

Khushal Khan Khattak and his Political Thoughts

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Abstract

Khushal Khan Khattak is a stalwart celebrity of the Pushtoons. He was a poet, thinker, philosopher, expert of medicine, hunter, politician and a fighter as well. Apart, he is the author of more than 300 books in prose and verse, in which approximately 20 books are available. His book Dastarnama deals with his political struggle, other relevant political ideas and discussions. His writings reveal that he lived by sword and pen together encircling each and every field of life. This paper is an attempt to explore his political activities, resisting the Mughal Empire. His imprisonment by the Mughals resulted in a new era in his approach towards the Mughal rule. He gave the Pashtoons the lesson of freedom of thought and success to make them the bright nation of the world through his experiences.

Introduction

The subcontinent on the whole and those areas where the Afghans/Pashtoons in particular are residing have always remained troubled areas in the annals of history. The history of this region took a conspicuous change when a Mughal warrior Zahir-ud-Din Baber defeated Ibrahim Lodhi the then

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ruler of the subcontinent in the Battle field of Pani Pat in 1526 and became an independent ruler. The subcontinent remained under the sway of Mughal dynasty from 1526 to 1857 A.D. till the British occupied the throne of Delhi. During the Mughal reign, the Pashtoon popularity was under severe tyranny, but no Mughal ruler was succeeded in maintaining his complete authority in the area.

Khushal Khan Khattak had a multidimensional character. At a time, he was a symbol of *Pashtunwali*, a poet, a warrior, a traveller and a hunter, fan of beauty, strict follower of Islamic teachings, an artist, historian and above all a politician. He had a dominant and active role in his family, tribal, national and state politics.

Being the elder son, Khushal assumed the functions of Khattak Chief in 1641(1050 Hijri) after the death of his father. Born in May-June 1613, Khushal, by then, was a smart and vibrant young man of 28 years; the best portion of life for an extraordinary person like Khushal to produce results of his own choice. During his childhood, Khushal was reported to have escaped accidental death narrowly on several occasions: his drowning in river Kabul at the age of six years just below his palace situated on the bank of the river, an attack of intense and unbreakable fever continuing for several days at a stretch, and an accidental fall of heavy stone from over a grassy roof of a *dalan* (verandha) on his head due to which he suffered from fever at the age of eighteen when he was married and his bride was sitting near his bed were some of the few fatal episodes, he survived.

The same year i.e. 1641, King Shah Jehan confirmed Khushal Khan as the Khattak Chief and guardian of the kings highway from Attock to Peshawar. From 1641 to 1658 when there developed instability in the Mughal Empire due to war of ascension to the throne, Khushal faithfully and sincerely utilized his energy, wisdom, bravery and all his uncommon capabilities in the service of his Mughal masters. During this era, the wars with his Yusufzai counterparts, which his father had bequeathed to him continued; Khushal

being an outspoken person refers to the real state of affairs. He says:

که له خپله حقیقته درته وایم
 زه ځاني یم د مغل نمک حلال
 که د جنگ د پرهرونو درته وایم
 چې له درده می به تن و لکه نال
 یو پرهار می به لا روغ په وجود نه و
 بل پرهار می به په تن شو یا په دال
 چې قضا د سړي نه وي سره نه مری
 که ئی درست صورت په غشیو شي غربال¹

The fact is that from the very start I have been faithful and a loyal of Mughals. What to say of the wounds I received in wars I fought, my whole body would become twisted due to pain. I never got relief from wounds and before having relief I would receive fresh wounds. There is no death before the appointed time even if one's body is pierced by arrows a hundred and more times.

During the war of throne between the King Shah Jehan's four sons, Darashikoh, Murad Baksh Shuja and Aurangzeb,² Khushal never supported any candidate of the Delhi throne. He was unhappy with Darashikoh partly because he did not like some of his anti-Islamic tenets and partly because Darashikoh had changed his fief and had handed over to Yousafzai Malik Bhagu Khan without any justification. Khushal sided with the former and successfully blocked the advances of the latter towards Kabul. Aurangzeb won the game and rose to the throne in July 1658 assuming the title of Abul Muzaffar Muhyuddin Alamgir Badsh-i-Ghazi. The new King initially was favourably inclined towards Khushal, and confirmed him in his Chieftainship. Khushal also continued to faithfully serve the Mughal interests. The King in the second accession of his reign announced the withdrawal of road toll on the transit of food grains and other articles. Khushal does not seem to have shown any adverse reaction against the toll withdrawal order. Meanwhile Baku

1 Khushal Khan Khattak, *Kulyat*, ed., Dost Muhammad Kamil Mohmand (Peshawar: Edara-e-Ishaat-e-Sarhad, Peshawar, 1952), 544.

