In poetry also it is mostly confined to the Ghazal form. Hamza himself also started with the Ghazal and ended with the title of “Baba-e-Ghazal” of Pashto literature. He was closely imitated by all the Khyber poets, as he was their Ostad. However Hamza has also written some well-known and memorable Nazams and Rubaiyats. His Rubaiyats have also been published in two or three separate volumes. Among the other Khyber writers only Murad Shinwari and Khyber Afridi have successfully tried the Nazam form and have written some landmark Nazams. Almost all the rest of the poets are lost in the intricacies of the illusive Ghazal. This has only made their poetry one-dimensional and tradition-ridden.

The Ghazal form has come to Pashto either directly from Persian or indirectly via Urdu; it is not an indigenous Pashto poetry form. There is a great deal of Ghazal in our Medieval literature. It has been tried by all our previous poets like Khushal Khan, Rahman Baba, Abdul Hameed, Kazim Khan Shaida, Ali Khan and Ahmad Shah Abdali. In Rahman Baba we arrive at the perfection of Pashto Ghazal. He is the Hafiz Shirazi of Pashto literature. All the Khyber poets are a part and parcel of this preponderant tradition and they are busy in exploring the infinite varieties of Ghazal.

The Khyber School is rather poor on the prose side. Hamza himself has left a worthy example of writing all kinds of prose which has only been taken up by one or two other writers to a far lesser extent. Among the rest of the Khyber poets only Murad Shinwari, Nor Muhammad Zigar and Sahir Afridi have written worthwhile prose in the form of stories and short stories. Murad Shinwari, Khyber Afridi and Kalim Shinwari have also written and published accounts of the Khyber poets and writers. But all the three suffer from a typical, narrow, traditional approach and much is left to be desired in their methodology and critical standards.

All the poetry of the Khyber School is potentially musical. Most of its poetry is sung with not only local music but music from the radio and television stations. The singing of this poetry was started in right earnest first by Rafiq Shinwari and later by Bagheram, both famous musicians from Khyber (the former having died, the latter is on the verge of death). Rafiq Shinwari was a disciple of Bacha Jan and would sing Sama’ or Qawali in his presence. With the passage of time he became such a well-known and master musician to be composing music for Pashto films. He has also sung a great deal of Hamza Shinwari’s poetry. Bagheram was a legendary Rabab maestro. He has composed music for most of Khatir Afridi’s and Khisro Afridi’s highly
popular songs. He would sing their poetry with accompaniment of his Rabab from Hujra to Hujra and this made them the most well-known poets from Khyber. Khisro had died in 1948 and Khatir also died young. Both were illiterate. Hence it is difficult to say whether they would at all have improved upon their existing poetry. The poetry of Nazer Shinwari, Murad Shinwari, Khyber Afridi, Sahir Afridi and a number of other poets is also extensively sung with music.

The Khyber literature did not die with the demise of Hamza Shinwari, although it can be said to have been born with his birth. The torch has been taken by his successors like Nazer Shinwari and Murad Shinwari (incidentally the one is his nephew and the other his son), and a number of poets of stature. They have kept the great tradition alive. The Khyber Adabi Jarga is not only alive and kicking, it has swelled its rank and accelerated its activities. If it was founded by only a handful of poets back in the fifties, now-a-days its rank and file run into hundreds; and if previously they would meet once in a blue moon, now-a-days they have regular weekly sessions which are attended by almost all the poets with religious regularity. The Jarga holds criticism sessions for both poetry and prose works. From week to week different members are asked to submit their fresh prose or poetry for critical evaluation. Such sessions are usually not only interesting but also highly informative at the same time. Since there is hardly any critical literature in Pashto, these poets and writers are not guided or misguided by any critical theories and standards. They devise their own “touchstones” there and then and judge their literature in the light of tradition and common sense, with the fear of God at the back of their mind. They also hold occasional grand Mushairas, particularly on the death anniversaries of the well-known poets, which are usually attended by thousands of people. Of late the “Hamza Kaliza Mushaira” on the anniversary of Hamza Shinwari, has become a regular annual feature. It is attended by so many people that it can no more be held in the confinement of a Hujra, where in the beginning it used to be held. It is now being held by his “Shrine”, adjacent to the sprawling grounds of the Landi Kotal school and college. The Mushaira attracts poets and people for audience from both Kooza and Bara Pakghtookhwa. I think this Mushaira is bound to soon end up into an outright Urs with Qawali and Raqs-e-Darwesh. The Government has also promised to construct a grand complex on the Mazar of Hamza (like the one built at the shrine of Rahman Baba in Hazarkhwani), with a spacious Hall, a library and a mosque. In this way it can be turned into a cultural centre for the whole of Khyber. If materialize this complex would be yet another catalyst
in the cultural and intellectual transformation of the Khyber tribes, with a wholesome effect on their literature.

The question that we asked ourselves at the outset is still staring us in the face as to why should the twentieth century Pashto literature find revival among the primitive environment of Khyber, or have its unique flowering in the laps of the bleak, imposing mountains of the historic Khyber Pass. Perhaps the answer to this question can be searched in the social, cultural, political and economic conditions there at the dawn of the twentieth century, and the coincidence of the birth of Hamza Shinwari there at the same time. We have already seen in the preceding account, that with Anglo-Russian scramble for India and the control of Asia, and with the geostrategic importance of the Khyber Pass, these tribal were gradually awakened to an opportunity of unlimited possibilities. Although partly subdued by the British Forward Policy, they still managed to maintain their cherished independence. Sandwiched between British India and Afghanistan, they successfully played the hostile force against each other for benefits and material gains. The changed conditions opened up previously unthinkable trade and commercial avenues, bringing all round prosperity and a revolution in their standard of living. Their very philosophy of life was changed from renunciation, resignation and asceticism to materialistic pragmatism. This also rendered their culture more sophisticated and differentiating. Claims of music, fine arts and literature on life became more demanding. They can be said to have developed even a taste for literature.

The birth of Hamza at the turn of the century was also mainly responsible for the revival of literature in Khyber. He gave it not only a start and a direction, but guided its course throughout his life. He appeared to be a poet with a mission, with his mission being the creation and establishment of a sound literary tradition. In this sense he was not only a poet but an institution for the dissemination of literature not only in Khyber but throughout the Pashto-speaking world. He had dedicated his entire life to the promotion of literature and would demand, in turn, the same dedication from his followers. And with this much self-less dedication, literature was bound to flourish. Hence the growth of such memorable literature in Khyber at the turn of the century.
Bibliography


