

## **EXPLORING BADAL AS ZEEST-O-RIWAJ IN PUKHTUN CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF FEMALES OF VILLAGE GALOCH, SWAT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper deals with an often-discussed theme 'Badal' or revenge among Pashtuns. Albeit; this paper provides the insights into a gendered domain of 'Badal' that is the cultural and ritualistic aspect of reciprocity. There are multiple lenses that could be used to explore the ontology of this gendered 'Badal'; including symbolic violence or the reciprocity through gift and exchange. This paper will explore these layers of epistemological meanings that are embedded in Pashtun Zeest-o-Riwaj or the Pashtun culture and rituals. Badal is what completes a Pashtun; making of Pashtun needs to be understood in its idiosyncratic feature of extended self through his or her commune. Personal identities are submerged and masked by the family or clan identities that constitute the communal and national identity for Pashtuns. This paper is based on the ethnographic fieldwork done in a Yousafzai Pashtun community in the rural setting of Swat district in post-Taliban era. The study brings forth the women centric accounts of Badal or reciprocity in a Pashtun cultural setting. In addition, it probed the question of latent symbolic violence that is either sustained or resisted by the Pashtun womenfolk. It provides hermeneutical insights to the gendered explanations of ghairat (often translated as shame). Even the educated women are involved in domestic chores rather than being employed in a formal setting; therefore, they are usually involved in this strategic reciprocal praxis. Badal as reciprocity is often a skipped topic when etic studies tried to understand the Pakhtunwali. Albeit, when an emic perspective of this ethnography explored the Badal from female perspective; new insights about burden and invisible symbolic violence were made overt.*

**Keywords:** Pukhtun, Pukhtunwali, Zeest-o-Riwaj, Badal, Swat, Honor & Taunt.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Description of life and lifeworlds is a cultural enterprise that defines an anthropologist and his or her job. This becomes politically charged when it is done for an ethnic nation positioned within a state of diversified ethnic groups. It further gets emotionally laden if the focus is on women of that ethnic community. This paper is about the *zeest* (life) and *riwaj* (customs, norms and traditions) of ethnically *Pakhtun* or *Pashtun* women. Identity is always in flux and contested, being *Pukhtun* and being woman are no different than any other form of identity. Rather; this identity is apparently embedded in mundane. In reality it is larger than life for women struggling within the frame of *Zeest-o-Riwaj* or life and customs. *Pukhtun* are portrayed as blood thirsty and aggressive in post-colonial male literature. This image is biased to serve the political ends. This image creation has a strong impact on perception of idiosyncratic features of these tribal people. One particular feature; that is within the ambit of larger traditional codes, known as *Pukhtunwali* is 'Badal'; that is often translated as 'revenge'. This feature or tradition is generally dealt in gender domain, commonly male, where revenge is mandatory, violent, and harmful. *Badal* in the realm of women world is an under-studied and under-represented aspect of *Pukhtun* identity. Literature, anthropological or other, is often about the aggressive and violent aspects of *badal* with the exception of few which translate the *badal* as reciprocity and reflect on the life of the women among Pakhtuns.

*Zeest-o-Riwaj* translated as culture and tradition, through the literal meaning of *zeest* is life, however, culture as figurative meaning is more appropriate contextually. Pukhtun honor is often expressed as '*ghairat*', which regulates the social life of Pukhtuns; therefore, it is central idea around which Pukhtun life is structured. *Badal* is one part of the aspects of honor or shame that regulates social identity of Pukhtuns. Little gestures, exchanges, reciprocity and extending support are the social episteme that unfold the rationality and knowledge of Pukhtun *zeest-o-riwaj*.

The epistemological attempt to decipher tribal identity through culture also unfolds the subjective miseries of Pukhtun women. The wretched souls are taking this burden of competitive reciprocity to uphold the social fabric of the tribal life. The juncture of subjective misery and tribal code often remained unnoticed in anthropological accounts; this paper intends to bring forth the personhood of Pukhtun women whose personal identities are submerged and masked by the family or clan/tribal identities that ultimately constitutes the communal and national identity for Pukhtuns.

*Badal* in general is translated as revenge and as a cognitive and lexical trigger to activate the domain of revenge; i.e. blood for blood, an eye for an eye or violence for violence. This is more of a patriarchal cognitive and lexical attribute; the probe from a more feminist perspective brings forth new domain features to transform the translation from 'revenge' to 'reciprocity'.

*Badal* is a polysemic and polyvocal concept for Pukhtun cultural life and often semiotic masculine and semiotic feminine. *Badal* is more meaningful when explored for its metaphorical meaning and use. The significance of usage as reciprocity is no less than the use as revenge as translation in the contested arena of social relations in the context. Metaphoric translations include reciprocity, exchange and debt. Exchange is referred to the exchange of gifts, taunts, harm, woman, support and even emotions. Semiotic feminine expressions are vast and deep to keep Pukhtun identity intact and vibrant.

### Research Gap

There is abundant literature on reciprocity and revenge. Rather much of the literature written about Pukhtuns is about *badal*, i.e. reciprocal revenge. However, there is a significant gap in this spectrum, which is the gender lens. Women are underrepresented in the social life of a Pukhtun community whenever it is represented in the anthropological literature. "Theories of reciprocity have been surprisingly gender blind (Ashwin, Tartakovskaya, Ilyina, & Lytkina, 2013)." This study is to bridge the said gap by contributing to the literature with women as protagonists in the field of reciprocity. This paper in general contributes towards a larger understanding of the Muslim society.

### Research Question

The research question that worked as impetus for this study is 'what is the gendered variation of *badal* or reciprocity among Pukhtuns?'

