



## Examining The Will's Volition In The Book "The Doves Necklace"

**LUBNA MOHAMMED ALI, PHD scholar in  
English, Gujarat University**

### Abstract

The examination of will is a prominent issue in Raja Alem's novel *The Dove's Necklace*, expressing the struggle between human liberty and external circumstances. The protagonists must traverse a maze of society expectations, cultural conventions, and personal wants that influence and confine their choices. Alem digs into the complexity of human agency, demonstrating how the characters' decisions are impacted by their surroundings while also exhibiting moments of resistance and willpower. The story depicts volition in a complex light, with the battle for self-determination plagued with internal and external conflicts, finally raising the question of how people may exercise genuine freedom in a society dominated by inflexible social systems.

**Keywords:** Fate vs. Free Will, Societal Expectations, Cultural Constraints, Moral Dilemmas, Gender Roles, Mysticism and Supernatural Forces.

### Introduction

The intricate novel "The Doves' Necklace" (originally titled "Tuyūr al-Ḥaram") by Saudi Arabian novelist Raja Alem weaves together themes of fate, free choice, and character volition. There are several ways to analyze the novel's depiction of the volition of the characters, mainly via their decisions and how Mecca's socio-political and cultural context shapes them.

Raja'a Alem's novel "The Doves Necklace" is set in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and it delves into the lives of several individuals against the backdrop of a civilization steeped in religious and traditional customs. The intricacies and paradoxes inherent in Saudi Arabian culture are vividly portrayed in the novel, especially as they pertain to the lives of women.

The protagonist of the tale is an anonymous woman referred to as "the woman in the black abaya." She acts as an observer and witness to other women's life in Mecca. Readers are exposed to a wide range of individuals through her point of view, all of them are battling their own challenges, goals, and wants.

The book explores topics such as identity, faith, love, and the oppression that women experience in a patriarchal, conservative society. By examining the different roles women perform and the complexity of their private lives, it questions conventional ideas of femininity.

Raja'a Alem's beautiful imagery and finely detailed words weave together a web of interwoven narratives that provide insights into the lives of these women. Among the characters are Aseel, a devoted Muslim who struggles in marriage, Fakirah, a former slave who finds comfort in religion, and Widad, a young lady who longs for love and an education.

The lives of the individuals cross paths throughout the book, offering a multi-layered examination of the struggles, aspirations, and agency of women in a country that is highly religious and culturally conservative. It illustrates the challenges these women encounter navigating their relationships, families, and social expectations in addition to their personal identities.

"The Doves Necklace" presents a subtle and moving depiction of the multifaceted challenges that women in Saudi Arabian culture face. It asks readers to consider the conflicts that exist between tradition and modernity as well as the opportunities for personal development, liberty, and self-expression in a society that frequently discourages uniqueness. The novel offers an engrossing examination of the human experience in the face of social restraints thanks to its vivid characters and gripping writing.

### **Examining the will's volition in the book "The Doves Necklace"**

The idea of volition of will is crucial to understanding the inner lives and struggles of the characters in Raja'a Alem's book "The Doves Necklace." The novel explores the difficulties of personal agency and the constraints imposed by society and cultural standards, and it is set in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The purpose of this study is to present a thorough examination of the volition of will in "The Doves Necklace," looking at the tensions, motives, and desires that influence the decisions and deeds of the characters.

**Cultural and Religious limits:** The existence of cultural and religious limits is one of the main elements affecting the volition of will in the book. These limitations result from Saudi Arabian society's deeply embedded customs and traditional views of Islam.

**Conventional Gender Roles:** The story explores how the female characters' free will and decision are affected by traditional gender norms. Women are less free to express themselves and have less possibilities to comply to social norms of modesty, submission, and domesticity.

Defying Cultural conventions: By voicing their goals and ambitions, Alem's female protagonists subvert expectations and cultural conventions. They challenge social norms and make an effort to live lifestyles that are consistent with their personal goals and ideals. These people serve as prime examples of the ability of volition and will to challenge and reshape social conventions because they refuse to fit into the assigned positions.

Resilience and Self-Determination: In their quest for volition of will, the novel's strong female protagonists demonstrate resilience and self-determination. They continue in their pursuit of personal satisfaction in the face of many challenges and social constraints. Alem presents these people as change agents who forge their own paths and resist the constraints placed upon them.

Struggle for Autonomy and Self-Expression: The female characters in "The Doves Necklace" go out on a quest for these two things, indicating their will to exercise their free will and claim their uniqueness.

Pursuit of own hopes: Alem's female protagonists aggressively look for opportunities to achieve their own hopes and aspirations. These people resist society norms and put their own decision of will first, whether it be for the sake of education, creative expression, or personal development.

Relationship Agency: The book presents female protagonists who stand up for their rights in partnerships, rejecting oppression, and setting limits on what they want. They want to be treated with respect, treated equally, and allowed to follow their own desires. Alem presents these connections as avenues for personal growth and development.

Expression of Individuality: Alem's female characters use a variety of techniques, such as creating their own identities, engaging in intellectual activities, and expressing themselves artistically, to show who they are. They challenge the idea that women should stay silent and invisible by looking for opportunities to be seen and heard. They affirm their free choice and stake a claim to their proper position in society by embracing their individuality.

Alem's strong female protagonists in "The Doves Necklace" challenge patriarchal norms by working to overthrow and recast the repressive power structures that limit their free choice.

