

Tribal politics, Mughal *mansab* and the sons of Khushal Khan Khattak (1667-1674)

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Abstract:

Khushal Khattak, the 17th-century poet, warrior and tribal chief, was a Mughal mansabdar from 1641 to 1664. Like his forefathers, he served the Mughals with loyalty. His fortune changed after his arrest by Aurangzeb (1658-1707), and his perception transformed vis-à-vis the Mughals. At the time of his release in 1668, a tribal uprising engulfed the Pakhtun borderland areas. The Yusufzais' uprising in the plain and hilly terrain of the Malakand region, coupled with Aimal Khan and Darya Khan's forays, had blocked the route of Khyber, which halted swift transportation for the Mughals. Although Khushal himself did not accept any Mughal slot after his release, his two sons, Afzal Khan and Behram Khan, fought against each other to get the mansab from the Mughals. This phase of Khushal's life was full of miseries. What role did Khushal play during this period? Why has his once dominating role and influence been diminished? Why did he fail to control or bring reconciliation between his sons? These questions are explored to grasp his position in that intra-family and inter-tribal power struggle. An attempt has been made to find out the role and position of other tribes during the second half of the 17th century.

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1. Introduction

The political environment of the Pakhtuns' borderland areas at the time of Khushal Khan Khattak's release in 1668 was charged with the revolts and the tribal uprisings. Purely within the tribal framework and utterly disunited, these armed activities in a strategically important area of Mughal Empire increased Emperor Aurangzeb's apprehensions. This era also formed one of the important phases in the history of Pakhtuns and Khushal Khan Khattak. It drastically changed not only the nature of Mughal-Khattak but, in the larger context, Mughal-Pakhtun relations also. Tribal dynamics, power politics and inter-tribal arrangements have been transformed during this period. This era witnessed increased distrust among various tribal chiefs. The power and fortune of the Khattak tribe remained a story of the past. Ironically, not a single academic work has been done to determine the changing political and tribal undercurrents in those tumultuous years.

Khushal Khan Khattak's shift from a Mughal *mansabdar* to that of an arch-rival is an interesting event. Most of the enquiries, however, are polemical, having the least analytical suppositions. At the time of release, he was landed completely in a changed political environment. The transformation in his perception of the Mughals has been discussed from various angles by the researchers. Often, the trend of scholars in this regard is traditional in nature and direction. In most of the available scholarly stuff, with few exceptions, he had been portrayed, after his release, as a Pakhtun nationalist and rebel from the Mughal rulers. However, some of his critics view his turnaround with suspicion on the basis of his dubious role and political realignment. Pareshan Khattak is of the view that Khushal Khan failed to make justice when the issue of succession emerged between his sons. He should rather outrightly repudiate any engagement with the Mughals. He miscalculated the strength of his younger son Behram Khan. In fact, Khushal was critical of both Ashraf Khan and Behram. He has castigated both in one of his poems.

په دا هومره قباحه اشرف عاق نه شو چي بهرام دا هسي عاق شو څه حکمت دي
چي و عقل ته د دواړو نظر اوکړي پروت د دواړو په وجود کښي حماقت دي
د بهرام تيري په دادی په بدی کښي چي لرلي د دنيا په محبت دي
(Khattak, p. 721).

Translation: Ashraf Khan, despite his acts of foolishness, has not been disinherited. Why was Behram disinherited? What is the logic behind it? When one observes the wisdom of both, they are foolish persons. Behram's evil is that he is extremely indulged in the love of this temporal world.

Pareshan Khattak says that it was an unjust act to support Ashraf Khan when he was utterly unpopular among the tribesmen and was acting like a Mughal stooge in the area (Pareshan Khattak, 2005). Khwaja Muhammad Sayel explored the matter from a different angle. He argues that Khushal Khan and his elders were loyal Mughal servants. During his pro-Mughal

days, he fought against his fellow Pakhtuns and took pride in it, which is reflected clearly in his poetry. His opposition to the Mughals was temporary, and he was not anti-Mughal. According to him, Pakhtuns knew that Khushal's resentment against the Mughals was transitory and artificial. They were also aware of the fact that Khushal disguised his personal grudge as a national and collective cause for wooing the support and help of other Pakhtun tribes (Sayel et al., 2006).