## METHODOLOGY AND POSITIONALITY

This study is ethnography from an insider's perspective. Qualitative data of inter-subjective nature was collected. Accessibility is one of the most important issues in ethnographic research; therefore, it is warranted that researcher place herself in the field research. Positionality; for this reason, is part of methodology. One of the researchers is an insider; born and raised among the community. She had command over language and faced no issues concerning gate keepers. However, she was taken for granted at many occasions. This study was an experiential contest to fight for her Pukhtun female identity. Hence, it is important to keep subjective position in limelight when considering methodology. It was her position that made the prolonged face to face interviewing easy and possible; conversational interviews were the primary source of narrative based data. In addition to this position of researcher; that was necessary for an emic perspective, academic mention participated to provide an emic perspective. The co-researcher is a non-Pukhtun, who questioned emic notions frequently to act as an etic vigilante. In addition to questioning the gendered position of arguments.

It is pertinent to explicate that to acquire ethnographic detail a prolonged stay was necessary in the field; the study is the result of four months of fieldwork. Language of the interlocutors was پښتو Pukhtu or Pashtu; researcher as an insider was proficient and well versed with the local dialect. Conversations with multiple stakeholders made it possible to triangulate the data, individual women were the unit of data collection. *Badal* for women is exchange and reciprocity, therefore it is essentially participatory. Participant Observation was the part of methods, in addition to

conversational interviews. Jotting during the conversational interviews was frequently done except when someone asked not to do that. Synchronous conversational interviews required probing very often and that actually helped to open the interlocutors and participate with zeal. Researcher's curiosity was an element that motivated the interlocutors to be more conversant and elaborate the minute details.

This ethnography was narrative based and the thematic analysis were implied to analyze the data. Themes were extracted from the transcribed conversational interviews, meaningful vignettes from the transcriptions were used as the unit of analysis. Codes emerging and re-emerging within and among these vignettes lead to refining the themes.

### **Ontological Insight**

The ontological dynamics of *badal* are the essence of Pukhtun life through participation; that, if avoided will lead to isolation and seclusion of an individual or a family from rest of the community. Isolated being is not worthy of personhood in Pukhtun culture. The Pukhtun tribe is based on a notion where commune is an indivisible unit. Thus isolation is an unacceptable option, consequently making reciprocity mandatory. *Badal* is part of every event, whether rites of passage or other daily chores for example the sharing of sorrow or grief as part of '*ghum khadi*. Although Amineh Ahmed (2005) sees "...segregated zones of *gham-khadi* as a space of female agency." She further adds that, "*Gham-khadi* comprises a body of ideas and practices of life, in which happiness and sadness are understood as indissoluble, and are celebrated communally within networks of reciprocal social obligations (Ahmed A. , 2005)."

### **Locale**

Galoch, the village, is a small village in Union Council Kala Kalay of District Swat. The village is integral part of history of Swat in general and shares the landscape of Gandhara Civilization in the historical framework. One major archeological site located in Galoch is fort Chinaar. According to the oral history collected during the fieldwork the village was inhabited by one of the families who migrated from Baghdad after the Mongol attack. The family dug a well and constructed a mosque and provided a home for their descendants we now know as *Qazi Khel*. Abdul Wadood, one of the sons of Wali-e-Swat, after completion of his education tried to resettle some families for better agricultural productivity in the village thus *Hasan Khel*, *Baba Khel* and *Nemat Khel* joined the *Qazi Khel* to dwell in Galoch. Almost 99 percent of the population is ethnic Pukhtun; around 1 percent are Gojri speaking.

### **Female Lifeworlds**

Participant observation of the gendered commune shall not be reductionist and simplistic, it must bring forth the richness and complexity. Lifeworlds of the women of the commune were observed in their domestic and communal settings. Biggs (2014) defines the rural lifeworlds: "Rural lifeworlds - the rural world as directly experienced by individuals, subjectively, in and through their everyday life and work - are frequently rendered into simplistic categories by those speaking "authoritatively" about the rural from elsewhere" (Biggs, 2014, p. 261). This is why affect perspective of *badal* is observed for its emic value, to describe how women's lifeworlds are shaped by this cultural traditional practice. Perception of *badal* is overtly part of the nurture and this occurs in the narratives, rhetoric and vernacular use *badal* idiomatically.

This study stresses three dimensions of *badal* for women. First is the perception of women about *badal* that is observed as part of nurture and the narratives in domestic sphere. Second is the spatial and temporal dimension within the social realm. Third is the significance of the practice; that refers to the impact on the life of women and the consequences of practicing or avoiding the *badal*.

### **Badal (Exchange)**

*Badal* means 'exchange'. *Badal* could be termed as both good and bad as per situations. It demands equal action, response, effort, goods or services in return. *Badal* does not only mean to take revenge. *Badal* is an obligation to return good deeds like help, reward, and gifts albeit it is often restricted within the circumscribed social connotations referring to vengeance. *Badal* has many expressions as vengeance; one of them is *swara*, where women of one household are given in marriage to the household of the aggrieved as a compensation and to settle down the conflict between two families. "In Pukhtun society ... the values are such that groups like a family act as a unit and the consequences of individual actions are also born collectively (Chaudhary, 2014)."

Exchange or reciprocity is about communal social network that is maintained by women. To much extent the *badal* is similar to *vartan bhanji* among Punjabis. As Zekiye Eglar's work is summarized:

“Village life in Mohla is built around *vartan bhanji* which is a complex mechanism for the exchange of gifts and services. The people who deal in *vartan bhanji* are consanguine and affinal relatives, friends, members of the same or of another caste, neighbors, almost anyone in the village, or even another village. Contrary to what one would expect in a male dominated society, this reciprocal gift giving is entirely in the hands of married women who represent their individual households. Thus the system with all its prescribed rules and purposeful aims at promoting friendship, establishing and maintaining a good reputation, gaining prestige, becomes the principal means of integration in Punjab society.”

