

## KHUSHAL KHAN KHATTAK'S RESISTANCE: TRIUMPH OR TRAGEDY FOR THE PASHTUN NATION

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### Abstract

This study examines the resistance movement led by Khushal Khan Khattak against the Mughal Empire in the 17th century, evaluating its successes, failures and implications for the Pashtun nation. Khushal Khan Khattak, a prominent Pashtun poet, warrior, and tribal leader, spearheaded a significant uprising against Mughal dominance, driven by a vision of Pashtun unity and independence. The research analyzes the political, military, and cultural dimensions of his rebellion, exploring key events such as the battles of Khaibar, Nowshera, Karhapa, and Langarkot, as well as his diplomatic efforts, including his visit to Swat. While Khushal Khan's movement achieved notable victories, including weakening Mughal control in Afghan territories, it faced challenges such as tribal disunity, internal family conflicts, and strategic missteps. The study assesses whether his resistance was a triumph, sparking a lasting sense of Pashtun nationalism, or a tragedy, marked by unfulfilled objectives and fragmented tribal alliances. Through a qualitative analysis of primary sources, including Khushal Khan's poetry, and secondary historical accounts, this research highlights the enduring legacy of his struggle, despite its immediate setbacks, and its role in shaping Pashtun identity and resistance against imperial forces.

### INTRODUCTION

Khushal Khan Khattak, a 17th-century Pashtun poet and warrior from the Khattak tribe, traced his lineage to Malik Akor, who established himself in the Nowshera region. The area, named Sarai Akora after his great-grandfather, saw Malik Akor appointed by Mughal Emperor Akbar to oversee tax collection from local communities. Khushal's forebears remained steadfast supporters of the Mughal rulers, as did Khushal himself until his imprisonment under Emperor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb, who seized the throne after a brutal family feud, enacted policies to eliminate tax collection by tribal leaders, impacting Khushal's authority. Initially, Khushal did not oppose

these changes, but his imprisonment, engineered through a plot by Mughal officials, transformed his outlook. This experience ignited his sense of Afghan nationalism, spurring him to challenge Mughal dominance.

His rebellion, sparked by personal disillusionment and a broader aspiration for Afghan unity, unfolded in a complex socio-political context defined by tribal divisions and Mughal dominance. This study, titled Khushal Khan Khattak's Resistance: Triumph or Tragedy for the Pashtun Nation, critically examines the effectiveness of his movement, evaluating whether

it catalyzed Pashtun nationalism or faltered due to internal and external challenges.

The research situates Khushal Khan's uprising within the Mughal framework of skepticism toward Afghans, which fueled his resolve to challenge imperial authority. His poetry and military campaigns articulated a vision of independence, while his efforts to forge tribal alliances aimed to strengthen resistance. This study assesses his successes, including significant victories against Mughal forces, its failures or impediments such as tribal fragmentation and strategic miscalculations. By exploring these dynamics, the research seeks to illuminate the broader implications of Khushal Khan Khattak's struggle for the Pashtun nation.

### Literature Review

The article "Khushal Khan Khattak and His Political Thoughts" explores Khushal Khan's political philosophy, emphasizing his advocacy for resistance, Afghan unity, mutual consultation, and democratic principles, highlighting his dual role as poet and warrior (Khalil & Bibi, 2007).

Khushal Khan's Dastar Nama outlines strategies for effective governance, offering insights into the principles a ruler should adopt to lead successfully (Khushal Khan Khattak, 2007).

Sowan-i-Hayat Khushal Khan Khattak by Dost Muhammad Kamil Mohmand provides a detailed biography of Khushal Khan, proving essential in addressing this study's research questions (Mohmand, 1951).

Life and Work of Illustrious Khushal Khan Khattak (Chieftain of Khattak) by Dr. Khadija Begum Feroziuddin examines Khushal Khan's life in its first section, supporting the development of arguments in this thesis (Feroziuddin, 2007).

The article "Khushal Khan Khattak and Swat" by Sultan-i-Rome details Khushal Khan's visit to Swat, where he sought support against the Mughals (Sultan-i-Rome, 2014).

Niaz Muhammad's PhD thesis presents Khushal Khan's educational philosophy, viewing education as a lifelong process of learning from the world, aligning his ideas with those of renowned scholars (Muhammad, 2009).

In *The Pashtuns*, Abubakar Siddique examines Khushal Khan's efforts to unite Afghan tribes against

the Mughals, portraying him as a visionary leader who sparked nationalism (Siddique, 2014).

"Khushal Khan Khattak ky Zandani Naghmy" by Noor ul Basar Aman analyzes the poetry Khushal Khan wrote during imprisonment, offering insights that enriched this research (Aman, 2013).

Baz Nama of Khushal Khan Khattak Translated in English, translated by Prof. Arif Naseem, is an English version of Baz Nama, detailing Khushal Khan's study of hawk rearing (Khattak, 2007).