Allah Bakhsh Yusufi holds the opinion that even after the release of Khushal, the Mughals showed confidence in him, engaged him against the Yusufzais and made him the governor of Langar Kot in Mardan (Yusufi, 1973: 225). He further writes that in spite of the fact that Khushal was fighting for the Mughals against the Pakhtuns, he was losing importance and relevance for both the Mughal imperialists and his fellow Pakhtun brothers (Yusufi, 1973). He is of the view that when Afridis and Mohmands stood up in 1672 against the Mughal Empire, Khushal Khan availed that chance and, through his poetry, opposed the Mughals. Ironically in 1676, Khushal Khan, after meeting with Shah Alam (Prince Bahadur Shah), almost broke his struggle. However, after a brief interval, he re-engaged himself in a civil war against them. Allah Bakhsh concludes that Khushal Khan had neither opposed the Mughals due to any national cause nor did he want to expel them from his country. All he did against the Mughals was for personal gain and vendetta (Yusufi, 1973).

A few scholars are critical of the nationalist credentials of Khushal Khan. Sultan-i-Rome criticised Khushal Khan for his dubious role. He explained that he had neither taken up arms lastingly nor reconciled with the Mughals. Before his arrest, as the chief of the Khattak tribe and Mughal *mansabdar*, he sided with the Mughals. After his release in 1668, he sometimes kept silent or reconciled for self-interest or fought against them along with other anti-Mughal tribesmen. Like his forefathers, in the first phase (1641-1664). He was a pro-Mughal warlord in the frontier area. To please the Mughal bosses, he killed his Pakhtun fellows. He was a *mansabdar* who got unbounded incentives and perks, but when he was deprived of that high-profile position, he turned against them. He lost the imperial favour and did not remain in the good books of Emperor Aurangzeb. In fact, it happened due to his personal vendetta, not for the cause of Pakhtun nationalism (Sultan-i-Rome, 2014). In most of the studies, little work has been done to analyse the transformation that took place in his ideas and perceptions regarding the Mughals. On the other hand, it is important to understand that despite many efforts, the Mughals failed to woo him for the benefit of the empire.

Mostly, the focus of scholars is to study and investigate (1) what happened to Khushal Khan in the Mughal court and prison, (2) how he spent his time in the fort of Ranthambore, (3) with whom he met and who made an effort to release him. (4) What compelled Aurangzeb to release him? Apart from these questions, it is equally important to ascertain that among his sons and other relatives who succeeded Khushal in his absence? How have Mughal-Pakhtun relations been transformed in those tumultuous years? The response of his family to his arrestment and, above all, the conduct of his sons needs proper understanding and analysis. Either it was a

smooth transformation or rowdy entrap on the part of the Mughals. What were the reasons behind Khushal Khan's diminishing influence on his tribe and family, particularly his two sons, Ashraf Khan and Behram Khan? Both brothers defied Khushal Khan at a time when he was struggling for his political survival. The behaviour and deeds of his sons remain an important theme of his poetry:

خو د پلار په نوم ي خورى چي مشران دی نور د توري د کار نه دی دا غولي
خو حسد بخل نفاق ي دی په بخره کله لو يو لو يو چاروو ته خلی
اکوري، شهباز په دوی پوري بد نام شو د پدر په خو ی نه دي راغلي
(Khattak, 2005, p. 457)

Translation: They (Khushal's sons) enjoy perks because of their elders' hard work; otherwise, these fucking guys are of no use for bravery and swordsmanship. Disunity and biasedness are their traits, and foolishly, they run to do great feats. Akor Khan and Shahbaz Khan earn bad names due to their misdemeanour because they do not know of the great traditions of their forefathers.

This period witnessed disunity, fighting and conspiracies among the family members of Khushal Khan. The entire Pakhtuns' borderland area was passing through political chaos, uncertainty and continued Mughal suppressions in major centres. It did not portray any better picture at all. Major writings astonishingly overlooked this seeming gap which this article tends to investigate in the context of Mughal-Pakhtun relations with special reference to the role of Khushal Khan Khattak.

2. Methodology

Mostly, the paper is based on primary sources, particularly the poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak. The analytical method to investigate the theme of the paper is used in the historical context. The opinions of experts in this field have also been analysed to add secondary sources. This is a theme of interest among the scholars and Pashto literary writers. Hence, it is basically a historical and analytical understanding of the politics in the family of Khushal Khan Khattak during his antagonism with the Mughals. In the end, the conclusion has been drawn on the basis of scrutiny of both primary and secondary sources.

