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## **The Struggle for Political Supremacy: Thirty Year Intra-Tribal Rind-Lashar Baloch War (1490-1518)**

### **Abstract**

*The fifteenth century marks a dominant phase of Baloch migration and settlement in what is now constitute as Balochistan, divided between Iran and Pakistan. The time is mythologized not only with the stories of Baloch origin, migration and settlement, but also with the tribal feuds and warfare for political supremacy, necessary for livelihood and survival. The Thirty Years War (1486-1518) between two major Baloch tribes, Rind and Lashari, has become a custom-mark of Baloch epical mythology as well as folk tradition. The epics of 25 battle fought between two popular claimants of Baloch identity, presents a story of Baloch culture, poetry and history. The Wars were fought between popular Baloch heroes Mir Chakar Khan Rind (1468-1565) and Guahram Lashari. The stories has constructed the customs and culture of Baloch bravery. The Wars are considered to be forming the modern identity of Baloch ethnicity as well as political Balochistan. Not only culture and customs of Baloch tribes are settled around the stories of the wars, but also the political authority and Baloch pride and prejudices are constructed on the culture of these Wars. The purpose of this paper is to explore and nature of these Wars and analyze the impact of these wars on the Baloch identity. For, the original Baloch folk lore, poetry and traditions as well as twentieth century Baloch and orientalisists' versions of analysis are used to draw inferences.*

**Keywords;** Political Supremacy, Baloch, Rind, Lashar, Chakar, Guahram, Nali etc.

### **Introduction**

The paper primarily deals with the Rind-Lashar conflict of thirty years as a battle of tribal supremacy in the region. As we have come to know through the different Balochi folk-tails and poetry that a bloody war of thirty years between these tribes crushed their powers not only but also pushed them from Balochistan to the plains of Sindh and Punjab. It is said that Gauhar a Jat woman was the basic cause of this bloody war but the tribal supremacy was also an important element which forced the two strongest Baloch tribes to prove their strength and power in the region. Although both fought the battle of Gandhawa jointly against enemy but soon they draw line of difference and superiority and face 25 times one another. This long battle also proved the power of tribal chief and the Baloch tribal and socio-

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political structure how they are bound in their traditions. In this context, paper highlights the causes, events and results of this war. The Lasharies lived in barren area as compare to Rind which lived in a much fertile land. Therefore, the Lasharis then tried their best to annex the area from Rinds but failed. In 1518 in the battle field Mir Chakar defeated the Lasharis and pushed them into Sindh. But he also left Balochistan to settle in the fertile of Punjab. Among the Baloch tribes Rind and Lashar were the two major tribes living in Balochistan in 15th century. Rind tribe was headed by Chakar (The Khan-e-Azam) and the Lashari tribe was headed by Mir Gohram Lashari. The tow tribe especially Rind was a prosperous and major tribe but destroyed owing to a civil war. For 27 years, both tribes went to a bloody war which resulted in the death of thousands of Rind and Lashari people. It is a story that all started with a horse riding competition but the element of tribal supremacy could not be denied. The Rinds won the competition and then the Lasharis on their way back to their village, killed and looted the calves of a women from Rind tribe name Guhar Jatni. Mir Chakar called the Lasharis to return the calves and pay the loss but they refused. The refusal resulted to a devastating war between these tribes which left many children orphans and women widows. The two tribes fought 25 battles, in 10 battles the Lasharis defeated Chakar and the other 15 battles were won by the Rinds. But it's believed that Gauhar was just a little reason, the main component of the war was the fertile land, power, strength and the supremacy of tribe and The Rind and Lashar both claimed as the real inheritor of Mir Jalal Khan. This civil war of two Baloch tribes continued for thirty year and to be a part of the Baloch tribal history.

Generally it is said that Baloch migrated from Kirman to Makran and they arrived in Makran during the middle of 12th century under the command of Mir Jalal Khan. After their arrival Baloch were scattered throughout the province having concentrated populations only in Makran, Sibi district, former Khairpur state and the districts Dera Ghazi Khan and Muzaffargarh. They speak different dialects like Western or Makrani, Eastern Baluchi, Khitrani, Sindhi.<sup>1</sup>

