



The Physician Of Afghan Nation: A Rational And Philosophical Discourse And Analysis Of The Political Philosophy Of Khushal Khan Khattak

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Abstract

Khushal Khan Khattak a poet, warrior, and political philosopher of the 17th century has widely written on political discourses through his prose and poetry. His political thoughts and vision were shaped and framed due to his life experiences, reading about leaders of the past and vice versa. His services for the Mughals, becoming an enemy of the Mughals in the latter part of his life, Afghans socio-political and socio-economic realities of that time and his ideal vision regarding nationalism, his ideal ruler, consultation in decision making inspired from Islam and Pashtun tribal background, War and its different dynamics and morality regarding politics greatly helped in framing his political ideas and philosophy. The study is qualitative based on content, thematic and discourse analysis and empirical in nature as it contributes

towards the political philosophy and thought process. The main argument of the study is that Khushal Khan Khattak has significantly contributed to the political thought and philosophy of those times through his prose and poetry writings based on pragmatic and constructive thought and also inspires modern political thought too. His political philosophy though inspired by the conditions of his time is still relevant in modern political discourses and debates. The study is instrumental in its pertinence to political philosophy, statecraft and policy making for political leaders, thinktanks and research scholars.

Key Words: Political Vision, Nationalism, Sovereignty, Ideal Ruler, Tribalism, Decision making

Introduction:

Khushal Khan Khattak was a Pashtun intellectual excelling in many fields like poetry, philosophy, medicine, hunting, fighting, and politics. His views were multi-dimensional varying across different fields and aspects of life. His ideas and vision are influenced and reinforced by the socio-political conditions of the then region of the Pakistan Afghan border predominantly and the socio-political construct of the regional conditioning due to the Mughal influence and rule in the region and the Mughal- Pashtun conflict that shaped Khushal political ideas to a significant extent. The region in which the Khushal lived in those times was troubled geography that was constantly in conflict with the Mughal, s and their Caravans traveling in the areas of the crossing of the Pakistan-Afghan border called in modern times and these tribal Pashtun were constantly in conflict with themselves too. Khushal, s political vision had distinctiveness in its approach in the era, s when Khushal was pro-Mughal and after when Khushal conflicted with Mughals. But his major contribution to political thought came after he was imprisoned by the Mughals that changed his approach towards the Pashtun community and ruling class, Mughals. (Hamida Bibi, 2017)

Khushal Khan Khattak before the era of Aurangzeb Alamgir was faithful towards the Mughals. In the era of Shah Jahan Khushal was the chief and the Guardian of the Highways from Attock to Peshawar. Khushal utilized all his energies, courage, and wisdom for securing the interests of the Mughals in these areas even if he has to kill his native Pashtuns. Khushal turned against Mughals when he was arrested by the conspiracy hatched and actions taken by Syed Amir, Bahadur Khan, and Firoz to rank themselves high in the Mughals

rule as Khushal was considered as a threat towards their interests in the region even though Khushal was very committed towards the Mughal interests and did not do anything that would have sparked rage against him in the Mughal court. Yet he was imprisoned, which greatly changed Khushal's perception towards Mughals, rejected them once for all and he was determined and committed in his approach towards them till his death. (Kamil, 1952).

Literature Review:

Khushal Khan Khattak's political philosophy and thought can be differentiated on his pre-Mughal confrontation and post-Mughal confrontation era, (Hamida Bibi, 2017). His philosophy of Nationalism in this regard emerged after his confrontation with the Mughals that greatly shaped and framed his concept of Nationalism (Kamil, 1952). Khushal Khan Khattak boldly declares Pashtun nationalism for the cause of Afghans though it not based on prejudiced thinking (Nasrullah Jan Wazir, 2013) (Rasool, 2001). Along with that, he talks about his ideal ruler, his concept of Dsataar, and its pre-requisites in Dsataar Nama (Naseem, 2007). He attaches certain skills and qualities with his ideal ruler and Sovereign (M.A, 1890). The real task of his ideal ruler is to ensure peace and he must take all the necessary steps to achieve peace and harmony in his Kingdom (Feroziuddin, 2007). The ideal ruler of Khushal must be wise otherwise he is not better than a bull or a wolf (Khattak, 2002). Khushal Khan Khattak stresses the importance of consultation in political decision-making and endorses maximum people to be involved in consultation for mutually beneficial and sound decisions (Pareshan Khattak, 1980). Khushal Khan Khattak emphasizes morality in political decision-making, preferring morals in every category related to politics like war, state objectives, etc, and advocates peace and tranquility in a state. Morality must be a corner stone of the political conduct and decision making in a state (Ahmad, 2006).

