

BEYOND THE SHADOW OF KHUSHAL KHAN KHATTAK *A BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF FAQEER JAMEEL BAIG*

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ABSTRACT

The article is a biographical study of Faqeer Jameel Baig (more commonly referred to as Faqeer Baba) who was an obscure Sufi mystic, poet, scholar and the sole full brother of the renowned Pashtun warrior-poet Khushal Khan Khattak. He was born in Akora Khattak to the Khattak chieftain Shahbaz Khan, but his name became Jameel Baig because of his family's connection with Mughals. The historical wrangles about the birth date of his life, commonly reported as 966 AH (1558 CE) - this paper will concentrate on the primary sources and the localized learning to determine the actual date when he was born 1024 AH (1615 CE). The work describes his life during his youth, the work as a son of a chieftain, his involvement at the Battle of Aka Khel (1050 AH) together with his father and brother, resulting in the martyrdom of his father. After this turning point, Jameel Baig abdicated his chieftainship, material possessions and legacy to lead a life of utter asceticism (Faqr) with the spiritual guidance of Hazrat Sheikh Rahamkar (Kaka Sahib). He took his family to Chashmai, setting up a sanctuary (Khalwat) where he performed vigorous self-mortification (Riyadat), in order to overcome his ego (Nafs). In spite of his renunciation, he was a kind benefactor, who financed marriages of the poor, distributed revenues of his estate at Nihalpura, and gave shelter to the family of Khushal Khan whenever life squeezed them. The paper also mentions his literary work in Pashto, Persian and Arabic including Tazkirat-ul-Awliya, alongside more oral narratives documenting his spiritual charisma (Karamat). Ultimately, this paper shines a lot on the life of Faqeer Jameel Baig as a writer, a Sufi saint, on the spiritual heritage he left and the bond he had with Khushal Khan Khattak.

Keywords: Faqeer Jameel Baig, Kaka Sahib, Khushal Khan Khattak, Chashmai, Aka Khel, Luqman, Tazkirat-ul-Awliya, Kaadhy, Baadhy, Zwalanoon, Shahbaz Khan, Chalak, Khawlat

Introduction

Faqeer Jameel Baig was born in present day Akora Khattak at the residence of Shahbaz Khan, the Khattak tribe chief (1019-1050 AH) and a notable Mughal loyalist of his time. His original name was Jameel Khan, but due to his family's association with the Mughals, he was given the title of Baig. Most of his descendants call him Jamal Khan because it sounds similar to Khushal Khan,

however, it is believed that a writer confused his real name with that of another disciple of Kastir Gull Baba (Kaka Sahib), and that name caught on and now widely used by many (Khattak, Zest Rozgar 36). When Jameel adopted the life of Faqeer, he removed the title of "Khan" and "Baig" from his name. Faqeer Jameel Baig wrote his own name with his own pen in his book Tazkirat-ul-Awliya, stating (English translation):

"The writer of this book is Jameel, son of Shahbaz Afghan Khattak" (*Kakakhel, Manaqib-e-Faqeer* 6) Jameel Baig had one full brother: Khushal Khan Khattak, who is considered one of the most prominent figures in Pashtun history, and two half-brothers, Mirbaz Khan and Shamshir Khan (Khattak, *Murassa* 310).

The Birth and misconception

There are many misconceptions regarding the birth year of Jameel Baig. Many authors have recorded his birth year as 966 AH (1558 CE). However, there are contradictions in these writings. According to some, Jameel Baig was the younger brother of Khushal Khan Khattak, yet Khushal Khan was born much later in 1022 AH. Furthermore, their father Shahbaz Khan, himself was born in 1000 AH, and Jameel Baig's mentor, Hazrat Sheikh Rahamkar (famously known as Kaka Sahib), was born in 983 AH (Hayat and Altafullah 144).