Khushal Khan Kay Afkar by Raza Hamdani and Farigh Bukhari translates Khushal Khan's poetry and thoughts into Urdu in poetic form (Bukhari & Hamdani, 1952).

Swat Nama of Khushal Khan Khattak narrates Khushal Khan's visit to Swat, describing the valley's beauty and Pashtun society while reflecting his quest for anti-Mughal support (Khattak, 2005).

Armaghan-e-Khushal by Syed Rasool Rasa analyzes Khushal Khan's resistance, literary contributions, and philosophical teachings, aiding in addressing this study's research questions (Rasa, 2001).

### Methodology

This research employs a qualitative, historical, and descriptive approach. Primary sources, including Khushal Khan's Diwans and poetry, were analyzed. Secondary sources, such as books and research articles, were consulted in print and digital formats to provide a comprehensive understanding of Khushal Khan's life and resistance.

### Afghan Uprising and Khushal Khan Khattak

When Khushal Khan Khattak initiated his rebellion against the Mughals, he stood alone. His own family was divided, with his son Bahram Khan aligning with the Mughals. The Khattak tribe, which once supported Khushal, now backed Bahram, who enjoyed Mughal patronage. This initial lack of support posed significant challenges to building a robust movement. According to Yaqubi (2015), the majority of the Khattak tribe was under Bahram's influence (p. 193).

When Khushal consulted the leaders of the Khattak tribe, they unanimously supported Bahram, and some even suggested he leave the village. Additionally, Sheikh Zia-ud-Din, son of Hazrat Sheikh Rahamkar Kaka Sahib, played a detrimental role in Khushal's

uprising. He allied with the Mughals and supported Bahram. When Khushal's son, Ashraf Khan, failed to act decisively against his father, the Mughals, influenced by Zia-ud-Din, granted Bahram the title of Sardari (Khattak P., 2005, p. 421).

However, resistance against the Mughals was not absent. In an environment where Khushal had only a few loyal fighters, the Afghan frontier was primed for insurgency. The earlier Battle of Khaiber in 1672, where the Mughals suffered a humiliating defeat, significantly boosted Afghan morale. Afghan history shows that such uprisings often attract widespread support, rapidly expanding in scope. Sarkar (1921) describes the 1672 Khaiber uprising as involving Afghans "more numerous than ants and locusts" (p. 228).

Meanwhile, Darya Khan Afridi wrote to Khushal, proposing peace with the Mughals. Both Aimal Khan and Darya Khan had decided to negotiate with the Mughals, and Darya's brother, Tatar Khan, along with other Afridis and Aimal's nephew, were already aligned with them. Khushal sent his son Ashraf to discuss peace, but the effort failed. Such agreements were typically temporary, driven by power dynamics rather than mutual trust. As Sarkar (1921) notes, Afghan tribes made peace with the Mughals when circumstances demanded obedience, but as the effects of war faded, they broke these agreements and resumed rebellion with even greater numbers (p. 222). Khushal Khan Khattak had already gained support from the Afridi and Mohmand tribes through his campaigns against Bahram, positioning him to launch a full-scale insurgency in 1673. He spent this time planning attacks, moving between locations, tracking Mughal forces, and setting their installations ablaze.

#### **Khushal Khan Khattak's Letter to Darya Khan Afridi**

Disheartened by the lack of support from his tribe, Khushal wrote to Darya Khan Afridi to discuss future strategies. Darya sent his brother Tatar Khan, and a jirga was held at Rajgarh, where, according to Yaqubi (2015), they agreed to form a united front against the Mughals through an alliance (p. 195). This unity strengthened the fragmented movement, posing a significant threat to the Mughals. Mohmand (1951) states that the jirga resolved to wage war, with Tatar Khan planning an attack on the Nowshera fort (p.

198). While Khushal was disappointed with parts of his tribe, he gained support from some Tari and Bolaq Khattaks, as well as substantial manpower from the Afridi tribes.

#### **Afghan Attack on Nowshera Fort**

The combined Afridi and Khattak forces, numbering between seven and eight thousand, gathered at Dog Ismail Khan under the leadership of Khushal Khan Khattak and Tatar Khan. They successfully attacked the Nowshera fort. However, the Afghan fighters were disorganized. While fighting continued, the Afridis left with war booty, leaving the Khattaks to fight alone, weakening their position. Khushal's sons, Abid Khan and Abdul Qadir, fought alongside him. An unfortunate incident occurred when the Afridis captured Afghan women from the fort.

Khushal, respecting these women, pursued the Afridis, who fled from him (Mohmand, 1951, p. 198). He also freed prisoners held by the Khattaks. According to Yaqubi (2015), despite some resistance, the Afghans lost ground and were defeated (p. 155). Khushal returned to Rajgarh to rejoin his family. The attack on the Nowshera fort, though not entirely successful, boosted Afghan morale and intensified their resistance.

