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## The Religious Tendencies in Pashtun Culture

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### Abstract:

In this research paper the scholar has describe the anti aslamic custom in the pashtun society, pashtun have accepted Islam as their religion at the early stages of Islam but pashtunwali or Pashto remains their way of life of the pashtuns. Pashtunwali or Pashto and Islam are not conflict with each other but some ritual of pashtun wali are not compatible with Islam, these rituals are walwar and ghagh which are anti aslamic custum in pashtun society.

**Key words:** Religious Tendencies, Pashtun, Culture.

Culture is the name of acquired or international or conscious behavior.acquired behavior includes all of our habits, action, thoughts, customs and values that we hold dear practice or desire to practice as members of an organized society or family.Culture means our faith and all the beliefs and ideas that are included in our individual and social life.

“Culture is basicly an umberella term which embodies with itself mainly beliefs and practices, such as social moral and morms, religion, beleifs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities and habits of individuals in these group.culture values bind people togather which makes them strong and limited. Culture is the process which help us deffirntiate between brutality and being human. Cuture also encompasses diffierent activities and uplifting the art and education to an extent where is an atmospare of tolerance, prejudice free society and reforms, including high modesity, beauty in habits.softness in speech and valuing one’s history and customs is included”(1)

“Pashtuns have accepted islam as their religion at the early stage of islam.in this contant raj wali shah Khattak says that.

Pashtuns have accepted islam as their reiligion (din) but Pashto remain’s their code of life and they feel extremely committed to it.when religion and commitment (and or faith) join together. They construct a balanced way of life.this fusion of both makes

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spiritual and temporal values very strong. pashtuns adopted islam as a universal divin law at every stage and pashtunwali (Pashto code) has always been their code of life. Both pashto and islam have intermingled to extant that now it is impossible to separate them. Islam offers comprehensive principles for individual and collectivives. While Pashto too, provides a decent base for spending life both are natural and perhaps this is why that they have become inseparable islam is considered a religion closely akin human nature. the pashtunes have been living in natural environment for centuries”(2)

In the society of Pashtun, there is a term “Pashtunwali” or “pashto, “the Pashtun way of life ”, is a code of honor embracing the tribal religious and customary law, morality, ethos and notion of ancestral and historical heritage linked with “being Pashtun” and “acting like pakhto”. In Pashtun religious culture , Islam and pashto/pashtunwali are important criteria of Pashtun ethnic identity and competing forms of moral authority; they represent distinct domains of discourse and alternative frames of reference.

Defining the “Pashtunwali” or “pashto”, a scholar sultan Mohammad said,

“It is Pashtun ‘language, culture, character, honor, integrity, customs, religion and constitution all is in this “Pashtunwali” or “pashto”. With the “Pashtunwali” or “pakhto” the concept of religion is integral part of it. For example if a person is a Pashtun then it is understood that he is a Muslim and if a person becomes apostate, it means that he is not a Pashtun anymore.”(3)

The Pashtun religious behavior has been defined minutely by the above mentioned scholar. It has been noticed that Pashtun have their own made values about the religion but they love their religion much more than their values. It could be proved that there is no any Pashtun who is non-Muslim. Islam and Pashtun are concomitance. It has been calculated that there is less sectarianism in Pashtun society, as it was written in the Shaheen Qaisrani;

“At least in Balochistan Pashtun there is no any other sect even there is no any Shia amongst them. All Pashtun are Suni Hanfi and belongs to Deo Band school of thought. It could be said that there is no any sectarianism at all”(4)

Mr. Qaesrani defined a key religious psychological behavior at this point:

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“The Deo Bandi school of thought influence in Pashtun society is due to majority of religious scholars who got their education from that Deobandi religious institution and still this process is going on. Another factor is the Pashtun psychology could not afford the religious complexities. Pashtun are simple Muslims who offer prayers and keep fasts.”(5)

It is a fact that Pashtun are tolerant about religious but in their religious customs and norms they are not like their neighbors Baloch.