2 Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil, *Khushal Khan Khattak* (Urdu) (Peshawar: Edara-e-Ishaat-e-Sarhad, Peshawar, 1951), 67.

Khan, the Yusufzai (Malik) leader succeeded in winning the favour of the crown prince Darashukoh and deprived Kushal Khan of his Jagir consisting of Yusufzai area.³

Turning point

In 1663, Mahabat Khan, the Governor of Peshawar respectful and friendly towards Khushal Khan was transferred to Deccan replaced by Sayyid Amir and one Abdur Rahim as his deputy.⁴ This was a turning point in Khushal's association with Mughals. The transfer of Mahabat Khan ultimately created hostile environment for Khushal as latter was a straightforward Sardar but Sayyid Amir was addicted to bribes. He expected that Khushal would provide him a share out of his toll collections but he refused to do so. As Khushal himself confesses, that 'I was proud of my services for the Mughals! Khushal seems obviously to have ignored Sayyid Amir's importance. On the other hand, Sayyid Amir had entered into collusion with Khushal's opponents, Hidayat Tarin, Mirza Abdur Rahim, Khuda Yar Khalil, Khwaja Sadiq Badakhshe, the viceroy and three or four other persons were in league against Khushal including his two uncles, Firoz and Bahadur Khan who wanted to rise high in the eyes of Mughals at the cost of eclipsing Khushal Khan. They first hatched a conspiracy to implicate Khushal Khan in a murder case, which failed. Then as a part of this conspiracy, Sayyid Amir obtained ambiguous order from the king for the arrest of certain farmers and Khushal became the exclusive casualty of the said order; the beginning of a long ordeal for Khushal, which only terminated at his death.

Khushal's arrest and subsequent imprisonment brought about a great change in his personality and thoughts and thereafter all the Mughal attempts to reclaim and elevate him and win over him back proved futile. Khushal had rejected Mughals once for all, and his decision was firm and final. Now Khushal was equally proud to declare:

3 Kamil, *Khushal Khan Khattak*, 81.

4 Kamil, *Khushal Khan Khattak*, 85-86.

په منصب پوري خوشحال خټک نوکرو
چي منصب ورځني لار شہ اوس بادشاہ دے⁵

With status (Munsab), Khushal was a servant, now being free from that bondage, he is a king.

Khushal during his imprisonment had reached definite conclusions and decisions to which he remained committed during the rest of his life. He had lost trust in the Mughal's approach towards Pakhtoons. His views about his changed ideas find abundant place in his poetry. He intently condemns the Mughal King Aurangzeb in the strongest possible words, calls him a *munafiq* and questions his belief and describes his outward attachment to Islam as a tactic to deceive the masses. In Khushal's opinion he had no right to claim to be a genuine Muslim as he was the very person who killed his brothers and imprisoned and insulted his father for becoming king himself. Khushal says: his (Aurangzeb) heart is as black as his black face.⁶

Khushal's arrest, imprisonment and his subsequent break with Mughals provided him with a new era in his philosophy – a philosophy of nationalism to which he gave an eternal beauty and deep foundations through his living and piercing poetry. This was the time when Khushal declared that:

بله هيڄ ليدله نه شي په دا مېنځ کيني
يا مغل د مېنځه ورک يا پښتون خوار⁷

The options are only limited, either Mughals have to give way or the Pakhtoons to get lost.

خودي توان توفيق رسپري بپرون مه شه
په هر دم د پښتانه د تنگ و نام⁸

5 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 849.

6 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 849.

7 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 527.

8 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 560.

As long as your sources and energy support you, always remember to serve the cause and good name of Pakhtoons.

About the causes of his arrest, Khushal says:

په ناحق د اورنگزېب په بند بندي يم
خدائے خبر دے په تهمت او په بهتان
زه په خان کبني گناه نه وينم په خدائے گو
ولي نور خلق خبري کا شان شان⁹

I am for no fault of mine in Aurangzeb's prison. Only Allah knows on what grounds. I do not find any wrong in myself. But the people ascribe many reasons.

Khushal's arrest brought about a turning point in his life and thoughts, targets and determination. This period of ordeal gave him a new vision. It was during this period of imprisonment that he wrote his "Dastarnama", a great book in Pashto prose.

