

A Comparison of the Political Thoughts of Khushal Khan Khattak and Allama Iqbal



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Abstract: *Khushal Khan Khattak and Allama Iqbal are two well-known writers and thinkers. The former was a Pashtun poet and fighter, while the latter was a well-known philosopher and poet of the East. Both lived in different periods and were of different ethnicities, but there are a lot of similarities in their thoughts. Some of their thoughts are discussed below in order to find out the nuanced similarities and differences in their thoughts—similarities and differences between the ideal man of Khushal and Allama Iqbal, via which they try to explain the ideal man of society. Another concept is that of democracy, where these two also agree on some concepts but disagree on others. Here we will also study in detail the sources via which Allama Muhammad Iqbal studied Khushal Khan Khattak: personalities and written sources, i.e., Major Roverty, Khadija Begum, and Mir Ahmad Shah Rizwani. These were the sources for knowing Khushal Khan Khattak, which made Iqbal able to study Khushal in detail and borrow many of his concepts. He also appreciated the thoughts of Khushal Khan, and due to this, we can say that Allama Iqbal was one of the most inspired fans of Khushal Khan.*

Keywords: Khushal Khan Khattak, Allama Iqbal, Philosopher, Jirgah, Democracy

Introduction

Khushal Khan Khattak was born in Akora Khattak in 1613, at the time of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (1605–1627). There is no doubt that Khushal Khan was a multidimensional personality; at the same time, he was a philosopher, thinker, and poet. He was also the author of more than 300 books, among which approximately 20 were published and available¹. He was indeed a genius personality who is considered a man of sword and pen.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal was born in 1877 at Sialkot. This was the time when the sub-continent was under the rule of the British. The concept of modernity was the main excuse that Britishers had made to rule over the sub-continent. They were treating the people of the

sub-continent as savages and white men's burdens, and under the guise of a civilizational mission, they were in fact fulfilling their colonization mission. Many non-Eurocentric explanations came as a response, and Iqbal was one of these philosophers who gave his own interpretation of the political ideology and contributed to this thought in the form of poetry, speeches, and writings².

Background:

As I mentioned above, Khushal Khan Khattak and Allama Muhammad Iqbal have many similarities and dissimilarities, one of which is political, and their political visions are not very different from each other in many places. Although the political period of Allama Iqbal is not very old, he was in recent times at the start

of the 19th century, while the time of Khushal Khan Khattak was 300 years ago. (Hanif Khalil, 2021) Where people were not properly aware of political thoughts in the subcontinent, there was no Western democracy in the time of Kaushal Khan Khattak, while on the other hand, in the time of Allama Iqbal, there was Western democracy.

Democracy:

In simple words, democracy According to the political scientist Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." [i] That is where the people chose their representatives for the legislation.

In the era of Khushal Khan Khattak, there was no such democracy, i.e., western democracy, but there was a system in Pashto culture called the jirgah, which is a traditional and ancient kind of legislative body that is similar to modern democracy as well. Jirgah is a group of people in the culture of Pashtuns, which is similar to democracy with little change. In the jirgah system, a group of people will legislate an issue, and in the end, the victims should agree with the leader of the jirgah. Sometimes people do not agree with the final decision of the jirgah, and then they are considered very low-level Muslims and idiots in society, and most people boycott them. Because in jirgah there was a group of people in which the decision of the majority was accepted, And this kind of system Khushal Khan Khattak also appreciated, which he mentioned in the stanza of his poem.

که سره په مصلحت کښه لر بر نشی
زه ضامن چه دده کار به اېتر نشیⁱ

Translation: I will not sacrifice my interests for anyone else,

I guarantee that I won't engage in a riskier task.

These stanzas of his poem show the importance of getting the advice of a group of people before doing any work. If you get a piece of advice from people, it means you will be successful, and for this, I am giving a guarantee. In this poem, his idea is very close to democracy, where he shows that he focused on the importance of a group of people. In these lines, Khushal Khan

Khattak wants to define the importance of advice, and he also shows the importance of advice in the last line, where I am the guarantor, that if you get the advice of your nobles before doing any task, you will never fail in it.

