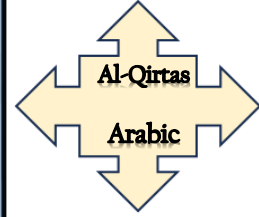


An Examination of the "Walwar" Tradition among the "Pashtun" in Urdu and Pashto Literature



Dr. Anwar Ali
Dr. Humaira
Fazal kabir

Assistant Professor Department of Urdu, Islamia College
University Peshawar
Assistant Professor Department of Urdu, Islamia College
University Peshawar
Lecturer Department of Urdu, Islamia College University
Peshawar

Abstract

The tradition of Walwar, in which a father arranges their daughter's marriage to another man in exchange for financial incentives, continues to exist in Urdu literature, alongside other aspects of Pashtun society, both positive and negative. Contemporary and past authors have illuminated the obscure elements of this Pashtun tradition. The possibility of any remnants of this behaviour enduring is not ruled out. There has been no prominent Urdu writer who has ever urged the Pashtun people to completely forsake their language. The Pashtun people, who are adherents of Islam, seem to be deeply entangled in their cultural traditions. Regardless of their level of understanding, there will always be individuals who defy social and cultural conventions. Fiction writers have consistently strived to integrate Pashtoonwali principles with Islamic ideologies, while being mindful of Pashtun culture. Moreover, their works have promoted the notion that the Pashtun people have the potential to enhance their culture and emerge as a civilised nation on the global stage by rejecting immorality and adhering to universally accepted moral standards. We acknowledge the cultural significance of assessing such abhorrent activities by furnishing you with the necessary research materials for your review.

Key Words: (Pashtun, Pashtun society, Pashtoonwali, Walwar, Mairman, dowry, chargul, kaldary, Islamic beliefs)

Introduction

Despite Islam's elevation of women to a high position, certain countries' decline led to the introduction of abhorrent traditions that continue to exist in the present day. When Muslims conquered these areas, they introduced their ideals. Hinduism has significantly influenced local customs and culture throughout the subcontinent. In addition, Hinduism promoted ethical conduct. The indigenous people's strong inclination towards brotherhood guaranteed that women, similar to the Shudras in Hinduism, continued to uphold their subordinate position even after embracing Islam. Pashtun cultural norms historically did not accord women the same level of importance as mandated by Islamic law. Pashtunwali culture encompasses both positive and negative elements, which are seen in its beliefs and traditions. Despite being respected as "Mairman" or Goddesses in this community, women were subjected to cruelty and degradation

when they were married against their will or without their consent. Indeed, it was considered offensive to solicit women's opinions. One of the most egregious customs was the "Walwar" tradition, which involved the sale of sisters and daughters in exchange for money. Another reprehensible practice was the systematic denial of women's rights to inherit property.

Urdu short stories depict the positive and negative facets of Pashtun culture, especially the traditional Walwari lifestyle. Similar to the early writers, modern short stories have emphasised enduring customs that persist in Pashtun society. The practice involves the allocation of women as female indentured servants to individuals who provide compensation to the parents of the girls. Due to the widespread recognition of the tradition and the strong connections between the families of the girl and boy, the custom never infringed upon the rights of parents or brothers to their daughters. The daughters were accorded reverence and were never subjected to any sense of inferiority by their in-laws. Due to a widespread tradition, the reputation of married women was never compromised. In addition to the general population, the religious community was also impacted by the tradition. The custom was so prevalent that individuals who asserted greater wealth were greatly esteemed and respected by their relatives by marriage. Nevertheless, as time passed, the tradition transformed into a multitude of negative consequences. Most individuals consider the prevailing tradition, which goes beyond mere commerce as it entails acquiring wealth by exploiting the weddings of sisters or daughters, to be a malevolent force. Despite the custom's lack of acceptance, it has not been completely eradicated. As mentioned before, it was not first traded due to long-standing tradition. Furthermore, the primary focus of the marriages was to secure the most suitable position for daughters and sisters, with individuals striving to obtain a place that matched their social status. The most unfavourable iteration of the tradition occurred when certain individuals exploited it as a means to ensure economic security. This led to a shift in perspectives due to the detrimental nature of the practice. The educated and cultured class not only abandoned the tradition, but also displayed robust opposition.

