

Psychoanalytic and Cultural Mappings: Love and Madness in Bano Qudsia's *Raja Gidh*

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Madness and obsession are two terms that have been in literary discourses for centuries. Plato and Aristotle put forward their discourses on the idea of madness. "Even Socrates, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, seems to endorse the paradox: 'Our greatest blessings', he informs us, 'come to us by way of madness, provided the madness is given to us by divine gift' (Scull 7). The term madness is not a medical term, it is a common term used by plebeians to refer to a set of unusual tendencies in human behavior that act against the logic and reasoning used by the large masses. Andrew Scull refers to the idea of madness as "something that profoundly disturbs our commonsense assumptions; threatens the social order, both symbolically and practically; creates almost unbearable disruptions in the texture of daily living; and turns our experience and our expectations upside down" (2). The French socialist Emile Durkheim describes madness as a social fact. "Its manifestations, its meanings, its consequences, are most certainly deeply affected by the social and cultural context within which it surfaces and is contained" (Scull 2). Different terms are used to refer to states of mental illness – especially abled, psychosis, lunacy, insanity, to name a few. "... the referents to all of these are disturbances of reason, the passions, and human action that frighten, create chaos, and yet sometimes amuse; that mark a gulf between the commonsense reality most of us embrace, and the discordant version some humans appear to experience" (Scull 3).

An enquiry into madness varies to stark degrees when seen through the lens of psychoanalysis. Brentano, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung have discussed the possible existence of the unconscious mind. Dreams and myths play an important role in vindicating the psycho-chemical

hypothesis of existence of the unconscious mind. The idea of the unconscious mind gives space to comprehend the mental apparatus of human mind and behavior. In *Beyond Pleasure Principle* Sigmund Freud uses the term 'traumatic neurosis' to explain the state of disturbed mental health. Traumatic neurosis is a kind of "disorder to organic lesions of the nervous system brought about by mechanical force" (6). Mechanical forces can be in the form of severe accidents, war, disasters and other accidents that involves loss or risk of life. Freud further emphasizes:

The symptomatic picture presented by traumatic neurosis that of hysteria in the wealth of

its similar motor symptoms, but surpasses it as a rule in its strongly marked signs of subjective ailment (in which it resembles hypochondria or melancholia) as well as in the evidence it gives of far more comprehensive general enfeeblement and disturbance of the mental capacities. (6)

Through the scope of a psychoanalytic lens, humans are described as having sexual and aggressive drives. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that human behavior is deterministic. It is governed by irrational forces, and the unconscious, as well as instinctual and biological drives.

When certain aspirations and strong desires remain fulfilled and repressed, they manifest themselves in the form of unusual behavior patterns, dreams and subversive desires. In many cases, "several patients suffer from traumatic neurosis" (Freud 6).

Pakistani writer and playwright, Bano Qudsia, is most popularly remembered for her novel *Raja Gidh* (King Vulture; 1981), remarkable for its allegory, socio-cultural aspects and psychoanalytic tendencies. *Raja Gidh* focuses on the discourse of madness. Several dialogues in the text give insight into the understating ideas of mental trauma; madness and insanity are emphasized by Professor Sohail. A section in the text is devoted to the beast fable where discourse is used for emphasizing the reason behind madness. *Raja Gidh* connects madness with unfulfilled desires and unrequited love. This paper focuses on the idea of madness with particular reference to *Raja Gidh*. It reads how madness can be connected to cultural and social tropes that condition our understanding of moral ethics, social reality and, right and wrong. It explores these ideas in detail by focusing on behavior and dreams (dreams manifest latent fears in the unconscious minds) of the characters like Qayum and Seemi Shah. Qayum, a service class young, handsome, undergraduate student with an average intellect is the central protagonist of the novel. Seemi Shah is a modern, beautiful, young girl who along with Qayum has started her graduation when the novel opens. Cultural and religious aspects of mental

illness will also be explored. The paper reads how social, cultural and religious tendencies condition the human psyche.