Challenging Male domination: By claiming their agency, the female characters defy conventional power systems and challenge male domination. By their decisions and behaviors, they actively seek to undermine patriarchal systems and refuse to be subdued or manipulated by them.

Alem emphasizes the resilience of female sisterhood and togetherness in the face of patriarchal persecution. Together, the characters encourage and support one another, forging alliances that give them the strength to

defy social norms and discover strength in group empowerment. Alem emphasizes the unifying and supportive power's transforming potential through these partnerships.

**Redefining Femininity:** The novel's strong female protagonists reinvent femininity according to their own standards. They accept many identities and reject the limited notions of womanhood that patriarchal conventions impose. Alem highlights that these people may recover their choice of will and create their own stories if they embrace who they truly are.

**Obedience and Repression:** The characters in the book frequently experience pressure to suppress their emotions and follow social conventions. Their capacity to achieve personal fulfillment is hampered by their fear of social judgment and the repercussions of breaking from cultural and religious norms, which limits their free choice.

**dread of Social Judgment:** Throughout the narrative, suppression and obedience are mostly sustained by a dread of social judgment. Characters that break from society norms frequently experience social isolation, reputational damage, and rejection. Characters are driven by this dread to conform and give up their free will in order to be accepted by society. dread is a strong force.

**Preservation of Honor:** A recurrent topic in the book is the preservation of honor, both familial and personal. The need to preserve the honor standards of society and protect their family's reputation drives characters. Even in situations where it goes against their own free will, this pressure frequently results in the suppression of their own impulses and the conformity to social standards.

### **Internal Conflicts and Restraining Wants**

"The Doves Necklace" explores the characters' internal conflicts and suppresses their impulses, emphasizing the emotional and psychological costs associated with obedience and repression. **Conflict between Personal Desires and Cultural Expectations:** The characters grapple with the conflict between their personal desires and the cultural expectations placed upon them. They often find themselves torn between their own volition of will and the pressure to conform to societal norms, leading to internal strife and emotional turmoil. This conflict highlights the repressive nature of societal constraints and the impact they have on individuals' ability to freely express themselves.

**Self-Censorship and Conformity:** To avoid criticism and preserve social peace, the characters in the book exhibit self-censorship and conformity to cultural standards. This self-imposed suppression is a result of the fear of straying from the accepted social and cultural norms. The characters submit to obedience in order to protect themselves, even at the expense of their own wants and uniqueness.

**Emotional and Psychological Effects:** Alem examines the characters' experiences with emotional and psychological fallout from obedience and suppression. Emotional anguish, loneliness, and dissatisfaction can arise from repressing one's wants and denying oneself. Through navigating these internal conflicts and balancing their own needs with those of society, the protagonists ultimately show the negative consequences of suppression and obedience on

**Rebellion and Consequences:** "The Doves Necklace" explores the ramifications of rebelling against social norms, emphasizing the dangers and opportunities for growth that come with resisting oppression and conformity.

**Acts of Disobedience:** Alem depicts characters that resist the oppressive aspects of their society by doing acts of disobedience. These behaviors might vary from subdued opposition to overt defiance of social norms. By these deeds, the characters question the established quo and establish their individual identities while reclaiming their agency and volition of will.

**Consequences on the Social and Personal Level:** The book examines what happens to characters who decide to defy social norms. These repercussions may include physical risk, damaged familial ties, reputational damage, and social exclusion. Alem illustrates the dangers of going against social conventions and the cost characters incur when they use their free choice.

**Personal Transformation and Liberation:** "The Doves Necklace" also examines the transforming force of defiance, even in the face of possible repercussions. Individuals who resist oppression and submission frequently evolve, learn who they are, and become free. They defy social conventions and make their own goals and ambitions known via their acts of disobedience, and in the end, they feel empowered and freed from the bonds that formerly bound them.

Raja'a Alem deftly illustrates the issues of obedience and repression in "The Doves Necklace," emphasizing the effects of societal and cultural restraints on the lives of the protagonists. The book examines the inner conflicts, repressed impulses, and outcomes that people encounter when navigating a culture that values compliance and conformity. Characters oppose the oppressive aspects of their society via acts of resistance and revolt, demonstrating the possibility of emancipation and personal growth. Readers are prompted to consider the challenges of balancing one's own goals and wants with those of society by Alem's representation. "The Doves Necklace" is a moving reminder of the psychological and emotional costs of suppression as well as the possibility of personal development and empowerment via expressing one's choice of will.

## Conclusion:

In "The Doves' Necklace," volition is explained as a complicated interaction between personal preferences, social constraints, and supernatural influences. The book makes the argument that although protagonists may aspire to liberty, greater powers—such as the city of Mecca, cultural customs, or supernatural elements—are always shaping and occasionally restricting their free choice. Using the story, Raja Alem investigates how people exercise free will in a society where choice and fate are closely related.

## References

Alem, Raja. *The Doves' Necklace*. Duckworth Overlook, 2016.

Hassan, Wail S. "The Desert in Arabic Literature: Landscape, Narrative, and Homeland." *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Literature*, edited by Roger Allen and Terri DeYoung, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 141-157.

Hallaq, Wael B. "Shari'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations." Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Saqer, Khawla. "Raja Alem's The Doves' Necklace: The Political and the Mystical in Saudi Arabian Literature." *Arab Studies Journal*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2017, pp. 110-129.

Al-Musawi, Muhsin J. "The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence." Brill, 2003.