The old custom served as a means of bestowing honour upon married girls, so enhancing their value and recognition. These behaviours indicated that parents contributed their own funds, in addition to the money from Walwar, to support their daughters. Certain individuals, driven by the only objective of amassing wealth within the boundaries of established customs, even disregarded the need of seeking a morally upright individual or someone with a respectable appearance when selecting spouses for their sisters and daughters. These weddings exacerbated the challenges and anguish in the lives of the girls. Despite society's condemnation of the practice, certain individuals persist in trafficking underage girls under the pretence of cultural traditions. When marriage is predicated on such cultural practices, ladies are perceived as akin to indentured servants within the families of their in-laws. Walwar is a malevolent ceremonial practice that inflicts destruction and brings about grief in the lives of married young women. The Urdu short story writers highlighted the detrimental aspects of the habit in order to increase awareness and eliminate it. Tahir Afridi's short tale "Khula Sandooq" features caustic commentary. The way she is handled by her mother, father, and brother is akin to treating her as a commodity, like one would give a cow, goat, or cattle for sale. (1) The act of marrying a young woman to an elderly man, or vice versa, is regarded as a conventional method of accumulating riches.

"Kanwari Bewa" is a short fiction written by Rahat Zakheli that employs the figure "Marghay" to illustrate the abhorrent nature of certain traditions. The narrative compels us to acknowledge the abhorrent and unrelenting nature of this behaviour. Marghay is in a marriage with a child that is nine years old, while she herself is fifteen years old. The author states that

Marghay's father was a covetous individual, and due to his desire for fortune, Marghay was compelled to marry someone from a remote location. She became a widow shortly after getting married. She continued to exert control over the slaves even after her marriage had ended. Marghay was subjected to servitude by her in-laws and they adamantly refused to consider releasing her from the marital obligation. From that moment forward, the act of using cosmetics or engaging in other methods of self-enhancement was regarded as a sinful act. Her existence has acquired the characteristic of a melancholic essence. They regarded her as a disastrous event that would happen to their household and son. She was a perpetual source of concern for the family. Subsequently, she had to withstand the incessant onslaught of derogatory remarks from her relatives. While she was on the roof, savouring the fresh air, she came perilously close to being hurled into a blazing inferno. The father-in-law intervened when his malevolent mother-in-law started accusing and mistreating her. He defended his wife and asked why she had decided to converse with the woman. "I desire to incinerate her and then apply oil on the resulting ashes." She opted to end her life by submerging herself in a river due to the overwhelming anguish she could no longer bear. "Taisra Khat" is a concise novella written by Farigh Bukhari, with Marghay as the protagonist, a charming orphan. As to the author's account, she entered into a marriage with a malevolent individual due to her father's insatiable desire for riches. The user's text is "(4)". Initially, her spouse displayed affection for her in the early stages of their marriage, but later he married another person. Salima relocated to her parents' residence along with her dependent kid following the termination of her spousal privileges. Both Jirga, a traditional Pashtun assembly for community decision-making, and divine guidance were invoked by her father to establish his authority over her. However, Aqil, due to their marriage status, was given preference over her father by both of these sources. However, in contrast to Marghay, she resorted to legal action when she was unable to find a means of evasion. Upon her arrival, she experienced disillusionment and subsequently embraced Christianity with the approval of her lawyer. The little story portrays the habit as a complete betrayal of kindness. According to her husband, he had financially supported her to become a bondmaid, which left her unable to advocate for herself. The author has highlighted the societal hypocrisy that arises when individuals exploit religion for their own personal benefit.