Due to this deterministic nature, psychoanalytic theorists do not believe in free will. The unconscious is the portion of the mind of which a person is not aware. Freud said that it is the unconscious that exposes true feelings, emotions, and thoughts of the individual. In psychoanalytic study, various techniques are used to access and understand the unconscious, ranging from methods like hypnosis, free association, dream analysis, etc. Dreams allow us to explore the unconscious; according to Freud, they are “the ‘royal road’ to the unconscious” (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 189). Dreams are composed of latent and manifest content. Whereas latent content is the underlying meaning of a dream that may not be remembered when a person wakes up, manifest content is the content from the dream that a person remembers upon waking and can be analyzed by a psychoanalytic psychologist. Exploring and understanding the manifest content of dreams can inform the individual of complexes or disorders that may be under the surface of their personality. Dreams can provide access to the unconscious that is not easily accessible. One of Freud’s greatest legacies is the recognition that our minds are structured to protect us from erasing the truth. And to protect us from too much reality, each part of our minds harbours a different form of madness. In *Raja Gidh* Bano Qudsia focuses on some of the characters’ dreams in detail that manifest the latent fears in their unconscious minds.

In Psychoanalytical theoretical framework, the idea of madness in literary texts has been at the centre of discourse. Social and cultural responses to unusual human behavior and human nature are mostly recognized due to emotional disturbances where cognitive impairments come at a later stage. Madness has a lot to do with bizarre and disruptive emotions on one hand and neural imbalances on the other. Cultural codes and societal laws maneuver our conscience and when our conscience doesn’t accept unconventional acts and ideas then such a state of affairs heightens one’s nerves. Freudian interpretation of dreams and the idea of repression attached with pleasure principle explain the losses in love and life that catalyzes ‘death instincts’ in human beings.

The most striking form of madness in the normal psyche is the unconscious. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud laid out the rules by which the unconscious operates. These rules describe the very essence of madness – thoughts are depicted in the form of images, our minds jump from one seemingly random thought to another linked by unconscious association; time has no meaning so events from past and present are presented at the same time; every image in a dream can have multiple

meanings, and thoughts and feelings are often replaced with their opposite (Hughes 2).

In *Raja Gidh*, ideas of madness surface majorly on two stages – firstly in Professor Sohail’s classroom and secondly, in the meeting of the birds.

The novel opens in a sociology classroom of Professor Sohail, where after the introduction, the question whether suicide is a cause or an outcome is brought up. Aftab explains:

Madness is always caused by unfulfilled desires, sir, and unfulfilled desires,” he continued “are caused by taboos prevalent in every culture. In cultures where one is not supposed to marry one’s maternal uncle’s daughter, the impossibility of being loved by the uncle’s daughter can become the cause of insanity. (Qudsia 11)¹

Seemi Shah sarcastically accuses him of borrowing Freud’s ideas on psychoanalysis. This leads Aftab to proclaim “Madam, I haven’t based my idea of this aspect of madness on repression; the kind of madness I talk about is comparable with the madness of Mir Taqi Mir, of Farhad... I am talking about an aspect of madness that can be perceived as something sacred – that drives one to conquer Mount Everest or dig a canal of milk” (Qudsia 12). Professor Sohail’s observation that social pressures lead human beings to madness and then to commit suicide, sets the stage for this discussion. These characteristics are reflected through various characters and actions in the novel. The conference of birds also brings up the question of madness.

The novel revolves around Qayum who is passionately in love with Seemi Shah whom he describes as a modern girl when he first sees her in the classroom. However, she is soon impressed with Aftab, another batch mate, a smart, young Kashmiri from a business class family. We later discover that Professor Sohail was also in love with Seemi but Aftab remained the focus of her love throughout the novel. Aftab’s marriage with, Zeba on the pretext of family pressure brings disaster to Seemi’s life, who now relies on Qayum, the man who is still in love with her. Despite all his efforts, he fails to alter her feelings for Aftab. He consoles her:

I will keep you alive. As a seven-month-old baby is kept alive with the help of an incubator in a hospital...I will keep you

¹ All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are by Raghbul Haque

breathing with the warmth of soul...By Khuda, I will not let you die. Never! (Qudsia 119)

Later they share a sexual relationship, despite being unsure of their true feelings for one another. Qayum compares himself to a vulture that feeds on the dead. As he observes “Aftab has hunted down this city-doe and I am fated to feed on the corpse of the doe he has hunted. She lay there helplessly under the camphor tree, half-dead.” (Qudsia 119)