Conceptual Framework:

Khushal Khan Khattak gives a detailed explanation regarding his political philosophy by talking about every relevant aspect related to the politics of those times. His political vision regarding an ideal ruler and his skills and qualities attached, the concept of Nationalism, consultation in political decision making, and his philosophy of morality regarding politics are comprehensive and fits the standards of those times as well as applicable to

some of the major extent in the modern times too. All the specific perimeters he describes regarding politics and political thought are essential for any state or Kingdom. Thus, they are inevitable contributions to political thought and political philosophy.

Major Source of Khushal Khan Khattak, s Political Vision:

Khushal, s major source in understanding and interpreting his political thought is his memorial work of Dsataar Nama. The book is equated with the renowned work of Machiavelli “The Prince” which is the source of classical realism and political philosophy of the modern version. Khushal, s work is of the same level and expertise only differentiated on the ground that it is written and explained with a different perspective and vision of looking at the political structures and processes. In the times of Khushal as there were kingdoms sprung throughout the world that is why Khushal, s ideas in the book are bent upon giving suggestions and counseling to an ideal ruler on how to rule, what should be the qualities of an ideal ruler, the concept of Khushal, s sovereignty, the use of Turban or Dsataar for an ideal ruler, the conditions and pre-requisites to wear that Dsataar, different other attributes to be attached with the ideal ruler of generosity, bravery, consultation, wisdom, kindness, educational insight, etc. Thus, Khushal in the Dsataar Nama gives the complete details of an ideal rule and of an ideal ruler that must rule according to the sets of principles set by Khushal in the book. (Naseem, 2007).

Pashtun Nationalism and Khushal Khan Khattak:

Khushal though cannot be considered as the innovator of Pashtun nationalism, yet was no doubt the first scholar that refined the concept of Nationalism for Pashtun, s cause. He gave it a distinct dimension through his writings. The incident of Khushal, s imprisonment by the Mughals led to a shift in the Khushal, s perception of Pashtuns in their geographical terrain, vis their attitude and confrontation with Mughals. According to Khushal the self-revival and self-protection for Pashtuns to protect their culture, history, and their interests in the socio-political context was the need of the hour. He opined that Pashtuns must be united and initiate a diehard struggle to get rid of the Mughal domination and subjugation. He made it necessary for the Pashtuns for freedom and self-respect a rejuvenating nationalistic struggle(Hamida Bibi, 2017).

But Khushal, s Nationalism had its connotations and concepts which are not directed against some other nations for the extension of prejudice and

hostility. Rather his concept of Nationalism is based on self-identity, self-perseverance, and self-reflection. His concept of Nationalism has the distinction of its well-established in the Pashtun socio-political and cultural realities of those times. The life and struggle of Pashtuns living on both the edges of the Pak-Afghan border in modern geographical identification are reflected in the Khushal, s thoughtful and conscious effort of Nationalism. The Pashtun's confrontation with the Mughals and also when Khushal became anti-Mughal also affected Khushal, s thought process to a great deal. Khushal was a peace lover and thus his Nationalism was also framed on a constructive thought process that was bent on consultation, meditation, and mutual table talk process on issues of mutual importance and convergence. His interests and goals in this regard were always bent on constructing a peaceful and pragmatic Pashtun society that can strive for their self-identification and self-preservation in the socio-political set up of the society. He always preferred consultation in mutual decision making and more people involved in consultation leads to correct solutions for their issues and problems. (Hamida Bibi, 2017)

