



KHUSHAL KHAN KHATTAK

The Book of Falconry

Translated by SAMI UR RAHMAN

بازنامه

خوشحال خان خٹک

KHUSHAL KHAN KHATTAK


The Book
of Falconry

Translated by
Sami ur Rahman

PanGraphics

First published in Pakistan 2014

Copyright © 2014 by Sami ur Rahman
Calligraphy by Riffat Khattak
Sketches by Fasi Nawaz and Iqbal Latifi
Miniature paintings by Iqbal Kausar and Mehmood Ali

The moral right of the translator has been asserted

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the translator except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews

Every reasonable effort has been made to trace copyright holders of material reproduced in this book, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the translator would be glad to hear from them

For feedback and orders, please write directly to the translator:
samiurn@yahoo.com

PanGraphics (Private) Ltd.
No. 1, I&T Center, Ramna 7/1,
Islamabad

To
His Highness
Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Vice President of the UAE
an accomplished poet, falconer, and philanthropist
this translation is affectionately dedicated

Even if to the falcon the crow eggs you commit
It still won't produce from them falcons a whit
Even if with the lion it would cohabit
What leonine quality will inherit the rabbit?

(Khushal)

Contents

<i>Forward</i>	xi
<i>Translator's Note</i>	xiii
<i>Introduction</i>	1
1. On General Features	6
2. On Furniture	8
3. On Colors	10
4. On Eyries	12
5. On Manning	16
6. On the Hawk's Mutes	20
7. On Retrieving the Lost Hawk	21
8. On Haggards	25
9. On Tercels	28
10. On Gamebirds	30
11. On a Newly-Caught Hawk	32
12. On the Beginners	34
13. Falconry - An Ode	37
14. On the Throw	38
15. On the Game Season	40
16. On Duck Hawking	42
17. On Hatching	44
18. On Sportsmen - An Ode	47
19. On the Sparrowhawk	48
20. On the Saker	52
21. On the Saker's Colors	55
22. On the Saker's Manning	59
23. On the Shaheen	64
24. On the Shaheen's Colors	69
25. On the Peregrine	72
26. On Hybridization	74

27.	A Word of Caution – An Ode	76
28.	On Diet	78
29.	On Washed Meat	81
30.	On Purgatives	84
31.	On Molting	89
32.	On Enseaming	92
33.	On Infections During the Molt	96
34.	On Treating Low Condition	100
35.	On Food Infections	104
36.	On Nematodes and Asthma	109
37.	On Worms	111
38.	On Lice	112
39.	On Coughing and Shortness of Breath	113
40.	On Cataracts	117
41.	On Costiveness	119
42.	On Dry Meat	121
43.	On False Molt	123
44.	On Frounce	125
45.	On Lethargy	127
46.	On Gastric Trouble	129
47.	On Miscellaneous Diseases	130
	<i>Vocabulary of Technical Terms in Pashto</i>	146

Forward

Khushal Khan Khattak (1613-1689) has widely been hailed as the greatest poet of the Pashto language - a branch of the Indo-Iranian language family and spoken by some 50 million people on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border. His work consists of more than 40,000 couplets on themes ranging from love, aesthetics, statecraft, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy, medicine to jurisprudence and falconry.

Khushal's command in the field is evident from the fact that he wrote the entire book only in six days. It contains a total of forty-seven poems or chapters. In the introduction of the book, which is also written in verse, he mentions yet another *Baaz Nama*, he penned in Persian prose, but, which has, unfortunately, been lost to the ravages of time. His *divan*, however, is replete with references to hawking, while his prose book, *Dastar Nama*, also contains a long essay on the subject.

Contrary to other famous Eastern poets like Rumi, Khayyam, and Attar, Khushal's work has been grossly overlooked in the West. One possible reason is that, unlike Persian and Arabic, there have been very few Westerners, who could actually speak and understand Pashto. And those, who tried their hand, like Major H.G. Raverty, C.E. Biddulph, and D.N. Mackenzie, restricted themselves only to his love and nationalist poems. That's to say, none of them tried to render his *Baaz Nama* in English.