3. The start of Behram and Ashraf Khan rivalry

The agony through which Khushal Khan had passed through during his confinement has been vividly mentioned in his poetry. In one such couplet Khushal Khan mentioned:

بادشاهان چي ستم ناک شي په خلل د خلقو ژواک شي
بادشاهان چي بي خير شي خلق خوار په هر اطراف شي

بادشاهان چي بي تميز شي کار د ملک واره ابتر شي
 بادشاهان چي ناحق جن شي چي عزيز وي نا عزيز شي
 (Khattak, 2005)

Translation: When kings turn tyrant, the people are faced with miseries, when kings are ignorant, the people suffer (at their hands). When kings are disgraceful, the state machinery becomes paralyzed. When kings are unjust, the near and dear ones (of the kings) become strangers (to them).

The imprisonment of Khushal Khan, as expressed in his poetry (Khattak, 2013) and reported by Afzal Khan (Khan, 2006), was a conspiracy of his uncles and some Mughal officials. It is understood that getting a chieftainship of the tribe and Mughal *mansab* were two supreme objectives of his uncles. The Mughal *vali* of Peshawar, Syed Amir Khan, on his part, wanted Khushal Khan Khattak's detention for his own interest. By arresting a prominent warlord like Khushal Khan Khattak, he wanted to infuse fear in the heart of local tribal chiefs. As Khushal Khan mentions:

ورغم تر ده پوري څه پاک په خپل باور ترونه مي نا اهله مغولي شو په دا شر
 لورپه لور مغول تر ما چاپير شو په هنر مفت ي په لاس کينوتم په حکم د قدر
 (Khattak, 2005, p. 747).

Translation: I went to meet (Syed Hamid) with complete trust, but my devious uncles has tuned Mughals in these affairs. I have been encircled by the Mughals from all sides; it was Allah's command that they arrested me so smoothly.

Moreover, being intensely corrupt, *vali* Peshawar was given fifty thousand rupees by the unscrupulous uncles of Khushal. The affairs of the Khattak tribe and of Saraye Akora then came into their hands. However, both of them, Feroz Khan and Bahadur Khan, proved themselves extremely incapable. In fact, they were neither good administrators nor military commanders like Khushal Khan. Mostly unpopular among the public, they also lost control of the tribe. Those were difficult days for the people who were either close to Khushal Khan or his strong supporters. Ashraf Khan, his elder son and political heir, was also captured by the Mughals in Peshawar. There was political chaos with no one having strong control or capacity to overcome this political chaos (Kamil, 1968).

Meantime, the Yusufzais, old rivals of the Khattak tribe, also protested this arrangement and, in retaliation, besieged Saraye Akora in support of Khushal Khan. The chieftainship of Khushal's rival uncles was not accepted either by the local people or tribal chiefs. Only the Mughals were supporting them for their own interest. The situation of the Khattaks situation went from bad to worse when the Mughals realized their mistake and released Ashraf Khan on the personal guarantee given by the son of commander Bahadur Khan. He was then recognized as the chief of the tribe (Khattak, 2005). He somehow brought normalcy, and some of the

Khattak families returned to their homes in Saraye Akora. However, his frequent visits to the court of Syed Amir Khan in Kabul, act of extreme sycophancy in the Kabul court and unbounded loyalty towards the Mughals made him an enigma for the common people of the tribe. For the locals the release of Khushal Khan was a matter of importance. Most of them wanted him back to control the cleavage among various contenders for Mughal *mansab* in the Khattak tribe. It was expected that being the elder son of Khushal Khan Khattak and comparatively close to the establishment in the frontier, Ashraf Khan would get his father released from prison. His sole purpose and real design were, however, soon exposed. He wanted a swift change of command in the power struggle. He foresaw the looming threats around him, which he tried to eliminate at any cost. Getting his father's position was his objective, for which he crossed every red line. His aim was to consolidate his power before the release of his father. In this power struggle, he feared that any contender in his family could contest his claim. Practically, he did nothing for the release of his father, who was resented by the common people. In those days, he completely acted according to the dictum that kingship knows no kinship.