#### **The Battle of Doaba**

During this period, the Battle of Doaba, led by Mir Hussaini, resulted in another Mughal defeat. Details of this battle are scarce, but Mohmand (1951) notes that small-scale skirmishes were widespread across Afghan territory, making life difficult for the Mughals. Mughal caravans faced regular attacks, exacerbating Aurangzeb's troubles.

#### **Why Was This Afghan Resistance So Effective?**

Sarkar (1921) explains the effectiveness of the Afghan uprising. It evolved into a national resistance, spanning from Kandahar to Attock. Its leaders, including Khushal, were former Mughal army officers familiar with Mughal tactics. Although the Afghans lacked heavy artillery, their resilience as mountain fighters gave them an advantage in their rugged terrain. The Mughal army, unaccustomed to mountain warfare, feared the cold and struggled with food shortages (p. 233).

**An Analysis of Aurangzeb, Mahabat Khan, and the Afghan Triangle**

Aurangzeb demanded harsh punishment for the Afghans, but Mahabat Khan, the Kabul governor, favored reconciliation. He wrote to Khushal, seeking his allegiance, and later attempted to win over Afzal Khan, Bahram Khan, Aimal Khan, and Darya Khan, but failed. Joshi R. (2001) suggests that Mahabat's lenient approach led Aurangzeb to suspect him of inciting the Afghans, resulting in his poisoning (p. 171). Sarkar (1921) notes that Mahabat avoided aggressive action, secretly conspiring with the Afghans to avoid conflict and delaying operations under the pretext of cold weather (p. 234).

This significant Afghan resistance forced Aurangzeb to shift his focus from India to the northwest. On November 14, 1673, he sent Shujaat Khan, a trusted general who had crushed the Satnaami uprising in 1672, with heavy artillery to suppress the Afghans. Jaswant Singh was ordered to assist. Shujaat's success made him a target of envy among high-ranking officers like Mahabat and Jaswant (Sarkar, 1921, p. 235).

**Why Was Aurangzeb's Policy So Harsh Against the Afghans?**

Mohmand (1951) argues that Aurangzeb's harsh policy was misguided, especially amidst simultaneous uprisings by the Marathas, Rajputs, and the British. He suggests a Muslim ruler should have sought peace with Afghan Muslims to counter non-Muslim threats. However, I disagree with Mohmand's religious perspective. Mubarak Ali, in the introduction to Noamani and Pershad (2000), argues that Aurangzeb used religion for political gain, prioritizing power over ethics. His harsh policy toward the Afghans stemmed from their rebellious nature and his mistrust. The Afghan uprising was a fight for emancipation against an imperialist ruler. Mohmand (1951) notes that Khushal's refusal to support the Langarkot fort was seen as rebellion, possibly provoked by Mahabat Khan. However, Khushal's nationalist fervor and Mughal policies made his revolt inevitable.

I also view Khushal's revolt in light of Mughal policies toward the Afghans, as Mohmand (1951) describes. In his poetry after the Khaiber war, Khushal repeatedly expressed his desire to launch an insurgency against the Mughals, considering war a viable option. While Mahabat Khan appears to have provoked Khushal's

revolt, Khushal's status as an Afghan chief driven by nationalist passion, combined with Mughal imperialist policies, made his rebellion inevitable.

Aurangzeb's efforts to suppress the Afghan resistance and Jaswant Singh's appointment as Jamrud's commander, who had fought against Shivaji under Shaista Khan and Prince Muazzam in 1671, along with Shujaat Khan's deployment to Afghan territory, significantly weakened the Mughal army elsewhere in India. Sarkar (1921) notes that the best part of the Mughal army was engaged against the Afghans, benefiting Shivaji. Thus, the Afghan resistance indirectly aided the Marathas and Rajputs fighting the Mughals in the Deccan.

**Shujaat Khan, Jaswant Singh, and the Afghans**

When Shujaat Khan and Jaswant Singh reached Attock, they once again sent a letter to Khushal Khan in which he was given reassurance and threats at the same time. But Khushal Khan rejected their proposal and answered them bravely. According to Mohmand (1951), Shujaat Khan and Jaswant Singh sent troops to fight Khushal Khan. Khushal Khan had not even prepared an army to fight. But the Mughals abandoned their intention to fight and left for Peshawar (pp. 204-205). When Shujaat Khan and Jaswant Singh failed to intimidate Khushal Khan, a chief, Sher Muhammad Khan Bangash Kohati, an opponent of Khushal Khan, was also released and given the old Jagir so that he could oppose Khushal Khan. He also tried to arrest Khushal Khan Khattak under a plan but did not succeed. Meanwhile, it was reported that Shujaat was killed in Gandab with a large army, while Jaswant Singh managed to escape. Aimal Khan had a great victory against the Mughals.