Strategy

It may be pointed out that as far as Pakhtoon nationalism is concerned, it does not owe its existence to Khushal — he is the philosopher who merely made the concept of nationalism refined and transparent. Pakhtoons happen to be the first people in the subcontinent particularly and in the South Asia in general who had developed a sense of self-awareness who always fought and refought for self-survival, self-protection and' remained always involved in a lasting struggle for regaining their lost prestige and sovereign status in the Indian Subcontinent.

Khushal urged Pakhtoons to unite to win freedom from Mughal subjugation. He said, "If we agree to join hands with each other, no one will have courage to face us."¹⁰ In a reply to Mahabat Khan's letter, Khushal wrote:

To become a Mughal, I wielded sword and cut off many an Afghan heads yet I could not become a Mughal and remained same Afghan. Alas for the one who arrives so hard and so in vain? He was convinced that his cause against Mughals was genuine for

9 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 579.

10 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 38.

which he had stout heart, great courage, pursuable ideals and Pakhtoon nationalist Ideology and when he gave a call to Pakhtoons, he knew that a house divided against itself could not stand.¹¹

Khushal was by nature a peace preacher and therefore he would never have advocated war against Mughals as he was aware that a war even when victorious was a national misfortune but he was sure that few moments of life in freedom were better than years of life in slavery and consequently he had no other option but to ask Afghans to rise against Mughals for attaining their freedom from slavery and subjugation as freedom and independence were not attainable without offering sacrifices.

Khushal's message to Pakhtoons for developing unity and solidarity amongst their ranks and his philosophy of nationalism was not a blind urge and appeal to their prejudice and hostility against others.¹² His nationalist doctrine was thoughtful, conscious and contemplative which aimed at constructing a peaceful society through mutual consultation and collective efforts and he was very emphatic in suggesting that consultation amongst six was better than consultation amongst four and eight were better than six persons when they had an affair to ponder over.¹³

During these years, Khushal used to warn Pakhtoons of the evil design of Mughal authorities. He warned that Aurangzeb was a King who was only pleased to see the Pakhtoons in total devastation, and in order to protect Pakhtoon honour and national dignity he exhorted them to sacrifice their lives and property as nothing was more valuable than honour and grace. He clearly advocated a democratic unity and coherence amongst Pakhtoon tribes. He said that:

د نمانځه تر قضاگرانہ دا قضا ده
چي قضا شي دڅلورو مصلحت
نوراني که هغه ځانے چي سره کښېني

11 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 38.

12 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 592.

13 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 861.

دیرینه څلور هوښیار په مصلحت
په اخلاص چې په دعا لاسونه هسک کا
ور به پرانت شي د فتح د نصرت¹⁴

The missing or ignoring of mutual consultation between any four sages is worse than the missing of prayers. Whenever four wise men gather together for mutual consultation, the place of their meeting becomes enlightened and luminous. And when they together raise their hands for prayers, the doors of victory are opened (by providence).

He recommends that mutual consultation amongst four is better than consultation between two and consultation amongst six is better than four in pursuing a cause. It is evident that Khushal's objective of unity amongst Pakhtoons is directed towards a destination i.e. social justice and Islamic polity to which he wants to reach through a process of democratic consultation. Ultimately, through this process, he wants to infuse a sense of nationalism in Pakhtoons.

بنډويست د کائنات شي په خبرو
يو تر سله صدقه شه سل تر زرو¹⁵
خدائے دي ورک د پښتو کا دا دري توکه
يو بد جهل، بل بد نیت، درېم نفاق¹⁶

You can capture the whole universe by conducting debate. Hundreds are better than one and thousands are better than hundreds. May Allah remove these three traditions from Pashtun society; one is ignorance and other is lack of trust and lasting disunity.

Khushal was a pragmatic, realist and equipped with sharp vision. He had his eyes on the strengths and weaknesses of Pakhtoon character. He says that the ignominies befalling on Pakhtoons are the results of their own misdeeds and that is why he gives a bold and courageous call to Pakhtoons for unity and integrity amongst their ranks. He says that:

14 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 511.

15 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 238.

16 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 846.

پښتانه په عقل پوهه څه ناکس دي
 کوته سپي د قصابانو د جوس دي
 بادشاهي ئي د مغل په زرو بانبله
 د مغل د منصبونو په هوس دي
 اوښ له باره سره کور ته ورغلي
 په اولجه د اوښ د غاري د جرس دي¹⁷

It is my concern for Pakhtoon honour which keeps me travelling through unpaved paths. We live in a society where there exists neither *Deen* (religion) nor a system. People are losing sense of shame and mutual regard and respect. This is time which requires sacrifices from Pakhtoons and see what they are doing. Pakhtoons without doubt are better than the Mughals but the tragedy is that they (Pakhtoons) lack wisdom and sagacity. They lost their own kingdom out of greed, just for the sake of having and collecting few Mughal coins and chairs. The unfortunate and short sighted Pakhtoons could not see a camel loaded with treasure and raced towards catching the bells ringing in the camel's neck.