The subplot of the novel involves a conference among the birds and animals from all over the jungle. The *surkhaab* was appointed judge. The kite and the other animals perceive that the Raja Gidh or the vultures’ behavior patterns that are beyond their control originate from madness. The animals discuss the causes and symptoms of madness. They also claim that these are due to the *rizq-e haram* they partake. The kite pronounces that the vulture has become insane and reasons that this is manifest in its moonlight wanderings and feeding on its own vomit. According to the kite, this may bring disaster to the peace of the jungle as it is contagious and will, very likely, affect others as well. The Kite also believes that the vultures’ insanity is occasioned by their association with humans and their habit of eating human corpses. The kite believes this madness will bring about the destruction to the animals and birds of the jungle. Madness or insanity is looked upon by the birds of the forest as a signal for creating chaos and disturbance that will hamper the peaceful atmosphere of the forest. The vulture comes forward to defend itself before the judge. The animals call for the banishment of Raja Gidh. As indicated by the title, this plot correlates with the main plot and is also a satirical allegory on human beings.

In the latter part of the discussion, the important question regarding the cause of madness is brought up. Some animals believe it is because of their *rizq-e haram*. As a bird explains “haram is what is prohibited” and illustrating it further it says “as Adam ate the wheat in the Paradise of which they were prohibited and that caused negative energy in them” (361) This has two inferences in the text, on the one hand, vultures do not hunt for themselves; they scavenge. Eating others is prohibited in Islam; they eat corpses and feeding on the dead is prohibited in Islam. Owing to this, vultures are accused of consuming *rizq-e haram*.

Another reason for madness which the birds discuss is unrequited love. This is crucial because unrequited love is an important theme of the main plot of the story. A few birds blame the extraordinary power that leads humans to insanity, others reason humans’ un-ending search and curiosity leads to their madness. Some others look for the reason in binaries, having choices as night as opposed to day, and that confuses the

minds and sometimes leads to madness in human beings (Qudsia 241-249).

These reasons not only have socio-cultural relevance but also have relevance to the main plot of the story. In the story of Qayum, Professor Sohail and Seemi, the readers can easily detect the characters wondering about these questions and struggling to find answers. By the end of the novel, several major characters of the main plot have suffered insanity due to *rizq-e haram* in some form or other. The behavior of Qayum draws us towards the pertinent question of madness. Seemi's deteriorating emotional condition pushes her towards the escape route of suicide. Her end becomes the beginning of another disaster in Qayum's life as he goes into depression and searches his love and peace, with overwhelming anxiety and passion. In his classroom, Aftab explained a similar sort of reason behind madness.

Another pertinent question arose in the conference of the birds and animals – is the *rizq-e haram* consumed by vultures intentional, or is it natural for them to eat it? This question has been dealt with in great detail in the text. Some animals believe it is natural to them, as a result, the vultures are not responsible for anything, as they are helpless to their natural pattern. No one can expect anyone to change what comes naturally to them. However, if this is intentional and developed then the vultures themselves are responsible for their madness. If they choose to consume *rizq-e haram* intentionally, they are responsible for the consequences. Here the example of Adam is given who ate the forbidden wheat. The birds discuss that this brought negativity into the nature of Adam which had hitherto fore been one of goodness and piety (Bano 361). This transformation was visible in later generation too; as it is noted Abel from the next generation of Adam became the first man to commit murder of his brother Cain. So, *Rizq-e haram* caused insanity in the following generations also. The birds believe that the vultures have learnt to consume *rizq-e haram* from the same generational line of human beings. Thus, they reason that this is a learnt and intentional action of the vultures and so they are responsible for their actions. Their acquired actions occasioned insanity among them. As a result, they should be banished from the jungle.

This conference among the birds goes hand in hand with the main plot of the story. All these discussions on the idea of madness throw light to the main plot. They also provide readers a moment to retract and rethink about the characters and what was happening in their lives. Besides, in the main plot, there are glimpses to the subplot as well. Qayum's reference to himself a vulture scavenging on the body of Seemi is one such. Such

instances also facilitate a better and wider understanding of the issue of insanity.