One can observe the similarities in the *badal* and *vartan bhanji* when it is relative to women and domestic sphere.

### **Conceptual Definition of Badal (Revenge or Reciprocity!)**

*Badal* is polysemous - expressed in varying senses like revenge or justice, reciprocity, debt, taunts, assault and even visits. The two main standards of doing *Pukhtu* are revenge (often semiotic masculine) and reciprocity or *badal* (often semiotic feminine). For women *Badal* means exchange of visits and gifts while for men this means exchange of blood or women. This is how *badal* is conceived and treated at conceptual level in general within a Pakhtun community.

### **Operational Definition of Term Badal**

Operational definition for this specific text is more or less similar as that explained as conceptual definition. Galoch, the village, is the microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic Pakhtun society. It is imitation of the *Pakhtu* or *Pakhtunwali* that provides basis of identity to the Pakhtuns of Galoch. *Badal* is a relationship based on reciprocity of visits, gestures and gifts among *Pukhtun* women. Hence; *badal* is an essential part of *zeest-o-riwaj* (life and traditions) and is being practiced at different occasions like betrothal, wedding, funeral, to visit the sick person and other affairs of sorrows and joys e.g. *ghum khadi*. *Badal* makes a person social as it helps integration and affection; else non-practice of reciprocity leads to isolation and alienation.

### **Pashtun or Pakhtun**

Written Pashto and spoken Pashto are two different things. Now the modern standardized Pashto language script represent both “Kh” and “Sh” phonemes through a single letter “ښ” but it is read and spoken differently by the two dominant main Pashto dialect speakers. Standardization which on one hand helps in the development of language and enhances the communication among variant dialect speakers of the same language; it leaves little room for diversity and encourages homogeneity and universality on the other. Therefore, the word spelled *Pakhtun* or *Pashtun* represents and refers the same ethnic group in this text. (Ali, 2019)

Pathan is often used as a synonym of Pukhtun. According to Ghani Khan the word Pathan is derived from ‘*fatha*’ means victorious and this title is achieved by *Pukhtuns* because of their bravery and chivalry. Pakhtuns are an ethnic group who predominantly live a richly cultured life and historically claim to have influenced religious belief in whole India through their continuous conquests.

### **Pukhtunwali**

*Pashtunwali* is the code of life the *Pukhtuns* live by. If one is to learn about or become part of a *Pukhtun* society then it is imperative for him or her to understand and agree to it. *Pukhtunwali* is a belief and a modality of behavior for *Pukhtun* and works like a yardstick to measure normative and deviant behavior.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study is primarily focused on women in Pukhtun society, tribal ethnic identity is tantamount of life for Pakhtun women, to uphold this identity they demonstrate praxis of *badal* or reciprocity as central feature of their traditional life. Hence one objective of this study is to bring forth the domestic life of women that revolves around *badal* or reciprocity. Consequently, the ever-increasing complexity of social networks and inflation is subsequently making it an economic burden; hence symbolic violence, instead of a cultural practice of maintaining social networks among relatives and

neighbors. Thus, another objective of this study is to explore this symbolic violence and how it is manifested through the assimilation of *ghairat* and *Pakhtunwali* into daily routine of women.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study deduced from the existing body of theories in social sciences. *Zeest-o-Rawaj* or culture and traditions are usually highlighted by the ubiquitous idiosyncratic patterns that make them distinguished. These patterns are the structures that helps create a vivid understanding of the culture for pan-cultural audiences. Viewed from Saussurian lens, *badal* is *parole* and structure that place male in contrast of female is *langue*. Signification here is critical where *badal* as signifier is significant in its own right but the signifier(s) are determined within the structures.

Structuralism helps one to peep into epistemology or the arrangement of knowledge, that is an intersection of truth and belief, which is structured in the cognition and cultural life of any group. *Badal* helps as a very significant knot that elucidates the crossroads of gender and culture from structuralist stand. *Badal* is a way of knowing the world for a Pukhtun. Meanings are generated in the social milieu and are often given more metaphysical sense for structuralism. Therefore, looking at reciprocity is significant to understand the identity *per se*. Structural anthropologists' focus on pattern of human thoughts. The structure of the human thought is same in all culture, but shapes are different which make differentiations between cultures. Latent meanings exist in all cultural terminologies.

Semiotic feminine understanding of *badal* or reciprocity calls for integration of theories of reciprocity within the frame of structuralism. Falk & Fischbacher (2006) understands the social nature of reciprocity as for them; "It is a behavioral response to perceived kindness and unkindness, where kindness comprises both distributional fairness as well as fairness intentions. In addition, they predicted that "identical consequences trigger different reciprocal responses in different environments (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006)." Reciprocity is diversly understood in social sciences from a judicio-political stance where mutual recognition is reciprocal (Brooks, 2012) to the philosophical stand where gratitude is reciprocal and sacred duty (Tevenar, 2006).

In the preface of the new addition of 'Stone age economics' Marshal Sahlins states, "Human beings are double and divided, said Durkheim, composed of the egocentric desires inherent in their own nature and the moral constraints they derive from society...If you're not maximizing material utility, you must be satisfying some other, purely social value. (Sahlins, 2017 [1972])"

Marshall Sahlins (1965) categorized reciprocity into *Balanced Reciprocity* or immediate and equal return or exchange, *Negative Reciprocity* when return in exchange is expected to be higher in reward, and *Generalized Reciprocity* or usual exchange to establish social relations with delayed expectations of return, it is "putatively altruistic giving" (Price, 1978).