During this heat of Mughal-Pakhtoon hostility, young Nizam, Khushal's beloved 26 years old son died in 1675. Khushal expressed his deepest grief over his death in the following words:

کشکے خون د پښتانه په ننگ کښي مر وے
 نه چي گور لره روان شو له تولتک
 چي د قام په ننگ کښي ومړ هغه خوبه
 په عالم جهان کښي دخپل پلار غاره کا لک¹⁸

I am grieved not over your death; I am grieved because you did not die for enhancing, promoting and protecting Pakhtoon honour. It is indeed no death going to grave from resting bed. A son who sacrifices his life for national honour brings pride and esteem to his father in society.

Khushal says in few other verses:

هره چار د پښانه ده
 اتفاق ورسره نشته ډپر ارمان پښتانه تر مغل

17 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 340.

18 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 536.

د بھولي او د شبر شاه خبري اورم
 چي په هند کبسي پښتانه وو بادشاهان
 سپراووه پيري ني داسي بادشاهي وه
 چي په دوي پوري درست خلق وو حبران
 يا هغه پښتانه نور وو داڅه نور دي
 يا د خدائے دے اوس داسي شان فرمان
 که توفيق د اتفاق پښتانه مومي
 زور خوشحال به دوباره شي په دا خوان¹⁹

Pakhtoons are better than Mughals in every respect but they lack unity. He digs out the past and reminds them that there was a time when Hind (Hindustan) was ruled by Pakhtoons. They ruled Hind for six or seven generations in such a beautiful and effective way which surprised the entire world but what now? It appears that the Pakhtoons then were either different from contemporary Pakhtoons or may be Almighty Allah wished them as such. Old Khushal will once again gain youth when Pakhtoons ever become united.

Realizing the exigency of time, he exhorted Pakhtoons that only two possibilities were visible i.e. either Mughals had to quit or Pakhtoons to embrace miserable condition. Khushal, on this occasion, makes a high and proud claim that a united Pakhtoon would have enabled him to tear the collar of Mughal to pieces but alas the entire Pakhtoons are terribly involved in mutual hostilities and they do not and cannot tolerate the existence and wellbeing of each other. I have no doubt in my mind that by this time they would have been the masters of the entire wealth in India but they are ignorant and lack wisdom and courage.

خدائے دي ورک د پښتنو کا دا دري توکه
 يو بد جهل، بل بدنيت درېم نفاق²⁰

Unfortunately, Pakhtoons have fallen prey to three evils
 i.e. ignorance, lack of mutual trust and cooperation and
 are lasting disunity

Although, Khushal was well aware of Pakhtoons shortcomings yet he continued to exhort every Pakhtoon that

19 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 215.

20 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 846.

he should work for enhancing the Pakhtoon honour according to his resources. In his view, it was the obligation of each and every Pakhtoon to contribute to national strength. However, the Pakhtoon behaviour disappointed him and the proud Khushal found himself forced to say:

Although I have sufficient natural resources and vast area full of wealth and mines. I have great manpower and young, mountains, and forests and rivers but all these sources of wealth are of no avail, as I do not have the aid and support and assistance of intelligent and awakened folk.

He says:

خنى څه لوى دعوى لرم په زړه كېنى
ولى څه كرم چې پښتون واړه بې ننگى دے²¹

I had a lot of big claims and saw splendid dreams and perceived ideals but what to do with my Pakhtoons who have lost sense of self respect, dignity and honour.

كه هر څوئى سازوم رانه سازېږي
پښتانه دي د تېږو كاتيو ديوال²²

Alas! Pakhtoons are like un-cut stone, which does not fit into a wall and my strivings and attempts to erect a wall of them bore no fruit.

كه په نور خلقو كېنى بڼه سړي موندل شي
ولى بڼه سړي به لږوي افغانان²³

Indeed the whole world is full of ignorant and stupid and unlearned people but on observation one finds that most of the ignorant, stupid and the unlearned are Afghans.

With sheer disappointment, he announced that 'good people could be found elsewhere but there were too less good men amongst Afghans.

21 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 343.

22 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 545.

23 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 214.

