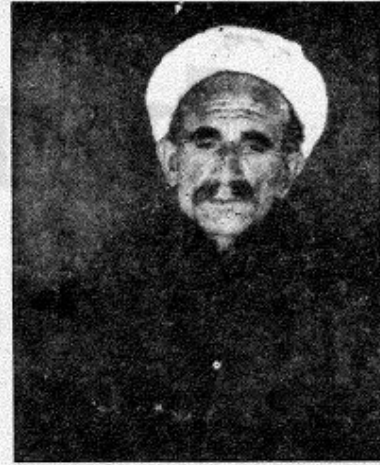


LITERATURE

Prominent Kohwar poets-III

Baba Ayub, ghazal-producer

By Sher Nawaz Naseem



THE famous German poet Goethe once said, 'When you love a woman you produce children, when I love a woman I produce poems.' But Baba Ayub, a gifted Kohwar poet, is a man who loves both men and women and produces ghazals.

Born in a well-to-do Rezakhel family, in 1919 at Drosh, Chitral, he got his early religious education at home. His father, Hakim Musharaf Khan, was an outstanding figure in his lifetime. His grandfather, Baba Feroz Khan, was awarded land at Chumorkhown, Chitral, being foster-father of Shahzada Hisamul Mulk, the then governor of Drosh. The late Hisamul Mulk had immense love for Kohwar language and made a great contribution towards developing it on the one hand and promoting Chitrali culture on the other.

Baba Ayub was brought up with love, affection, and care. An abundance of wealth allowed him to lead a luxurious life. He was a good polo player and there was none to match him in hunting. He had great command over the roaring rivers as a swimmer. Being close to Shahzada Hisamul Mulk, he began to take great interest in his native language, and appeared to be anxiously awaiting for Kohwar to flower. Under the former's patronage and guidance, he began to write in Kohwar, and selected it as the linguistic means of expressing his feelings and giving his message to the people.

In 1963 he for the first time, took part in a Kohwar mushaira, held in Chitral and became known to the public as a poet of ghazals. When a Kohwar programme, only of fifteen minutes duration, began to

be broadcast over radio in 1965, he contributed to it with his na'ats and ghazals, and received appreciation from the people. In the early stages of his life, he was not allowed to suffer from hardships miseries and sorrows by his parents. Therefore, his poetry is free from the bondage of negative approaches. He speaks of love, courage, faith, unity, peace, brotherhood and understanding. He has a keen desire to serve the people and says:

درینا پر دما آرمان بیره ووا
غم گین ہر دریانتے درمان بیره ووا
مہ سار ہر نژانوارت فائدہ تدر سیر
بیابانا چھاغوسوم ای کان بیره ووا

Alas; Would that my desires, to heal the wounds of others, were fulfilled. If I were a shady tree in a desert, I would have been a source of consolation to all (who seek rest under the shady trees).

He belongs to a well-off family but he is not unaware of the surroundings in which his fellow beings live in adversity, deprived of all basic amenities of life. He lauds the role of the philanthropists and condemns those who collect wealth by hook or by crook to deprive the needy of their rights. He says:

ہر ہاتے سخی روپو متار جوٹ
صد لاسہ ووری کی فوہائی دار جوٹ

حرصیو دولتاری کوستے کیہ فائدہ
گور دوغو وارغا توغون مردار جوٹے

The man who is generous has a high place in society. The sandal, without fragrance is, no more than a wood. The wealth of a miser is like that of a donkey's corpse (which finally goes to vultures).

Baba Ayub is a poet of ghazals. He is famous for using simple language. He is the poet of the man in the street. All his poems reflect his inner feelings towards the attitude of his beloved, to whom he had complained of neglecting him. Despite her disregard, he has many words of praise for her. The story of his ghazals revolves around her shining face, arched eyebrows, waist-length scattered black tresses, moving like a cloud with a cool breeze and her lips like a bud of rose that is ready to burst into blossom:

لعل مہ دو چھارا ہانی ای سحر ادشونی
دوکا مس دی ہورو پرورشہ کھور ادشونی
قاتلو پنچ برودی درون ویٹو و غون ا
آفرین ہس کی جام ناتوثر و رادشونی

The pearl (my beloved), when it appeared before me, I found her a heavenly nymph. The glittering moon was matchless to her mirror-like face and her eyebrows are like an arrow. Salute to the mother who has given birth to such a beautiful one.

Baba Ayub has great love for his own

culture and traditions. In his poems he has painted the values, norms, customs, usages and ways of life of the people. One of his poems reveals his intensity of love with a Chitral-made overcoat (*shooqa* in local parlance), which he himself is proud to wear:

غیرت داربپ گینان یادگار مہ شوقہ
مہر گین نان تان ہوستار مہ شوقہ
قومی لباس کیچہ چھاغدار مہ شوقہ
خود یا مٹراغ بر خود دار مہ شوقہ

The overcoat is a sign of memory of my forefathers and my loving parents had made it with their own hands. As a traditional dress, how attractive it is looking and provides a sense of pride and self-respect.

Baba Ayub, as a poet, is involved in activities meant to promote Kohwar language, with great spirit and zeal. He has been president of Anjuman-e-Taraqi-e-Kohwar, Chitral, for two years. In February 1986, he went to Sind on a two-week visit, at the invitation of the Academy of Letters. On his return, when he was interviewed by the Radio Pakistan Kohwar programme, he claimed similarities between Kohwar and Sindhi language.