Balanced Reciprocity is the most significant type of the reciprocity or exchange for this study because it reflects the spirit of *badal*. Kolm explained that, "...in *comparative, matching, compensatory, or balance reciprocity*, your return giving or favour aims at establishing some balance between what you benefited from and what you provide in return. It "evens out" some inequality in the relation. You think that you ought to do this, that this is the proper thing to do, and you often feel you have a kind of moral debt towards the initial actor as long as you have not "paid your debt" by this return action" (Kolm, 2008).

### Contextualizing *Badal* in Pashtun Culture

*Badal* as *Zeest-o-Riwaj* is a socially unique reciprocity term, which is often not highlighted in gendered terms. The following features are deciphered on the basis of extensive ethnographic fieldwork:

*Badal as a Code of Society*: Pakistan is a collectivist society (Lyon, 2002) that requires frequent reciprocity among community members. *Badal* is practiced because it is a customary code of Pukhtun society. It is an essential part of life for men and women, varying from blood feud revenge to small gift exchange. Pukhtun society often reinstates the value of customs, چى چرى اوسى/اوسى په مذهب به د هغوي شى (wherever you live, you will observe their customs).

*Badal as Love/Respect*: *Badal* in symbolic interaction is often translated as an expression of love, patience, care, sympathy, respect, help, support and favor. *Badal* as exchange, within communal domesticity, could be of an edible thing or just the exchange of good gestures and positive vibes,

although without expectations but are often reciprocated as cultural obligation. Badal is a metaphorical equivalent of respect and egalitarianism. The gift or thing which is given as a favor and without any expectations is called دالی *Dalai*. But now the gift has assumed the form of Badal. If someone gives something to someone else in hand as respects then the other one returns the gift for the sake of his honor and consider it their duty. People think if the person gives something to someone, it obliges them to return the favor in future and hence it is named Badal.

*Badal as an Entertainment:* Traditionally in patriarchal Pukhtun culture women mobility was restricted and reciprocating the food with the neighbors gave them ample time to gossip, given that the pot or plate in which food is brought a house shall not be returned empty. The tradition of “*Tla Ratla*” تله راتله was a way to keep women entertained and provided social space within the domestic spheres.

*Badal as an Embarrassment:* Badal stems from shame, one is not honorable if she visits without gift to offer, particularly if one has received gift shall reciprocate with something better or something more valuable. Pukhtun being is egoistic and he or she cannot let anyone’s favour remain unmatched. Returning less than what one has received is considered an insult or assault on person’s honor. Proverbial taunting is prevalent to ensure that shaming is done if someone visits without gift; one such taunt mentioned by an interlocutor was تول مال ئ راله اوخور (they seized all our wealth).

*Badal as an Expectation/Greed:* Although at verbal level the relationships are meant to be free of greed but are never without expectations. Badal is indeed about expectations and exchange. A respondent reported that if someone fails to respond to the social expectations of badal than she will be disgraced directly or indirectly by her social network. One of the respondents shared a short story of her relatives that,

*“A decade ago, there was a woman among our relatives who gave a coconut to one of her beloved relatives (in the past coconut was considered a valuable gift). Though this gift giving was an act of affection but generated greed in the woman who received the coconut. She assumed that she will get a huge dowry if she marries her son to the daughter (who was not that pretty) of the gift-giver. Giving coconut signified the higher status and wealth. Thus, gift exchange generates affection, alliances, competition and greed simultaneously. To whom she gave the coconut, married her daughter who was not beautiful. There is favor and greed. The woman who gave the coconut was a favor and the woman who married her daughter was greed because there was an expectation of high dowry”.*

Reciprocity is a social responsibility and a way to keep the network intact and vibrant. The reciprocity is a calculated social activity where the return is expected even if deferred. The exchange is a tricky business where worth of the material goods signifies intentions and relations.

*Badal to get Admiration and Praise:* Exchanging is like a “game” for women to get prestige (Eglar, A Punjabi Village in Pakistan, 1960). Akin to the practice of *Vertan Bhanji* in Punjabi villages, this wins a married woman prestige. Women in the village have this desire at the core to be admired and praised by the social networks they reciprocate within.

*Badal as to Secure Honor:* Pukhtun and honour are synonymous in the viewpoint of *Pakhtunwali*, badal or reciprocity is an instrument to gain and protect honour, therefore, it is the most important element of the life of a Pukhtun woman. “To avoid feeling inferior and to safeguard reputation, the recipient must reciprocate” (Sherry, 1983). To secure their honor; Pukhtun even sell their valuables like property and jewelry to fulfill the formal obligation to reciprocate. One of the interlocutors highlighted the implicit relationship of giving and honour in a proverb, “*Da fasal khwar ym kho da asal khwar na yam*” (I am a poor of crops but not of good birth). Pukhtuns are nurtured in the spirit that ‘they can die for their honor but cannot tolerate to lose their prestige and honor in the society’.