که هرڅو ورته د پند خبرې وانی
د پلار پند ئی هم بښه نه لگی په ځان²⁴

They are the only people who never accept and act on the advice of sages, and they are averse to it to such an extent that even dislike and dishonour the advice of their fathers!

Khushal laments that:

په لینکر لینکر نارې شوم ورته سترے
دا کابنه راته نه مهیرک وائینه ځار²⁵

'I have been trying to draw the attention of Pakhtoons, but now I feel tired, fatigued and they do not have leisure to give me their heed

مرگ زما په پوهه بښه تر دا ژوندون دے
د عزت سره چی نه وي زیست روزگار²⁶

Freedom cannot be attained without the use of sword. I think that sans honour and dignity, death is preferable to a life.

بله هېڅ لیدله نه شي په دامینځ کبښی
یا مغل دمېنځه ورک یا پښتون ځوار²⁷

There is left no option, either Mughals have to quit or Pakhtoon to embrace disgrace and misery!

Khushal made concerted efforts to restore the hopefulness to Pakhtoons and urged them to work and act collectively under a dynamic and democratic system of institutional consultation to which he attaches extraordinary importance. According to him, nothing can be attained without struggle, movement and hard work. A renowned Pashto mystic poet Amir Hamza opines that it appears that Almighty Allah required Khushal to create a sense of national consciousness and basic foundations for generating a sense of collective life and awareness amongst them leading them to freedom and independence. In spite of his

24 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 214.

25 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 526.

26 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 528.

27 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 527.

strong ideological and practical approach towards ameliorating the Pakhtoon lot, they in return left him alone, discarded and rejected and gave no response to his calls for unity among their ranks, a prerequisite for their renaissance. He defines Pakhtoon indifference and coldness towards his calls in these words:

زۀ غلیم د اورنگزبب یم
 سر په غره په بیابان
 زۀ په ننگ د پښتانه یم
 دوي نیولی مغلان
 لکه سپی هسی جاروخی
 د مغل په آشونان²⁸

In hostility towards Mughals, my abode is in mountains and deserts for redeeming Pakhtoon honour. Lo the (Pakhtoons) are behind Mughals to ensure their personal and petty interests and Mughals could never be friends. The Mughal awards.

Khushal says that:

آزادی تر بادشاہی لا تہرے کا
 چي د بل تر حکم لاندی شي زندان شي²⁹

independence is higher in status than a Kingdom. When a person loses independence, he becomes a prisoner.

It was rest time for me but fortune placed me on mountains and stony paths. It pains me to remember the wars which I fought for Pakhtoon honour and dignity. When I look at myself, I am astonished at what I was and what I am now. Mountains have become my abode. I was strong like an elephant but now I have gone weak for everybody. It is my luck which made me needy of bread. My relatives and non-relatives abandoned me. My wisdom bore no fruit as an army of ignorant surrounded me. When I lost faith in my people, I became homeless and alone. What is the use of non-responsive people? I have nothing for them except the curses.

28 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 584-85.

29 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 613.

About his last days he says:

اقربا راته عقرب شول
 رضامند مي په تعب شول
 دواړه ترونه ممي نااهل
 ابوجهل، بولھ، بولھ شول
 زه ئي بند كرم په مغلو
 په خاني او په منصب شول
 رشوتونه ئي قبول كړه
 په تلاش كېني روزوشب شول
 خپلخانه مي شوه په غرونو
 پري كار و نه پېښ عجب شول
 درست اولس قبياسه واره
 گرفتار په ډېر غضب شول³⁰

مرگ رانزدي راغې پيري كرم
 غاښ ونه لار لغم د بصر كرم
 وخت دارامو د زړه د كامو
 قسمت په غاري په غرونو سر كرم³¹

My uncles behaved like Abujahal and Abulahab; they conspired to send me to the Mughal prison in order to raise high in Mughal books. My family today is afflicted by griefs and conflicts and we are being watched by the world with astonishment. When I look at and watch the competence of my sons I say whether a human being might have such offspring.

Khushal Khan was out to teach a lesson to the Mughals, but he could not do so due to his disobedient sons and disunited, cold and indifferent Pakhtoons. The great crusader for freedom and independence rejected and cold-shouldered the joys and comforts of life for the sake of achieving a sovereign status for Pakhtoons. Khushal will indeed remain alive for as long as there exists a single freedom fighter in the world. Khushal, the pride of Afghans, the man of sword and pen, the warrior philosopher and the greatest Pashto poet crossed over to the eternity at the age of 78 on Friday, the 20th February, 1689 at Dambarah

30 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 165-66.