Despite all the specific connotations attached with the Khushal view of Nationalism, one thing is clear that Khushal openly and bravely declares Afghan, s Nationalism for their self-identity and self-recognition which is never explained and elaborated by anyone before. (Nasrullah Jan Wazir, 2013). In one of his couplets he declares, I took the sword for the dignity and honor of the Afghans and I am Khushal the nobleman of my time. (Rasool, 2001)

Khushal Khan Khattak considers Afghans or Pashtuns more than capable for having a nationalistic course of action, having a bigger cause of a state rather than playing in some other hands like Mughals for insignificant gains. He believed that Afghans are more capable than Mughals in every aspect. But he also points out certain societal evils in Afghans that he criticizes severely. He opines those Afghans are ignorant, selfish and lack unity. They have no socio-political vision and lack constructive and united approach for a greater cause. That is why they are not achieving their rightful gains and goals as they have no collective vision and relying on individual pity gains (Mohmand, 2006).

Khushal's ideal ruler and concept of Sovereignty:

Khushal gives a comprehensive explanation about his Ideal ruler or sovereign in his book Dastaar Nama. He attaches certain qualities and pre-requisites for his ideal ruler to acquire and improve to successfully and efficiently rule his

specified territory. The major qualities of an ideal ruler according to Khushal are self-recognition, horse riding, hunting, swimming, archery, writing, poetry, bravery, generosity, means of living, bringing up children, music, painting, trade, and business are essential for any ideal ruler. A good ruler according to Khushal is undoubtedly the one that combines all these qualities and merges them in its personality and then uses them effectively and efficiently for the service of his state (Naseem, 2007).

Bravery is one of the essential prerequisites of a sovereign to rule successfully according to Khushal khan Khattak. On explaining one of the traits of bravery he opines that a brave sovereign must not speak and praise and explain its achievements rather he will silently and successfully keep up its mission and work for the safety, welfare, and security of its people and state. On another aspect of bravery which Khushal explains that the sovereign has huge regard and love for money, material possessions, and the throne which many kings and sovereigns love coupled with his fear from death or that one who loves his life too much cannot become a good and successful sovereign. These qualities lead to the lack of bravery and thus restricts the sovereign fundamentals on which it would dwell to be an effective sovereign in the perspective of Khushal. Also, for the King or sovereign that himself is not a brave one and expects from his army to be brave is a fool according to Khushal khan Khattak. (M.A, 1890). On one another place on the essentiality of bravery for the ideal sovereign Khushal khan says that Brave sovereigns and warriors are not afraid of big armies and huge weapons. They are brave in their decision making and fear is unknown to them in the context of wars. He further explains that if you have enough man and he points to it in that way by having ten men with a commander he must not then be afraid in any way and show courage and bravery on the battlefield. (Feroziuddin, 2007)

Khushal Khan Khattak also stresses swordsmanship as an essential feature of successful leadership. He was a man of the sword and liked this for all others especially sovereigns that they must be brave and be on the battlefield with their armies to defeat the enemy. He also cites the example of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in this case that with his leadership, skill, and ability the Quraish were able to defeat their fellow tribes and later the other empires of the region as leadership defines a nation and only brave leadership can do such things. Khushal says that if a chief or a ruler has such quality, he must be remembered for the times in the future even after his death. A true and gallant leader and sovereign according to Khushal must always maintain their honor and dignity and must not leave or flee the battlefield rather must always stand

fast on the battlefield. He must not take rest until he takes revenge on his enemy. The ruler must always be to refine and improve this quality of swordsmanship. (Rasool, 2001)

An ideal sovereign according to Khushal is a peace lover and a peacemaker. He must employ all the necessary tactics and strategies for ensuring lasting harmony and peace in the geographical area where the particular sovereign or ruler rules. In establishing peace Khushal Khan Khattak even opines for the usage of required force too to end the conflicts and problems that challenge the state, s peaceful position in its geographical structure. Khushal praises those people that sacrifice for the lives of other people. In establishing peace, the ruler must ensure sacrifice to bring greater harmony and joy to its people and state. (Feroziuddin, 2007)

Another feature that Khushal points out for a successful and ideal ruler is that of Generosity. Generosity according to Khushal is the attribute of Allah. An ideal and successful ruler must be generous and spend his money on the betterment of his subjects rather than just hoarding it as Khushal opines to it in a way that life in this world is too short. Khushal Khan Khattak led an extremely simple life. He was not found so much of worldly matters and things. His love was just of writing and learning that according to Khushal coupled with his generosity gave him huge fame. (Feroziuddin, 2007)