*Badal: Pakhtun Cooperation or Hindu Competition:* It was quite perplexing when the interlocutors reported that badal is not *Pakhtunwali*. Women’s emic voices do not consider the contemporary practices of badal synchronous to the spirit of *Pakhtunwali*. It was a reciprocal relationship to strengthen the in-group affiliation and establish a support network for the members of the tribe. However, media influenced the tribal life and transformed badal to a competitive Hindu practice. “*Zbatal da Hindwano kar day da Mustman na*” (Recalling the favors is the habit of Hindu not Muslim). In the view of another middle aged woman ‘Muslims practice gift exchange with a spirit of kindness and sympathy, it is not a burden as we see the custom-bound Hindu communities.’ For

anthropologists "...‘love’ has been part and parcel of the social relations that are so foundational to reciprocity. (Remtilla, 2010)"

Materialism and Badal: Poor persons often feel marginalized; when it comes to reciprocal networking in a social web. Begum, one of the interlocutors narrated,

*"This is my personal experience, when I had no money nobody wanted to talk to me or keep contact with me. I personally experienced this, when I visited some relatives with my yor (sister in-law), we took the same amount of sugar but in return my sister in-law got suit and I got only soap. This is because I was financially not sound. But when my son went to Dubai and started earning, people started visiting me; suddenly I was important enough to be one to socialize with. Simultaneously expectations of people began; they wished to have a reciprocal relationship and expected gifts from me. In contemporary society those people are honorable who have some money in their hand. "*

Without a gift every affectionate expression is futile.

Badal and Relatives: Maintaining social relationships among neighbours who are often relatives in a Pakhtun society is quite complex. An interlocutor retorted in these words, *"Sharing of cooked food or curry, shared over the wall by neighbours, is also an expression of Badal. Some people exchange it with expectations that the neighbours might return something better."*

Only the material is recognized and appreciated. Kind acts might be applauded in the person's presence but she will lose respect among relatives if kindness is not augmented by material gifts. "Things have values which are emotional as well as material" (Cunnison, 1950 [1966]).

Regulating Badal: A Patriarchal Balance: Elder of the family means head of the household and usually a patriarch who rules the house and his decision is final. The actions of youth of the family are often dictated and directed by the patriarch. Therefore, pleasing the elder of the family through *badal* is mandatory and his consent and happiness implies the happiness of the family. As it is discussed earlier that practicing *badal* is doing *Pukhtu* i.e. to secure one's honor. The question arises that, who are responsible for performing *badal*? The answer is the head of the family. Then; who is the head of the family? The answer, in the words of one of the interlocutors, 'who earns or runs the expenses of the household', usually they are men. It is the men who decide about keeping relations with other families.

Without male permission, female cannot practice *badal*. Apparently it seems that domestic *badal* or exchange and reciprocity are female domains but the women acknowledged that they cannot practice *badal* without the consent of men. Men are not overtly involved in exchange but they covertly regulate the exchanges.

Patriarch regulates the *badal* through his women folk and occasionally personally to maintain his honor, and to satisfy his 'Pukhtu' ego. A man's honor increases due to his woman by her domestic activities, mostly by offering lavish hospitality (Ahmed A. A., *The World is Established through the Work of Existence : the Performance of Gham-Khadi among Pukhtun Bibiane in Northern Pakistan*, 2004). Majority of the respondents said *"Men are often involved in this tradition"*, that is discernibly manifested by the women as active protagonist rather than men. Men are doing it out of house and do not show it, while women are showing it to get admiration and also like to practice it. As it has been explained earlier that it is the leisure activity for the women that gives them break from domestic chores and provide opportunity to socialize. That's why it is more catalyzed by women. Secondly, women arrange and manage it; they verbalize the details about how to practice it. Women keep account about the reciprocity and decide about how much they need to give to others?

Amount to be fixed for Badal: When people visit someone else it is important to bring something in their hands. This is depending on their status, people's relation, relatives and occasion. A proverb explains this, *"Kofar da twana pori day"* (No one can do evil beyond one's power). One gives as much as she could afford. As it is connected with shame, people try to present to others more amount in terms of value and it becomes a burden for them. One woman responded with a famous Pukhtu saying,

*"Aasman pa dazo mawala"* (Don't throw stones towards the sky), it means that, do not boast of doing something beyond your capabilities.

Mostly people offer money, sugar and rice. Chiefly sugar, usually people give sugar of 1 *Darai* which is equal to 5kg. If there is wedding ceremony and someone has to go then they offer

money or cloths. If the person goes to congratulate (*Mubaraki*) then they offer sugar. People used to give sugar because it is cheap, used in everyday life, easily available and every one can afford it.

When the gift is edible; it is consumed in the house. If the gift is something other than food like cloths than it is either used or kept to pass on to someone else. Usually; if the gifted item is beautiful or expensive; than the receiver will use it for her own use. Otherwise; she keeps it till she uses it for *Gham-Khadi* exchange. Some people pass on the things which have lesser value for them or unwanted gifts to others who might appreciate them more (Adams, Flynn, & Norton, *The Gifts We Keep on Giving: Documenting and Destigmatizing the Regifting Taboo*, 2012). Previously people used to give organic eggs, *desi ghee* (clarified butter), milk, *masta* (yogurt), *Gwara* (raw sugar), *charg* (chicken) etc.

Keeping Record of Badal: Badal requires remembering what has been received and what should be returned, the return is an obligatory action. It is keenly observed at every occasion the amount and the quality of the gift which has been received. Gift is equated with honor and respect, to present a gift is to ascribe honor unto the receiver. People keep it in mind and return back according to the received amount apparently and received honour latently. "*Har cha ta khapl izzat aw maal khog day*" (Every one love their honor as well as wealth). Pukhtun woman, the receiver and the donor carefully observe the gift which has been received or given according to the previous debt or donation (Ahmed A. A., *The World is Established through the Work of Existence : the Performance of Gham-Khadi among Pukhtun Bibiane in Northern Pakistan*, 2004).