This federative arrangement seems to have worked smoothly so long as the Baloch remained confined to Makran and their numbers were small. When, however Makran became smaller in area and resources for their increasing numbers, requirements and ambitions and drive towards the each became only a question of time, their old organization fitting in well in Makran was bound to expand and crack. The re-organized and recouped Rinds and Lahars of Makran assumed the role of conquerors in 15<sup>th</sup> century when they overlook and killed Mir Umar Mirwani or Mirwari, the Brahui ruler of the infant state of Kalat under Mir Chakar Khan Rind. They ruled over the State for two years but probably finding it as unproductive as Makran, they left it under Mir Mandwa, the father-in-law of Mir Chakar. Then the Baloch band moved towards Kachhi which was a plain area and fit for permanent settlement. Its water resources, nature of the soil and agricultural potentiality tempted them so much that they occupied it dividing it into two parts the eastern falling to the lot of Lasharis and western to the Rinds so that none had any cause of complaint. Here they lived peacefully probably as two independent but fraternal political entities. It was here that Mir Chakar, not so unwisely as through by M.S. Khan, divided them into clearly defined tribes under individual leaders, so as to meet the growing problem of numbers and forestall any dis-

integration consequent upon it as well as to secure a permanent military organization for the perilous times he live in. So long as he was there, nothing ominous was visible in the arrangement. There was peace, plenty and prosperity and was right with the world and every Baloch was well aware that Chakar had a majestic personality. He was a fierce lord, bred to arm and well bred.<sup>2</sup>

Among Baloches there were many tribes and mostly belong to Rind. Rind was the elder son of Mir Jalal Khan and other three sons Lashar, Korai and Hot. Rind considered the most important tribe with other tribes during 15th century. They fought jointly the battle of Gandhawa with Lashar. But the horse race created conflict between Rind and Lashar and both fought 25 battles and at last Lashari defeated. After the death of his father Chakar became the chief of Rind tribe and he extended his state in Balochistan with many other Baloch tribes.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, some rivals of Chakar gathered in the camp of Mir Gohram the chief of Lashar tribe who also declared himself chief in the life of his father.<sup>4</sup> According to Chakar, Gohram had 45000 army and also got the help of Sindh rulers. His own force was 40000 thousand strong, armed men. They fought 25 years. There fratricidal quarrels plunged the whole Baloch race in a bath of blood. Baloch tribal structure came to collapse and spread to its foundation. Mir Han the cousin of Chakar along with 700 hundred swordsmen and thousands of Lashari killed at Nali near Gandhawa.<sup>5</sup>

Rind pushed to Lasharies from Balochistan to Sindh and some area of Punjab as they settled in Dera Ghazi Khan during the time of Mirani rule and received a Jageer from the Baloch ruler near at Chorhatta.<sup>6</sup> After the decisive war Lashari defeated and moved to Sindh and settled there. Chakar called the Lasharis to return but they refused. In 1518 Mir Chakar also left Balochistan to settle in the Punjab region. But the 30 years' war and dauntlessness of the two tribe leaders continues to be a part of the Baloch's history.<sup>7</sup>

Gauhar which was a Jat widow became the reason of the conflict between the two tribes and Rind supported her against Lasharies due to their tribal supremacy. The incident proved horrible for the Baloch unity and power because they involve in civil war than raised their power to the east and it was a big mistake of Mir Gohram Lashari because this war was the result of his non-serious attitude and arrogance. Although many persons as Bi-Barg and his father tried utmost to stop this tribal war. But they could not stop the both Chakar and Gohram from a long tribal war due to self-conceit of the both.<sup>8</sup> This bloody war end with the victory of Great Chakar and it forced the historian to write the tails of Rind and the Chakar bravery as Raverty mentioned "mighty Chakar Rind" that " God-like man and no one is like mighty Chakar among Baloches."<sup>9</sup>

Some historians stated Guhar, is famous in Blauch-classies as 'Maheri' or Mistress of camels, cows and cattle. She was a lovely as a gem and 'Darrin' or as beautiful as a pearl. She was a doubly blessed woman possessing the power of wealth as well as that of beauty. She sat on the floor of silk and brocade, her tent poles were made of gold and she was a lady of velvet tread and numerous blandishments. Even her camels were comely and attractive. Such a lady of dazzling fortune and outstanding beauty could be the envy of anyone. No wonder, therefore, if Mir Guhram Lashari; whose subject she was, approached her in

company with Abu Bakar and Ramin asking for a Favour of a marriage with the Mir.<sup>10</sup>