Behram Khan, the most infamous son of Khushal Khan and the younger brother of Ashraf Khan, even went many steps ahead in getting the Mughal favours. It was the start of a struggle between the two brothers. According to many scholars, the turning point in the life of Khushal Khan was the rebellion of his son Behram Khan against the former at the behest of the Mughals. Khushal Khan, after his release, nominated Ashraf Khan as the chief of the Khattak tribe. But Behram Khan got offended and openly violated his father's nomination. A probable explanation of Behram Khan's resistance might have been his strong position and large public support. With the emergence of these differences in his own family, the entire Khattak tribe was consequently affected, ultimately diminishing the influence and power of Khushal Khan to a larger extent. A large number of his followers lost courage or were side-lined. His image and position had been crippled due to the emergence of rival power contenders within his family. One of the major reasons behind his weak position was the intra-family conflict for the *mansab* between his sons. Both Ashraf Khan and Behram Khan considered themselves more fit and capable of being elevated to the position of tribal chief.

This period was one of the heartbreaking phases in the life of Khushal, which ultimately vanished dominancy of the family. Both his sons confronted each other, and the entire tribe got divided on the issue. Ashraf Khan and his son Afzal Khan were supported by Khushal Khan and a few Khattak tribesmen. The rival faction was led by Behram Khan who was supported by Shaikh Zia-ud-Din, son of Kaka Sahib and majority people of the Khattak tribe. In fact, both factions tried to win over the Mughals, which consequently exposed their nefarious ambitions to everyone. In return, Mughal local officials and commanders utilized these affairs to achieve their own purposes. Mughals, on the other hand, wickedly adopted the policies of divide and rule and carrot and stick. In this phase, one can find the sons and grandsons of Khushal Khan embroiled in a prolonged war against each other. Can one absolve Khushal Khan Khattak from all these disgusting affairs? Absolutely not! It is a matter of further research because the

transition from Akor Khan to Khushal Khan Khattak was smooth but took the shape of a crucial rivalry between his sons.

The Mughals remained successful in creating a rift not only in his family but also in the whole Khattak tribe. It was a serious blow and a surprising development. He was neither mentally prepared nor physically capable to get out of this impasse. After Khushal Khan's release, he tried his utmost to restore his former glory among the tribesmen. In the process, he arranged meetings to work out an agreement and bring reconciliation. For that matter he discussed the matter with some Khattak chiefs; however, the majority of them supported Behram Khan. This was a grim situation for Khushal Khan. A considerable number of tribal elites plainly told him of the large-scale support for Behram Khan. Some even threatened him with dire consequences in case Behram would have been deposed. Ibrahim, a Khattak noble, even asked him to leave his village, Totki, for Teri or Sutra due to backlash from Behram's supporters. In fact, there was a tiny pro-Khushal faction among the Khattak tribe, but they were not powerful enough to challenge Behram Khan and took up arms against him (Khattak, 2005). This was the state of affairs in his tribe which was made extremely difficult by the attitude of Ashraf Khan, Behram Khan and Afzal Khan.

Apart from Khushal Khan's rivalry with Behram Khan, his elder son Ashraf Khan, who had again joined the Mughal service, also created differences with his father. Prior to the battle of Doda, a misunderstanding developed between the two, as Khushal, without obtaining the consent of Ashraf, went to Tari and Bolaq stationed at Yut at Karak, which perturbed his son (Khattak, 2005). The relations between them got worse even more after the battle of Doda, as Khushal had besieged Ashraf Khan's men in the fort of Lachi. The tussle between father and son made the local population suffer, who suggested that Khushal move to Nizampur and settle his scores with Ashraf there (Kamil, 2006). Khushal, therefore, left Yut and arrived at Nizampur. Khushal, after the occurrence, said the following verses:

مغل بي قدره پښتون بي ننگه
توبه له تور ي توبه له جنگه
تسبيح په لاس کښي په نظامپور کښي
ناست په مسجد کښي جمد هر ترڅنگه
(Khattak, 2005, p. 482)

Translation: The Mughals do not realize my worth, while the Pakhtuns have turned honour-less. I forsake wilding my sword and going to war. I have adopted a life where I sit in the mosque counting rosary while dagger beside myself.

Marred by conflict in his own family, deprived of his *mansab* and disturbed by the emerging rumpus with his son, Khushal Khan was like a fugitive noble in that phase of his political life. Deadly skirmishes took place, which shattered the very fabric of tribal social structure. Khushal tried to conciliate between the two, but as he has already made himself controversial by taking

the side of Ashraf Khan, therefore his efforts bore no fruit. Probably, Khushal Khan failed to understand the winds of change and the mood of the general public. The entire tribe, including people attached to the shrine of Kaka Sahib, openly defied the way he wanted to solve the problem. Among the seventy sub-branches of the Khattak tribe, only nine had supported Khushal Khan. Most of them belonged to the Mahmandi sub-branch of the tribe. It was during this state of affairs that Ashraf Khan had been arrested by the Mughals and was kept in confinement at the Deccan. It proved a blow to Khushal because he was now confronted by the younger and more nefarious son, Behram Khan.