The followers of different religions hold a negative view of us and our faith due to these simplistic actions; they perceive us as being aggressive and lacking cultural advancement. Islam has traditionally advocated for the eradication of gender injustice and the empowerment of women, alongside promoting brotherhood and equality. The first message was intended for the entirety of humanity, yet we, as Muslims, distorted its meaning and made it solely about ourselves. Due to her inability to endure the excruciating agony any more, she made the decision to terminate her life by immersing herself in a river. "Taisra Khat," a concise novella by Farigh Bukhari, chronicles the narrative of Marghay, a lovable orphan. The book recounts how her father's unquenchable ambition for wealth compelled her to wed a cruel guy. The value extracted from the user's text is "(4)". Notwithstanding his initial demonstrations of affection towards her, her partner ultimately wedded another individual.

Following the suspension of her marriage privileges, Salima and her dependent child moved to her parents' residence. Her father asserted his dominance over her by invoking Jirga, a Pashtun communal deliberative assembly, and supernatural guidance. Conversely, because of their marital status, both of these sources showed a preference for Aqil over her father. However, she took the initiative that Marghay failed to do and resorted to legal proceedings when she was

unable to reach a peaceful resolution to the problem. Upon her arrival, she had a sense of disillusionment and, with the approval of her legal counsel, embraced Christianity. Based on the anecdote, the habit revolves around betraying the kindness of others. According to her husband, she lacked the ability to assert herself because he had provided financial support for her choice to become a bondmaid. The author has already addressed the systemic hypocrisy that arises when individuals exploit religion for personal gain. A significant number of religious individuals hold an unfavourable perception of us because to our adherence to these core traditions; they perceive us as being prone to violence and without sufficient cultural advancement. Islam has consistently advocated for the eradication of gender injustice and the empowerment of women, while also fostering brotherhood and equal opportunity. Despite the initial intention to encompass all individuals, we Muslims have distorted the message to align with our personal agendas.

According to Walwar tradition, it is required to cover all expenses and also offer the girl's family with prepared rice and meat. One of the male family members feels compelled to assume complete financial responsibility for the wedding. According to Sahar Yousafzai's short fiction "Sawye," the practice is morally abhorrent. Taza Gul's mother received the following message during a visit to discuss her son's marriage: "The son of the khan has requested a payment of two thousand rupees in cash, as well as the provision of food and other essential items." The number 7. Taza Gul saw it as a matter of honour and social standing, but she attempted to persuade her son to abandon the notion due to the exorbitant estimated expense of at least four thousand rupees, which was beyond their modest socioeconomic situation. He financed the wedding by selling his bulls and maintaining his cultivated property. The brief narrative contends that marriage possesses such sanctity that it should not be seen as a mere commodity. Impoverishing the spouse to facilitate the marriage of the daughter is unjust. Ultimately, these types of loans inevitably result in disgrace and insolvency.

Similarly, the malevolent Walwar ritual is subject to criticism in the story "Chand Aur Khandar" (8). Shad, the main character, was incapable of providing the bride's father with a sum of one thousand rupees, leading to the dissolution of his marriage. In order to gain his affection, Shad had to surmount his impoverished circumstances. Essentially, another man married her in exchange for a larger quantity of money, resembling a deal. He resorted to intoxication as a technique of evading the concerns of the physical realm and the intensity of his loves. Consequently, he developed schizophrenia and his life was severely impacted. The short story "Kambal" depicts a customary ritual prevalent in rural tribal areas, which is not considered malevolent. The Lajbar informed Rashmina that her father would request an amount lower than the thousands of rupees required to cover the wedding expenses. Given the specified quantity, wouldn't you conclude that...? There is a deficiency in this location. Subsequently, he terminated all forms of communication. 9th Lajbar and Pashmina, like many others, have had their marriage proposals declined as a result of this custom.