**The War of Karhapa**

This was the war of Karhapa, where Aimal Khan destroyed the Mughal army. What actually happened was that Shujaat Khan stayed in Peshawar for a few days and was then returning to Kabul. Aimal Khan attacked the royal army as it was crossing the Kotal Karhapa in February 1674, which is situated on the northeastern end of the Gandab valley, north of the Kabul River. Extreme cold and gloomy darkness inflicted heavy losses on the Mughal army. The Afghans were raining stones and bullets on them from the heights. According to Mohmand (1951), Shujaat

Khan fought bravely in this war. But the Mughal army had suffered heavy losses and was unable to fight. The royal army retreated to a safe place to spend the night. Many of their soldiers were killed, and the survivors were shivering from extreme cold. Early in the morning, the Afghans attacked the Mughal army again. The royal army was surrounded by Afghan fighters. Jaswant Singh came to help the Mughal army. Three hundred of the five hundred Mughal soldiers were killed, while only two hundred managed to escape. Shujaat Khan was severely wounded in this battle and was killed, while Jaswant Singh managed to escape. According to Yaqubi (2015), the Afghan attack was so sudden that, in the blink of an eye, Afghan fighters attacked the Mughals and massacred them. Thousands of Mughal soldiers were killed, while a large number fled the field (p. 199). This was the second Mughal catastrophe in less than two years after the Khaibar war (Sarkar, 1921, p. 236).

#### **Darya Khan Afridi's Attack on Kohat Fort**

After Khushal Khan Khattak's successful attack on Nowshera and Aimal Khan's destruction of the Mughal army in Karhapa, the Afghans became more enthusiastic. Khushal Khan Khattak and Darya Khan Afridi were planning to attack Kohat. But continuous successes of the Afghans made Darya Khan Afridi overconfident. He thought that he too could attack the fort of Kohat alone and promise victory to the nation. However, Sher Muhammad Bangash Kohati successfully repulsed his attack. Darya Khan Afridi's brother, Tatar Khan, was killed in this battle. The Afridis were defeated, due to which the Mughals also rewarded Sher Muhammad Bangash Kohati. According to Mohmand (1951), after the defeat in this war, Darya Khan Afridi wrote a letter to Khushal Khan and asked for his help. Khushal Khan Khattak sent fighters to fight, but Kohat could not be attacked. Darya Khan himself came to meet Khushal Khan and prayed for the victims of Kohat. Later, a jirga decided that Khushal Khan should go to Tirah. According to Yaqubi (2015), the attack of Darya Khan Afridi was a premature act; his guess about the result of the war was incorrect, for which he lost his younger brother and more than a hundred people (p. 200). Of course, there is weight in the argument that if Darya Khan Afridi had waited for Khushal Khan Khattak and this

attack was carried out in an organized manner, there would have been no reason for his defeat in this war.

#### **Khushal Khan Khattak's Visit to Swat**

Khushal Khan Khattak also visited the Mohmands and Khattaks before leaving for Swat. He was saddened by the Khattaks' cold response. However, there were hopes from the Yousafzai. So, he himself says that if I have to fight for Nang, I will look to Swat. The Khattaks' armies are of no worth (Yaqubi, 2015, p. 201). Khushal Khan Khattak went to Swat around September 1674. He also wrote a book called Swat Nama, in which he described Swat with many references. He praised the beauty of Swat, i.e., he says that in many respects, Swat is better than Kabul. He also compared Swat with Kashmir, praising Swat's springs, cold water, and snowfall.

Khushal Khan has written extensively on Swat's lifestyle, geography, and society. But what is important is to see his visit to Swat in the context of the Afghan resistance. Khushal Khan Khattak wanted the people of Swat to be part of the uprising, but it was not a complete success, and there are many reasons for this, which are important to explain and understand in the context of the Afghan uprising. Khushal Khan's expectations from the people of Swat are understandable. For centuries, the people of Swat have been fighting against invaders. Swat was also a headache for King Akbar. The Yousafzai were a symbol of resistance for centuries, not only against Akbar but also against later Mughal kings.

Khushal Khan Khattak himself continued to fight the Yousafzai at the behest of the Mughals before his imprisonment at the hands of the Mughals. When he was imprisoned, it was the Yousafzai who protected his family. He himself praised the Yousafzai in his poetry. This was Khushal Khan Khattak, who himself said that, "The Yousafzais are the leaders of the Afghans. They are both brave and hospitable" (Yaqubi, 2015, p. 203). On another occasion, he highly praises the Yousafzai by titling them the lions of both plain and hills (Sultan-i-Rome, 2014). However, later on, during the visit to Swat, the same Khushal Khan Khattak wishes to leave the Yousafzai, as according to him, they were not brave Pashtuns (Yaqubi, 2015, p. 202). What was the reason for that? The purpose for which Khushal Khan Khattak visited Swat was to incite the Yousafzai against the Mughals.

But he did not focus on his goal. He became involved in controversies. He criticized the Makhzan of Darwaiza. At that time, the Makhzan of Darwaiza had a sacred religious status in Swat, due to which Akhond Darweza's grandson, Sheikh Mian Noor, came out against Khushal Khan Khattak. The whole Yousafzai tribe was divided into two parts: one was a supporter of Khushal Khan, and the second was a supporter of Sheikh Mian Noor.

