



SIDHWA'S THE CROW EATERS: A DELIGHTFUL INSIGHT INTO THE PARSI SOCIETY

Dr. Shalini Pandey

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Govt. T. C. L. P.G. College Janjgir (C.G.)

ABSTRACT

In her book "The Crow Eaters," Bapsi Sidhwa portrays the attitudes of her own community toward norms, values, and social conduct. In Pakistan, this novel was first published in 1978. It describes how the Parsi household, the Junglewallas, advanced socially during British rule in the early 20th century. A few years before partition, the novel unties. The first section of the hardcover describes a general stiffness during the separation period. A fictional story about a Parsi family and the real people in the Parsi community is called The Crow Eaters. This novel presents a vibrant picture of the various attitudes and personalities that make up a remarkable community. Although the characters in the book are fictional, the details that are disclosed about them give the impression that they are real. This book accurately portrays the community from which Bapsi Sidhwa hails. This essay aims to investigate the Parsi community, individuality, and society.

KEYWORDS: Parsi Community, Parsis, Comedy, Immigration, Family and Society.

INTRODUCTION

A fictitious novel called The Crow Eaters offers a lovely analysis of the ordinary story of a Parsi family and its corresponding social environment. This book provides a detailed explanation of Parsi culture, values, behaviour, and thought processes. The book opens with a farewell and customs. The patriarch of the Parsi community, Faredoon Junglewalla, is introduced in the novel at Lahore, giving an explanation of his success by drawing a comparison between it and his people's history. The Faredoon Junglewalla, the book's protagonist, is a symbol of Parsi aspiration, industry, and frugality and dishonesty. The entire book is incredibly light-hearted, enjoyable, and modest riotously funny and brimming with horrific character. The work is literary because of the complex and sultry characters.

Near the close of the 1800s, the main character, Faredoon Junglewalla, set out on his journey. In search of his future, he moves out of the home of his forefathers along with his wife Putli, mother-in-law Jerbanoo, and their adorable little daughter Hutoxi. On his tedious journey, he encountered numerous mishaps and minor disasters. Five rivers make up the fertile area that Freddy's bullock cart enters. In addition to the typical anxieties and concerns of a lengthy trip driven by bullock cart, Freddy soon discovered After spending a few days in the beautiful city of Amritsar, I was faced with two major issues. They relocate to the Parsi city of Lahore.

Freddy is enthralled with the ambiance and beauty of Lahore. He then made the very wise decision to establish his home in Lahore. He discovers four Parsi families in Lahore there. The Toddywallas, Bankwallas, Battliwallas, and Chaiwallas are the names of these families. The Toddywallas are the tea stall owners, and the Chaiwallas are the bar owners. Mr. Bankwalla is a skilled dancer, and Mr. Battiwalla works as a bank teller. It is these families that Freddy meets. They assisted

and guided him in relocating his family there. They are really helpful to Freddy's family. Faredoon Junglewalla cultivates a reputation for being a kind person in the community. Similarly Freddy assists Mr. Sodawalla's son when he is in great need of assistance. He reacts solely because the Parsi Community's reputation is in jeopardy, not because he was directly involved in the act.

The Crow Eaters tells the story of a Parsi family's social mobility, which is a feature common to the community. They start out as a single merchant store in Lahore and grow to become a chain of stores with licenses to handle goods between Peshawar and Afghanistan.

The Parsi friend's migration from the west coast to the century is also chronicled in the novel. Bapsi Sidhwa is a member of the third generation of Parsi settlers in different cities in North India. She was raised with the entrepreneurial skills of her forefathers, which gives her portrayal of Faredoon Junglewalla's adventures in the business community a certain level of authenticity.

Freddy's failure in his family life undermines his commercial success. Zoroastrianism claims that this causes self-awakening and, ultimately, obsolescence.

Leeway serves as a symbol of magnification, a synthesis of lifestyles, and a conclusive combining. Freddy gains a lot of social recognition for his unrelenting trading prowess and fervour with his actions of welfare that are obviously selfless. If his unwavering loyalty to the British protects his social standing and security, his generosity and kindness correspondingly bring him a large number of friends and admirers. He departs. the sheet covering his son's lifeless body, which is considered a vulgarity in traditional Parsi culture. When The men in his community don't think well of his actions, he responds : "They

had stood all this while to see my son: let them. What does it matter if they are not Parsis? They are my brothers; and if I can look upon my son's face, so can they." (The Crow Eaters: 179)

As a result, Freddy has a strong sense of duty to his community, which helps him become known as a prominent member of the Lahore Parsee community. While Zoroastrian ideology demands allegiance to the state ruler, there is no connection between Freddy's devotion to the British and his pious nature. It is only a means to achieve personal growth. His affinity for the colonists is strong. Because of his turbulent life, Freddy's humanitarian deeds secure his social standing and increase his attention to religious beliefs. Freddie's concerns about his own repression are a significant step in his development of self-awareness. The core of Freddy's life is self-fulfilment, a morality inherent in Zoroastrian ideology that is a way of life. He said that one should take one's responsibilities seriously. He claims: But God has fashioned man as a creature of desires and fulfilling desires brings contentment, the driving force, and essence of life. (The Crow Eaters: 113)