If we go through in the Pashtun society love and devotion for Islam we come to know that the Islamic customs and norms have very much resemblance with the Pashtun tribal codes which are the code of Islam too. It will not be wrong if a person say that an ideal Muslim is an ideal Pashtun and an ideal Pashtun is an ideal Muslim. It's one example is the higher number of Madrassas, religious Scholars Saints and Sayed's in the Pashtun areas. These Saints, Sayed's and religious scholars are given much esteem in the Pashtun society, and this is because these people and religious institutions are present in Pashtun areas till today.

Taking into consideration this aspect of Pashtun culture we see that In Baluchistan everywhere the graveyards of saints are. Approximately in every village there is a saint's graveyard to whom people give tribute. This graveyard must be a masjid imam, religious orator or an old tribal elder. People consider him as a spiritual person.

But these Pashtun belt graveyards of saints are not like Pakistan's other provinces saint's graveyards. Here people go to saints graveyards but act in the light of the Islamic sharia.

In Pashtun society Mulla has a great respect and regard as English writer depicted rightly.

“Show great reverence for Mullahs, Akhunds and holy man of all sorts who writes charms, read incantation, enjoy alms and pilgrimages”.(6)

Historically it is proved that Mulla has a strong influence in Pashtun society from the very beginning. If we go through the Jihad movement in Pashtun society it has many stages it begins from Anglo-Afghan Wars, which are also called Afghan wars.

**These** were three wars (1839–42; 1878–80; 1919) in which Great Britain at that, from its base in India, wanted to control over neighboring Afghanistan and to stop Russian influence in the Afghanistan.

In second stage we see the Russian invasion of Afghanistan 1979, which paved the way for a new series of Jihhad movement in Afghanistan. In this Mulla or today

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Taliban played key role and propagated that Islam is in threat. The Taliban with the help of international community and Pakistan compelled the Russia to leave the Afghanistan and after all burnt down to the ground.

In third phase we see that Pashtun Mullas fight with each other till Taliban occupation on Kabul From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban governed over Afghanistan, and introduced a strict interpretation of Sharia Islamic law and violated pashtunwali result as clash between sharia and pashtunwali “

“in the recent post some analysis are of the opinion that same mistake was repeated by the Taliban. Pashtuns no doubt have great respect for sharia but within the parameters of pashtunwali, when the Taliban violated these parameters and tried to completely do away with pashtunwali, they were faced with tremendous resistance by the Pashtuns which ultimately resulted in their downfall”(7)

This near about century Jihad movement, which was fought on the name of religion has left a deep color in Pashtun society and Mulla is the key character in this whole phenomena.

Besides Mulla in Pashtun society Sayed's are given respect but they are not treated like Sindh and Punjab province where they are even worshiped. In Pashtun society Sayed's and saints have not big tombs and shrines as there are in Punjab and Sindh.

Pashtun are very staunch Muslims but there are some superstitious in their society and Pashtun society have these superstitious and ideas since long.

Sultan Mohammad Sabir have described some superstitious in this way;

“Now people do not believe as people believed earlier that there should be given the wild rue smoke in while delivery of pregnant woman. While delivery of woman a blue thread with red currency should be tied. The symbol of Swastika in not to leave labor room. For fear of witch new born baby and mother is not allowed alone. Mother take bath after forty days of delivery. The new born and its mother neck a piece of ginger is worn. Childless woman is not allowed near the baby and mother because she is considered as sinister”. (8)

And now these mythical ideas have taken the roots of Pashtun society. In cities these irrational customs are not observed but in villages still these customs are common. Lack of education is the main cause of these superstitious and illogical norms.

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Besides these irrational ,un Islamic and conventional superstitious Pathans some traditions for women are also anti islam and uncivilized. As Pathan is considered as a best Muslim in every aspects but as for as women rights are concerned they become so rigid and give their tribal and hard Pashtun.