Khushal Khan Khattak makes it necessary for his ideal ruler that he must be wise. Wisdom according to him is the primary prerequisite of leadership. Leadership is an extremely difficult and cumbersome task as one has always to make the right decisions in the right course of time. In running the affairs of the state smoothly and soundly a particular kind of political wisdom and consciousness is extremely necessary as running a state is not the work of a foolish and unwise man. A sovereign must be intellectual and fore-sighted that can curb future dangers and challenges with ease and then act accordingly to curb the danger before it springs up fully. (Feroziuddin, 2007)

Khushal Khan Khattak greatly stresses the company of a wise man for the running of affairs of the state efficiently. A ruler must have a circle of wise men and intellectuals so that he can consult them from time to time on issues of mutual importance. So, any sovereign according to Khushal for effective and sound decision making must have a bunch of friends and intellectuals so he can consult them on issues of state, s interests, and integrity (M.A, 1890). The

unwise ruler to Khushal on the throne is of no worth according to him and he compares such man with bull or wolf (Khattak, 2002).

According to Khushal Khan Khattak, an ideal ruler must strive for the honor. Any leader that is honorless cannot be considered a leader in genuine form. To preserve the honor of the state, the leader must have to take risky decisions too. Only an honorable leader according to Khushal can preserve the honor of the particular state. For this, the leader has to give a lot of sacrifices too if the time demands it and the situations are tough and severe. The leader must be free from worldly gains in preserving honor. Khushal himself was a very good example of such a leader as he always preserved the Afghan honor in times of even severe conflicts and challenges. He was not concerned about fiefs and money as his mode of life was extremely simple. (Feroziuddin, 2007)

On economy Khushal Khan Khattak emphasizes too as a primary component for a prosperous state. He asserts that a sovereign must make the country economically strong and must take all the necessary measures in this regard to achieve its goal. After strengthening the economy of the state, the ruler can then emphasize and allocate a sizable budget for its army or defense. As it only can be possible when the state has a sound and strong economy. Khushal disregards that state which has a weak army as a security according to him is the primary requirement of the state. A sovereign with a lot of gold and money but with a weak army is of no use to him according to Khushal. (Khattak, 2002)

For Khushal the ideal ruler along with other responsibilities must have a strong emphasis on the education for his subjects. The educated people under a ruler will help in building the state and making it on a path of success and glory. Khushal was not the person who was biased towards female education. Rather he stressed the education of the females in the same way as that of the male's education. It is evident from the death of one of his daughters that shocked him as she was a scholar according to Khushal and was very close to the heart of Khushal. Khushal clearly stated that for any successful rule to rule wisely he must take practical measures for education as no nation can become successful without that. (Feroziuddin, 2007)

Khushal, s Concept of Turban/Dastaar as Instrumental for an Ideal Ruler:

Khushal Khan Khattak makes it inevitable for an ideal ruler and sovereign to wear a Dastaar (turban) as a sign of honor, dignity, and respect. The wearing of the turban will make the sovereign distinguished from the other people. But according to Khushal having the capability for wearing the Turban is

necessary first. According to him some persons rightly deserve to wear a turban because of certain specific qualities and attributes in their personality while others do not deserve it and just wear it for the sake of cultural symbol of respect and honor etc. That is why he says that thousands of people wear turbans but the rightful and legitimate of them are only a few. (Naseem, 2007)

In his remarkable work, *Dsataar Nama Khushal* discusses the case of turban that it was even before Islam was considered as a sign of honor and respect and was wore by only Kings and tribal chiefs to whom the permission was given by Kings. Ordinary common people would not dare to wear it as they were not considered capable of wearing it. The holy prophet also has emphasized the use of turban for Muslims to a great deal. There are countless Hadith in this regard stressing the use of Turban. Khushal explains further that the important responsibilities that are attached to using *Dsataar* cannot be fulfilled by many. He describes that the four pious caliphs were the most capable rulers who were the rightful users of *Dsataar*. Till the Day of Judgment, there will be good and bad people in Muslims. For an ordinary man or person that uses *Dsataar*, it will not be fair according to Khushal as using *Dsataar* requires certain very important obligations to fulfill and it is not just an act of cultural symbol or identification. It is a pure symbol of honor, prestige, respect, and distinction that is why must be used and wore by the right and capable person. (Naseem, 2007)