Khushal Khan continued his efforts to get his family and people out of the entanglement. This time he preferred the name of Behram for the *mansab* required that he would use influence to release Ashraf Khan. This arrangement reached in a *Jirga* was not acceptable to Afzal Khan, son of Ashraf Khan. Afterwards, he openly confronted Khushal Khan and Behram Khan which he had vividly mentioned in *Tarikh-i-Murassa* (Khan, 2006). The end of Ashraf Khan was quite bewailing. He was arrested in 1683 and kept in confinement in Bijapur (Deccan) where he died languishing for ten years. Despite this painful agony, the family of Ashraf Khan used every means to get a Mughal *mansab*. His son, Afzal Khan, acted as a corroborator and tribal chief during Shah Alam. He was with the prince when, in 1707, the news of Aurangzeb's death reached Attock. He was left in charge of the family's old responsibility to collect tax on the highway to Peshawar (Caroe, 2003).

4. Role of Shaikh Zia-ud-Din S/O Kaka Sahib

What made the situation more complicated for Khushal Khan was the role played by Shaikh Zia-ud-Din, son of Hazrat Shaikh Rahamkar Kaka Sahib. Khushal Khan had revered Kaka Sahib and considered him as his spiritual guide. He treated him with utmost respect and regarded his presence as a blessing for the entire area. He had established matrimonial alliance with the family of Kaka Sahib by giving one of his daughters to Zia-ud-Din. Kaka Sahib died in 1653 and was succeeded by Shaikh Zia-ud-Din as his spiritual inheritor. He proved very antagonistic to him.¹

During Khushal Khan's absence Zia-ud-Din involved himself in political and tribal affairs. Unlike his father, he indulged in worldly affairs and got close to the Mughals. In the whole affairs, he used his influence in support of Behram Khan against Khushal Khan. He was constantly in touch with the Mughals and aligned himself with Behram Khan against Ashraf Khan and Khushal Khan. To curtail the position of Ashraf Khan, who was supposed to be the nominee of Khushal Khan, he pressed the Mughal governor to issue a *firman* to confer on Behram Khan the *mansab* and chieftainship of the tribe. Pareshan Khattak has given a detailed account of these developments (Khattak, 2005).

It is a matter of further research that despite Khushal Khan's spiritual attachment to Kaka Sahib because he was pushed to the wall by Zia-ud-Din and Behram Khan. A likely explanation has

been the arrogant attitude of Ashraf Khan and his desire to become the tribal chief at any cost. By using cheap means, he wanted to be in the good book of the Mughals. He fulfilled every malevolent act to get official approval for his chieftainship. In those days, he eliminated his closest relatives as potential rivals and Behram's supporters. It was due to his haughtiness that disunity became the fortune of the family (Khattak, 2005). Sticking with his father's position and making efforts to get for him the Mughal approval, he crossed even the moral red lines. He was asked by the Mughals to banish his father from Saraye Akora, to which he happily agreed. This was, however, resented by the people and elders of the tribe. His arrogant attitude towards his father and other family members had even compelled Zia-ud-Din to take the side of Behram in this family feud. Using his influence in the Mughals, he deposed Ashraf Khan with Behram Khan as chief of the Khattak tribe. In retaliation, Zia-ud-Din was poisoned to death on the order of Ashraf Khan (Khattak, 2005).

5. Mughals' Campaign against the Yusufzai

In the above pages a glimpse of the events has been given to understand the intra-tribal competition and rivalry between the sons of Khushal Khan. It is to be mentioned here that apart from creating rift among the family of Khushal Khan, Mughal officials tight the noose on other tribes. Outside the Khattak family tangle broke out Mughal campaign against the Yusufzai tribe, which usually led the anti-Mughal camp in the frontier. The Yusufzai uprising had been took a serious turn under Bhako Khan. Thousands of Mughal soldiers have been put to death in a number of encounters. Thousands of Pakhtuns were likewise slayed in retaliations. This proved to be "one of the deadliest uprisings in the frontier areas" during Aurangzeb's kingship. In the start, thousands of tribesmen had been mobilized in the *Samah* (settled) areas. This campaign flared up mostly among the Mandanr Yusufzai who lived in the plain territories along the river Indus. A number of scholars has stated that a king, namely Mullah Chalak, emerged, which provided fresh zeal to the youth. Initially, the Mughal soldiers fled and abandoned the entire plain area from river Kabul to the Indus. Syed Amir Khan, the Mughal governor of Kabul, completely failed to take concrete measures to defend the Mughal installations in the area (Yaqubi, 2015).