Khushal Khan Khattak had gone to Swat for the unity of the Pashtuns. But because of these conflicts, the people of Swat themselves became divided. According to Sultan-i-Rome (2014), Khushal Khan Khattak criticized the chiefs of Swat, the ulema, the people, the sheikh, and all other influential people. He gives the reference of Khushal Khan Khattak that, according to him, the alim in Swat are all ignorant. None of them are educated, nor are they scholars or jurists. Their educational qualifications are limited to Fiqh, Kanz, and Qudoori, and that too is only superficial. They use religion only for worldly gains.

It was not wise for Khushal Khan Khattak to get involved in such a debate. Rather, he had a principled purpose. To achieve his principled stance of uniting the Yousafzai against the Mughals, he should have limited himself to a single point of unity and should have worked on a broader agenda. But he did not. Almost all the writers here have linked Khushal Khan's actions with his weak politics at this time. In Khattak K. K. (1986), while presenting the case, Hamish Khalil repeatedly expressed his wish that Khushal Khan Khattak should have focused only on his goal and not gotten involved in religious debates. His position on the Makhzan raised the threat of civil war among the Yousafzai. Khushal Khan's own life was also in danger. Even the lives of the chiefs who had invited Khushal Khan Khattak were in danger.

According to Yaqubi (2015), Khushal Khan Khattak not only questioned Mian Noor's knowledge but also criticized his beliefs. However, behind Mian Noor was the Mughal government. Mian Noor wanted to spoil the mission of Khushal Khan Khattak, but Khushal Khan could not understand him and fell victim to it badly. He further says that Khushal Khan Khattak failed to understand the cultural sensitivities of the local population. Khushal Khan Khattak should have avoided such types of activities rather than putting blame on Mian Noor for the failure of his mission.

Khushal Khan Khattak, on one occasion, himself recognizes the fact that, "Makhzan of Darwaiza and sheikhi and piri (priesthood and sainthood) of Mian Noor, and the third one is the khanship and chieftainship of Hamza. All three carry great value and respect in Swat. This I am not saying due to grudge, but Allah knows it is so" (Yaqubi, 2015, p. 206).

Those who wanted peace and reconciliation also held a debate in the great interest of the Afghan people and to end political tensions. According to Khushal Khan, he won the religious debate. As a result, the already existing tensions further escalated. Sultan-i-Rome (2014), who has linked Khushal Khan's entire movement to his personal interests, says the Yousafzai took action in light of their own situations. They could not support Khushal Khan Khattak because relations between Aurangzeb and Yousafzai in the plains had become cordial.

While Yaqubi (2015) disagrees, he says relations between Aurangzeb and the Yousafzai have not been better. Aurangzeb has fought against the Yousafzai many times. In fact, Bhako Khan resisted him fiercely. He himself came to Hassan Abdal to crush them but utterly failed. He adds that, at last, the Mughals had to make a ceasefire with the Yousafzai. But this ceasefire cannot be called the end of enmity or what Sultan-i-Rome calls cordial. Bhako Khan's rule was due to successive defeats of the Mughals. Therefore, Khushal Khan did not have much success at that time. In fact, the enmity between the Mughals and the Yousafzai was not over, but Khushal Khan's arrival came at a time when the political situation was not encouraging to his agenda (pp. 206-207).

Sultan-i-Rome (2014) argues that the Yousafzai also did not support Khushal Khan for the reason that there was no conflict of interest between them and Aurangzeb. Unlike his grandfather Akbar, Aurangzeb did not deprive them of their freedom. However, on the contrary, if we look at the history, Aurangzeb has attacked the Yousafzai many times and fought wars with them. Even he came to Hassan Abdal to punish them.

According to Caroe (1958), Khushal Khan Khattak had failed completely in the Yousafzai case. He says that the failure of Khushal Khan Khattak was certain, and the reason is connected with history itself. Khushal Khan Khattak's previous record was the reason for his failure, when he fought with the

Yousafzai for the Mughals in the past, and the Yousafzai fought the Mughals. How can anyone succeed in such a situation?

But according to Yaqubi (2015), it was not as if Khushal Khan Khattak failed completely, as Sultan-i-Rome or Caroe says. The fact is that Khushal Khan's visit to Swat was not at an appropriate time. It was a time when Swat gained independence from the Mughals under the leadership of Bhako Khan. From Bajaur to the Indus, apparently Bhako Khan was the ruler. He did not even need Khushal Khan. But it was not that no one supported Khushal Khan. Rather, Khushal Khan Khattak mobilized a section of the Yousafzai tribe, but to no avail, as the Mughals had already been defeated in Swat (p. 210).