The concise novel "Sabza aur chinaar" (10) by Sahar Yousafzai satirises the tradition of Walwar, which requires individuals to pay a significant sum of money in tribal areas. The main character, an impoverished farmer named Shah Nazar, had a towering and robust physique. He is deeply devoted to Shahro. Since the landlord has simply provided him with interest, he bears full responsibility for all housing expenses. His father's capacity to finance Shahro's treatment has steadily declined. He entered the urban area and commenced labouring to get a financial income. He intended to wed Shahro after he accumulated sufficient funds to repay the khan's interest. He informed Shahro that her father had sold her due to his impoverished circumstances. By virtue

of the khan's words of motivation, the affluent urban dweller successfully captured her affection. In the book, a wealthy individual residing in the city coerces Shahroo into engaging in prostitution. As a result of this method, his father was exempted from the obligation of paying the khan's interest and house rent. In the short story "Aarzo ki mouth" (11), the act of practicing is shown as a malevolent force. The storyline of the concise tale Due to traditional customs, Gul Muhammad made a payment to Gul baba's father that beyond his financial means. He obtained a loan from the village Khan, who imposed an interest rate, in order to maintain control over his affairs. Due to a lack of alternatives, the regional ruler confiscated the harvested grain in order to repay the loan. That was the beginning of the most challenging moments in his life. His wife succumbed to complications during childbirth due to his inability to obtain medical care at a hospital. In the same manner, his son died as a result of extreme lack of food. Both his son and wife perished as a result of the ritual. Despite his son-in-law's significant riches accumulated while overseas, Gul Baba's father did not exempt him from the normal treatment. "Wo Hai Darwaaza" (12), a brief narrative authored by Fahmeeda Akhtar, chronicles Zar Gul's endeavour to secure a marriage proposal from Zarnata. The mother declined the deal due to his failure to obtain six rams. As a result of her physical limitations, he was requested to provide three rams instead of the customary six, causing disagreement and finally resulting in the termination of the marriage.

Asharaf Hussain Ahmad's short story "Pairay Dam" sheds light on the enduring tradition of amassing wealth through the marriages of daughters and sisters. The story portrays the plight of unsophisticated, assertive girls hailing from various regions, who are traded off in the guise of marriage for a mere sum of four Afghani or, in certain instances, four hundred kaldary. The number 13. The short story "Abar Ki Zad May Sitara" (14) by Shamim Fazal Khaliq depicts a tradition that resulted in the exchange of Asmat. The concise tale elucidates numerous enduring customs of the Pashtun people. The negative component of tradition is exemplified by Dadai's intention to get into a marriage solely for the advantage of his son in the short story "Daph" (15). Their financial incapacity to afford the wedding resulted in an unequivocal rejection. The elderly women attempted to persuade the man to abandon his proposal. After seeing his father-in-law's humiliation and scorn, Walwar made a solemn commitment to regain his dignity and accumulate wealth. Consequently, he embarked on a clandestine operation to smuggle goods, and he met his demise when he was fatally shot by law enforcement. The user's name is Ahsan Syeda. In the concise novella "Barf," it was demonstrated that Zaini and Tari were unable to be married because of cultural conventions. Tari informed her cousin that her father had stipulated two conditions for her marriage to Zaini: a remuneration and a dowry amounting to 100,000 rupees. Despite our marital status, he intends to continue working. 16 Girls in tribal and rural communities face impediments to accessing contemporary education. For certain individuals, the act of urging their daughters to enter into marriages solely for the purpose of financial benefit is considered offensive. In the short novella, the antagonist Zaini's father arranges a marriage between her and Walwar in exchange for a sum of money, which he wants as payment.

Tari asserts that the father is relinquishing his duties and capitalising on his daughter by degrading her for monetary benefit. Following her disillusionment with Zaini's father, Tari entered into matrimony with another individual mostly for the purpose of financial advancement. The author includes the following statement: "There was no purpose in interrupting as she was married to a middle-aged officer who had been widowed and had no offspring." In addition, he presented three gifts to Zaini's father. The Pashtun culture exhibits a significant prevalence of

