

## An analysis and Assessment of human dignity in the poems of Shad Mohammad Khan

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### ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to analyze Shad Mohammad Khan's verses, focusing on his insightful views about human perfection and dignity. It attempts to offer a philosophical analysis of the poet's writings, focusing in particular on ideas related to human love from mystical, theological, and philosophical perspectives. There are several religions, including Islam, that uphold the importance of the idea of human dignity. Shad Mohammad Khan's poetry offers a unique perspective on this specific problem and calls for a careful examination. A small body of academic work has been written about this esteemed poet. The aim of this research is to provide a critical examination of the verses written by Shad Mohammad Khan, with a particular focus on how human dignity and greatness are portrayed. Moreover, the goal of this study is to have a thorough philosophical discussion on the poet's corpus of work, paying special emphasis to how philosophy, religion, and mysticism intersect in his works. By adding to the scholarly knowledge of Shad Mohammad Khan's literary and philosophical significance, the aim is to close the current scholarly gap. The current investigation employs an all-encompassing methodology that integrates library and field research. The present study employs a methodology that entails the application of descriptive and analytical tools to analyse the poet's lines and the implementation of surveys to evaluate their relevance and impact. The poet's original works are considered primary sources, whilst related works, criticism, and interpretations are considered secondary sources.

**Keywords:** *Humanity, Philanthropy, Human Dignity, charity*

### Introduction

Islam's core belief is centred on the idea that all people belong to a single nation, as stated in the Quran. (Quran, p. 2:213) It was explicitly stated by the Prophet Muhammad (s. w.

a.) in his final speech at Hajjatul Wadda that Islam is for all people, now and in the future. (Undalasi, 1991) The Qur'an has been subject to numerous misconceptions. The portrayal of this text frequently emphasizes themes of violence and animosity, potentially fostering a sense of unquestioning adherence among adherents of the Islamic faith. Instead, it offers a framework for actively participating in society and discovering a sense of meaning and direction in one's existence. One of the primary mechanisms through which this is achieved is by placing a significant emphasis on the integration of human knowledge and rationality within the realm of religious endeavours. The Qur'an places significant importance on reason as a method for comprehending both the natural world and the Divine. Islam has established a set of universal fundamental rights that are to be upheld and honoured for all of mankind, regardless of whether they are within the jurisdiction of an Islamic state or outside. Islam has also established specific rights for non-Muslim individuals who may reside within the confines of an Islamic state. Notwithstanding this, there is a resounding and vehement assertion that the global understanding of fundamental human rights originated from the Magna Carta of Britain. The Magna Carta was established more than six centuries following the emergence of Islam.

In present article attempt is made to explain and project the true concept of humanity as portrayed in the poetry of Shad Muhammad Khan, is a profound exploration of humanity and philanthropy. It revolves around the idea that each human being, as envisioned by Allah in His infinite wisdom, possesses an identical essence. This shared essence signifies that individuals are inherently inclined to act benevolently toward others and empathize with their suffering.

Shad Muhammad Khan's poetry beautifully captures these universal themes, aligning with the sentiments expressed by other mystics and Sufi poets throughout history. His verses resonate with a profound illumination of the concept of human dignity, shedding light on the inherent goodness that binds humanity together (Zwarki, 2017, p. 14). His poetry echoes the principles of unity, compassion, and shared human experiences, which form the bedrock of the Islamic faith. By delving into the verses of Shad Muhammad Khan, this article seeks to explore and further elucidate the profound notions of human dignity as expressed through the prism of Islamic poetry (Saidi, 1983, p. 4)

Moreover, the concept of human dignity as portrayed in the works of Shad Muhammad Khan has been the subject of limited scholarly exploration. Existing academic literature provides valuable insights into the broader themes of mysticism and Sufi poetry in Islamic culture, but there is a scarcity of dedicated research specifically focused on Shad Muhammad Khan's contributions. Therefore, this article aims to address this scholarly gap by conducting an in-depth analysis of his poetry and its relevance to the concept of human dignity. This examination will contribute to a deeper understanding of the poet's philosophical and moral significance within the context of Islamic literature (Khan, 2002, p. 7)