In a way, it was a tactical blunder of Bhako Khan, who expanded the war front and led an expedition in the Hazara region. Crossing the river Indus, the Yusufzais' Lashkar invaded a number of small forts in Mansehra and Attock. It was so sudden for the Mughals that they failed to devise any counter-military strategy. Soon, the tribesmen entered Mansehra and massacred a considerable number of soldiers. Fort of Chachal was captured and its *Faujdar* Shamsheer Khan disbanded it in haste. These initial successes made Bhako Khan audacious by expanding his war fronts, making his power tinny and exposed. One of the strengths of the Yusufzai's was guerrilla strategy, which they could not properly utilize in the plain areas. This point had never been realized by Bhako Khan by making his Lashkar an easy target. Hit and run policy was need of the time which they never tactically utilized. The more he moved forward in the plain, the more he exposed his *lashkar* to the Mughal looming offensives.

Aurangzeb ordered the swift mobilization of the force to check Yusufzais' further penetration. Syed Amir Khan dispatched five thousand soldiers from Peshawar. To make the Mughal defence stronger, Muhammad Amin Khan, the *Mir Bakhshi*, was dispatched from Delhi with nine thousand soldiers. The pro-Mughal local tribal chiefs also came to assist the imperial forces. The Gakkhar *Sardar* Murad Quli Khan and Ashraf Khan Khattak joined them with their tribal contingents. These fresh arrivals reinforced Kamil Khan, *Faujdar* of Attock, who was already engaged with the Yusufzais' *lashkar*. Shamsher Khan Tarin² made such a horrible counter-offensive that crumbled down the Yusufzai military gains (Yusufzai, 2016). In April 1667, a deadly encounter took place on the bank of river Haro near Hasanabdal. Two thousand Yusufzais were executed, and a minaret of their skulls was erected (Kamil, 2006).

Against the Yusufzais, a major offensive was then launched in the *Samah* led by Shamsher Khan Tarin. He was reinforced with fresh soldiers and munitions. In these campaigns entire population of a number of towns were wiped out and reduced to ashes. Mandanr Yusufzais in Mardan and Swabi were mainly targeted; crops were destroyed, and cattle were massively snatched. Till October 1667, the uprising subsided, witnessing indiscriminate carnages and butcheries (Kamil, 2006).

In these military engagements against the Yusufzai, Ashraf Khan fought alongside the Mughals. It was the time when the Mughals used both Ashraf Khan and Behram Khan not only against each other but also the Yusufzais and Bangash. The Mughals lured both the brothers through *mansab* and chieftainship. The rivalry had been fomented by the Mughals, which weakened the family of Khushal Khan Khattak and the Yusufzais, against whom both the brothers were cleverly used.

6. Behram-Khushal Encounters

In 1673, minor arm skirmishes occurred between Khushal Khan and Behram Khan. The latter received active support from the Mughals. In all these intra-family encounters, hundreds of Khattak tribesmen were killed. The following are the details of the wars fought between Khushal Khan and Behram Khan:

6.1. The first encounter between Khushal Khan and Behram took place in May 1673. Behram, at the head of his Khattak supporters, appeared on the scene. He was given equipment by the local Mughal officials. At dawn, tribesmen from both sides clashed; Khushal's men fought gallantly and broke Behram's forward formation and ranks. At daybreak, the Jammu hill musketeers in the Behram contingent rushed forward. This contingent was the reinforcement force from the Mughal side. The scene changed, and now it was the Khattaks under Khushal Khan who, unable to stand the onslaught, were scattered. Few people were slain, and the victors went to Saraye Akora Khattak. Khushal spent the night at Khwara, contrived his way towards Nizampur, and from there went to Gharbin. Abid Khan, son of Khushal, with a small force, attacked the road

near Nowshera, killing about a dozen of the Mughal soldiers and taking others as prisoners. Khadija Ferozuddin is of the view that Khushal, afterwards, had led an attack on Khairabad at Nowshehra (Khadija Feroz-ud-Din, 2008). She has, most probably, misread the specific line of *Tarikh Murassa*, mentions that Abid Khan and Abdul Qadir Khan (sons of Khushal) led the attack on Khairabad. The gates were broken, and more than a hundred men were killed. A large amount of booty, including horses and camels, fell into the hands of the victorious Khattaks (Khattak, 2006).