د نمانځه تر قضا گران دا قضا ده

چه قضا شی د څلورو مصلحت

نورانی کا هغه ځایه چی سره کښینی

دیرینه څلور هوښیار په مصلحت

په اخلاص چه په دعا لاسونه هسک کا

وربه پرانست شی دا فتح د نصرتⁱⁱ

Translation: Justice is lost in the realm of fate,

Where fate is determined by personal interests.

The bright path lies before those who perceive it,

The cunning remain prisoners of their own interests.

When sincerity is replaced by selfish prayers,

Victory will be short-lived, a fleeting triumph.

Similar to what I mentioned above, Kaushal Khan Khattak stressed the advisory group of people and again showed the importance of their advice, even though he compared that particular group of people with one of the most important pillars of Islam (namaz). He said that getting advice from a group of four important people is more important than your basic pillar of Islam (namaz), but if you missed it, it means that you missed an important thing like namaz. If you got advice from experienced intellectuals, it means you are under the light of success. And he also mentioned that 4 Nobel Prizes mean Kushal Khan Khattak believes in limited democracy; he believes in quality, not quantity. And this is the way to success. Khushal was also much respected by the group of advisors and considered them very compulsory before doing any kind of task. He used to get advice from the advisors, but they should be honest, intelligent, sincere, able to solve problems, willing to sacrifice, and have the ability to make good decisions. It is known from Khushal Khan Khattak's works that he considers mutual consultation very necessary for every collective

work. And he must be a sincere and honest representative.

During the Iqbal era, democracy was not introduced properly in the subcontinent, but in the west, it was properly at work. Due to Western influence on the subcontinent, people were shortly educated about Western education and their political system. Allama Iqbal was an intellectual and multi-talented personality who gained much awareness about Western democracy. Allama Iqbal was not against democracy, but he was against Western democracy because he criticized that in Western democracy there is no value given to quality, although there is much importance given to quantity, which is not a proper system for electing a representative because western democracy only counts heads, not quality.

Allama Iqbal discussed in his thoughts about democracy that when democracy is focused on quantity instead of quality, the people will not be able to choose the person who can sacrifice and do justice; the representative will cross his limits; he will not be honest; he will not care for every individual. Because the electives will be chosen by a group of people, and this is because we prefer quantity, Allama Iqbal criticized this system. Because he is in favor of limited democracy, limited means that the choosers should have a basic knowledge of rule and rulers (representatives). Allama Iqbal presents that we need quality instead of quantity. If we have an understanding of politics, then we will be able to choose the representative who will be honest, responsible, just, and able to practice his duties properly, which he criticized in his poetry.ⁱⁱⁱ

جمہوریت طرز حکومت ہے کہ جس میں

افراد گنا کرتے ہیں تو لا نہیں کرتے

Translation: Democracy is a style of governance in which People are counted, not weighed.

This means that for real and true democracy, counting votes alone is not enough, but it is the first condition that the people running the democratic system should be wise, good, and sincere and support the truth. Allama Iqbal says in this that we should give the right to vote to the person who is convinced that he can think and make his own decision; that is, we should not

give this right to everyone who cannot think about matters.