In the following sections, we will delve into Shad Muhammad Khan's verses, which poignantly reflect on human dignity, and analyze the profound impact of his poetry on the discourse of humanity and philanthropy. By drawing from his verses and aligning them with the teachings of Islam, we hope to shed light on the timeless message of unity, compassion, and the shared essence of humanity that resonates in his works. Shad Muhammad Khan, a renowned poet of his era, dedicated his poetic craft to the profound exploration of human dignity. His classic poems resonated with a central focus on this timeless theme, leaving a lasting mark in the world of literature.

## Research Problem

The poetry of Shad Muhammad Khan explores the notion of human dignity, examining it via mystical, theological, and philosophical perspectives. Although his viewpoint may diverge from that of sophists and other philosophers, it would be inaccurate to assert that he maintained complete silence over the issue. Despite major changes, his theories demonstrate linkages to the Renaissance era. A notable quandary develops due to the prevailing misinterpretation among our cadre of writers and scholars. There exists a misconception among certain individuals that humanism emerged solely during the Renaissance period, a view that is indeed wrong. Numerous challenges continue to impact the overall welfare of individuals residing in underdeveloped nations. Articles such as the one mentioned can make a significant contribution towards addressing these issues within certain fields and provide vital guidance to the global community.

## Significance of Research

The poetry of Shad Mohammad Khan upholds human dignity by stressing the need to strive for greatness, grow morally, and avoid evil. The idea that humanity is inherently superior to other species is emphasized in many passages that highlight the divine's gift of inherent perfection. The importance of Shad Mohammad Khan's poetry is shown by the way it attests to his dual identities as a devoted Muslim and a kind person.

## Research Objectives

- a. To explore the concepts of humanity and human dignity within select poems by Shad Mohammad Khan.
- b. To analyze the religious and mystical perspectives regarding human dignity in Shad Mohammad Khan's poetry.
- c. To conduct an in-depth examination of the theme of human dignity.

## Humanity and Human dignity

The term "humanity" originates from the Latin word "*Hmanitas*," which refers to the inherent quality of being human and encompasses qualities such as kindness and compassion. The term "humanity" can encompass the entirety of the human species or alternatively denote the quality of benevolence and compassion exhibited by individuals. The human race comprises the entirety of individuals inhabiting the planet Earth. Furthermore, it encompasses other human attributes, including but not limited to love, compassion, creativity, and the absence of robotic or extraterrestrial characteristics. There exists a divergence of viewpoints among many schools of thought about the conceptualization of humanity, a subject that is readily contemplated yet has challenges when attempting to articulate a definitive proposition. Many scholars and advocates assert that the core objectives of social philosophers and leaders of movements revolve around humanism and humanitarianism. In order to mitigate the risk of misinterpretation and becoming entangled in literal interpretations and logical disputes, it is imperative to initially direct our attention towards comprehending the essence of the human being and its multifaceted nature. Subsequently, we can go into an examination of the derived infinitive form "humanity," encompassing its significance, virtues, and functionalities. Numerous Pashto poets have extensively explored the themes of humanity and dignity in their literary works. A comprehensive examination and interpretation are necessary to comprehend the relevance of these ideas. (Shinwari, 2004, p. 12)

The poems of Shad Muhammad Khan shed unique light on the subject of human dignity, as explored in Dr. Syed Azeem Shah Khayal Bukhari's work (Shad Mohammad Khan's Kuliyaat). In this regard, it is significant that the Holy Qur'an prioritizes humankind, and traditional Pashto poets—such as Shad Muhammad Khan—emphasize human dignity, embodying this viewpoint as pious Muslims and bearing similarities to the writings of Abdul Rahman Baba. Shad Muhammad Khan's poems, for example, promote virtue and discourage evil while advocating for human perfection and humanity, as Dr. Syed Nazim Sidi said in an interview. (Kargar, 1982)