6.2. The Khattaks and Mughals, led by Behram, moved to Nizampur, defied the attack of Khushal Khan and went to Gharbin. On the 9th of Muharram (1673), leaving Danbara (Frontier Region Peshawar), Khushal, too, reached Gharbin. He was supported by seven hundred horse and foot soldiers and combated the Mughal-Khattak force in Suniala Pass. The conflict continued for three hours. Behram offered stiff resistance while the Khattaks, led by Khushal Khan, stood firm and finally put the Mughal vanguard to flight (Khan, 2006). According to Khadija Ferozuddin, only two men of Behram were killed in the encounter (Feroz-ud-Din, 2008). *Tarikh Murassa* states that twelve men were killed and more than twenty were wounded (Afzal Khan, 2006). Villages of Seni Khattaks, supporters of Behram, were ransacked. The Khattaks descending the hill in the afternoon stopped for the night at Garo. The next morning, they started marching towards Nilab, raiding and plundering villages on the way. Danbara was soon ransacked, where the Afridi tribesmen were given leave to depart on a promise to return.

6.3. On the 26th of the said month, a large force consisting of Khattaks and Afridis conducted a midnight raid on Jeena Kor.³ They, led by Mullah Usman, plundered two nearby villages. Three or four men were killed. A large booty also fell into the hands of the invaders (Khan, 2006). *Tarikh Murassa* has remained silent on the point of whether the villages plundered by Khattaks and Afridis were inhabited by the supporters of Behram or not. Probably, they were pro-Bahram Khattaks. Otherwise, the dwellers of those villages were Pakhtuns and, therefore, damaging them is beyond understanding.

In the meanwhile, Aimal Khan Mohmand and Darya Khan ventured to make peace with the Mughals. Khushal Khan too played his role in this connection. He narrates: “I, on the request of Darya Khan Afridi, deputed Ashraf Khan to Khyber, with the intention of making peace with the Mughals. Aimal Khan and Darya Khan intended to make peace with the Mughals. Tatar Khan, the brother of Darya Khan and a few other Afridis were busy in negotiation a deal with the Mughals. Nephew of Aimal Khan set in the Mughal bandwagon. Ashraf Khan went there; however, the issue could not be settled to the liking of Ashraf Khan. Peace was not made with the Mughals” (Khan, 2006). It seems that both Aimal Khan and Darya Khan were compelled to mend their ties with the Mughals, as their close relatives had joined the Mughals along with their tribesmen.

It left little breathing space for other Pakhtun leaders to continue their struggle against the Mughal.

6.4. In this interval, the Mughals once again instigated Behram to expel his father from the area, or they would reassign the *Jagir* and *mansab* to Ashraf Khan (Khan, 2006). The former, therefore, moved his army to Mahraji, situated a little away from Manki Sharif in Nowshehra, and encamped in the Mir Kalan pass. Khushal Khan, on the other hand, had prepared himself and had the support of five hundred men. Bahram at the head of three thousand soldiers, moved towards Kamal Mela. The war was about to start when Ibrahim, a supporter of Behram, came forward to negotiate between the two sides. He, according to Khushal, had received a bribe of twenty rupees from Behram to discourage Khushal Khan's supporters. Many of them lost heart and deserted Khushal Khan, while some still stood by him. Khushal Khan ordered his men to move forward in small parties. A group of forty horsemen led by Mullah Usman took Behram's men by surprise. Behram's army was shaken by the assault, but they soon realized the small number of the attackers and reorganized themselves. Khushal's men had by this time arrived in full force, and were, as usual, posted in tribal divisions. The Takar Khels and Fateh Khels (subtribes of Khattaks) displayed bravery. According to Khushal, Takhti Khel could not hold their ground; otherwise, he would have gained a remarkable victory (Khan, 2006).