Consequences of Failing to Maintain Badal: One of the interlocutors, Razia, shared her story, "*My mother-in-law died after a few days of my wedding. As a newly wedded bride I was not familiar with relatives of my in-laws and was not aware of their relations. As I was from city, these customs were unfamiliar to me. It was very difficult and a challenge for me to observe these customs. But as it is a woman's responsibility that no harm is done to the family's honor. When I started visits to reciprocate the visits of relatives; I was quiet silent. My quietness made people talk about me, they considered it rude. They said I was not good, I do not maintain the relationships, and they labeled me arrogant urbanite because I was from city and doing a job. My husband told me not to go anywhere. Due to this, people started breaking the relationships. It seemed that we were losing our value and status in the society. Then my husband started sending me again to maintain his 'Pukhtu' and to gain the status in the society. My husband used to tell me that with whom, when and how to keep the relations for sustainability of our traditions. Even he also tells me that how to talk with whom and how?*"

There is a fear of losing prestige and status, if one fails to practice *badal*. Failure to practice *badal* brings shame and dishonor to a person and his/her family, it provides an opportunity to people to bad-mouth against the family and taunt the family members. It is important to keep good relations by visiting other; particularly on festive occasions or the events of sorrows and joys. Those who conduct this give and take or reciprocity properly; they bring prestige to the family (Eglar, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan*, 1960). Badal is most common and important phenomenon in Pukhtun society. If someone does not practice it, he/she lose his/her honor. *Gham Khadi* is a complex process which helps to build strong social and familial bonds (Ahmed A. A., 2004). People are obliged to return the received gifts, if they fail to return or repay sufficiently the result will be loss of status and self-esteem (Mayet & Pine, 2010). No one wants to keep *Gham Khadi* with them that result in their social isolation and signifies their incompatibility with the community. Society starts ignoring them and label as *bay-riwaja* (out of custom) and *bay-dastora* (disgrace). They are referred metaphorically as dead bodies by the members of the community.

One who is incapable of attending to the call of social responsibility to contribute towards the fellow community members will consequently face isolation because the behaviors and gestures are equally reciprocated. Skipping a funeral may result in a less attended funeral for the family members of the person who skip the event of *Gham Khadi* in other homes of the community. A less attended funeral is an element of shame. Similarly ones behavior brings bad repute to his off-springs; if he fails to attend occasions of *Gham Khadi*. Community members not only avoid such a person and his or her family but ridicule them as well. It is important to be remembered in good words by the community when one departs so that people pray for the deceased; however an isolated person is deprived of such



spiritual benefits if she avoids the communal rites.. They face taunts of community and relatives and feel embarrassment. They have to practice the custom of Badal at any cost. Else the person will be neither invited in any ceremony nor will any one participate in theirs. Hence they lose their value in people's eyes. "*As chi khuday khwaravi, nom yi yabo kri*" (When a horse loses his place in animal hierarchy, he is treated like a mule).

Death is preferred over a disgrace among Pukhtuns. Hence the social coercion keeps one strangled in the web of social networks. *Badal* is a means to satisfy Pukhtun ego. If people do not keep this tradition properly the relations will become worst.

*Badal* is a complicated phenomenon. On one hand it connects people and on the other hand it may break the relationships. If people disconnect than the dissociation may give way to aggression; and may culminate into enmity. The return should be something new and little bit more from the received amount. It is very rare to return the same thing. The return should always be more from the received amount. Equal exchange leads the relationship to an end or at least creates a rift and loathe between the *badal* partners (Nasir & Mielke, 2015).

*Badal: Social Burden:* *Badal* is a social obligation that requires a lot of investment that is returned but in a deferred fashion. That leads to borrowing and puts the family in trouble. "*Por da wajod oor day*" (A loan becomes a trouble for a man). To do or not to do is the dilemma that keeps the women in an arena that requires constant struggle for them to keep themselves motivated to actively participate in *badal* after thorough calculations. The increasing facilities, competition among *badal* partners, increasing the number of visits at each other's homes and increasing in ceremonies and more elaborated customs leads to burden because all these factors require more investment. Previously it was not that difficult when people kept simple. People used to give things as a gift (*Dalai*) as a sympathy or humanity and favor that required a *badal* but not as a burden rather as a reciprocal favor that could be lesser than what was received. These gifts were without expectations.

"*Chanra di wi kho pa meena*" (Be it gram, let it be with love). It means that even if there is little to offer, it should be presented with grace and sincerity. If the members of society follow the simplicity in *badal* it will be without competition with each other and people will maintain their relationship full of love and affiliation.

If death occurred, the neighbors sent meal to the house of the deceased so that the mourning family can eat and cater the guests. Nowadays people do not go to share grief or to show sympathy, but they visit for their own good. The increasing ceremonies lead to greed and expectations. People respect and praise the ones who spend lavishly.

It is the wealth that ensures ones respect among her community. If one is not that wealthy then she has to sell her valuables to meet the expenses. This expenditure and spending is compulsory to avoid taunts and criticism. For example, if a person "A" gives something to "B" and "B" does not return it to "A" then "B" is criticized and mostly by "A" and lose value in the eyes of the people. To keep away from critics of society "B" will try to give more in returns to "A". As Salma said "*da khalko khabari sok nashi bardasht kawaly*" (people cannot tolerate taunts and critics of others).

In this competition of give and take, *Badal* is transformed into a bad thing and the true spirit of communal significance is reduced. It is an identity marker for Pukhtun women and they are the major contributors to keep it vibrant and functional. Now majority is up with this transformation of the custom that requires coercive competition. Respondents explicitly verbalized that they are fed up of this competitive customary reciprocity and demanded a ban by the government on this. These women stated that this coercive practice leads to domestic quarrels between spouses and labeled it as headache, burden, socially coercive and cruelty. Once *Badal* is started, there is no way to end it without putting ones grace and honor at stake. "*As asan day sanj yi gran day*" (Buying a horse is easy, feeding it is difficult).