mental problems, with a rate of 17 cases. Individuals resort to suicide or abduction of girls when they are unable to discover a means to fulfil the customary payment, regardless of the considerable time and effort they have invested. A concise narrative The main character in "Char Gul" declines Zar Tashta's offers of chargul (jewellery) due to the interference of Walwar, which hinders their marriage. Zar Tashta acknowledges, "You are aware of the exceedingly high expectations my father has in the pursuit of Walwar." The user's text is "(18)". Zar Tashta abandoned the idea because she was aware that my father would marry the one who offered him the most payment. She perceived her choice as inconsequential. The short narrative "Roog" by Muhammad Sadiq Pasarli encompasses a wide range of traditions. Walwar's inclusion in a settlement that stipulated the disbursement of a lump sum over a predetermined duration was uncommon. The act of signing the contract provided happiness to both parties. It elucidates the manner in which girls are treated as livestock. A commercial contract is on the verge of materialising. According to the account, Auraz allegedly provided a sum of 20,000 Afghani in order to terminate his daughter's union with the moochi. Moochi is obligated, as stipulated in the agreement, to fulfil the installments within a period of ten years. It is important to take into account the financial implications for the bride's family while creating the wedding budget. The user's text consists of the number 19. The narrative also condemns the inhumane and unfair treatment of a parent who sells his extremely young daughter to a repulsive individual. The narrative depicts the female protagonists' sense of powerlessness, compelling them to resort to the ultimate act of terminating their lives. The myth portrays these individuals as a scourge upon Pashtun communities due to their malevolent nature and propensity for filicide driven by financial gain.

Engaging in such aggressive conduct is seen inappropriate for an individual who adheres to the principles of civilization. These ideas prevalent among families and tribes have adversely affected all the positive attributes of the culture. Hence, the bulk of followers of the tradition also perceive educated and civilised individuals as deficient in cultural refinement. The author expresses remorse for all local customs and practices. She believed that in order for our country to be regarded as civilised, we needed to eliminate the customs and practices. In addition to the observance of the Walwar tradition, there is also a corresponding custom known as "Exchange marriages." As per convention, it was customary for each family to host their daughters' weddings at their own residence. When a family mistreats the woman in an exchange marriage, it leads to the emergence of hatred. The family's response elicited comparable challenges for the second girl. In Fahmeeda Akhtar's short story "Nishana" (20), the protagonist Saaz Gul, who is a pathan, demonstrates a blatantly antagonistic demeanour, effectively emphasising the prevailing cultural norm. The agreement he made with his sister enabled him to be married. Due to a familial conflict, his brother-in-law relocated to his parents' residence through the assistance of our sister. Consequently, he felt compelled to treat his wife in a similar manner, despite his deep affection for her and their child. Despite his strong desire to reside with his wife, the entire town began to scorn and disgrace him for his decision. Mullah Rahim Daad chastised him for his failure to divorce his wife. Ziarat Khan, his brother, conducted his affairs in a similar manner. He stated that the integrity of the family was linked to it. After enduring two days of intense emotional distress caused by the conflict between respect and love, he was granted permission to reside with his parents. This brief narrative illustrates the necessity of relinquishing one's attachment to ancestral territories and societal norms in order to gain acceptance. Saaz Gul is unable to contest the established reputation that has been gradually developed over time. It is advisable to emulate

the actions of one's forebears under such circumstances. Despite the innocent spouse's affection, the tradition still imposed punishment upon her.

The plot demonstrates the inherent injustice of seeking retribution on one's partner for the actions of another individual. It is unjust for society to approve of a behaviour that results in the death of innocent individuals. Minha, our protagonist, is a widow who courageously arranged dowries for her children after assuming the responsibility of supporting her family. Due to the positive contributions they provide to society, these women exhibit greater courage and happiness compared to males. In the Pashtun short story "Zinda Dukh," there is a parallel concept where a mother refuses any form of payment for her daughter's marriage to Habib, Zaini's son, going against the customary practice in their village. "Furthermore, she made a valuable contribution to the festive event." The user's text is "(21)". Minha supports those who hold divergent views from the majority and advocate for the idea that parents should have the autonomy to allocate their own income. Minha vehemently objected to the malevolent Pashtun custom of extorting cash from her son-in-law, despite it being against the Walwar tradition. The traditional customs of 'Walwar' have become less prevalent, however they continue to be observed in rural regions, where the expenses of the wedding are still borne by the groom's family. There are some who continue to view it as a gesture of reverence to cover the expenses of the wedding for the family of the groom. It is seen disgraceful for a woman's family to arrange her marriage and then oversee the financial affairs of the home. In Pashtun culture, it is customary to bear the cost of the food one wishes to consume. Currently, a significant transformation is occurring, and the practice is diminishing. In contemporary times, parents not only allocate their own funds to fulfil their individual desires, but they also renounce providing financial assistance to deter their daughters from entering into matrimony. In addition, family members provide assistance to their daughters and sisters during times of need. They derive contentment from this, while not meeting the criteria for receiving an inheritance.