However, this study distinguishes itself from previous research by carrying out an exhaustive analysis of human dignity in a few chosen poems by the selected poet within the context of a scholarly paper. The main difference is the claim that the poet's examination of human dignity in his poetry requires an analysis from a mystic and religious perspective. A particular fallacy has been noted in some previous talks, where some have approached it solely from a religious perspective and others have approached it via a philosophical lens (Mandozi, 1988, p. 8) Poetry by Shad Muhammad Khan tackles the idea of human dignity by highlighting the significance of aiming for greatness, upholding morality, and avoiding evil. One theme that appears repeatedly throughout his poems is Allah's bestowal of greatness upon humanity, underscoring the fact that humans are better than other creatures. Khan's poetry highlights the value of his literary efforts by demonstrating the traits of a good Muslim and a kind person.

This study used a mixed methodology that included approaches from libraries and the field, as well as techniques from surveys, analysis, and description. A significant amount of reading has been done, and when needed, thorough notes have been taken out of the books to bolster assertions. The highest level of accuracy has been maintained while quoting sources. Thorough critical examination has been a hallmark of the material review and information sourcing processes, guaranteeing a perceptive appraisal of every quote. In addition, an extensive range of interviews—including both in-person and virtual exchanges—with many subject matter experts have been carried out using a structured interviewing approach.

### **Depiction of Human Dignity in works of Shad Muhammad Khan**

Shad Mohammad Khan was a highly influential individual during his age, widely acknowledged as a major character and esteemed as the Khan of his contemporary period. He originated from a genealogical line that encompassed his paternal figure, Mir Afzal Khan. Notwithstanding the numerous honors presented in the introduction to the Diwan, the author's origins remain unidentified. Shad Mohammad Khan demonstrated a profound appreciation for the works of Abdal-Rahman Baba, integrating the mystic's influence into his own poetic creations. The poetry authored by him exhibit characteristics of simplicity, fluidity, and a notable level of profundity. The author's utilisation of analogies demonstrates a notable level of proficiency. Shad Mohammad Khan's poetic repertoire encompasses a wide array of subjects, including virtual and genuine love, guidance, and societal concerns. However, the most notable aspect of his poetry lies in his profound examination of human dignity, approached through the lenses of religious and mystical perspectives. (Mangal, 2011, p. 5)

The question of whether Shad Muhammad Khan's poetry that explore the idea of human dignity fall under the category of philosophy, religion, mysticism, or even a combination of these emerges. During a phone conversation with Dr. Syed Nazeem Sidi, the following is recommended:

"It will not be an exaggeration to say that the poems of Abdul Rahman Baba and his contemporaries contain more reflections on human dignity than those of poets from the second period. However, Shad Muhammad Khan's exploration of human dignity possesses elements of mysticism and philosophy. We can conclude that all poets from this literary school approach the topic from the angles of mysticism and religion, but their philosophical aspects are also noteworthy. Wisdom and reflection are often regarded as essential for individuals, following mysticism, religion, and philosophy. When a person does good and refrains from evil, all sources of guidance bestow wisdom and knowledge upon them" (Noorbakhsh, 2016, p. 9)

In light of the aforementioned discourse, Shad Muhammad Khan posits that humans are regarded as entities endowed with inherent dignity by a divine entity, hence positioning them at the apex of the natural order. The poems of the author encapsulate the fundamental aspects of human dignity, which include the attribution of worth to human being, the advocacy for virtuous behaviour, and the avoidance of transgressions. These attributes are intrinsic to the embodiment of a morally upright individual and a devout adherent of the Islamic faith. Regarding the concept of dignity, various commentators and scholars hold differing viewpoints, and unanimity eludes them. Some believe that human beings are empowered to attain dignity through their excellence, while others link human dignity with piety, faith, and righteousness. The essence of these discrepancies lies in the multifaceted nature of human dignity (Associate, 1983)