She refused saying “I have nourished you like a son and loved you as a brother” When the Mir left crest-fallen, she was afraid of reprisals and immediately hurried towards Mir Chakar along with her herds and belongings. She entreated for an asylum under him as well as assigning to her a grazing ground for her cattle. The chivalrous Mir Chakar, in conformity with the Baloch custom, granted her refuge and allowed her to graze her cattle at Kichi irrigated by canals in Shoran area. In this way Mir Chakar became reasonable for the safety of her cattle, belonging and person. The even did not apparently ruffle the Rind Lashar relations for the time being as Mir Gohram, bound by the Baloch *Dastur* of conventional, social and public code could not capitalize and exploit his own rebuff and thus expose his own failure to ensure an honorable life to his subjects. Moreover, Mir Chakar had acted in the best traditions of Baloch *Dastur* and it was a folly to challenge his magnanimity. This prize had been lost and the fabulous bird had flown and, with all the yearning and burning that it caused, it was wise to keep mum on the issued. The friendly atmosphere between the two sides continued as usual and the frequent courtesy calls, comings and goings, games and contests went on unabated. Once Ramin Lashari, the son of Mir Guhram, was a guest of the Rinds and a contest in horse racing was decided upon between him and Rehan Rind. The race ended in a victory for Ramin but the Rinds, instead, announced the victory of Rehan and sang the praises of his celebrated mare Shoal dark in color and strong as a lion, and indulged in celebrations and jubilations. Ramin all the while burnt with protest and rage swearing to avenge this insult sooner than late Had not the Rinds grown haughty and arrogant? Had not they twisted and distorted the truth in contravention of all moral obligations which bind human beings? Had not they insulted a guest violating the centuries old *Dastur*? Had not they granted protection to the Jat woman, Guhar, who was a lawful Lashar subject? Surely the Rinds were overstepping their limits, and so Ramin nursed his rage and justified his proposed relation.<sup>11</sup>

The Council comprised the viper-tongued Mir Jarror of Phuz tribe; God-fearing Huddey; Mir Hasan Maulai or a *darwish*; Piro Shah, a veteran warrior and his equally brave and charitable son Mir Bajjar; Mir Han, a boon companion of Mir Chakar; the hot headed Raihan; the warm-blooded Sohrab of brave-necked horse, the level headed Bivaragh or Bibarg; the impetuous Haibat and tried warriors like Sobha, Maihan, Mir Ali, Jam Sihak, Allan, Ibrahim, Safar, Ahmad, Kallu, Hammal, Kihan, Chanar, and Jind etc. Though the exact number of the members of this council can perhaps never be ascertained yet it can be safely asserted on the basis of the available information that it was fairly representative and that it was dominated by war-minded and war-tempered men like Garno, Rehan, Sohrab, Mir Han, Piro Shah and Mir Chakar him-self. The elders like Huddey and Hasan were pacifists but passive. Mir Mando, as an elder statesman, did not seem to favor was when he said, “We must send our tribal women folk who are our honour to Kavand mountains” but he did not openly advocate peace. The only imaginative person who insisted on restraint and peace was Mir Bibarg. He said, “Leave off your garrets and housewives, pull down your tents and forts and abandon your irrigated lands and belongings”. Then sheathing his sword he said, “We will not

indulge in bloodshed for the sake of the camels of a refugee Jamoot woman". But war zealots like Mir Han denounced such statements and the voices of wisdom were drowned in the horrible din of was drums.<sup>12</sup>

The council constituted as such could not but decide upon making a war upon making a war upon Lasharis, to forestall them, and they were in no way wiser or less reluctant to go to war then the Rinds. It discussed the issue back and forth for three or four days and gave its verdict in favour of offensive war. As Mir Chakar, in accordance with this decision, galloped his horse forward along with his 40,000 warriors for attack, Mir Bibarg once again and for the last time held the reins of his horse and requested Mir Cjhakar to control his anger and keep to his fort remaining on the defensive. But before Mir Chakar could think and find out the deep wisdom in it, Jarro, Raihan and Sohrab advanced on the wisest man of the Rinds with their biting, flaming and poisoned darts of sarcasm, "Bivaragh! You are afraid of enemy's arrows and his resplendent Indian swords. Rest accured we will keep you safe from his onslaughts by attaching you with the non-combatant 'mirasis' and other riff-raff so that you should watch the changing fortunes of war from a safe distance". This was too much for the wise man who was brave to the backbone. Mir Chakar did not open his lips even and Bivaragh left off the reins. The Rinds took the plunge and the army of 40,000 advanced forward in a bid to forestall the enemy.<sup>13</sup>