The translation of the book was long overdue. One great difficulty in its way was the highly technical nature of the text. Besides, more than three centuries have elapsed since its writing. Great changes have taken place in the due course. Some of the names and terms are no longer in use. To preserve the beauty of the original was also no less than a challenge.

The translator has taken great pains to overcome all these difficulties. I hope that the endeavor will help in understanding the prevalent practices in Mughal India and that the falconry community will greatly benefit from it.

KAMRAN KHAN YOUSAFZAI

Translator's Note

Khushal was born in 1613 AD in a small town, Akora Khattak, in modern-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The town was founded by Khushal's great-grandfather, Malik Akor, who was the chieftain of the Khattak tribe. The third Mughal emperor, Akbar the Great (1542 -1605), had appointed Malik Akor as the guardian of a section of the royal highway from Delhi to Kabul.

After the death of his father in 1642, Khushal was given the chieftainship post by King Shah Jahan – the builder of the timeless Taj Mahal. Soon after his appointment, Khushal participated in the campaigns of Kangra, Balkh, and Badakhshan, as a military commander, and proved his mettle in war.

During the course of following years, he also met with Shah Jahan a number of times. "It was an era of great affluence," he proudly says in one of his poems. And why not! Like his predecessors, Shah Jahan was a great patron of art, architecture, and literature, and pursued a policy of peaceful coexistence and conciliation toward the followers of other faiths.

In 1658, after much court intriguing and machinations, Shah Jahan was dethroned and imprisoned by his ultra-conservative son, Aurangzeb. A few years later, in 1664, Khushal himself was arrested by the provincial governor of Kabul through a royal decree. He was first kept under house arrest in Delhi and later transferred to the dungeons of the Ranthambore Fort in Rajasthan, India. Overall, he spent about four and a half years in incarceration.

Upon his release, Khushal started a freedom struggle against the Mughal hegemony in the Pashtun belt. He formed an alliance with two other influential chieftains, Aimal Khan Mohmand and Darya Khan Afridi, and was quite successful in a number of military campaigns. When events took a nasty turn, Aurangzeb himself came from mainland India and camped in northern Punjab to supervise the war proceedings.

For Khushal, things, however, started to fall apart with the death of his two allies and his own old age. The Mughals then made inroads in his household by bribing and offering royal offices to his sons. His later life was marked by exile and suffering at the hands of both the Mughals and his sons. He died at the age of seventy-six in 1689, while in exile.

According to his will, his body was brought to his hometown, Akora Khattak, and secretly buried in a place, where, in his own words, “the dust of the Mughal cavalry hoofs could not light upon my grave.”

The *Book of Falconry* was written by Khushal in 1674, on his journey to the Swat Valley, north-western Pakistan. The purpose of his trip was two-fold. First, to urge the Yousafzai tribe to join with him in his struggle against the Mughals. Second, to explore the art of falconry in the region. He wasn't very successful in his political goal, but as to his contribution to the field of falconry, its fame and utility still abides.

There has never been any dearth of falconry books, both in modern and medieval times. What makes Khushal's *Baaz Nama* unique is its poetical form. Perhaps, there's no other work in world literature that deals the subject matter in verse on the one hand and keeps its systematic exposition and professionalism intact on the other.

Besides, unlike the Persian treatise *Baz-nama-yi Nasiri* by Taymur Mirza, Khushal's manual is pretty concise and cogent. There are no long-drawn and tedious accounts. The style and diction is extremely down-to-earth. It doesn't stray from the topic and is more in synch with modern developments than Mirza's.

The book also precedes the Persian treatise by almost two centuries. The Mughal rulers and noblemen, no doubt, were ardent falconry enthusiasts. There are great many miniature paintings, depicting them with hawks on fists. Many such accounts abound even in modern literature. And yet, not a single work that survives from the era. Khushal's book fills that much-needed gap and throws sufficient light on the prevalent practices of his time.