The remark provided suggests that human dignity is bestowed upon individuals at an individual level, largely to promote equality with others and personal growth. Considering the universal presence of a shared exterior structure among humans worldwide, the need of advancing mankind has paramount significance. There are those who argue that the concept of human dignity is an inherent and individualistic attribute, but others maintain that it is intricately linked to notions of power and governance. The essential point at hand pertains to the determination and preeminence of an individual, which are subjects subject to personal discretion. However, there are proponents who argue that the concept of perfection and dignity in individuals is intricately linked to their practice of altruism, engagement in benevolent actions, and avoidance of immoral behavior. Upon careful examination of all aspects, it may be deduced that persons possess the inherent capacity to make moral decisions by opting for virtuous actions and refraining from engaging in malevolent behavior. "One of the reasons for human dignity lies in the unique human structure. Humans are created in a way that distinguishes them from all other creatures on Earth, both in external and internal aspects. As mentioned in a verse from the Holy Qur'an, 'Man is created beautiful.' This beauty signifies the harmony and balance inherent in human beings, which is the essence of dignity." (Yadullahpur, 2009, p. 11)

Considering the aforementioned discussion, we refer a compilation of verses extracted from the poetry of Shad Muhammad Khan. These verses serve as a means of imparting wisdom and communicating a message centered on the values of humanity. They inspire individuals to aspire towards the cultivation of virtuous qualities and the embodiment of moral excellence.

په بدی باندې خپه د بد کردار دی

په نېکۍ باندې شادمان دی رب زما

د بدی نه یې ده نهی په مونږ کړي

د نېکۍ کړی فرمان دی رب زما

(Khan, 2002, p. 62)

نېکي نه کړې په بدۍ کې خوشالېږي

دا بدې چې ته کوي په کوم سبب

هېڅ دې فرق د بدۍ نېکي اونه کړ

لکه فرق د اوبو نه کوي کب

د نېکۍ په کار کې پل به بدل نه کړي

د بدۍ پکار کې گرځي روز و شب

د نېکۍ په کار کې سعې کوشش نه کړي

د بدۍ پکار کې ډېر کوي طلب

په بدۍ کې دې خپل ځان خراب تراب کړ

هم دې واړه شرمنده کړ کُل نسب

(Khan, 2002, p. 74)

The above stated verses collectively emphasise the significance of the human condition, the inherent value of every individual, and the ethical obligation to engage in benevolent actions while abstaining from harmful behavior towards fellow human beings. The words of Shad Muhammad Khan collectively assert that humans occupy a superior position in comparison to all other creatures, and this superiority is intricately linked to their inherent dignity. In accordance with Islamic theology, it is believed that Allah has created mankind in a morally upright and visually appealing manner. The Holy Qur'an encompasses a multitude of guidelines and principles regarding human behaviour and compassion.

In the grand scheme of creation, humans stand as the most noble and exalted beings, designated as Ashraf al-Makhluqat. In essence, Bani Adam, all human beings, shares equality in terms of their inherent humanity and dignity within the framework of Islam. Every individual possesses their own dignity, deserving of reverence and respect according to Islamic principles.

In an interview with Muhammad Kargar on the subject of self-respect, he expounds: The shared beginnings of humanity can be traced back to a common source, where humans were produced from the same earthy substance and brought to life through the infusion of a single drop of water. These commonalities extend beyond mere physical features, encompassing both exterior and internal attributes that are bestowed upon all individuals. Abdul Rahman Baba consistently references the concept of self-dignity within the poems of the wayfarers, with a predominant foundation in the Islamic faith and its teachings. Consequently, his lines serve as a testimonial to the significance of self-respect. (Associate, 1983)

When we delve into the concept of human dignity, it's essential to highlight both the internal and external facets of this dignity. This inherent dignity is integral to the nature of humanity. Humans possess intellectual capacity and rationality, with a soul and heart that are

inherently pure and sacred. They are endowed with both external and internal senses, setting them apart as superior to all other creatures. Human beings' wisdom serves as evidence of their completeness and defines their capabilities. This intellectual potential distinguishes humans from other creatures. According to Aquinas, an individual can exhibit morality independently of societal influences and contribute to the establishment of a moral society by doing good and refraining from wrongdoing. It is crucial to acknowledge that human nature is influenced by various factors, including society, heredity, the unconscious mind, and collective social consciousness. In truth, humans possess the capacity for sound reasoning and virtuous conduct, facilitated by their capacity for thought and knowledge. However, there are instances when external coercion or societal constraints lead individuals to engage in wrongful actions, even when they possess the innate ability to think and act virtuously.