#### **Diversity of Occasion of Grief and Happiness (Gham Khadi) when *Badal* is Practiced**

Reciprocity is a mandatory action which exists in every culture of the world in one form or the other, some celebrate the exchange in a highly ritualized manner and others do it without pomp. In Pukhtun culture it also exists in the form of *Tla Ratla* (visiting neighbours) at different ceremonies. These ceremonies include wedding, death, *Tapos* (visiting sick) , *koiждан* (betrothal), child birth, and ceremony of *Hajj* (pilgrimage), *Kherat* (banquet, charity feast), construction of new house, returning from abroad and even death of an animal.

These events either celebrated with great pomp or may be as a routine; albeit, the spirit of reciprocity is highly functional and observable in these reciprocal events. *Gham Khadi* غم بنادی is a Pashto phrase that means ‘sorrows and joys’ that refers to diversity of celebrated rites of passage and moments of life. The primary concern of *Gham Khadi* is the neighborhood, close relatives and friends. Honor and prestige of an individual in a community depends on the practice of *Gham Khadi*, higher the frequency of practicing it shows more respect and close bonding among the members of the community. *Gham Khadi* is practiced at the occasions of:

Child Birth: The birth of a child is celebrated with great enthusiasm. People express their happiness through material gifts for instance sweets, cash or clothes. Exchanging of gifts sometimes become very figurative and people act accordingly, an infertile respondent stated, “*At birth of a child I do not go to congratulate. I cannot go empty handed and if I give the gift for the new born; I will not be reciprocated because I will not have kids.*”

Betrothal (Kojidan or Kwezhdan): Betrothal or engagement is a socio-cultural ceremony in which a girl and a boy formally tied in a new relationship. It is regulated by female members of the family and the intensity of performing *badal* at this occasion ensures the suitor and his family about the suitability of the girl, who will be taking charge of *badal* responsibilities in her husband’s home. Therefore, her circle of relatives reveals an awesome zeal to impress the suitor’s mother and sisters.

Wedding (Wada): Invitation to a wedding in Galoch village or any other *Pukhtun* community for that matter is practice of *badal* to much extent because one is invited if one is expected to invite the host in future or already invited the host in the past. So, invites are actually reciprocated in the long run. In boy’s wedding the close relatives may contribute by gifting a sack of sugar (50kg), sack of rice (40kg), tin of oil (16 liter), or slaughtering a buffalo for meat (buffalo is considered an expensive gift), or decorate the car for the groom. These are considered obligations of the relatives who are in the reciprocity network of the groom’s family. In return the donor receives cloths. Those who give high amount will receive the finest cloths. While those who give small amount will receive ordinary cloths or they receive the same amount returned on similar occasion or celebration of their family. The friends offer sweets, money and a traditional garland made from fresh currency notes. The return may be immediate or deferred for a later on ceremonial transaction. It may be in form of cash or kind. Not only material things are exchanged, but singing and dancing are also subject to *badal*. If someone sings a song or dances in one’s wedding, then one has to do the same in his or her wedding.

Pilgrimage (Hajj): *Hajj*, Muslim pilgrimage, is one of the most important events for a devout Muslim. The pilgrims are highly respected and are showed reverence or veneration by their relatives. Relatives and neighbours visit one after her return from *Hajj*. Offering cash as gift to a pilgrim on her return may embarrass her, however a garland of fresh currency notes is an acceptable form. Pilgrim often reciprocate by giving dates (*Ajwa*, *Sukkri*, *Safawi*, and *Khudry* are most famous dates), *Zam Zam* water, Muslim skull-caps (*topi*), prayer beads or rosary (*tasbih*), prayer mat (*jay-e-namaz*) and chequered scarf (*Keffiyeh*) or fabrics. Clothes are offered to the close relatives. Similarly, when the people return from abroad (it is always men who go abroad as labourer, often to middle-east and gulf states) the similar nature of gift exchange takes place that requires reciprocity or *badal*. A short folk story told by a respondent provides insight that how reciprocity is nurtured in the folk wisdom. “A man was going to bazaar. Someone ask him where are you going? He replied “*bazaar ta zam titi (hen) la jamay akhlam*” (I am going to bazaar to buy some clothes for hen). The person astonishingly asks that is there any clothes for hen? The man explained that a friend of him gifted him a hen so he is going to buy clothes as a reciprocal gift”.

Charity Banquet (Khairaat): *Khairaat*, giving or distributing something to please the God, should be for the sake of God. *Kherat* is usually food, people are invited; rich and poor alike, and participants eat *khairaat* food for divine pleasure. Similarly, *sadqa* is given to the poor and the receiver is told about it, only the deserving can receive *sadqa*, usually *sadqa* is given to avoid ill fate, disease, or any form of misfortune. *Sadqa* pleases the God and God protects one from evil eye, by engaging Divine into reciprocity. In *Khairaat* people pray for the person. Nowadays, these ‘giving’ occasions are not only an expression of religiosity but also subject to *Badal*. If someone is not invited for any reason or by chance then she will be reciprocated or revenged by not being invited to the similar occasions arranged by the person who was skipped. As respondent told,

“*My husband told me that there was a Khairaat, which was a chehlum (salwekhtama) of the grandfather of one of his friends. He forgot one of his friends to invite. That person*

*got angry and stated; "Zama hum Dada shta" Means that I have my grandfather!  
Implied that he will not invite his friend to avenge forgetting".*

Tapos (Visiting mother of a person undergoing rites of passage): *Tapos* refers to multiple tasks; it is to visit a person after long time, to ask neighbors to help them in their difficult times and to visit the sick person. *Tapos*, most often, refers "to visit a sick person". A gift is an obligatory part of the visit and it is not acceptable to visit for *tapos* empty handed. Benedicte Grima (Grima, 1985) states that *tapos* is the mandatory visit of women to the mother of someone having undergone a rite of passage. This is a major event of identity for the women folks in Pukhtun society who construct their Pukhtun identity through grief, pain and suffering; therefore, it is a very important signifier within the broader category of *badal*. *Tapos* signify the misery that is within the gendered domain where mutuality is constructed through the pain or suffering that Pukhtun women share. The mutual sharing of pain and suffering and its narration are the reciprocal responsibility of the partners in *badal* or *tapos per se*.