In his book (*Zest Rozgar Da Faqeer Jameel Baig*), Dr. Rajwali Shah Khattak cites Afzal Raza stating that Jameel Baig was born in 1024 AH, making him two years younger than Khushal Khan Khattak. These same dates are also supported by Nasratullah Ghashtaly in his article "Of the Gamil Big Mystical Concept." Taking all these points into consideration, Faqeer Jameel Baig was born in 1024 AH, not in 966 AH.

Family Lineage

Jameel Baig (also known as Jameel Khan) was the son of "Shahbaz Khan, who was the son of Yahya, son of Malik Akori, son of Darwesh Muhammad (famously known as Chenjo), son of Uthman, son of Hasan, son of Sheikh Ali, son of Atta (Huti), son of Pati, son of Atho, son of Bargoyat, son of Teri, son of Tuman, son of Luqman (Khattak, *Kulliyat* 8). Luqman was famously known by the nickname Khattak, from which the tribal name originated. (Yaqubi et al. 18)

Malik Akor Khan had eight sons, of whom Yahya Khan was the eldest. Yahya Khan had eleven sons, with Shahbaz Khan being the eldest, and Shahbaz Khan had four sons, and Khushal Khan Khattak was the eldest (Khattak, *Zest Rozgar* 29).

Jameel and Family in battle

Jameel fought alongside his father and brother against the Aka Khel tribe in 1050 A.H. At that time, Jameel was 26 and Khushal was 28 years old. They lost the battle and their father, Shahbaz Khan was heavily wounded, which led to his martyrdom (Yaqubi et al. 24). It is difficult to consider him a martyr, as the conflict was fought between fellow believers for the safety of the chieftaincy. Nevertheless, there is no doubt regarding Shahbaz Khan's personal faith and devotion. Jameel and Khushal soon avenge their loss and won the battle against the Aka Khel.

Although his other two brothers, Mirbaz Khan and Shamshir Khan, are not mentioned as having fought alongside them in this battle, it is possible they were still adolescents at the time.

Path to Devotion

After the battle, Jameel Baig lost interest in his temporary life, and from then on, he decided to devote himself to the way of God. Jameel Khan, one a chieftain and a noble man became a Faqeer. He gave up all his wealth and privileges. Whatever share he possessed in terms of wealth, cash or clothing, he distributed among the poor and needy. He informed his wife and sons about the new spiritual path, to which they agreed.

Faqeer Jameel Baig left Sarai Akora and moved south into the mountains, to a place called Chashmai. There was a spring (Chashma) of pure water surrounded by a forest of (Palosa) trees, with no human settlement around. He brought his family here and presented himself at the Darbar of Sheikh Rahamkar (Kaka Sahib), who had blessed him with good news of paradise (an event discussed later). Chashmai was close to Kaka Sahib's shrine, so commuting was easy for him, as his true purpose was to serve his mentor or spiritual master, Kaka Sahib (Khattak, *Murassa* 618).

Rider of Paradise

Many accounts record that one day, while out hunting, Faqeer Jameel Baig came across the famous saint Hazrat Sheikh Rahamkar, widely known as Kaka Sahib. In his Persian manuscript Jameel Baig referred to him as Hazrat Sheikh

Rahamkar Khattak Karlani (Khattak, *Murassa* 587) in one of his book Jameel Baig wrote: “*The writer of this book is Jameel, son of Shahbaz Afghan Khattak, disciples of Sheikh Rahamkar Afghan Khattak*” (*Kakakhel, Manaqib-e-Faqeer* 6), indicating he was a Yaseenkhel Khattak rather than a Syed.

While Kaka Sahib was resting with his followers, when someone asked Kaka Sahib “What would the rider of Paradise look like?” Pointing at Jameel Baig, Kaka Sahib replied, “Just like this rider.” At that moment, Jameel Baig fell unconscious, and upon awakening, he devoted himself to Kaka Sahib. He was given the title “Faqeer” by Kaka Sahib.