Khushal Khan Khattak elaborates on his views on the competence for the wearing of a *Dsataar* for a particular ruler. He sets certain conditions and requirements that a particular sovereign must fulfill to be eligible for the *Dsataar*. Khushal mentions and explains these requirements primarily on religious grounds for a ruler that the ruler must be a well-versed Muslim in his theory and action and must always be ready for Jihad. (M.A, 1890) Khushal explains here Jihad is not merely a war in itself rather he means that must be initiated against injustice and oppression. It will have a noble cause and cannot be waged for ignoble designs.

Khushal Khan Khattak on Consultation in the Political Decision Making:

The consultation was used as the primary tool in all the political decision-making processes in the past as all the kings and princes had councilors and ministers of different departments. The method is applied still to date in the modern democratic and even autocratic setups. Khushal was very much aware

of the fact and the importance of consultation as he was a wise man and also religious man who studied the role of consultation in the Islamic discourse, in the reign of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and the reign of the four pious Caliphs. Khushal mentions in his book *Dsataar Nama* that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) was the wisest man of his time but still consulted his fellow man in the decision-making process related to wars etc. (Naseem, 2007)

Khushal holds the opinion that it is the wisest move on the part of any ruler to consult his fellow man in the decision-making. He attributes consultation with shrewdness and prudence and hold's it indispensable for a sensible ruler. He is of the view that only those decisions taken by a particular sovereign can be fruitful and rewarding in the end if they are taken with a proper consultation at the beginning. On the other hand, if any ruler ignores this in his political affairs it will bring nothing to him but shame and he will be considered nothing but a fool. (Khattak, 2002) Here Khushal Khan Khattak has stressed on choosing wise and reliable persons for consultation so that they can give effective and constructive recommendations to the King for the service of the state. A fool, inexperienced and unskilled advisor would bring nothing to the table but mere gossip and senseless advices.

Khushal even attributes the absence of consultation in the decision-making more severe than the absence of prayer. He elaborates that whenever four friends gather for consultation on an issue and then after deciding something they raise their hands for prayer the door of success and help will be opened for them. Khushal beliefs and endorses the maximum number of people to be involved in making a decision. (Pareshan Khattak, 1980) Khushal may have explained the absence of consultation in the decision making more severe than leaving prayer because prayer is a private affair related to only own self while on the other hand, an issue of national or regional importance has a broad conception and utility and thus must be tackled by involving more and more people in the consultation and decision making process. Any ruler or sovereign represents a huge number of masses with varied interests and regional dynamics. So, by involving all in the decision arena only can the right approach can be taken and the right decisions to be taken in this regard later. Modern parliament in democratic states has been evolved from time to time having consultation philosophy that was practiced in different forms and shapes from time to time and has taken the current modern version of parliament as a legislative and consultative body. The fundamental philosophy of consultation remains the same while the procedure has evolved gradually (POLLARD, 2019).

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Khushal Khan Khattak on War as a Purposeful action driven by Morality:

Khushal Khan Khattak a staunch believer of piece and harmony in a state believed that a war can only be launched and inflicted upon the enemy and aggressor that becomes detrimental to the interests of the state, tribe, family or a nation. A War is always a purposeful act having a sound causation and conditions to be launched. Khushal Khan Khattak fought hundreds of battles in his life time considered that honor and integrity must compel a leader to launch war and to thwart the enemy designs and plans directed against his nation and people. He explains in his couplets that he fought for Afghan, s honor and integrity and in fighting Mughals the Afghans can unite in order to tackle a common enemy that is challenging the common interests of the Afghans in the region (Feroziuddin, 2007).