In this stanza of his poem, he directly criticizes that democracy is a system where we count but do not measure, which means only quantity matters, not quality. On one side, we have ten great intellectuals, and on the other, we have eleven illiterate persons, but in democracy, when they choose their representative, those eleven illiterates are more powerful than those intellectuals because in democracy, a large number of voters matter, not great minds. As I mentioned above, Iqbal was not against democracy, but he was against this type of democracy, for which he presented Islamic democracy (limited democracy), in which he focused on humanity and the democratic will according to Islamic teachings. For this reason, during British India, they also demanded a separate electorate where they would choose their Muslim representative for their Muslim community, which would help safeguard their religious, political, social, and economic rights. (Sarwar israr, zaffar zubar, n.d.)^{iv}

Leader/ideal man:

Nangyal is Kaushal's Ideal Man. In light of Islamic beliefs, he formed his idea of the ideal man. This explains why Kaushal's Nangyal and Iqbal's Mard-e-Momin are close by. However, Khushal's Nangyal as a whole is full of the spirit of Nang (honor), and because of this quality, he called his ideal Man Nangyal. His Mard-e-Momin includes all the qualities of Khushal's Nangyal.

The ideal man is the best person for the right job. Muhammad Iqbal and Khushal Khan Khattak presented a very clear image of the ideal man. Both have different ideas for the best person for the right job, but the ideas are very similar for an ideal man. Some of their similarities of the ideal man are that he should be honest, sincere, brave, intelligent, and in high spirits; he can protect the nation; and he can do justice. (Abdus samad meer, 1987)^v

Khushal Khan Khattak and Allama Muhammad Iqbal advise people to give up ease-loving lifestyles and take on mendicancy. Instead of chasing wealth, work on becoming more humble

so that the world and things will come to you. Our hearts have been bound to materialism. Unlimited love for materialistic gains grows in a heart that is ruled by materialism.

Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal aimed to create self-possessed people in society who, first and foremost, should know themselves before making decisions following their desires and will. They must first establish a foundation for their aspirations to achieve this. Self-hood, or khudi, is the foundation. Dr. Iqbal made an effort to explain to them the importance of khudi for the awakening of the Muslim Ummah.

Khushal Khan Khattak was born into the Akora family, which existed in different affairs in the Mughal period, especially when they used to fight for the Mughals, which means that Khushal was already familiar with the concept and responsibilities of a leader, but due to his multi-dimensional personality, he introduced a multi-quality theory for leadership because, by himself, he was a practical and theoretical fighter and political figure at the same time. And he spent all his time in fights, writings, philosophy, etc. In his poetry, he presented an ideal man. (*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam - Mohammad Iqbal - Google Books*, 2013)^{vi}

سردار هغه دے چه شرم ونگ لري

مدام ده شرم توره تر سنگ لري

صرف په زر نی کا، صرف په سر نه که

چي دښمنان وی له هغو جنگ لري^{vii}

Translation: The chief feels no shame, it seems,

Forever shamelessly taking advantage.

It's only about wealth, not about honor,

Fighting wars against their own enemies.

In these stanzas of the Khushal Khan Khattak poem, he mentioned that an ideal leader should feel ashamed whenever his nation is struggling, which means he cannot ignore the humiliation of his nation. He should keep his weapons in hand and be ready for any kind of situation to fight for his tribe. He should not care about his head (self) and should not care about the wealth. He should enter the battleground with bravery and fight

openly to defeat the opposition. Whenever you face enemies, keep fighting them and remove them from your front. Khushal Khan Khattak argued in these stanzas that if you have these qualities, it means you are a good leader for your nation.

دار په بنه سردار دے نور څه مه وايه اے څو ان

چه مرد د لښکر مرد وی. گران چار شی پر اسانه

که صبر ته همت دے فتح له ميدانه^{viii}

Translation: A great leader is like a shining star that guides us,

For he is not just a man but a man among soldiers. It's a significant challenge for us,

To achieve victory on the battlefield through patience and courage.

Khushal Khan Khattak presented in these stanzas of his poem that everything depends on the leader. If you have a good leader, then it doesn't matter who is on your back because if the leader is brave, he can motivate his nation, lead them very correctly, and create a vacuum for any kind of situation. If the unit of fighters is led by a brave and competent leader, it means success is your finishing point, and he should be successful if you have a leader who is brave, competent, strong, patient, courageous, and a hard worker. If anyone has these qualities, he will always be ready for everything.