In a later stage of life, he realizes that scared enlightenment can only come to a happy mind. Through her unusual yet realistic and sensitive use of English, Sidhwa very profitably illustrates his lack of originality. By explaining the fashion, Bapsi Sidhwa skilfully conveys the Parsi background on pain and transformations. Because of their similar fashion sense, Parsis maintained their communal congruence. Faredoon took pride in his traditional manner of dressing, as did his family members. Putli and Jerbanoo stayed out of the spotlight at all. The traditional dresses are gradually discarded by Tanya, Behran, and the upcoming Parsi peer group. Tanya liked to wear saris, but the way she styled them revealed a lot about her: "she became daring in her attire and tied her sari in a way that accentuated the perfections of her body. She took to wearing a little make-up and outlined the astonishing loveliness of her lips". (The Crow Eaters: 246)

Bapsi Sidhwa consistently makes fun of the fervor with which Mr. Toddywalla and Faredoon Junglewalla, two prominent Parsi business magnates, support the British cause. The British gave the Parisians a unique position as negotiators and trustworthy business partners out of a desire for trade. As an astute observer of human nature's lack of dependability, Bapsi Sidhwa considers this in *The Crow Eaters* in search of different scenarios and perspectives. The moribund Faredoon Junglewalla's vehement opposition to the nationalist movement and his ability to convince his family to remain loyal to the British Empire serve as a clear illustration of this identity disaster.

The point that Bapsi Sidhwa is trying to make is that the Parsi community has its own strengths and limitations just like any other community. In contrast to many eulogies of Parsi by Parsi, *The Crow Eaters* merely puts Parsi life in perspective rather than elevating the community. It provides a detailed look inside Parsi culture. Irony is present in Sidhwa's vision, indicating her moral concerns. It encompasses both the fundamental and transient aspects of existence. The title, which simply means

"people who talk too much," is suggestive even. It alludes to the Parsi people's well-known habit of speaking nonstop and loudly, resembling a swarm of crows.

The novel has a comic tone throughout. It is a genial comedy instead of a social comedy like Jane Austen's, a satirical comedy of swift, or a comedy of manner. The perspective of life held by Bapsi Sidhwa is broad. People tolerate human foibles and follies with a light touch of corrective irony. It is commendable that the author is not moralistic or advocates for standards of conduct and mindset that should be followed. The tone is not one of reprimand, even when Faredoon Junglewalla turns to questionable tactics like purposefully setting his store on fire after concealing his merchandise in a hired godown, in order to get insurance money.

Instead of being the product of an imaginative dying man, Faredoon's fears are based on social realities. Talking about the need to change faithfulness, he has the fervor of a moribund man. In response to a question about the future of the Parsis after gaining autonomy posed by Bobby Katrak, the spouse of his daughter, Faredoon provides a fateful response: Faredoon said softly, „we will stay where we are...let Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or whosoever rule. What does it matter? The sun will continue to rise... and the sun continues to set – in their arses...! (The Crow Eaters: 283)

As he gets closer to his deathbed, Faredoon starts acting logical and disoriented. Bapsi Sidhwa combines an observation that is primarily and exclusively for Indians with the essential elements of horseplay. These views stem from an analytical perspective that regards the world as *Leela* or a play. Each plays the role that they have been assigned; none of them is more sensible than the other. The autonomous but intelligent, purposeful beings only fulfill their part in a greater plan that is ultimately mysterious and confusing. When Faredoon cannot stop his son from dying and his other son from rejecting the world he loved so much, he realizes this. Thus, *The Crow Eaters* explores both the sentimental and incidental facets of the hysterical style.

Not only is it a delightful satire, but it also includes a thoughtful observation of the world; the perception is humorous in the same way as Shakespeare's satires because it communicates variety, vitality, and viability at every stage of life.

Sidhwa has assessed the Parsi community's role in India's partition and freedom struggle. Her research focuses on the Parsi community. She makes an effort to sketch a map of their evolving identities. She has reached the remote corner of his secret society in their own unique way. The primary focus is on the idea that their culture defines who they are. Parisians are reluctant to reveal Parsi culture. They have always held the view that they should shield their culture from outside influences.

REFERENCES

1. Dhawan, R.K. and Kapadia Novy, eds. *The Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa*. New Delhi: Prestige Book, 1996. Print.
2. Dodiya, Jaydip Singh, ed. *Contemporary Indian Writings in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishing, 1998. Print.
3. Kapadia, Novy. "The Parsi Paradox in *The Crow Eaters*." *The*

- Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa. Eds. R. K. Dhawan & Novy Kapadia. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1996. Print.
4. Kumar, V.L.V.N. Narendra. Parsee Novel. Prestige, 2002. Print.
 5. Kulki, Eckhard. Parsee Novel. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2002. Print.
 6. Modi, Jivanje Jamshedji. The Religious System of the Parsis. Bombay: Times of India Press, 1893. Print.
 7. Pratap Singh, Randhir. Bapsi Sidhwa. New Delhi: IVY Publishing House, 2005.
 8. Sidhwa, Bapsi. The Crow Eaters. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1978, Print.