Basically the status of Pashtun women varies considerably with their social background, the region in which they live and the social class to which they belong .For example, the conditions faced by women in the tribal regions of Baluchistan and the Khyber Pakhtun khwa far flung regions are different from those of Pashtun women living in significantly different from those of women living in urban centres. Those Pashtun women which belong to the elite classes have moved beyond their traditional condition and entered university, take up non-traditional careers, take part political movements, and even choose their husbands. But these Pashtun women are in a small numbers who have benefited from advances made with respect to the status of women. By contrast, women in rural areas and from the working classes of the Khyber Pashtun Khwa and Balochistan vast majority of the female population of Pakistan are illiterate, live in poverty and are subject to enormous labour. Moreover, these women have experienced the consequences of the policies of various Pakistani governments including the Islamization policy of General Zia Ul-Haq.

Walwar (bride price) is a very cruel ancient custom in Pashtun society which is prevailing since long.

This is a very inhumane, unIslamic and barbaric aspect of Pashtun society that in rural areas still these anti-islamic and uncivilized customs like Walwar are common.

Walwar is defined I this way;

“Originating from the tribal tradition of Afghanistan, specifically from a Pashtun perspective, walwar is the most common Pashto term for bride price. More specifically, walwar is the sum of money paid by the groom or his family to the head of the bride’s household. And out of this sum, the bride’s family may provide the couple with a dowry (or jahez), which usually consists of furniture and jewelry/clothes. So, walwar is basically a payment to the bride’s family in consideration of the girl who is given away in marriage and is not specifically directed to be spent on the provision of a dowry. Though, it seems that walwar is also supposedly given in order to reimburse the parents of the bride for the financial loss they suffered while raising their daughter, hence justifying the notion that having a daughter is indeed a burden (and that is usually how it is viewed among most Pashtun families, especially in tribal areas) and having the groom (or groom’s family) pay for that burden will suddenly make their having a daughter worthwhile. Furthermore,

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walwar is known to be a matter of honour and prestige– the higher the walwar, the higher the esteem of the husband's family for the bride.(9)

As we see that Walwar is anti- Islamic trend, there is not such a tradition imposition in Islamic society. This is totally against Islamic law. But it is a fact that for financial interests Pashtun mix Walwar with Maher (bride right in Islamic law).Much has been said and propagated against this cruel tradition.As this Walwar has been ruining the grounds of society because due to walwar daughters and sons are married lately.

There is another un-Islamic custom of Ghagh.Ghagh is a Pashtun custom in which a man forcing marriage proposal.

Ghagh is an ancient Pashtun custom called "ghagh" that entitles a man to force his marriage proposal on a woman.

Once invoked, ghagh -- which means "a call" -- can have various outcomes, none of them happy for the woman. She might end up being married against her will, or stay single for life, or see her family drawn into a dangerous, lingering feud.

“Overall this is contrary to Islam practice of ghagh is not common among Pakistan's Pashtuns, who live chiefly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the adjacent Pashtun regions of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan. But scholars, human rights activists, journalists, and political activists say ghagh persists in FATA and other underdeveloped areas such as the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In FATA, the overall condition is not good because years of war have eroded social solidarity and government control.”(10)

### **Conclusion:**

In Subcontinent Pashtun are the people who accepted Islam in early days of Islam. Religion is the integral part of the Pashtun society. Pashtun and Islam have the body and spirit relation. If the Pashtun is the body then it could be said that Islam is the spirit. Pashtunwali” or “Pakhto”. With the “Pashtunwali” or “Pakhto which is the code of Pashtun life are those norms and customs which have the colors of religion. In short Pashtun loved Islam very much and for their love they have paid enormous sacrifices for a century and till today they have been giving. Due to illiteracy they have some contrary to islamic customs ,these customs have taken deep roots in Pashtun society. There is high rate of illiteracy and poverty in Pashtun society which pave the way for illogical, irrational and anti religion customs . As for Pashtun society it is favorable ground so these weeds have grown here and these weeds could be destroyed by the spray of education, reason, dialogue and knowledge. Islam is a complete code of life if it is accepted with complete spirit it could remedy all these social evils.

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