While some individuals continue to adhere to traditional practices, the majority of people nowadays hold the belief... In contemporary society, the practice of providing dowries to daughters persists. However, it is considered socially disgraceful and degrading for individuals to amass fortune only through their daughters' marriages. Despite being in low-income circumstances, parents make efforts to obtain loans or liquidate assets in order to purchase essential items for their daughters. Miss Sarwat Wahab conveys her viewpoint in her short story "Baba" (22). The Urdu short stories not only criticized Walwar, but also highlighted the disadvantages of dowry. A description by Akaas Bailain (23) portrays a social catastrophe resulting from the perils of dowry. An eminent concern addressed in the short story "Baddaltay Mosam" is the escalating influence of dowry in Pashtun culture. The story begins with the statement, "Currently, I lack a significant sum of money to organize my daughter's dowry. Therefore, it would be wise to delay the decision about the wedding date until I can obtain the required funds." The number is 24. "Mother!" "In order to accumulate funds for our sisters' dowries, the protagonist of 'Sharaab' informs his mother that we must relocate from this spacious residence to a smaller one." Wedding attendees exhibit greater fascination with a spacious residence rather than the dowry. "My salary will be exclusively allocated to support my family in the event that we refrain from leaving the premises of our residence." (25) The family endured challenging financial circumstances, diligently saving every rupee, in order to accomplish this. During that period, the lad was in a state of matrimony, and his wife bestowed the dowry at this location. The topic of the sister's marriage arose, and his wife proposed to contribute her dowry in support of her sister-

in-law. The societal responsibility of dowry has resurfaced, mirroring the individual weight experienced under Walwar's reign.

The excerpt from Rahim Gul's little novel "Khamosh Nigahain" exemplifies the parallels between the two customs—the Walwar in Pashtun society and the dowry in Hindu culture: "Hello, Dhani Rao!" The practice of trafficking women in different countries has been previously acknowledged. It is regrettable that you provided an answer. I was born there. My lack of knowledge and innocence were the reasons why I felt proud of that, Dhani Rao. I am beginning to comprehend this now. These women must have acquired wealth or compensated for their physical attractiveness. Regarding discussions, that is the sole distinction... The females are equally vulnerable in both locations. India and Pakistan share many similarities. "Hindustan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and Waziristan all infringe upon women's rights in a similar fashion." The user's text is "(26)". Urdu short stories depict Walwar, swap weddings, and dowry customs as means to convey the message that daughters are divine gifts and should be accorded equal respect and consideration as sons by their parents. It is imperative that Pashtun societies cease the abhorrent practice of exchanging women for monetary gain. Although it is optimal to allocate funds for daughters, this action does not necessarily result in parents experiencing dire financial hardship. The characters in these short stories exhibit a strong devotion to their Islamic faith, willing to sacrifice their lives for it. However, they also represent ordinary individuals who perceive the practice of selling daughters as a source of pride. It is perplexing that women are prohibited from expressing their opinions and are subjected to beheading when abducted to preserve the family's reputation. It contradicts the fundamental definition of honor. Despite the strong religious adherence of the Pashtun community, no level of education can persuade them to cease the abhorrent tradition of forcibly marrying their young girls. The complete elimination of these malevolent customs can be achieved by aligning Pashtunwali (Pashtun culture) with the principles of Islamic doctrine.

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