Fighting his Ego (Nafs)

The early life of devotion was not easy for him, when the heart of Jameel Baig turned away from worldly desires and devoted himself to divine knowledge, a state of spiritual ecstasy initially overcame him so intensely that people began calling him mad. However, his actual goal was to fight against his own ego (Nafs). The powerful ego of the young and noble man who had known only comfort all his life.

Overcoming that ego was not an easy task, he fought his spiritual battle by doing wild thing that no one else would dare to do. If sleep was ever threatened to overpower him, he would let himself be bitten by a scorpion or lie down on an anthill. Furthermore, he observed long fasts, sometimes going without food for two consecutive months. Whenever he did eat to break his fast, he would mix so much salt into oil/Ghee that it caused extreme distress instead of relief. The harshness of the meal can be imagined from the fact that once, when Faqeer Jameel Baig left his meal, a stray cat came and licked it. The cat collapsed immediately after consuming the food and died on the spot. (Khattak, *Murassa* 618).

Life as Faqeer Jameel

After the arrival in Chashmai, Faqeer Jameel Baig built a modest house for his family, along with a mosque and a hujra. His hujra was considered his “Khalwat”, where he would pray and spend his days and nights and no one was allowed to enter. He would only come out upon hearing Azaan. It

is said that he would sometimes perform only the obligatory (farz) prayer at the mosque, returning to Khalwat to offer the Sunnah prayer. Since the area was forested, he would lead the pray when someone came to visit, and after meeting them he would return to Khalwat.

He would often travel village to village alongside his disciples to preach the righteous path. He always kept himself informed about the condition of common people. Whenever someone was unable to marry due to poverty, Jameel Baig would arrange their wedding. Furthermore, if he learned that a family had unmarried daughter whose wedding delayed due to financial hardship, he would approach her father, provide him with the financial aid need to get married ((Khattak, *Zest Rozgar* 48).

Even though Faqeer Jameel Baig had nothing left, he still gave charity in the path of God. Most his charity work was done using what remained of inheritance from his father. He only had the village of Nihalpura (village between Jehangira and Khairabad) in his possession, and whatever annual income received from it, no matter the amount was, he would give away as charity on the very day it arrived. Since Faqeer Jameel Baig considered the Nihalpura property to be not just his, but also his children's, he took care of them as it was their rightful inheritance from their grandfather (Khattak, *Zest Rozgar* 46).

Spiritual Charisma (Karamat) of Faqeer Jameel Baig

After embracing a life of modesty and fighting his ego (nafs), Faqeer Jameel Baig developed a miraculous charisma. Once, Akhund Chalak, a warrior who was fighting at Kohistan visited Sheikh Rahmkar (Kaka Sahib). Akhund Chalak requested financial aid in the form of gold and silver to support his warriors and fighters. Kaka sahib told him to go to mountains where my disciple, Faqeer Jameel lives, he will help you. Akhund Chalak, accompanied by his companions, set off toward the mountains. At that time, Jameel Baig had left his home for the nearby forest, where he was engaged in Sama (spiritual music) alongside his disciples.

Through his spiritual revelation, Faqeer Jameel Baig learned of Akhund Chalak's arrival. He instructed his followers to stop the instruments, as Chalak was strict in religious matter and was against the Sama. When Akhund Chalak arrived, he saw Faqeer Jameel sitting with his disciples, engaged in Zikr and worship. Although, the musical instruments were placed to the side, covered with cloths, the sound of Samaa was emerging from the surrounding trees. Seeing this, Akhund Chalak was amazed.

Faqeer Jameel Baig then said to him, "I listen to Samaa, yet you call it an innovation (Biddah). I stopped the Biddah for you, so why then are these trees committing Biddah?" Hearing this Akhund Chalak went quiet and said, "What you say is correct. However, I have been sent by Kaka Sahib for another purpose." Jameel replied, "I know, spread out all the shawls and cloths you have." Faqeer filled their cloths with sand and stones and instructed them to take them along, and they obeyed. After travelling for a while, one of the companions said, "what a madman! We ask him for gold, and he give us stones." But when they untied their shawls all stones had turned into gold and silver ((Khattak, *Zest Rozgar* 52-54).