The discussion to establish the cause of madness is prevalent in the main plot as well. Professor Sohail refers to societal pressure as one of the major causative factors; to some students, it is an environment that hampers the psychosis of the individuals; a few connect it to cognitive disturbances aroused due to biological human framework, and some to 'repression' or some kind of 'lack'. As the novel progresses, the question deepens; it becomes more and more philosophical and at times it is represented with religious undertones. By the end of the novel when Professor Sohail meets Qayum, he says:

جس وقت رزق حرام جسم میں داخل ہوتا ہے وہ انسانی genes کو متاثر کرتا ہے۔ رزق حرام سے ایک خاص قسم کی mutation ہوتی ہے جو خطرناک ادویات شراب اور radiation سے بھی زیادہ مہلک ہے۔ رزق حرام سے جو genes تغیر پذیر ہوتے ہیں وہ لوے لنگڑی سے اور اندھے ہی نہیں ہوتے بلکہ ناامید بھی ہوتے ہیں نسل انسانی سے۔ یہ genes جب نسل در نسل ہم میں سفر کرتے ہیں تو ان genes کے اندر ایسی ذہنی پراگندگی پیدا ہوتی ہے جس کو ہم پاگلپن کہتے ہیں۔

(Qudsia, 344)

The moment *rizq-e-haram* enters the human body it affects human beings. A specific kind of mutation occurs due to *rizq-e-haram*, more disastrous than alcoholic medicines or more fatal than radiation. The genes formed due to forbidden food not only cause lameness, deformity, or blindness but also lead to hopelessness in humanity. When this transcends from one generation to another, it produces a mental disorder which we call madness.

Though this idea was refuted by Qayum due to lack of scientific validation, Professor Sohail remained firm with it. Moreover, Qudsia makes it the cornerstone of her novel. She seems to suggest two kinds of madness in human beings; constructive and destructive. However, it remains a mystery in the novel if madness among human beings is fated (divinely ordained) or it is an outcome of deliberate, conscious or pre-determined acts that lead to it. Seemi explains to Qayum:

دیکھو فعل ہم میں شروع سے ڈال دیئے جاتے ہیں، چوری چوری ہماری مرضی پوچھے بنا ہر انسان کے اندر ایک خمیر ہوتا ہے سرسوں کے بیج میں یہ فیصلہ ہوتا ہے اسکا زرد رنگ ہوگا، تربوز کاٹو تو اس کا ہر بیج یہ فیصلہ ہوتا ہے کہ اس سے جنم لینے والا تربوز سرخ ہوگا... دیکھو قیوم نہ تربوز اپنی خوشی سے سرخ ہوتا ہے اور نہ جمیلی اپنی مرضی سے خوشبودار۔ سب کے بیج کا خمیر ہے جو آدمی چور بنتا ہے اس کے وجود کو غارتگری کا خمیر لگا ہوتا ہے۔

(Qudsia, 171)

Look, our actions are pre-determined – quietly, without asking our will. Human beings are born with a certain temperament. The yellow colour is pre-determines for the mustard seed; if you slice a watermelon, every seed inside it is a proof that the fruit it will produce will be red in colour...Look, Qayum, neither is the watermelon red by choice and nor is the jasmine's fragrance sweet by its own will – these are the genes in their seeds. The person who grows up to be a thief is destined to be destroyed.

The whole novel revolves around madness, unrequited love, search for love and fear of death as explained by Masood Raja (122-139). While looking at the causes of madness in the characters one thing that strikes the reader is the idea of unrequited love. Seemi's passionate love for Aftab led her to a catastrophic end. Aftab, who first reciprocates Seemi's affection, marries another woman, partially due to family pressure and partially due to Professor Sohail's manipulations. Seemi claims she intuitively feels and sees all that is happening with Aftab thousands of miles away. She gazes at things for hours. Seemi develops minor disorders – she starts dreaming and hallucinating and falls sick after a while. In one such incident Seemi kept repeating that on the day of Jinnah's birthday there would be some sort of disaster, perhaps an earthquake (Qudsia 168). Strangely, it turns out to be the day she attempts suicide and has to be hospitalized. Seemi saw herself dead while she was hallucinating (Qudsia 231). The author highlights Seemi's extreme depressed state through a conversation that takes place between Qayum and Seemi in the hospital. On seeing Seemi's condition, Qayum asks Seemi if he should inform her father and get him to visit her in the hospital. Seemi refuses and asks him instead, to inform her father following day, expecting that by then, she will be dead. She also requests Qayum to stay with her till she is gone (Qudsia 233). Besides, Qayum later affirms that there was an earthquake in the town late at night and so another of Seemi's vision has come true. This condition where we find her lost all the time even when she is physically intimate with Qayum, leads Seemi into further loneliness and internal chaos. Qayum later describes her as 'cold flesh' and himself as a vulture (Qudsia 134). This again brings up the reference to vultures and their food habits which according to the animals are the reason behind their madness. Here again the question of insanity due to *rizq-e haram* arises.