The fact is that among many reasons for which Khushal Khan Khattak did not manage to mobilize the masses in greater numbers was that Khushal Khan Khattak did not understand the cultural and religious sensitivity of Swat. As a result, his purpose was damaged. On the contrary, the disbelief of Khushal Khan Khattak was publicized and propagated by his opposition in Swat. Khushal Khan Khattak should have avoided conflict and deviation from his purpose for a great cause. In Swat, however, we find Khushal Khan's politics not very mature and principled in the context of his focus on purpose and dealing broadly for a greater cause. However, a number of Yousafzai fighters were present with Khushal Khan when he left Swat. Mandar Yousafzai also joined him in the Samah, who were waiting for his arrival in Maidan. They formed a Lashkar under a plan and made a strategy to attack the fort of Langarkot.

#### **Afghans' Attack on the Fort of Langarkot**

The Afghans surrounded and attacked the Langarkot fort, spreading fear among the Mughals. Yaqubi (2015) notes that despite the Mughals' superior manpower and weapons, they could not withstand the Afghans' zeal for freedom (p. 212). Mir Hazara, the Foujdar of Langarkot, and forty soldiers were killed. This minor victory in Mundanr bolstered the Afghan uprising. Khushal then pursued the Mughal-aligned Gujjars, who fought fiercely but fled, leaving significant war booty to the Afghans.

#### **Fidai Khan vs. Afghans**

In October 1674, Fidai Khan replaced Mahabat Khan as Kabul's governor and arrived with advanced military equipment. He ordered Ashraf Khan to attack the Adam Khel Afridi with a Khattak army, but the Afridis prevailed. Khushal, angered by his son's actions, called him an enemy (Mohmand, 1951, p. 212). Aurangzeb instructed Fidai Khan to conquer Khaiber or die. The Khaiber Pass remained under Afghan control, with Darya and Aimal Khan ready to resist. Mohmand (1951) describes this as a great Afghan victory, though Khan K. (1976) claims Mughal success, praising Aghar Khan's bravery. Despite heavy casualties on both sides, Mohmand (1951) notes that Fidai Khan failed to secure the Khaiber Pass, meaning the Mughals did not achieve their objective (p. 213). The Mughal army faced repeated defeats, while Afghan morale soared with each victory. Ayubi (2015) suggests Fidai Khan understood the Afghan psyche and replaced Ganj Ali Khan with Multafat Khan, son of Khushal's friend Asalat Khan, as Foujdar of Langar Kot. Multafat Khan arrived in Nowshera with a large army, joined by Ashraf Khan. The Yousafzai attacked, killing Misri Khan, the Foujdar of Ghahla Dher, and sixty soldiers. Multafat Khan opted for diplomacy, sending gifts to Khushal and requesting a ceasefire. Khushal returned the gifts but, after consulting his people, agreed to a ceasefire and returned to his area. This decision aligned with Afghan traditions and Multafat Khan's connection to Asalat Khan. Mohmand (1951) notes that the Yousafzai's harvest season and internal differences also influenced their reluctance to fight, prompting Khushal to shift his efforts elsewhere.

#### **The War of Khapash**

The Battle of Khapash was fought in June 1675 A.D., in which the royal army faced a great tragedy. Mukarram Khan and Shamshir Khan were sent to attack the Afghans from the direction of Kotal Khapash with a large army. In Khapash, Aimal Khan and Darya Khan defeated Mukarram Khan and Shamshir Khan. Darya Khan killed Shamshir Khan. Mukarram Khan was also wounded in this battle. The Mughals suffered heavy losses in this war. The Afghans got a lot of war booty.

In September 1675 A.D., Aurangzeb was informed of a war between Hazbar Khan and the Afghans, where

Hazbar Khan, in charge of the Jagdalak outpost between Kabul and Jalalabad, was killed along with his son. In Jalalabad, the Ghilzai Afghans offered stubborn resistance to the Mughals, for which Khushal Khan Khattak paid rich tribute to them for recapturing the post of Jagdalak (Mohmand D. M., 1968, pp. 187-188). At the same time, Abdullah Khan Khushgi left Barang police station and fled. Many of them were imprisoned and killed. It all happened in two different and successful attacks. According to Mohmand (1951), on the one hand, Emperor Aurangzeb was present in Hassan Abdal to punish the Afghans; Aimal Khan, Darya Khan and their companions were reddening their swords with the blood of the Mughals. On the other hand, Khushal Khan Khattak was also active against the Mughals with his sword, tongue, and pen (p. 217).

#### **Afghan Resistance After Aurangzeb's Return to Hindustan**

In December, Aurangzeb left Hassan Abdal and went to India. According to Manucci (1913), Aurangzeb had no success against the Afghans. According to Khushal Khan Khattak, Aurangzeb also failed, as he has written in a poem that Aurangzeb resides in Hassan Abdal and is in worry. However, Sarkar (1921) has a different view. He says that the government was in a winning position on Aurangzeb's return. Although the emperor was not entirely successful, the situation was somewhat under control. According to Mohmand (1951), Khushal Khan's poem also suggests that the game had turned in favor of the Mughals (p. 226).