The other miraculous event occurred when Faqeer Jameel Baig learned about a tyrannical Subedar of Attock. Jameel Baig decided to travel to Attock to free the prisoner that held captive by the Subedar. As Jameel approached the riverbank, the Subedar ordered the boatmen to hold all boats on the opposite bank. The boats were locked on the far side, leaving no arrangements for Faqeer Jameel Baig to cross, as every boat had been chained.

When Jameel Baig reached the riverbank and saw that crossing was blocked, he asked, "Why is this closed? Why are these people being stopped, and who has done this?" Someone replied that the river crossing was blocked, so that you cannot cross. He then asked his disciple and crowd to pick whichever boat they prefer. When they selected the boat, Faqeer called loudly to the boat, "O Boat! You are bound only to the command of God, not to the command of a tyrant! Come and sail my disciples across." The boat immediately began moving toward them without any equipment or

boatman. Faqeer and his companion boarded and set off for the opposite bank. The Subedar, sitting on the tower of Attock fort, watching this sight. Upon the boat's arrival, he asked who set it free. The People told him that the boat had moved on its own without a boatman. The Subedar fearfully came out and welcome Faqeer Jameel Baig and asked for his forgiveness. He informed Jameel Baig that all the prisoners had been released. Jameel asked him to check if anyone left behind, but the Subedar replied that no one else left. Faqeer insisted to search again, saying "Go and look in a specific room, there is an imprisoned woman grinding a hand mill and weeping, release her as well. She belonged to the Akhundkhal caste, and having no close relative of her own. When Subedar heard this, he immediately ordered to bring the woman out. When brought, Jameel Baig smiled and said to her, "Take these five rupees from my side, and I have become your claimant (Khattak, *Zest rozgar* 83-85). These incidents reflect the kindness and generous heart of Faqeer Jameel Baig, who sought to help others even when he had nothing left himself.

It is not always the kindness, sometimes their anger can shake the earth. The severity of such anger can be understood through this instance; during the time of Faqeer Jameel Baig, there were two chiefs in the village of Mabatpur who were very cruel. They would take away the property and wealth of poor and indulge in alcohol. They were not alone in this, but the entire village was involved in such bad habits. Every kind of sin was committed in the there.

When Faqeer Jameel Baig learned of this situation, he called his son, Faqeer Sadiq, along with other disciple, to go and guide the people of the village. Faqeer Sadiq traveled to Mabatpur, preached to the chiefs and the villagers, and tried to guide them toward the right path. However, it had no effect on them. Instead, they laughed at Faqeer Sadiq, mocked him, and even threw garbage at them.

When Faqeer Sadiq returned and told his father Jameel Baig about the behavior of the chiefs and the villagers, Faqeer Jameel became furious, in the state of spiritual ecstasy, he travel toward the village Mabatpur alongside his disciples. Upon

reaching the riverbank, called out to them. A chief named Balak Khan was the only one who appeared, and begged for his forgiveness. Faqeer Jameel Baig assembled all the people of the village and told Balak Khan, "Your house will be saved." With that Jameel Baig shouted, at his shout, entire village of Mabatpur caught fire. Everything was consumed by flames, forcing everyone to carry whatever they could carry and left the village. Only the house of Balak Khan remained safe, as he sought peace from Faqeer Jameel Baig (Khattak, *Zest rozgar* 87-88) (*Manaqib-e-Faqeer*).

Jameel Baig as Writer

According to Mian Wakil Shah Faqeerkhel, a writer and author himself, Jameel Baig was a prominent writer and poet in Pashto, Persian and Arabic. Persian manuscript copies of his works, *Tazkirat-ul-Awliya* and *Noor-e-Muhammadiya*, are preserved in the Pashto Academy Library at the Peshawar University. His work *Majma-ul-Barakat* mentions several other books including *Shams-ul-Arifeen*, *Siraj-ul-Ashiqeen*, *Qudwat-ul-Arifeen* and *Tuhfat-ul-Muqarrabeen*.