According to Khushal Khan Khattak, the leader is one of the most important managers of the nation, and the person who manages events and faces different situations should have a lot of qualities. He should be loyal, honest, brave, intelligent, and respectful. Because he is not a common man like others, he is responsible for a huge group of people who are in different problems. He will deal with different affairs of his nation, i.e., he will be responsible for the affairs of his nation and for other issues like the economy, politics, and social issues. If he has a lot of qualities, he will not be able to protect his nation and their interests, and he will not deliver according to the requirements of his nation

بڻه سردار وٽه دنام خزانہ بويه
 كه نور هيڻ ورڻه نه ٻي له نام
 ورڪول توره هل دا دواړه بويه
 چه پر چار د سردارائي شي انصرم
 كه سردار ده خلكو زر لري هزار
 بندوبست د عالم نشي ٻي صمصام
 يا تكيه ده ديو خدائي يا د تورو
 په جرگو مرڪو نشي كار تمام^{ix}

Translation: A great leader is a treasure of honor,
 For he has no shortage of light or knowledge.
 His every action becomes a remedy,
 As he strives for the welfare of the people.
 When the leaders possess integrity and firmness,
 The people's wealth multiplies in abundance.
 No worldly shackles can confine them,
 For they rely on the divine support.
 In the face of challenges, they never falter,
 As they bring all endeavors to a successful conclusion.

In these verses of his poem, Khushal Khan Khattak analyzes loyalty as the most important requirement for a leader. If he is loyal to his responsibilities, his loyalty is enough to lead, but besides loyalty, if he has these qualities, he will be a blessing, like being always ready for any kind of battle with his sword in any kind of situation. Because confessions and jirgh will not solve all kinds of problems, keep your sword ready for any kind of situation. Loy and bravery are the most important qualities that he can give to his nation.

Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal is a notable thinker, philosopher, author, and poet of the twentieth century who, both for the virtues of his rhymes and prose and for the impact exercised by his ideas, appeared like a guiding light on the horizon of the east.^x

س قوم کو شمشير کی حاجت نہیں ربتی

ٻو جس ڪي جوانن ڪي خودي صورت فولاد^{xi}

Translation: A nation does not require the need for a sword,

When its youth possess self-made steel.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal stressed the bravery of the man. According to this stanza, if the man is brave, then the nation has no need to care because when you are true and strong, then automatically their needs will be fulfilled.

برهنه سر ٻي تو عزم بلند پيدا ڪر

يهاں فقط سر شاهين ڪي واسطو ٻين ڪلاه^{xii}

Translation: You have a hidden head, so raise your determination high,

Here, only the helmet is for the brave falcon's sake.

Sardar does not give beauty to every person; the only one who deserves it is the person who knows how to sacrifice for the nation. He can sacrifice his wealth and himself for the nation. Allama Iqbal and Khushal Khan Khattak both have almost the same idea about the Sardar. In the same way, a nation can move forward if it has a successful leader.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal about Khushal Khan Khattak:

The only poet in the entire subcontinent to learn about Khushal through translations made by some orientalist was Allama Muhammad Iqbal. In addition to having a deep appreciation for his poems, he also grew to admire them. Iqbal referred to him as the Afghan Shanas and Millats' Hakeem and Tabeeb (physician). According to Major Raverty and other orientalist, Khushal was not only an Afghan Shanas but also a renowned Insan-Shanas (one who knows man), just like Goethe and Shakespeare. Iqbal expressed his wish to have translated Khushal's poetry into Persian or Urdu if he had known Pushto.

This is a truly amazing tribute to a great Man by another equally admirable Man. Khushal Khan Khattak was a realistic individual. In his everyday behavior, he demonstrated every quality that he desired in a man. Khushal Khan Khattak, according to the renowned scholar Allama Muhammad Iqbal, is honored in the following verses.