31 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 688.

mountain, like a faqeer, in the deep and pervading silence of the mountain, unmourned and unwept. His grasp on the sword with which he had fought for the cause of Afghans gave way. His son Ashraf Khan wrote an elegy of 49 verses on his death i.e.

He Imam (leader) of Nangyals expired there at Dambara angry and annoyed all alone while he breathed his last. No son or brother at his side in the desert. Either his *Rabb* (God) knows or I am informed about the treatment he received from his people.³²

His sons with the help of his host Afridis brought his body to Esori Bala mount, a settlement at four kilometers in the South of Serai Akora, the present Akora Khattak where he was laid to rest far away from the rising dust of the Mughal horses. This was Khushal's last will that he should be buried in a place far away where the dust of Mughal horses could not reach. And there is his resting place beneath a tiny tomb. On the epitaph is inscribed his famous verse i.e.

د افغان په ننگ مي وترله توره
ننگيالي د زماني خوشحال خټک يم³³

I guarded the sword around my loin to protect the
Afghan honour, I am Khushal Khattak the Nangyal of the
eras.

Conclusion

Khushal did not put his pen and sword to rest till his death. According to D. M. Kamil Mohmand, Khushal will always live in the hearts of the people due to his valorous and scholarly deeds. He died but he inscribed indelible mark of bravery, courage, chivalry and as an experienced soldier. His name will be included in the multi-faceted personality in the pages of history.

He was a practical leader and his life was full of adventurism and struggles. Dr. Iqbal Naseem Khattak says: Khushal Khan Khattak did not keep his ideology aside from

32 Ashraf Khan Hijri, *Dewan*, ed. Hamesh Khalil (Edara-e-Elmo-Fun Pakistan, 2001), 311-13.

33 Khattak, *Kulyat*, 566.

his poetry rather let them go side by side. His life is the true picture of his poetry and his poetry is an account of his life.³⁴ He was political as well as military leader of his nation. His life is the story of collection of so many interesting events. Khushal Baba spent most of his life in fighting with Mughals. He was faced with the internal and external politics of Mughals which put deep impacts on his life. In the beginning, Khushal tried his best to have cordial relations with Mughals but when he noticed their treatment with Pashtoons personally then he put out sword to defend his land.

Raverty says that Khushal's nationalist poetry is highly appreciable and that is why he is considered as the national poet by Pakhtoons. George Margantiene says that I have been enjoying the poetry of Khushal for the last half century. Khushal is justified to claim for himself the status of Firdousi and Saadi.³⁵

Olaf Caroe has beautifully analyzed that:

All said, we have to judge between two men, which voice is the more authentic; that of the king who killed his brother and imprisoned his father to reach the throne, and with all his genius and persistence, led an empire to corruption and decay or that of the warrior poet still kindle fire in the hearts of his compatriots.³⁶

Alama Iqbal is the only poet in the subcontinent who came to know about Khushal through the translations done by some well-known orientalist. Iqbal not only highly appreciated his poetry but also developed a great respect for his person and it was Iqbal who called Khushal the *Hakeem of Afghan Millat* and *Afghan-Shanas*. In a letter to his friend Niazud Din Ahmad Khan, he expressed this desire that he would have translated Pashto poetry into Urdu or Persian. This is a great tribute to Khushal Khan.³⁷

34 Quarterly *Adbiyat*, Pakistan Academy of Letters, Islamabad (April-June 1988): 219.

35 Raverty H. G. Major. *A Selection from the Poetry of the Afghans (16th -17th) Century* (Peshawar: Chapzai Peshawar 1981), 147.

36 Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans* (London: Macmillan Co., London, 1964), 241.

37 Muhammad Niaz Uddin Khan, *Makateeb-e-Iqbal*, ed., Muhammad Niaz Uddin Khan, (Lahore: Bazm-e-Iqbal, Lahore).

Khushal was still active in Mughal employment when different Pakhtoon tribes were deeply involved in war of liberation from Mughal subjugation. And when Khushal was released in 1668 after remaining about five years behind bars in India, the stage for widespread and deadly wars against Mughals was already set under the leadership of Darya Khan Afridi and Aimal Khan Mohmand who from 1672 to 1676 devastated the Mughal armies in war after war and this was the period when Khushal appeared as Mughal's formidable enemy. Khushal was different from Darya Khan and Aimal Khan in the sense that he was equipped with philosophy and thought and gave a very clear and unambiguous nationalist guideline to Pakhtoons.