At time of birth and circumcision the household arranges just one large function and also provides entertainment. In case of illness female of the victim family especially the mother stays ready at to attend and entertain the guests. The mother of the victim tells the whole tale to share her emotions with the guests and they join her and show their sympathy towards her. As the guests leaving, they offer some money to the mother to help them financially. In return the receiver reciprocates with small gifts. This give and take is very carefully recorded. These donations are also held in weddings and also expected in deaths. Those who do not attend the occasion on time will still remain under the obligation of a short visit of *Tapos*.

Death (Marg): Death is inevitable. "*Gham pa stargo rond day hum konr day*" (Grief knocks at every door). *Badal* is ubiquitous in *Pukhtun* society, even in times of sorrow and grief, people expect to get the pay back of help and 'expressing of grief' to be reciprocated. People give money to the mourning family that actually helps them manage the funeral rites and associated feast. The hearth in the household of the deceased is kept without fire to symbolically communicate the event of grief. Household of the deceased do not cook for three days and food is provided, for family and visitors, by the neighbours and kin, who are in their reciprocity network, enacting as safety net. This favour is returned in the long-run and keeps the community bonded together. To keep the responsibility bearable and ensure the continuity of the traditions neighboring households take turns for the meals or sometimes few households contribute for each meal.

It is important to be recognized and recorded when one offers anything in a *badal* based reciprocity network. Reciprocity is obligatory; one of the interlocutors shared her personal experience, "*When my sister in-law died. One of her relatives came with sugar. She wanted to give it to my mother-in-law in person but when she did not find her, she gave the sugar to me and instructed to give it to my mother-in-law and inform her that who had given it*".

All these things were carefully observed who sent what and how much? But now this system is replaced by a local committee.

In the past small hamlets of more or less twenty households was called *tul* <sup>تول</sup> and its transactions and reciprocity was record of all reciprocal exchanges, particularly on the occasion of death. These houses sent meal to the family of the deceased for the three days. It was properly written by a person who was appointed for this. But now is the population has increased and village neighborhood exceeds the usual number of households of a traditional *tul*, therefore, the individual record keepers are replaced by a communal committee.

Usually, the communal committee consists of the members of one lineage. There are different lineages co-residing in the village; hence there are a few communal committees present in the village for this reason. Primarily the committee functions in a very hierarchical role specific form. Head of the committee keeps the record in black and white, and members are responsible to collect the amount from the families who are in the network or lineage. Contribution may vary as per affordability of the members of the network. Members in the supervision of the head of the committee are also responsible to arrange for the meals when death occurs among any of the member families. The family of the deceased is informed about the total collected amount and the spending is made according to the desire of the family of the deceased; however, the difference of expenditure and collections is to be borne by the family. Committee provides services and assistance in all arrangements if requested by the family of the deceased. For the breakfast the committee divided

these houses on three days, they send *parathas* and tea as a breakfast to the mourning family. The committee provides services to those who participate and contribute; which is an extended form of Badal.

Death of an Animal: Rural community of Galoch is agrarian; therefore, the worth of animals is higher. The animals are the assets, subsistence depends on the animals. The value of animals is overt; hence the death of an animal is a loss that calls for a sympathy visit by neighbours. This contextual visit is because of a covert reason that tells about the competitive nature of the Pukhtun life. There might be a perception that neighbor is happy on the loss; and by visiting on such occasion of loss will eliminates this (mis)perception. Such visits are to assure the neighbor or relative the concern one have in others wellbeing.

#### COMMENTARY

There is a trend of literacy among females, particularly the younger ones, however, they are often not part of the office going cohort. Usual profession for females is teaching at school or college. Majority is working within the domestic sphere of home. Social networking with relatives and neighbors is one of the primary tasks apart from errands and cooking at home; hence a lot of time and energy is spent in strategizing and carrying on this task.

#### CONCLUSION

Pukhtuns are one of the largest ethnic groups in South-Asia and scattered around Afghanistan and Pakistan. The two major identity markers of *Pukhtuns* are their language, *Pukhtu*, and their code of conduct called *Pukhtunwali*. Badal is one of the major codes of *Pukhtunwali*; constituting multiple meanings, expressions, usage and application. Badal means doing *Pukhtunwali* which is indoctrinated as a source of honor and shame. Badal or reciprocity is expressed in multiple forms ranging from murder (life for life) to a small gift or even exchange of gestures, emotions and words. Badal is used in many senses like revenge or justice, reciprocity, debt, taunts, assault and even visits. Among *Pukhtun* cognitive constructs male and female are the binary contrasts that translates into every aspect of *Pukhtunwali*. Hence *badal* analyzed from structural perspective exhibit the binary contrasts of 'violence' and 'cooperation' for male and female binaries respectively. *Badal* provides semiotic structural insights; it is the essence of communal life for a rural woman in *Pukhtun* society. Thus, in gist *badal* or reciprocity makes *zeest-o-riwaj* or customs-based worldview meaningful for the *Pushtun* women.

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