“قبائل ہوں ملت کی وحدت میں گم
 کہ ہو نام افغانیوں کا بلند
 محبت مجھے ان جوانوں سے ہے
 ستاروں پہ جو ڈالتے ہیں کمند
 مغل سے کسی طرح کمتر نہیں
 کوہستان کا یہ بچہ ارجمند
 کہوں تجھ سے اے ہمنشین دل کی بات
 وہ مدفن ہے خوشحال خاں کو پسند
 اڑا نہ لائے جہاں باد کو
 مغل شہسواروں کا گرد سمند^{xiii}۔

Translation: I am lost among tribes in the unity of the nation,

For I am proud of the name of Afghans.

My love is for those young ones,

Who bind the stars as their command.

No one is lesser than the Mughals,

This child of the mountains is noble.

Let me tell you, O fellow beings, a matter of the heart,

That resting place is beloved by happy Khans.

Where the wind cannot disturb,

The sea surrounds the Mughal riders.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal paid honor to Khushal Khan Khattak in the poem "Khushal Khan Ki Wasiyat" with the following words:

Let the tribes disappear into national unity so that the Afghans can acquire respect. I truly live among those for whom the stars are not beyond reach. This mountain child is not in any way behind the Mughals.

I tell you that Khushal Khan would prefer that his final resting place be far from the wind-borne dust carried by the Mughal cavalry.

From here, we can see that Allama Muhammad Iqbal pays some special tribute to Kaushal Khan Khattak. He has a huge respect for his personality and works because Khushal Khan Khattak contributed a huge amount of work in the field and literature, and at the same time, he is also a practical warrior, which attracts the

audience.

An essay by Allama Iqbal titled "Khushal Khan Khattak, the Afghan Warrior Poet" was published in the Hyderabad Deccan in Islamic culture in 1927. He conveyed his desire for the Afghan education minister to choose a researcher to do a study on Khushal Khan's teachings. This is more evidence of the respect Allama Iqbal has for Khushal Khan Khattak; he worked on Khushal by himself and also suggested that others work on him because he is one of the most important personalities and his works are precious and should be introduced to society.

Sources of Allama Iqbal's knowledge of Khushal Khan Khattak

Allama Iqbal was a great thinker, and thinkers always wanted to read great personalities to understand their thoughts. Allama Iqbal also has a huge interest in studying the Pashtuns, and Khushal Khan Khattak has more importance for Iqbal because he was not only a Pashtun but also a thinker, philosopher, psychologist, warrior, etc.

Allama Iqbal was from the very beginning interested in studying the bravery, struggle, nature, and works of Pashtuns, and Khushal Khan Khattak was a very respected and well-known personality of Pashtun society. Iqbal showed more interest in studying Khushal Khan Khattak, for which he used different sources. It was difficult for Iqbal to study Khushal Khan Khattak through primary sources because his works were mostly published in Pashto, and it was difficult for Iqbal to study him in Pashto.

The resources of Allama Iqbal that he used to understand Khushal Khan Khattak are

Sajeed gull (a relative of Khushal)

Mir Ahmad Shah Rizawani, a Pashtun intellectual

Major Raverty, along with some other orientalist

Khadeeja Begum Feroz-uddin (ph.D. dissertation)

This was the first source for Iqbal to study Khushal; Sajeed Gull was *risaal daar* in the British government. Sajeed was living in Kohat, but his posting was in Lahore, where Iqbal was also available. Iqbal was very interested in Khushal Khan, and Sajeed Gull was also interested in meeting Allama Iqbal. Iqbal welcomed him, and they met in 1919 in Lahore. They discussed many things about Pashtuns and Khushal Khan Khattak, and their meetings continued for a long time. Iqbal studied a lot about Khushal Khan Khattak, and with the help of Sajeed Gull, he wrote the *Mehrab gull Afghan ki afkar*. This was the first and fundamental source of Iqbal to know Khushal Khan Khattak. (Hanif khalil, 2021)

Mir Ahmad Shah Rizwani was a Pashtoon professor of Arabic with Allama Iqbal. In the beginning, Allama Iqbal and Mir Ahmad Rizwani used to communicate through letters, and this was one of the resources Allama Iqbal used to read Khushal Khan Khattak.