The poems of Khushal are rather an aesthetic and philosophical take on the subject. Some of the theories put forth - his views on hybridization, for instance - provide food for thought for even modern ornithologists. It's only natural for someone like Khushal, who regarded falconry not merely as a pastime but a science, asking for great devotion, dedication, and ardor on part of the falconer:

You see, either don't opt
For falconry at all
And when you do
Go get guts withal

I'll tell you what
 By falconry is meant?
 It's sheer torment
 Torment, torment

One sticks to it
 Whether one's old or young
 One sticks to it
 Whether one's weak or strong

All the poems - except the three odes or *ghazals* - have been written in the form of *mathnawi*, where the two lines of an individual couplet carry end rhymes. In the translation, for better understanding and simplicity's sake, each line has been broken into two parts, so the second and fourth lines fulfill that purpose. The translation is based on the Kabul manuscript and every possible effort has been made to remain faithful to the original.

The book can conveniently be divided into two parts. The first relates mainly to the manning, training, trapping, hatching, colors, and types etc., whereas the second to diseases and medicine. Naturally, this later section would make for a less interesting reading, but still there are many words of advice that the aspiring falconers and veterinarians will find quite useful and valid even today.

Like the rest of the book, however, here also Khushal avoids unnecessary chores and rituals, and comes up with a natural course of action.

It's great when you're
 Aware of every treatment
 But you should apply it only
 When she really needs it

Else, the hawk's natural state
 Is what I advice
 Medicine, you know, has
 Never been a good choice

To sum up, the translation is only a humble effort to give weight to the prevalent notion that falconry - apart from being a great field sport,

noble enough to be termed as a princely and kingly art – has its due share in world literature, and, therefore, it's something what UNESCO would aptly call "the intangible cultural heritage of humanity."

That, there are some responsibilities associated with such recognition, goes without saying. Protection and conservation of the endangered species, creation of sanctuaries, ensuring a balance between the raptor and quarry populations, and educating the falconer community of the daunting issues of the 21st century, are only to name a few.

I'd like to thank the president of Pakistan Falconry Association, Kamran Khan Yousafzai, for his continuous support and encouragement. Edwin J. Wylde was very gracious in editing the text and suggesting important changes. Mumtaz Ahmad, graphic designer at PanGraphics, worked diligently on the project and I thank him for that. I also acknowledge the help of Shahid Ali Shah, librarian at the Pashto Academy, Peshawar University, Taj Muhammad, librarian at the KPK Wildlife Department, and Syed Iqbal Ahmed, senior clerk at the Khushal Khan Khattak Library, Akora Khattak. The artwork is a collective effort by Fasi Nawaz, Riffat Khattak, Kausar Iqbal, and Iqbal Latifi. I appreciate their hard work.

SAMI UR RAHMAN

*"Nature of the golden eagle
Luckyly do I own
Ready to make headway,
You'll see, in every zone!"*

Written in the seventeenth century by the renowned Pakistani poet, Khushal Khan Khattak, the "Book of Falconry" is a rare work in verse, surviving from the classical Mughal era. It covers the whole gamut of the field, including trapping, training, manning, colors, types, furniture, hatching, diseases, and medicine. The dark-eyed, known as the long-winged in the West, make for a large part of the text and the species discussed are the saker, the altai falcon, gyrfalcon, shaheen, peregrine, laggar, and red-headed merlin. Among the yellow-eyed, or the short-winged, it's the goshawk, sparrowhawk, shikra, and besra etc. Dealing the subject matter in a concise, compact, and cogent manner, the poet gives the kingly sport an aesthetic and philosophical touch. The style and diction is down-to-earth and easy to follow. Apart from its historical and literary importance, the manual enjoys a great practical value, as some of the basic principles mentioned are as relevant today as they were three and a half centuries ago.

About the Translator: Sami ur Rahman is a freelance columnist and translator, based in Pakistan. He holds a master's degree in political science and is currently working on Khushal's quatrains. He belongs to the same small town that was founded by Khushal's ancestors, and to which the poet himself belonged.