Marriages and Descendants

Jameel Baig had four wives: (I) Bibi Kulsoom (II) Bibi Rabia (III) Bibi Arfa and (IV) Bibi Basri, with whom he had thirteen (13) sons and two (2) daughters.

He had three (3) sons from Bibi Basri: Muhammad Hassan, Muhammad Sadiq, and Muhammad Shaiq. Five (5) sons were born from Bibi Rabia: Muhammad Ibrahim, Muhammad Ishaq, Muhammad Siddiq, Muhammad Ashaq, and Muhammad Salih.

Bibi Kulsoom had two (2) sons: Muhammad Ghani and Muhammad Zafar. Three (3) sons were born from Bibi Arfa: Abdul Rehman, Abdul Karim and Abdullah (Mian Wakil Shah Faqeer Khel).

Jameel Baig also had two (2) daughters. Both of whom were married to the sons of Khushal Khan Khattak: Shahbaz Khan and Abdul Qadir Khan. However, some believe that rather than Shahbaz and Qadir Khan, they were married to Kaadhy and Baadhy, the sons of Mirbaz Khan, who were both nephews and son in laws of Faqeer Jameel Baig (Khattak, *Zest Rozgar* 33).

Kaadhy and Baadhy:

Kaadhy and Baadhy were brothers from the village Shaidu. At one point, they became disciples of Faqeer Jameel Baig. Later, they became companions of Bahram Khan, the son of Khushal Khan, who rebelled against his father under the influence of Mughals (Khattak, *Murassa* 527). They even used to harass Faqeer's disciples in Shaidu. *Tareekh-e-Murassa*, confirms that Kaadhy and Baadhy had a dispute with Faqeer Jameel Baig. In fact, Baadhy's son, Zwalanoon confronted Jameel Baig with a sword over an issue. Due to their severe oppression, Faqeer Jameel Baig cursed them, which led to the destruction of their houses.

Jameel and Khushal

The bond between the two brothers can be understood from the fact that no record of any dispute between them was ever written. Whenever members of Khushal Khan's family were squeezed by hardship, they would find refuge by Faqeer Jameel Baig's side. When Khushal's daughter, Taj Bibi fell sick while Khushal was in exile and distress, her last wish was; "After my death take me to Chashmai to Faqeer Baba's Darbar. Even a rebel like Bahram Khan stayed at Chashmai in his very last moments. Though, Khushal Khan was deeply suppressed by his rivals and later by his own son but still Khushal Khan poured his love for his brother into many of his poems.

(Translated for best context and clarity)

*I have one full brother who has taken the path of truth,
I have two other brothers: one is modest, while the other
is immodest.*

(Kuliyat, Khushal Khan Khattak p. 393)

*Where my brother has his residence,
Upon that hill, my peace (Salam) is bestowed.
Whether to my niece or my nephews,
Or to my brother's homes, far and near.
To every one of them, my peace (Salam) I send,
A Heartfelt peace (Salam), from the bottom of my heart.*

(*Firaq Nama*, Khushal Khan Khattak).

Faqeer's Death

While his brother, Khushal Khan Khattak captured the world's attention with his sword and pen, Faqeer Jameel Baig chose the quiet path of spiritual detachment. At last, Jameel Baig passed away in 1116 AH at the age of 92 (Khattak, *Zest Rozgar* 69). The place he had chosen for his grave reflects his simplicity, a desolate place far from any hustle and bustle, with a modest grave that remained without shrine for many years. Today, his blessed shrine is located below Tangaru, a village of his descendants, on the bank of a riverbed (Khwarh) near Jehangira. The place is now called by his name and is known as Faqeer Baba.

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