Qayum's insanity is of another kind. At the end of the novel, he notes: میں پاگل پن کی پہلی اور اسٹل ترین سیڑھی پر مہبوت کھڑا تھا۔ (I stood mortified at the bottom-most rung of insanity's ladder. Qudsia 406). After his separation from Seemi which left a lasting impact on his life, he succumbs to gloom,

a state of depression. He is depressed and believes this is the original cause of his ulcer. His anxiety compels him to resign from his job since he couldn't bear human presence any longer. Though, at first, he tries to fix the emotional void by associating himself with Abida and later with Amtal a prostitute but neither relationship works for him.

Professor Sohail is another mysterious but sophisticated character. It is Sohail with whom the novel begins and it is he who brings up the important question of insanity, its causes, symptoms and philosophical questions regarding life. He at first seems to be an ideal person but as the novel evolves readers come to understand him better. It is well established by the end that Sohail is a materialistic person who wants to climb up the social ladder at any cost. At first, he appears to be an unassuming and indifferent person, but later confesses to Qayum that he manipulated Aftab into not marrying Seemi. Aftab has implicit faith in Professor Sohail. Also disclosed in their discussion is the fact that Sohail was equally in love with Seemi and this perhaps makes him manipulate Aftab. By the end of the novel, his only desire is to upscale the ladder of social status to fill the void of unrequited love.

Religious and cultural aspects are significant in analyzing the causes of madness. In the novel, Abida, a family friend of Qayum's brother is portrayed as a religious woman who channels her life according to religious and cultural beliefs. She says:

(Qudsia 334) خدا کی قسم تم کسی دماغی امراض کے ڈاکٹر سے ملو قیومی۔

(See a psychiatrist Qayumi, seriously, by Khuda.)

Jealousy seems to be another striking feature that leads to insanity. Seemi didn't realize when her passion turned into jealousy against Aftab which plunges her into further gloom. Qayum observes:

اب وہ حسد کی تپتی ہوئی سفید ریت پر بھاگ رہی تھی۔ آفتاب سوا نیزے پر تھا۔ پیاس سے اس کے ہونٹ خشک تھے۔ فاصلے سے جپسم کے تودے جھی ہوئی برف کی طرح نظر آتے لیکن قریب پہنچنے پر سب کچھ سفید ریت میں ڈھل جاتا تھا۔ ہر طرف جلادینے والی، پھونک دینے والی راکھ کریدنے والی حسد کی سفید ریت پھیلی تھی اور اس ریت پر سیسی سسی کی طرح ننگے پیرو۔ ننگے سر بھاگ رہی تھی بے سمت۔۔۔

(Qudsia, 162).

Now she was running on the hot sands of jealousy; the sun was shone just over a span away; her lips were parched. Distance made the body look like frozen ice; yet proximity turned everything into a white dessert. All around her lay sands of jealousy that scorched; incinerated; and turned everything to ash, and on that sand, Seemi was running like a child, bare-foot and bare-headed.

On another plane, Qayum was jealous of Aftab but didn't dare to speak to Seemi about it. Qayum finally decided to marry a girl who is 'pure' and 'pious' which itself turned out to be a disappointment for him (Qudsia 348). On the nuptial night with his wife Roshan, he discovers that she had not only had an affair with Iftikhar but was also pregnant with his child. However, he not only accepted it as a part of her past sins but also permitted her to go back to Iftikhar. The author depicts Qayum on the path of spiritual recovery perhaps a reason not to lead him into deep insanity or suicide.