Shad Muhammad Khan, in his poetic expressions, aligns with the role of a moral poet and regards ethics as an integral component of human dignity.

د بدی نه په هېڅ رنگ نه شوې تائب  
بدي تاله په څه بنکاري مناسب  
د نېکۍ په کار کې پل اخستی نه شې  
په بدی کې له تیز باده یې غالب  
په بدی کې ځان د نور هسې څرگند کړې  
د نېکۍ د هره کاره شې غایب  
که کوې نېکي بدي پټه به نه کړې  
په اوږو دې مقرر دي دوه کاتب  
حق ویل دې چرې نه راځي په ژبه  
په جهان کې مشهور شوې په کاذب  
(Khan, 2002, p. 75)

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راشه اوباسه د بدو چارو لاس  
نور په طبع باندي مه څه د خناس  
نیک عمل کړه وظیفه ادمیت زده کړه  
غیر له شرعي قدم مه ږده کوز و پاس  
دا دنیا توره بلا ده په باطن کې  
په ظاهر ده لکه ناوې په لباس  
نادانان پرې لکه مچ هسې راټول دي  
هونبیاران ترې ساتي ځان په ډېر وسواس  
(Khan, 2002, p. 255)

Shad Mohammad Khan acts as a moral poet in all of the aforementioned lines and poems, directing people towards moral behavior. He emphasizes the value of virtue while decrying immoral behavior, much like a preacher. Aristotle was a firm believer in the development of virtues, placing them in the middle of nature and intelligence. He believed that the formation of piety was largely dependent on nature, habit, and intelligence. (Bowin, 2020, pp. 1-12) On the other hand, Plato rejected the idea of good, claiming that light is produced by the sun and is necessary for things to grow and learn. According to his theory, the idea of the good is inextricably linked to the truth and is the ultimate source of knowledge. Plato asserts that morally pure people are capable of creating an inwardly and externally virtue-oriented society. (Gerson, 1984, pp. 1-5)

Shad Muhammad Khan, in his capacity as a poet, establishes a benchmark for the concept of humanity and the process of humanization by employing a philosophical framework and drawing upon intellectual insights. From the standpoint of Arifs and Sufis, the heart and soul are regarded as fundamental elements in the pursuit of human perfection. Within the realm of wisdom, it is imperative to recognise that intelligence is a distinctive characteristic inherent to the human species. This truth has been empirically confirmed by scientists. The human existence is characterised by a unique amalgamation of components and elements that are not present in any other entity within the cosmos. The amalgamation of these constituents within the realm of human life means that humans embody the pinnacle of natural essence, cognitive awareness, and intellectual capacity. The tripartite structure of human existence encompasses the aspects of animality, humanity, and character. Shad Mohammad Khan also makes reference to the concept of knowledge in relation to human dignity, asserting that people possess intellect, a characteristic that sets them apart from other beings. The cognitive abilities inherent in the human species, encompassing a range of strengths and virtues, serve to differentiate individuals as extraordinary entities within the global context.

هر بي عقل وي بي رحمه په غريب  
لکه ترس په بیمار نه شي د طيب  
رحم ښه دی رحيم ځکه د رب نوم دی  
هر بي رحم نه وي عقل ته قريب  
چې د عقله مرور وي انسان نه وي  
هر بي عقل ته پند هېڅ وي د اديب  
بي وفا رحم مدار تابع د عقل  
جفا ظلم د بي عقل وي ترتيب  
بي رحمي ظلم جفا د احمق کار وي  
چې هميش عمل په خولې کړي د رقيب  
(Khan, 2002, p. 98)

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عقل سر دی همگي د ښو خويونو

دا جوهر چي چا له ورکړي پاک تراب  
د عاقل چي سړي کار شي د بي عقلو  
تل به خوري غوتې په غم کې د درياب  
چي د عقل خزانه چا څخه نه وي  
وي په شان د بي غلې کندو خراب  
(Khan, 2002, p. 91)