Major Roverty is one of the most important sources of Iqbal; he wrote the selections from the poetry of Afghans in which he translated the poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak, which is used by Allama Muhammad Iqbal to understand the nature and thoughts of Khushal Khan Khattak, which is published later, and Iqbal also argued in his article in "The Afghan Warrior Poet," published in the journal *Islamic Culture*.

Khadija Begum was basically from Punjab, but she was living in Bannu. She was enrolled in Ph.D., and her topic of Ph.D. was Khushal Khan Khattak, for which she wanted to meet different professors. In that case, she approached Allama Iqbal, and they met and discussed her work. Allama Iqbal was also interested in her work because he wanted to study Khushal Khan Khattak, and she was one of the important sources because she knew Pashto, Urdu, and English. They met with each other and discussed her work. Iqbal also suggested a few changes after completing her work. Iqbal read her thesis, which helped him know more about Khushal Khan Khattak.

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Conclusion:

In the above discussion, we discussed that Khushal Khan Khattak and Allama Iqbal were both great thinkers and philosophers of their time. Allama Iqbal and Khushal Khan Khattak have many similar thoughts, which are not just limited to their political thoughts. In this article, we discussed the concept of democracy and the ideal man. The result is that both agreed that democracy (the process of electing representatives) should be limited to nobles because they have an understanding of national and international affairs, which both prefer to limited democracy because in western democracy they count the quantity, not the quality, which is not a good system to choose the representatives of the nation. And the ideal men of Khushal Khan Khattak and Allama Iqbal are also approximately the same. Both believe that the leader, the man, the representative should be brave, have justice, be able to make sacrifices, etc. Khushal Khan Khattak has had an impact on Allama Iqbal, and that influence is due to his studying of Khushal Khan Khattak through different sources, i.e., Major Roverty, Khadija Begum, Ahmad Shinwari, etc., and this shows the love of Iqbal for the Pashtuns that he has a huge importance for because he uses different sources to learn about the Pashtuns, especially Khushal Khan Khattak. This is also evidence of the Iqbal's love for the Pashtuns: he did not used to write in English but he wrote on Khushal Khan Khattak; he did not used to dedicate his books but only once he did, and that is Pashtun Ghazi Aman Ullah; he did not allow anyone to compose his poetry with music but allowed only one, and that is Pashtun Rafiq Ghaznavi, etc. Allama Iqbal always used to present tributes to the Pashtuns, and this is due to their love and impact. But some of the time people criticized him for saying that he had copied poetry from Khushal Khan Khattak, which he had not, although there is a huge influence of Khushal Khan Khattak in his poetry.

ⁱ <https://web-archive-2017.ait.org.tw/infousa/zhtw/DOCS/whatsdem/whatdm2.htm>

ⁱⁱ Ibid 337

^{iv} Sarwar israr, zaffar zubar, allama Muhammad iqbal in politics of the subcontinent, p183

^v Abdus samad meer. (1987). *Khushal ao Iqbal*. Azeem publishing house Peshawar

^{vi} Iqbal, M. (2013). *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*. Stanford University Press.

^{vii} Abdus samad meer. (1987). *Khushal ao Iqbal*. Azeem publishing house Peshawar

^{viii} Ibid, p 129

^{ix} Muhammad Musaud Asdaque, ALLAMA IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF MEER-E-CARAVAN, Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

^x <https://ibl.com.pk/iqbal-philosophy-on-mng/>

^{xi} Abdus samad, meer, kushal aur iqbal, azeem publishing house, Peshawar p133

^{xii} Hanif Khalil, genius khushal, Afaq printers Peshawar, 2021 p11