#### **The War of Gumbat**

The battle of Gumbat was fought against Sher Muhammad Bangash Kohati. In fact, Sher Muhammad Kohati had the support of the Mughals, which led Khushal Khan Khattak to attack the Bangash area and eliminate the Mughal influence. He also wanted to avenge Darya Khan's failed attack on Kohat. So, the battle was fought in the Gumbat area of Bangash, in which the weight of the Bangash remained heavy. Khushal Khan Khattak's Lashkar was facing severe mismanagement. The Khattaks were fleeing the field. Khushal Khan was also injured, due to which the result of the war was in favor of Sher Muhammad Bangash.

#### **The War of Dodah**

However, Gumbat's failure was avenged in 1680 A.D., when Khushal Khan Khattak attacked the Bangash area. The Bangash were defeated at Dodah, and 160 of their fighters were killed.

#### **The Downfall of the Afghan Uprising, an Analysis**

After Amir Khan became the provincial governor of Kabul, although he fought battles, he did not achieve significant success. So, he started using political tactics, in which he got tremendous success. According to Yaqubi (2015), the new governor has largely succeeded in bringing peace to the region. Many Afghan tribes obeyed him. Many Afghans even joined the Mughal army (p. 216). According to Mohmand, one of the reasons for the downfall of the Afghan resistance was the differences between Khushal Khan and his sons (p. 74). The way Bahram Khan served the Mughals, he divided the Khattaks and opened a front against his own father with in family. This greatly affected the movement.

According to Yaqubi (2015), Amir Khan was a smart man. He had seen all the flaws in the previous governors' policies in dealing with the Afghans. On the one hand, he reduced anti-Mughal sentiments by distributing gold among the people. On the other hand, Khushal Khan Khattak, who was by no means ready for reconciliation, was approached through diplomacy. He reminded Khushal Khan of his father and uncle, who were friends of Khushal Khan Khattak, and kept on promising to treat him well.

In addition, Fidai Khan also played a significant role in stopping the Afghan resistance. Until Aurangzeb returned to Delhi, we know the condition of the Afghans from Khushal Khan's poetry. According to Mohmand (1951), Khushal Khan Khattak says that the Mughals are distributing wealth. He criticized the Afghans and says that there is no way out without a sword. What are the Afridi, Shinwari, and Mohmand doing while the Mughal army is encamped in Nangarhar, while the Yousafzai were worried about their farming (p. 220-221).

According to Mohmand (1951), when the Afghan resistance weakened, Aimal Khan strengthened the resistance with mountain-like bravery. However, the Mughals pretended as if they were sympathetic and persuaded the Afghans to demand that Aimal Khan should distribute the land among the Afghans which

he had snatched from the Mughals. Aimal Khan did it. However, differences arose, due to which Aimal Khan's people left him. While Darya Khan Afridi's people were also avoiding him. In such a way, a movement that disturbed the Mughals for many years was gone forever (p. 244). Yaqubi (2015), while criticizing Khushal Khan's relationship with Multafat Khan, says that Khushal Khan's character in such a situation looks like a confused and self-interested man, who has no clear purpose or direction and had personal relations with Aurangzeb's provincial officials. If, on the one hand, he was gathering people for war from the Yousafzai, on the other hand, he was telling the Yousafzai to stop fighting with Multafat Khan and the Mughals.

However, it all happened at two different times. When Khushal Khan Khattak went to Swat, he needed people. He wanted to fight against the Mughals after uniting the nation. During the time of Multafat Khan, he did not get much help from the Yousafzai. There were few people with them. While Multafat Khan had requested, after which Khushal Khan called for a ceasefire, and the Yousafzai themselves were avoiding the war because of the harvest days. Amir Khan used to distribute money among the Afghans and make the Afghans fight among themselves. He took full advantage of the enmity between them. The brave sons of the nation, Bhako Khan, Aimal Khan, and Darya Khan, had died. In such a situation, Khushal Khan Khattak was left completely alone.

In such a situation, Khushal Khan says in one place that when he sees the Mughals, they are no longer the old Mughals. Gone are the days of their swords. Now they have only a pen. They are trapping the Afghans with money and fraud. But by the grace of God, they have no effect on me. I'm not a fly flying around in the dirt. I am a Shaheen. My heart is happy with my prey. Both Aimal Khan and Darya Khan passed away with great honor. I am forever saddened by their passing (Mohmand, 1951, pp. 265-266).

According to Yaqubi (2015), even the Afghan chiefs who were fighting the Mughals were not able to sustain this national struggle, and even among them, the struggle for the position of the Mughals began. Khushal Khan did not succeed in making even his family a part of this struggle. The tradition of Mughal loyalty established by Khushal Khan Khattak and his

ancestors had shaken the foundations of the Afghan resistance movement (p. 218).