Another significant character in the novel is Amtal who once worked at the radio station where Qayum now works. She was once a sex-worker. On being asked about unrequited love that led to insanity she replied that she doesn't know about it because she doesn't hurt people. Rather people come to her with their pain and she tries to fill up their wounds. She says with watery eyes; "ہمارا فرسٹ ایڈ کا محکمہ ہے۔" (We run the first aid department. Qudsia 441.) She believes that pain can be healed only by the person who inflicts it and at times, pain is incurable.

Amtal's observations regarding pain, insanity, love and obsession provides a different perception of these ideas. The subjective understanding of several concepts and ideas that we follow in day-to-day life emanates from the societal and cultural conditioning which is unique to every individual. Here, Amtal's background assumes significant proportions, for she feels that, a lover has no choice but seek out his beloved or die of insanity, if his love remains unrequited; no physical intimacy can fill that void. This is true with respect to Seemi and Qayum as neither receives satisfaction from each other's proximity; neither is fortunate enough to reunite with the beloved. As for Seemi, the pain got beyond her and she took her own life; the pain faded for Qayum, with the passing of the time but he never completely recovered from it. It didn't lead him to complete catastrophe but didn't give him a happy life either.

Hallucinations and dreams have significant roles in the novel. Qudsia highlights incidents of dreams and hallucinations of several characters that represent the psyche of the characters too. It begins with a simple dream of Qayum who informs Seemi that he saw them in an airplane which crashed and nothing survived, not them either. On which Seemi indifferently replied, "اچھا خواب تھا۔ اگر کچھ بچ جاتا تو براہوتہ۔" (It was a good dream... had something survived it would have been a bad dream. Qudsia 90) Incidentally, as the plot unfolds it turns out to be true in a metaphorical way. Their reunion, after Aftab marries, leads towards a physical and some sort of emotional bond which ends catastrophically with Seemi's suicide.

Another such example could be Seemi's claim of being able to see things with her strong intuition. Qayum kept seeing a man in religious attire in the *Jinnah* Garden where they used to sit and every time his shadow disappeared suddenly. One day curiosity led Qayum to reach out to that man and ask about the mysterious questions of life which he had been bothering him – death, afterlife, the soul and insanity. The man vanished suddenly without answering Qayum's questions. He woke up with a start and questioned those who stood around him,

وہ کہاں ہے؟۔۔۔ وہ نوگڑکا آدمی۔۔۔ جو مشعل لے کر چلتا تھا۔ جس نے مجھ سے باتیں کی تھیں۔

(Qudsia 501)

(Where is he...he...that nine-foot man...who walked with a torch who...who talked to me.)

Quyaum soon realized that he was hospitalized and had been unconscious for the last couple of days. Another such example is Afrahim, the son of Aftab who is physically disabled. As Aftab informs, "He gets dreams...he...gets strange dreams...he remains seated in one position for hours...doctors call it Catatonic condition" (Qudsia 402). Aftab later questions Qayum desperately: "What has caused us this punishment? Have I committed any sin, have my forefathers' sins besieged him? ... Is the curse so powerful?" (Qudsia 403- 404). All these questions ring in the relationship between insanity and sin.

'Haram' (prohibited/ unlawful) is the most talked-about phrase in the text. It has relevance to the life of the characters and incidents. The cultural and religious undertones become significant in comprehending the individual and societal approach to life. Quranic verses give that it includes *rizq-e-haram* or prohibited food (as prescribed in Islam). The Qura'an says:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكَ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالْدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِبَعْضِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِفَةَ وَالْمُوقَدَّةَ وَالْمُرْدِيَّةَ وَالطَّيْحَةَ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذُكِّرْتُمْ
وَمَا دُبِخَ عَلَى الثُّنْبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ الْيَوْمَ يَبِئْسَ النَّيْنُ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ
أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْضَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِيمَانِهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ
رَحِيمٌ. (The Qur'an 5:3)

Forbidden to you (for food) are: *Al-Maitah* (the dead animals-cattle-beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns-and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal- unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death)- and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on *An-Nusub* (stone altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking

luck or decision; (all) that is *Fisqun* (disobedience of Allah and sin). This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin (such can eat these above-mentioned meats), then surely, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Hilali and Khan 141-42)