While this was happening on the Rinds side, Lasharis, soon after the losses inflicted by the Rinds contingent, were burning with vengeance. No time was lost and frantic preparations were set afoot. But in the heart of hearts Mir Gohram knew it well that Mir Chakar had a longer experience of fighting and conducting wars and that the Rinds were superior in numbers, war leaders and resources. It was, therefore necessary that he should augment his manpower and resources so that he should give the Rinds a decent fight and make a bid for victory. In order to do this, he approached Nuhanis, a section of Rinds who had differences with Mir Chakar and occupied the territory in between Rinds and Lashar lands. He succeeded in persuading them to go to war under his flag. They offered 1700 bulls, 1800 arams and 120 Maunds of flour besides 1000 warriors. Having done this, he approached his eastern neighbors i.e., Sammas of Sind who agreed to give him military aid. In the meantime his 30,000 men had been mustered and aided and supplemented by Nuhanis and Sindhis, and he confidently marched forward to meet the Rinds host. The armies met on the river Nali. It was the first great battle of this war. Both sides fought for the victory. But Rinds were defeated leaving 700 dead bodies including those of Mir Habn, Bivaragh, Safar, Ahmad, Kallu, Hammal, Kihan, Chanar, Jind, Mir Ali, Piro Shah and others. The Rind Army was scattered. Mir Chakar himself was left without any horse and sword and was seen defending himself with his shield only. His position was so precarious that he could be over-powered and killed any moment it was a this critical juncture, when Mir Chakar was in the very jaws of death, the Mir Gohram's celebrated father, Mir Nozbandah, the Zar Zawal or gold-scatterer of Baluch traditions, who was born of a Rind lady, Muddi, offered him his mare 'phool' which instantly crossed the mountains and took him back to his headquarters safe and sound. As to why the Rinds were defeated in the battle of Nali, the Baloch classics and traditions, which are mostly narrative and descriptive and sometimes even muddled, are mum on the

issued leaving as to reason out the defeat for ourselves. It seems that the number-proud and over-confident Mir Chakar had under-estimated his adversaries and had not carefully and ingeniously arranged his troops for battle.<sup>14</sup>

Mir Gohram, on the other hand, had to depend on shrewd arrangement and better tactics to make up his inferiority in numbers. Here his Sindhi allies seem to have helped him considerably as they had a more extensive experience of wars and battles. Mir Chakar could not station his troops on an advantageous position and he must have realized that the foreign troops had given his rivals a lead over him. He seems to be that the foreign troops not only swelled Lashari numbers and resources but also added their varied experience to their local knowledge. That's why we find him soon after this battle trying frantically for enlisting the Turkish support on his sides. Not only this, we find Mir Guhram also trying to at least dissuade the Turks of Herat to come to Rind and in case he failed to win their support. In each case, both sides had come to consider the foreign aid a must for their victory. The battle of Nali had struck a blow which could never be forgotten or swallowed by Mir Chakar. For a brief period, he remained in humiliation and utter frustration and out of these was born his grim resolve to devastate Lashari lands smash their power completely. With a view to ensure the success of this grim object, he hurried to Shah Hussain Balaqara of Herat (873-911A.H./1468-1505 AC) through the war continued between the tribes in a desultory manner and was conducted by his lieutenants. Mir Chakar had not promise path to tread in enlisting the Turkish support as it is never easy to enthuse or persuade a foreign power to help even the highest of noblest cause and even when all the prospects of intended was are obviously presaging your success. If the defeated goes to another court for successor, enormous sacrifices are a must for a favorable response and even you might be compelled to barter away your very freedom for that help. To crown all Mir Guhram, who had outwitted Mir Chakar as a politician and as a tactician so far, was maneuvering on his heels. They had brought many presents for the Turkish ruler including a gold brocaded carpet. Thus the poor Mir Chakar had to rack his brain, take the extreme personal ricks and make the maximum sacrifices using his resourcefulness to its last ounce to win over Shah Hussain who was all along wooed by the Lasharis. The refined and benevolent Shah was inclined to Mir Chakar, his immediate neighbours, the first to knock at his door and the man who seemed to be as brave as a lion and as open as the sky. But he could not spurn the Lashar emissaries outright and he was still procrastinating and indecisive when he had already tested the presents of mind, skilled horsemanship and sheer bravery of Mir Chakar by subjecting him to three successive ordeals during which Lasharis very cleverly offered three loads of presents, until the Shah's mother was converted, as the Baloch classics go, to Rind cause due to the Mir's unprecedented bravery. She intervened and prevailed upon his son to order his Qandahar Governor Zaman Beg Arghun to help him. Shah agreed and the Mir returned to Sibi having succeeded in his mission. Mir Chakar had grown wiser after the battle of Nalli and felt stronger after his Herat journey while the Lasharies were demoralized and shaken due to their failure at the Turkish Court. High spirited as Mir Chakar was, he planned to weaken the Lashar position as far as possible before the arrival of Qandahar troops. The defeat of Nali and the deaths of so many of his brave men including that of Mir Han had to be avenged. He, therefore, made a sudden swoop on the Lashar positions defeating them at the

battle of Gori and successfully storming Dabani fort so that when Mir Guhram taunted him for his defeat at Nali, he could equally taunt him for his defeats at Gori and Dabani and the losses suffered therein.<sup>15</sup>

