

The Baloch... Glimpses Of Social and Martial Traditions

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Abstract

This paper focuses upon the social and martial traditions of the Balochs. It is an effort to dig out the classical Baloch traditions and to carry them to the youth with a message that they should remember their glorious past and the traditions their forefather had. These traditions can evidently be witnessed in the Baloch nomadic and rural life and provide food for thought for the contemporary researchers.

THE BALOCHS

The Balochs are chief indigenous race of Balochistan. The Pashtoons, Meds and the Jats are also amongst the oldest inhabitants of Balochistan. The Meds now, as then lived on the coasts. The Jats still compose the cultivating classes of Las Bella and Kachhi (Nasirabad Division). The Balochs have developed as the Chief Race and the people of Balochistan, and some of the Kurds whose insolence led to the final subjugation of Sindh by the Arabs are still to be found in the Jan Valley in the Jhalawan.(1)

The present day political of Balochistan is dominated by the tribalism and still the Baloch tribalism has much weight in the society. Both politically and numerically the Baloch stand in clear majority. The Jats, the cultivators now form only a small minority and many of them have been absorbed by the Balochs. Among religious and the occupational groups may be mentioned the Sayyids, Dehwars, the indigenous Hindus who live under the protection of tribesmen and carry on the trade and other business of day to day life.(2) The settlers are small in number and most of them are in the services sectors.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India has narrated the Physical features of the Balochs in these words, "His build is shorter, and he is sparer and wiry. He has a bold bearing, frank manner, and a fairly truthful; he looks on courage as the highest virtue, and on hospitality as a sacred duty... his face is long and oval and nose aquiline."(3) Here one should not get the impression that all the Baloch are "SHORTER" rather one may find frequently the Baloch of tall structure. The physical strength of the Baloch is also discussed by Mohammad Sardar Khan Baloch in these words, "the word Baloch is the compound of Sanskrit BAL and OCHS which means the most powerful" (4)

The term Baloch as explained in Burhan-e-Qa'ti means in the Persian language as Cockscomb or Crest. (5)

But if we analyze the crest borne by the Balochs, as cited in the Shah Nama-Firdusi, hardly explains the etymology of the name. Mir Gul Khan Naseer, a historian, poet and the expert on the Baloch, while discussing this Cock Crest tales and dealing with Firdausi says that his (Kaikhasro) one army consisted upon Koch or Baloch braves, they were fighters and marshals, they bore the cock crest and were never defeated.(6)

The words also are spoken and taken in different areas and people by different voice, for instance in the contemporary practice of the Afghan's who call them Belos and Arabs Bulos, while the Iranian and the Indian belt as Baloch.*I Let there be any reason or story behind the name or the title Baloch, but at least one thing is evident that is "the courage and bravery of the Balochs".

The Brahvi, Balochs had been settled in Sistan, Rodbar, Chaghi, Marap, Shiah Tumb, Jhalawan and also in kalat.2*

The Balochs possessed the nomadic character, they have remained wanderers, moving from one place to another, from one valley to another and of course for many centuries they remained wandering.3*

Now, although most of them have settled in plains, mountains and valleys for centuries, yet the wandering character can be witnessed. The Baloch always possessed courage bravery and honor; these featured them throughout their history.

Social and Martial Traditions

The Balochs have very rich social and martial culture, they have glorious traditions at their back, although today the society is at the decay but still one can find the glimpses of social and martial in the Baloch society. These traditional are the real beauty of the Baloch society. Baloch conventional and traditional system were was effective enough to meet the needs of the day. It will not of place to mention here that Dr.Abdul Rehman Brahvi, Jan Mohammad, Hatto Ram, Mir Gul Khan naseer and Agha Naseer Khan have frequently mentioned the Baloch tribal customs and traditions which are in one way or the other under the influx of Islam. They are like:

1. Bravery

Throughout their history, they remained brave and the long chains of combats prove their bravery and well established courageous and moral basis of war and peace.

2. Hospitality

It is one of the very novel features of Baloch culture. The host may be poor or rich; he will entertain his guest at his best.

3. Allegiance to treaty

The combat may be longer or shorter, if there is a treaty between the parties; the Balochs are quoted to be always in allegiance to the treaty. It will be hard to quote any instance of desertion treachery.

4. Religious Tolerance

The Balochs have old conventions of religious tolerance and the people of other religions live peacefully in their Ares. They are more accommodative to the followers of different religions like Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Bihai and others. (7)

Folk Tales and Baloch Mutualism

Folk tales are the ancient source of the Baloch culture, civilization and traditions. If one goes through these tales evidently one finds that they are focused either to the bravery. Courage or to the romance. Even in the case of romance the courage, bravery and martial feelings are the domination factors. An eminent Baloch scholar Dr. Abdul Rehman Brahvi concluded the following from the study of the folk literature.

1. Not to attack over enemy without warning.
2. If the enemy escapes from the battle field, not to attack over him
3. If the enemy surrenders and apologizes, his apology will be accepted.
4. To protect the person and property of those who take refuge and seek protection.
5. Allegiance to the treaty at any cost.
6. Honor of the trust.
7. Custom of hospitality and entertainment of the alien guest.
8. To protect the sanctity and modesty of the sister, wife and daughter at any cost.
9. Not to kill woman and children in combat.
10. Not to kill anybody, even the most enemy in the boundary of the shrine of any saint.
11. During war time if any woman or a Sayyid intervenes or carries holy Quran on the head or bears a bare sword and requests for peace the parties to the combat will stop war and will refrain from bloodshed.
14. If the enemy composes and brings a MEIRH (a Baloch conventional method to resolve the intricate issue including heinous crimes. Here a group of elders is sent to the aggrieved party to redress the matters. (8)

Evidently these characteristics run in customs, traditions, norms and values of the Baloch race, common man care more for these

traditions and in the rural and nomadic life they can be quite frequently seen while in the cities the life seems to be on the changing path. These traditions are under the heavy influence of the principles of Islam for instance Hitto Ram has presented a Balochi poem in which in Mohrram the boy of village followed a chameleon to kill him but he took refuge in a house. The mistress forbade them but they persisted and killed chameleon, whereupon the mistress asked her husband to take revenge of it because the poor creature had taken refuge in their house, then there was a war and one hundred and ten people died in it.(9)

This ballad may be insignificant for a casual reader but it has a lot for a researcher who has the eyes on the past and contemporary cautions.

Conclusion

From the above discussion we can draw the following conclusions.

1. The Baloch have long history of bravery and courage.
2. The Baloch customs traditions and values are dominated by Islam. The analysis of the Baloch social and martial traditions reflect that they have their social and conventional roots in the principles of Islam.
3. The Baloch are courageous and brave
4. The Baloch have the honor for the women by traditional and they learnt it long before the modern world.
5. They have the set principles of war and peace.
6. Even in the state of war they have the respect for the women and the children without any discrimination.
7. They have the sanctity of system of refuge like other great races of the globe.
8. They have the traditional of the religious tolerance and the followers of any faith can live without fear in their neighbor.
9. Hospitality is a very feature of Baloch culture.
10. Commitment and allegiance to the treaty is observed in the Baloch culture and a Balochi commitment means a strong commitment.

Notes:

1*. Gul Khan Naseer has discussed this transformation and emergence of the word Baloch from Balkoch, Bakchos and Belus in Koch and Baloch, his well-known work

2*. This shifting character of the people exists in the transformation process moving from the nomadic to the settled life.

3* Gul Khan Naseer has discussed the Brahvis as the Bloch, the Brahvis are also the Balochs.

References:

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