Professor Sohail believes it is *rizq-e-haram* that leads to madness since it transforms some genes in the human body. Later in the novel when Qayum meets Professor Sohail, the professor explains the reason for insanity in detail, articulating that forbidden food creates listlessness and pessimism in a human being and this passes down generations. The vultures' madness is also attributed to the *rizq-e-haram* they consume. Abida's desperate desire to bear a child cannot convince her to having sex with Qayum as sex outside marriage is haram and a part of *haram-kari*. Amtal refuses to marry Qayum as she feels her body is impure for she has committed *haram-kari* in the past. Marriage to her is a sacred relationship; she believes that she cannot be married with someone in spite of her past.

On being asked to marry by Qayum she wails: "We two Sir? We two? My whole body...each drop of blood in my body has lived off *haram* sir. I cannot beget anything *halal* with my blood..." (Qudsia 309). She further suggests that Qayum, marry a virgin: "You are in search of a woman's love, and virgins don't satiate anyone's thirst... they lose their heart and body all together" (Qudsia 310). Ironically Qayum's only demand of marrying a virgin is not met. Roshan his only legal wife came to him when she was already pregnant with Iftikhar's child and later married him with the help of Qayum. This again brings up an important question regarding how sins of the past affect the present and future. The verses of the Quran suggest that only virgins deserve another virgin.

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ (The Qur'an, 24:26)

Bad statements are for bad people (or bad women for bad men) and bad people for bad statements (or bad men for bad women). Good statements are for good people (or good women for good men) and good people for good statements (or good men for good women): such (good people) are innocent of (every) bad statement which they say; for them is Forgiveness, and *Rizqun Karim* (generous provision I.e., Paradise). (Hilali and Khan 470)

As Qayum was involved in *haram-kari* he couldn't marry a virgin despite his all efforts, and by the end of the novel, Afrahim's madness makes Qayum wonder if it is due to his father's *haram-kari*.

Bano Qudsia has addressed the question of madness through ethical and religious perspectives. Cultural, social and religious undertones bring the human psyche to a point where individuals are thrown into a whirlpool of thoughts. The idea or meaning of righteousness and sinfulness emanates from cultural codes and religious ethics. The thought of what is right and what is wrong holds them accountable for their actions. The one who transgresses will have to face brutish consequences at emotional and cognitive levels. This has been affirmed through Abida's denial of sexual intercourse with Qayum, due to her religious belief about prohibition of sex outside marriage, despite her desire to bear a child. Amtal's refusal of Qayum's marriage proposal stems from her belief that she was impure because of her profession. Professor Qayum's elucidation of *haram* affirms that *haram* leads to madness. Melancholy in love and jealousy that develops in unrequited love could be one of the most significant reasons for pushing people towards madness.

In *Beyond Pleasure Principle* Freud focuses on the power of the external world that models and maneuvers human behavior:

We know that the pleasure principle is proper to a primary method of working on the part of the mental apparatus, but that, from the point of view of the self-preservation of the organism among the difficulties of the external world, it is from the very outset inefficient and even highly dangerous. Under the influence of the ego's instincts of self-preservation, the pleasure principle is replaced by the reality principle. This latter principle does not abandon the intention of ultimately obtaining pleasure, but it nevertheless demands and carries into effect the postponement of satisfaction, the abandonment of a number of possibilities of gaining satisfaction and the temporary toleration of unpleasure as a step on the long indirect road to pleasure. The pleasure principle long persists, however, as the method of working employed by the sexual instincts, which are so hard to 'educate', and, starting from those instincts, or in the ego itself, it often succeeds in overcoming the reality principle, to the detriment of the organism as a whole. (4)

In most of the cases represented in the text, the causative factor that ultimately brings individuals on the verge of madness is the socio-cultural and religious idea of wrong or of something that is forbidden. The Freudian concept of 'Thanatos,' i.e., death drive in the characters like Seemi Shah and others is manifested. Unsatisfied desires lead to terrifying the death drive. Social conditioning of individuals bears a significant mark in channeling their cognitive regulation, if decisions don't fall under the righteous framework of the socio-cultural and religious models, an

unusual development of emotional impairments referred to as madness occurs.

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