The famine of 1685-86 also largely affected the Afghan resistance, which reduced the intensity of resistance. Besides, the movement was not organized. The uprisings were scattered all over Afghan territory. There was a severe shortage of resources. On the other hand, they were competing with a king and his kingdom. Khushal Khan's own son, Abid Khan, was at enmity with the Mohmands. The Afghan nation was divided by small tribal animosities, an example of which was Khushal Khan's own house. According to Yaqubi (2015), "The people for whom he first served under the Mughals and then fought against them deserted him in the last days of his life" (p. 219).

#### **Afghan Resistance Under Khushal Khan Khattak: Success or Failure, an Analysis**

To answer the question of whether Khushal Khan's resistance was a failure or a successful one, the movement needs to be examined from different angles and then answered. As far as the question of whether Khushal Khan succeeded in getting the Mughals out of there is concerned, the straightforward answer is "No." But the answer is neither that simple, nor is a simple "No" to this question a concrete answer or a hint of its failure. According to Yaqubi (2015), the control of Aurangzeb through punishment enabled him to control the Afghans only for a limited time; however, his wars in the frontier regions were never a complete success (p. 221). I strongly disagree with the statement of Yousafi (1940), who says that his struggle brought no benefit to the Afghan millat. Indeed, the Afghan uprising had far-reaching benefits for the Afghan nation. Khushal Khan's movement has broad ideological and intellectual achievements. Khushal Khan Khattak's poetry associated with the Afghan resistance movement has instilled a sense of nationalism in the Afghans for centuries. According to Khalil and Bibi (2007), "His call to the Afghans did not go in vain. Meer Wais and his heirs and the emergence of Ahmad Shah and the establishment of Afghanistan in 1747 A.D. were the direct consequence of Khushal's dream and vision for united, free, and well-directed Afghans" (p. 135).

Khushal Khan Khattak also showed the essence of bravery in the field. The Afghans won many great

battles against the Mughals and killed thousands of Mughal soldiers. The Mughals were so disturbed that Aurangzeb himself came to Hassan Abdal, fought with the Afghans for almost a year and a half. To win a war or to test the success or failure of one's movement, one sometimes has to look at it very carefully. Sometimes the win seems to be indirect. After winning major battles, the Afghans kept the Mughals so busy on Afghan soil that the Marathas occupied Carnatic. The victory of the Marathas was, in fact, the victory of the Afghans against the Mughals. According to Yaqubi (2015), "War against the Afghans and the Marathas changed the whole political scenario in the Mughal Empire" (p. 221). The truth is that the Afghans, through their resistance, had shaken the foundations of Aurangzeb's government.

### Conclusion

Apparently, Khushal Khan Khattak's movement ended. But I consider this movement to be a successful movement against the Mughals because, in a very short period of time, these areas of the Afghans were liberated from the rule of Aurangzeb. In Aurangzeb's last ten years, his influence in Afghan territory was nominal. Since then, Afghan territory has been free. According to Yaqubi (2015), they soon lost control of Kabul and Peshawar, and there was no governor of Kabul at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 A.D. (p. 222). The reason was that the Mughals did not have the resources and funds to deploy troops in Afghan territory for further wars. If, on the one hand, the condition of the Mughals all over India was weakened, on the other hand, according to Yaqubi (2015), not only was a lot of money distributed among the people against Khushal Khan Khattak and the Afghan movement, but also a heavy army was brought here, on which a huge amount of funds was spent (p. 221). The Mughals also lost their best generals and soldiers in the fight against the Afghans, i.e., Shujaat Khan, etc., who were skilled in warfare and were killed against the Afghans.

The Afghan resistance launched under the leadership of Khushal Khan Khattak, Aimal Khan, Darya Khan, and Bhako Khan cannot be limited only to the Afghan nation but is a symbol of resistance for all human beings. In 2018, the Pohantoon Adabi Stori, a literary organization at the University of Peshawar, requested the country director of UNESCO to

announce the handwritten text of Khushal Khan Khattak as a common literary asset ("Call to Declare Work of Pashto," 2018). Khushal Khan Khattak's literary work is the reflection of his resistance against the Mughals. Khalil and Bibi (2007) give the reference of Dr. Iqbal Naseem Khattak, who says that, "Khushal Khan Khattak did not keep his ideology aside from his poetry but 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. He was a political as well as a military leader of his nation. His life is the story of a collection of so many interesting events" (p. 132).

Khushal Khan Khattak, both through practical resistance against the Mughals and through poetry, created political and national consciousness in the Afghans, which led them to their freedom and independence. Today, he is the national poet of Afghanistan. Allama Iqbal calls Khushal Khan Khattak the Hakeem of the Afghan Millat and Afghan Shanas. Even today, Pashtun nationalist political parties use Khushal Khan Khattak's poetry and give examples of his sacrifices for the Pashtun and Afghan nation in their speeches. Though he is not alive, he is still alive in the hearts of the Afghans. Isn't this his biggest victory?

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