Along with the causation and purpose of the war Khushal Khan Khattak as commanded his troops in many battles also discusses the mode of warfare. He advices various strategies and tactics to be employed in the battlefield for inflicting maximum damage on the enemy soldiers taking less risks. He advices Pitched battles, marauding expeditions and Night attacks to be employed against the enemy forces depending upon different conditions, type of war and the resources available at the disposal of the commander in the battlefield. The success of these war strategies greatly depends upon the experience and talent of the commander as well as the bravery and capability of the soldiers at his disposal. Khushal Khan Khattak also considers the playing of chess for the military commanders and leaders essential as it greatly contributes towards polishing their skills for strategizing War and managing different stages in a fight. Along with that he considers hunting as an exercise and practice for Wars helping in preparing for the battlefields. That is why he emphasizes upon the commanders and leaders to significantly give a due time to playing chess ad hunting for war preparation. Spies according to him also plays an important role in Wars dealing with enemy plans and knowing about different tactics and plans made in the enemy camps and thwarting them with counter planning and counterattacks (Naseem, 2007).

Moralistic Trends in the Khushal Khan Khattak, s Political Vision:

Khushal Khan had a moralistic approach towards different aspects of life including politics. While he was the staunch advocate of Afghan unity and Nationalism, yet he did not feel any shame in criticizing and rebuking his tribe and Pashtuns clearly and categorically. He has always pointed the faults and

misdeeds in the Afghans and has criticized them on several occasions. Iqbal that is why has called him the Hakeem or Physician of the Afghan nation. Khushal pointed out three main shortcomings in the Pashtun nation which he wished if removed Pashtuns can become one of the strongest nations in the world. These are the ignorance, lack of trust, and the lasting disunity among them. As Pashtuns in Khushal times always fought among themselves tribe's verses tribes on matters of negligible importance. They were disunited and always in conflict with each other. (Kamil, 1952)

Khushal Khan Khattak preferred peace over war. According to him, war is the last resort of settling disputes. Any matter or conflict that can be solved peacefully there is no need to go to war. (Rasool, 2001). Khushal always preferred consultation and negotiations over conflicts and thus upheld and stood for morals in deciding complex issues. Khushal on his wars and military struggles opines that they were only for the noble causes and not fought for any worldly gains or material possessions. He advocates that war can be fought for the upholding of religion, Muslim's honor, and dignity. According to him war is not an irrational act or to be waged for mere showing of power and hegemony rather its greater purpose must be in upholding peace and tranquility in the state (Ahmad, 2006). Khushal Khan Khattak thus stresses on the moral standards even when it comes to war and it is not merely a case of realpolitik or a power show upholding state, s dominance and hegemony rather it must have a moral cause behind it. Either it must be for the safeguard of the territorial boundaries of the state or for protecting Muslims and citizens honor and dignity in a state.

Khushal in *Dsataar Nama* by laying down pre-requisites for an ideal sovereign laid moral conditions necessary for a ruler to be a successful ruler. The important moral values which he attaches with his ideal ruler are that of possessing truthfulness, determination, courage, gentleness, piety, modesty, humanity, honor, forgiveness, faith, benevolence, and fortitude, etc. Khushal Khan Khattak believed that an ideal ruler must utilize his moral values and beliefs for the best possible interests of the state and in conducting state affairs he must not compromise upon the moral standards rather it must be his priority. An ideal ruler of Khushal Khan Khattak must be close to perfection and an epitome of moral beliefs and standards. (Naseem, 2007).

Conclusion and Analysis:

Khushal Khan's political vision and discourse are unique and distinct in its connotations and character as it has their context and explanation. It gives the most comprehensive and profound analysis of politics and political thought processes. His concept of the ideal ruler is ideal not on the pretext that it is not applicable yet as one scholar said "Only ideal is real" means his ideas are based on reality and the only sovereign with such essential qualities or State can give ultimate welfare to their people. His concept of Nationalism and consultation in political decision-making is rational and constructive. Criticizing Afghans through championing the cause of their nationalism truly reflects his unbiased approach towards the cause. In the same way, his views on morality in political decision-making and politics signifies his moral approach towards purely political issues by signifying and essentializing moral as a primary feature of politics. His approach towards political philosophy is constructive, rational, neutral, and inevitable to academic circles and debates.

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