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ښه او بد سره په عقل پېژندی شي  
څه بيلتون کوي د ښو بدو دواب  
(Khan, 2002, p. 90)

The poet's verses contain significant words regarding humanity and the concept of human dignity, conveying the idea that human beings are exceptional and extraordinary. In line with Descartes' philosophy, he proposed that when he believed in his own existence, he pondered the question, "What am I?" It became evident that every factor contributing to his belief was rooted in thought. Thus, he concluded that because he possessed thought, he existed. In the absence of thought, his fundamental identity would be nullified. This perspective aligns with Islamic teachings, which place a strong emphasis on the act of thinking and deem the lack of it as detrimental. Franz Fronmius, an individual characterized by intellectual virtue, is associated with moral virtue, according to O'Connor. Aristotle widely recognized as the first philosopher to present a comprehensive series of lessons and lectures on ethics, produced a work known as Nicomachean Ethics. This work was collected and edited, presenting novel and practical ethical principles for human society. (Aristotle, 2003)

The fundamental question of ethics had a profound impact in ancient times, and Aristotle's response to this query holds great significance. Despite the 20th-century philosophers largely neglecting this question, recent research affirms its value in the annals of human civilization. Similarly, other verses authored by Shad Muhammad Khan reflect these sentiments.

بي عمله علم مه له خدايه غواړه  
لا په وينو اوښکو ډېر پرې باندې ژاړه  
نايينا چي څي په لارې اخر پوند دی  
دغه حيف دی چي بينا درومي په شاړه  
علم گر عمل اوبه ښکي دانه ده  
بي اوبو به څه دانه غواړي له شاړه  
هر يو کار دی د عمل د علم نه دی  
دې شيطان ته به لعنت نه وو په غاړه  
(Khan, 2002, p. 225)

*Pray for God to protect us from pointless knowledge and emphasize the need to lament over it.*

*A blind person who strays remains blind; it's a significant issue if they traverse dangerous paths.*

*Knowledge is like the field, action is the water, and goodness is the crop. Without water, the field cannot yield anything.*

*Action holds greater importance than knowledge. While Satan possessed vast knowledge, he lacked action. In humanism, the synergy of knowledge and action is essential for accomplishment and life.*

It can be inferred that Shad Muhammad Khan, akin to other poets within the lineage of Abdul Rahman Baba, embodies the essence of a poet who espouses humanistic values. He provides them with instruction that aligns with the major concepts of this particular literary movement.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the poetry of Shad Muhammad Khan provides an in-depth examination of the idea of human dignity that is deeply ingrained in the Sufi and mystical traditions. His poetry adds to the vast fabric of Sufi literature and is consistent with the ideals and style upheld by Abdul Rahman Baba's disciples. This environment echoes the larger intellectual foundations of Sufism by emphasising the moral and ethical aspects of human existence. But it's crucial to remember that, even with the poets like Shad Muhammad Khan's enormous impact and importance in Sufi literature, there is still a significant research vacuum in terms of thorough and committed scientific analyses of their writings. Though a significant amount of research has been done on the great poets of the Sufi tradition and on classical Sufi poetry, poets such as Shad Muhammad Khan have received relatively little specific attention. This research void offers a chance for more investigation and examination. Subsequent research endeavors may extend the analysis of Shad Muhammad Khan's writings by scrutinizing the subtle nuances in his poetry concerning human dignity and ethical theory. These kinds of studies might provide a more nuanced comprehension of his contributions to Sufi literature and its applicability in modern times. Furthermore, contrasting Shad Muhammad Khan with other Sufi poets and mystics could help highlight the unique qualities of his viewpoint on human dignity. Moreover, interdisciplinary studies that link Shad Muhammad Khan's poetry themes to more general Islamic intellectual and ethical debates are welcome. These kinds of research can help us better comprehend the significant themes in his lyrics and how they relate to the moral discourse of today by bridging the gap between the literary and philosophical aspects of his work.

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