He preserved his thoughts, philosophy and nationalist ideals in his prose and poetry and saved it from extinction for the coming Pakhtoon generations. It is indeed not a pleasant commentary on Pakhtoons sense of history that the names of Darya Khan and Aimal Khan are available on the pages of history but their last abodes and their family lines and backgrounds are still in dark. The mention of Aimal Khan Mohmand and Darya Khan Afridi exists only in the pages of books written by Khushal. Khushal on the other hand is a living phenomenon. His poetry is vibrant, hot, persuasive and miraculous. Though Pakhtoons have not yet caught the spirit of his message, however Pakhtoons of the coming centuries who are likely to be more awoken will certainly be able to understand Khushal and his philosophy.

Khushal's nationalist poetry is being subjected to severe criticism by Pakhtoons themselves as well as non-Pakhtoons. His critics say that his nationalist poetry is a reaction against the disgrace to which he was subjected by Mughal authorities. Their only plausible or implausible argument against his nationalism is that if he were really a nationalist he would have not joined Mughal service. But here they forget that a reaction does not and cannot last for decades. They also ignore the fact that all the Mughal attempts to win him back and all their offers to restore to him his dignity and authority bore no fruit. And his critics are also

indifferent to the fact that all great men undergo a certain period of evolution during which they form and develop their philosophy in an imperceptible and unconscious approach.

So Khushal's concept of nationalism is not at all based on hate and dislike for non-Pakhtoons. He was an outspoken opponent of Mughals because they had not only been unjust towards him. The last strong Mughal emperor was Aurangzeb who escalated the Hindu Muslim religious differences in the name of Islam. Khushal has profusely expressed himself against Aurangzeb whose heart in his view was as black as that of his face and who pretended to be a great, devout and devoted Muslim but his greed for power had overpowered him to an extent where he removed his father and brother from his way in order to reach to the crown and throne.

Khushal in a hundred divergent ways supports his arguments while suggesting love and attachment to one's own land and people. The present world scenario proves that Khushal said nothing against human nature however what makes him distinct is that he was the first thinker, poet and philosopher who raised his voice in support of his oppressed people and that voice against oppression was later on heard everywhere by the oppressed people of the world at large. Today, to speak and to struggle against oppression and foreign occupation is considered to be the basic human right. The first ever proponent of a nationalist ideology has great respect for man, which is evident from his saying:

چي له دوسته له دښمنه بڼه سلوک کا
د هغو سړيو بڼه زندگاني ده³⁸

چي توفيق درکوي ربالعلمين دے
له آزاد هپستنه اوسه درستي ندے³⁹

38 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 263.

39 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 352.

ستا به نوم په جهان پاتي شي خوشحاله
يوه لويه مشغولا ده ستا دكار⁴⁰

سبا به تلراخي مسابه تلراخي
چي يوتيرپوي باندي به بلراخي
يو به خوشحال غوندي پيدا خوك نه شي
په شپه په ورځ كيني خوشحال كه سلراخي⁴¹

نه به زما غوندي بل ننگياله راشي
نه به زما غوندي بل جنگياله راشي
ختك لا پرېرده په درست افغان كيني
عجب كه هسي فرهنگياله راشي⁴²

The man who treats friend and enemy with equal morality, will be comfortable in his life. It is God who grants good deeds. Your name will remain forever in the world by doing good deeds. No one will back in this world so everyone should perform well. No other Khushal can come further in the world. There is no one similar to Khushal in honour. No one can be come in bravery. There is no warrior just like Khushal not only in Khattaks but in the whole Afghans.

Khushal's standard of happiness was innocent one i.e. a life in Serai (Akora Khattak) was a fountain of joy for him.

Going through Khushal's philosophy, it is quite evident that he never proposed the amalgamation and mixing of all Muslims, in the name of Islam or on the basis of religion. He definitely, clearly and forcefully stands for Pakhtoon individuality and Pakhtoon identity, and any encroachment on Pakhtoons identity and territorial integrity is in direct conflict with Khushal's concept of nationalism. His calls to Afghans did not go in vain. Meer Wais and his heirs and the emergence of Ahmad Shah and the establishment of Afghanistan in 1747 were the direct consequence of Khushal's dream and vision for united free and well-directed Afghans. He had arrived at certain definite and solid

40 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 108.

41 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 781.

42 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 807.

conclusions to which he remained committed for the rest of his tumultuous life.

چي پښتون شوم په دا هسي سپينه ږيره
نور مي خدائے مہ کره مغلوایم په خيره⁴³

If I cannot become a complete Pashtoon in this old age,
so I will not be a pro-Mughal in my coming life.