Bahram, taking advantage of the inactivity of the Takhti Khels, reached Totki, a place situated a few miles away to the south of Cherat in Nowshera. Khushal Khan followed him there with a small contingent. There, he received a shower of arrows but escaped unhurt. After a fierce contest, more than fifty men of Behram's died and wounded fell into Khushal's hand. Khushal Khan, after the above-mentioned battle, visited the southern areas of the frontier, including Lachi, Teri and Sawatra (Karak district), to raise a strong force. He failed in his task. Pareshan Khattak, in this connection, remarks: "It was due to the reason that the Khattaks of these areas were the disciples of Kaka Sahib, whose son Shaikh Zia-ud-Din was siding with Behram. Moreover, Khattaks did not want to fight against their brethren" (Khattak, 2005).

6.5. Khushal Khan, on return, once again intended to fight Bahram, who had positioned himself in Suniala Pass. He, however, on Khushal's arrival, fled away to Mahraji. Khushal, on the other hand, with a force of four thousand, attacked Bakhty village and set it on fire. Shah Kot village met the same fate. Afterwards, he proceeded towards Spin Kanry, situated some distance from Mahraji, where Behram had positioned himself. Behram again did not confront his father and vacated that place. Khushal was advised to chase the fleeing army, but he refused and said: "They are not infidels. Our enemy is Mughal, the Khattaks (his opponents) are ill-fated. Killing them is useless, I will only weaken myself" (Khan, 2006). Khushal Khan, soon after, confronted the enemy at Kaka Sahib (Nowshera). The encounter resulted in the death of a few foot

soldiers of Behram. Khushal Khan continued his march and, on the way, ransacked the villages of Esori Koz, Dangarzai, Shaidu and Narai. He finally reached Khairabad, situated on the bank of the River Indus, near Attock Fort. He set the place on fire.

7. Conclusion

The struggle of Khushal Khan Khattak after his release was initially directed to bring about reconciliation between his two rival sons. It seems that he openly supported Ashraf Khan in the power struggle. Taking the side of Ashraf Khan virtually deprived him of the inherent strength which he wielded in the typical Pakhtun society. He failed to understand the fact that Ashraf Khan was extremely unpopular and power-hungry, for which he was even ready to fulfil every Mughal demand. This phase of Khushal Khan Khattak is crucial in the sense that it heralded an era of power struggle within his family. It shattered the family unity, which, till his arrest, was kept intact by his father and grandfathers. It is quite clear from the available sources that Khushal Khan was willing to keep a liaison with the Mughals through his sons or his personal contact. At the same time, he was looking to lead resistance against the Mughals and assemble anti-Mughal elements under his command. The obvious reason was the loss of support in his political and tribal constituency. In fact, he wanted to carve out a position of respect for himself among those tribes who were anti-Mughals. This intra-tribal and family dispute provided a splendid opportunity for the Mughals to get the maximum benefit out of it. One can observe that Bangash, Yusufzais and the allied tribes were brutally suppressed by the Mughals. This was one of the darkest periods in terms of political awakening among the Pakhtuns. In the south, the establishment kept the Khattak and other tribes in a prolonged war led by Khushal Khan, Ashraf Khan and Behram Khan. It was later on joined by Afzal Khan, son of Ashraf Khan, when he was arrested by the Mughals. This power struggle weakened not only the strength of Khushal Khan but shattered the tribal confederacy under him. In the plain, the Yusufzais were brutally suppressed, and thousands of tribesmen lost their lives. In the borderland areas Afridis and Mohmands reconciled with the Mughals. In the south several villages have been ransacked in the power struggle between Khushal Khan and Behram. The “Divide and Rule” policy was applied to keep the Pakhtuns under the tyrannical and merciless rule of the Mughal Empire.

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Notes:

¹ Hazrat Kaka Sahib has five sons; Hazrat Syed Shaikh Zia-ud-Din, Hazrat Shaikh Haji Muhammad Gul, Hazrat Shaikh Haleem Gul (Speen Baba), Hazrat Shaikh Khail Gul (Zamary Baba) and Naj-ud-Din (died in infancy). Shaikh Zia-ud-Din is famous by the name of Shaheed Baba.

² When the Tareen settled in Hazara they extended the hand of friendship to the Mughals. They formed alliances with the pro-Mughal chiefs in the area. Shamsheer Khan Tareen was a friend of Khushal Khan. He was appointed the *Faujdar* of Hund, Garhi Kapura and Ghaladher during Aurangzeb's reign. For crushing the might of the Mandanr Yusufzais, he rendered great services for the Mughals. He was given a *mansab* of five thousand with a huge jagir. His father Ali Khan was also a Mughal employee (Yusufzai, 2016).

³ Jeena Kor is a small town situated in Peshawar district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It lies near the frontier Region bordering District Nowshera.