If Mir Guhram could boast of his victory at Nali due to Sindhi support. Mir Chakar could be equally proud of his victory at Gajan due to Turkish support. But truly speaking Mir Guhram boasted vainly and Mir Chakar prided falsely as the victories gained against each other were only pyrrhic victories. Neither the Sindhi support could save Mir Guhram Lashari and his tribal from the ultimate doom nor could the Arghuns support save Mir Chakar and his tribal from being insulted and finally compelled to leave Baluchistan for good to Multan.<sup>16</sup>

It is observed that Baloch culture stands promoted his phenomena of Baloch history and is often reminded of three such parallels in world history, as Arabs before Islam in a period of *Jahiliya*, the pre-Muslim Rajputs of India and Mongols before Chinggis. All were desert chivalrous all around but there were certain inherent defects in their way of life and thought which in its turn was but an inevitable impression of the geography and economy of their respective areas, their way of life and thought could be easily labeled as "Nomadism" which presupposed a blind obedience to their chiefs; an obligation to take personal family or tribe revenge known to the ancient Arabs as 'Thar', an exaggerated and excitable ration of personal or tribal dignity or prestige and a 'neck or nothing' attitude when a call arms, was made in defense of tribal *Dastur*'. It was the recrudescence of this nomadic spirit, which had been only scotched by Mir Jalal Khan and Mir Rind that threw the Baloches of 15<sup>th</sup> century into this conflagration. That's why it could not be stopped or put out before all its participants had been killed, wounded or scattered to the four quarters. Such is the heavy toll taken always by nomadism in History and such is the enormous price paid by tribes and communities when they are driven into internecine warfare!

At last the war end with the supremacy of Rind but they also moved to Punjab and settled different places. The account about the war is highly valuable being as the first-hand accounts of war. They are quite eloquent on why Guhar came under the protection of Mir Chakar, why remain cut down her young camels, how the war started, how brave and powerful were the two sides and what were their respective military achievements. One, thing is evident from their study that Mir Chakar, Mir Guhram and their associates, poets as they were, much have said more, if not all, about the war that what has been collected and preserved. if an intensive search and research are carried out, more poems might be unearthed amongst the 'gaiks'(singers) giving us a fuller account of war. The task is so important and valuable that it must be taken in hand immediately.<sup>17</sup>

They were brave, generous and generally peaceful people but they were extremely revengeful. They were deeply religious people having may 'Qaris' and 'Huffaz' amongst them but they were broad-minded and never persecuted anybody for his religious opinions within their domains. They had a firm and unshakable faith in God and they prayed to Him for victory as well as immunity from sufferings.

## Conclusion

The story of thirty years Rind and Lashar war is based on ancient Balochi literature explored by different historians and writers of Baloch history. The Balochi literature and epics poetry indicated that it was minor cause of horse race which destroyed the two strong tribes and snatched the glory of past. It may be a little cause of this long civil war but the major element could not be neglected in the context of Baloch autonomous, sovereign, superiority and supremacy. Baloches are considered as warrior in their history and the tribal head always ready to establish their identity and supremacy. Although the story is beautifully provided an imaginary touch and Gauhar was linked. But the other important causes could not be neglected as the fertile lands to feed animals especially the camels and goats of the tribes because Baloch already had a nomadic culture and the migrated and settled in different areas where the possibility of water and grass were available. The set boundary of territories between the two tribes and many previous invasions of Lasharies from barren area to fertile land were the major causes. Lasharies tried to annex the large lush green area to their state. But they failed and the event of horse race became a folk-tail in Baloch history. This thirty year civil war was actually an attempt to establish the supremacy of both Rind and Lashar. Rind tribe was headed by Chakar (The Khan-e-Azam) and the Lashari tribe was headed by Mir Gohram Lashari. For 27 years, both tribes went to a bloody war which resulted in the death of thousands of Rind and Lashari people. The two tribes fought 25 battles, in 10 battles the Lasharis defeated Chakar and the other 15 battles were won by the Rinds. The Rinds won the competition and the resulted of war was to a devastating war between these tribes which left many children orphans and women widows. But it's believed that Gauhar was just a little reason, the main component of the war was the fertile land, power, strength and the supremacy of tribe and The Rind and Lashar both claimed as the real inheritor of Mir Jalal Khan. This civil war pushed them back and they settled in Sindh and Punjab.

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