The Mughal temptations and attractive offers failed to win him back to their ranks.⁴⁴ Khushal refused to be the chief of the whole Yusufzais as he had realized his political mistakes. He openly and frankly regretted over his wars with his Yusufzai brothers for the glory and prosperity of alien Mughals. Now he was determined to fight against Mughals in order to end their sovereignty over Pakhtoons or otherwise to devote himself to worship. He regrets over his mistakes by saying that, my pride on my valour in the service of Mughals was misplaced and similarly my effort to diffuse and break the Yusufzai power was wrong, unwise and detrimental to Pakhtoon cause.

زه د يوسفزی په جان زبر وم قاتل
بل مقصود می نه وو په خدمت کی د مغل⁴⁵

I was pro Mughal and enemy of the Yousafzais but I was wrong.

Khushal's efforts to unite Pakhtoons had almost failed. His visit to Swat proved futile and his negotiations and jirgas with Yusufzais Maliks also gave no returns and in the meanwhile the Mughal king at Hasanabdal was lavishly spreading money in order to liquidate the Pakhtoon uprising. Obviously, he failed in his attempts to make a breakthrough but in fact the money he spread had inserted a perforation in Pakhtoon resistance. Pakhtoons unity melted, disunity overwhelmed them as usual and their enemy succeeded in saving its face; nevertheless this Pakhtoon uprising which remained violent, assertive and determined for almost six

43 *Swatnama*, 54.

44 *Khushal Khan Khattak* (Urdu), 192-93.

45 *Khushal, Kulyat*, 942.

years shook the very foundations of the Mughal empire. The blow by the Pakhtoons had also made a hole, rather a crack in the Mughal might and pride.

However, Khushal had a firm belief that Pakhtoons which were being conferred on Pakhtoons, pained Khushal, which in his view were traps and nets to catch and enfeeble Pakhtoons, and therefore he warned them not to be proud of Mughal honours and entitlements. As stated earlier that Khushal visited Tirah, Swat and other tribal areas in search of unity amongst Pakhtoons. His arguments, Persuasions and efforts produced no positive results and his dreams and ideals for a united, assertive and democratic and prosperous Pakhtoon had been ultimately shattered.

پښتانه ګانه آدم زاد دي
 په ځويونو ګڼي هغه دي
 نه حکمت لري نه عقل
 خوښ هر ګوره په **fasad** دي
 نه د پلار په وټېل کار کا
 نه په **nghta** د استاد دي
 چي په ديو ګڼي يو بڼه وي
 د هغه د سر جلا دي
 يو د بل په کمي ناست وي
 ځکه تل په بلا ياد دي
 په نفاق نسي واره ورک کړل
 که شجاع دي که جواد دي
 دا لا شکر دے خوش حاله
 چي بنده نه دي آزاد دي⁴⁶

Wisdom and courage are not visible amongst Pakhtoons. I returned from them empty-handed with my backbone broken. Pakhtoons, no doubt, are from human kind but in habits they are strongly inclined, like animals, towards mutual rivalry and self-annihilation. They lack sapience and shrewdness and welcome anarchy in their ranks. They are the people wishing each other down and disgraced.

46 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 333-34.

که زما ژبه پښتو ده
 په پښتو وایم خبرې
 یو پښتون رانه بنکارېږي
 چې پرې پوه شي نزدې لري⁴⁷

they speak Pashto but still they are unaware of each other'. Khushal says: 'My language is Pashto and I advise and speak to them in Pashto but Pashtoons do not seem to understand me.

په بل غشي ټوپک هېڅ ویشتلې نه يم
 که ویشتلې يم خو بیا په خپل ټوپک يم⁴⁸

I have not been pierced by arrows thrown at me by aliens; my own people pierced me with my own arrows.

In order to win Mughal rewards, Khushal was chased down by his own sons and grandsons. The people for whom Khushal fought for 25 years withdrew from him. Ignored by Pakhtoons and disowned by Khattaks, Khushal at last embraced the solace of nature in the loneliness of Dambara hills where he and his two sons lived in a hut surrounded by a life of poverty and misery but accompanied by freedom and independence which he valued more than life, property and comfort. The great Khan and Afghan philosopher passed away there as a free man.⁴⁹

47 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 854.

48 Khushal, *Kulyat*, 565.

49 Iqbal Naseem Khattak, *Da Taand aw Bahand Takhayol Shair* [Pashto] (Quetta: Pashto Academy Baluchistan, 2014), 133.