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COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN CHAMAN NAHAL'S "AZADI"

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Abstract:

The novelist Chaman Nahal was born in 1927 in Sialkot, India (now in Pakistan). He educated in Delhi University and the University of Nottingham, England. He was a former professor of English at Delhi University and a fellow, Churchill College, Cambridge. Nahal has authored nine novels. Between 1966 and 1973 he wrote a literary column for 'The Indian Express', the leading news paper of India. His book 'Azadi' was published in India and the united states in 1975. Actually, 'Azadi' is a semi-autobiographical Novel by Chaman Nahal. As Chaman Nahal himself was a refugee, he writes Novel Azadi. Azadi is a seminal account of partition time. The novel owns a 'Sahitya Akademi Award' in 1997. It has been translated into 10 languages. 'Azadi' deals with the theme of partition of Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan.

KEYWORDS:

Partition, love, non-violence, refugee, Hindu community, Muslim community.

INTRODUCTION

As Chaman Nahal himself was a refugee, he has presented life-like picture of that time. Nahal depicts the picture of penetration and realism of the Indian psyche. Through this novel, Chaman Nahal shows the fear, pain in all sensitive minds, silence, dissolution, conflict, clashes, migration, violence and the problems of refugees. He also shows remarkably how the partition changed the political ideology of both notions.

Azadi is a story of a Hindu family from Sialkot to Delhi during the partition of the India in 1947. It is a love story of a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl unfolds against sense of terror and violence. In respect of Chaman Nahal and the novel Azadi, Bhagwant Goyal says:

"It deals with the political, social, economic, religious, psychological and cultural implications of Azadi which India achieved in 1947."

K.K. Sharma and B.L. Johri write:

"Azadi portrays vividly the horrors of the partition the colossal violence that still haunts the Indian psyche. It concentrates on the exodus of millions of refugees from Pakistan and on the aftermath of the partition".

Like a good creative writer, Chaman Nahal has depicts the horrors of partition experience by concentrating on the life of Lala Kanshi Ram. Through the character of Lala Kanshi Ram, author highlighting the positive as well as the negative side of the complex problem. This character is protagonist. He quotes the line, "enjoyed the safety of British Raj and hugged it lovingly." At the same time, his wife

Prabha Rani who kept several tonal versions of:

"Hai Ram!"
in mind to use at the appropriate moment.
Lala Kanshi Ram believes that,

"All created matter was one, man and beast and bird, and the flowers and the trees to boot. And these Angrez were another aspect of the same Brahman who constituted total reality..... Their Hurrah Parade had been ruined by these nasty dogs, which no one owned and which were a nuisance to the entire community. They must help them to corner these scavengers and destroy them....."

He, therefore, takes his son Arun to Hurrah Parade and inspires him to watch the discipline of the British officers. He try the show that, the principle of spiritual unity in human life. At the same time, his following remarks show his way of thinking about British:

"What mattered to Lala Kanshi Ram was the precision of the British Raj, which was seen in as small an act as the killing of a stray dog. No wonder they ruled the world over, no wonder, he said to himself. There indeed was no Raj like the Angrez Raj!"

Thus, above remarks shows, a love-hate relationship between Indian and British as symbolized.

Through the protagonist character, Chaman Nahal expresses idea of partition and British role. The protagonist character of Lala Kanshi Ram fears the division of the country. Thus, Lala Kanshi Ram is against the partition.

Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhri Barkat Ali was a friend. Both has influence of Gandhi's principle of non- violence. The time 1947 in the novel, migration of people from both sides of this country starts taking place refugee camp was full of Hindu families and are guarded by the military Lala Kanshi Ram comes to know that Muslims have killed his daughter, Madhduri. After some day, Refugee Hindus couple starts leaving in Sialkot for the Indian side. News of killing of Muslims by Hindus on the other side of the Pakistani border (Radcliffe Line) spreads like wild fire and disturbs the communal relationship.

When this violence foot convoy reaches the Indian side, they all are completely taken aback and dumb found. Then Lala Kanshi Ram start the journey from Sialkot and violence reaches on the top. The news of killings, rapes, kidnapping, fires are started rapidly on both side of Hindu and Muslim community.

Lala Kanshi Ram has a son, Arun. Arun loves Nural-Nissar, the daughter of Chaudhri Barkat Ali. Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhri Barkat Ali knows the love of Arun and Nur, Both families heard each other's happiness and sorrow. Arun is ready to become a Muslim for her sake. Munir (Nur's brother) advised him to show harmony between Hindus and Muslims.

The two friend's converse:

Arun: I'll become a muslim, if your father insists.

Munir: You don't have to. Why can't you keep your separate religions?

Arun: How do we solemnize the marriage?

Munir: A ceremony in a civil court.

The novel is divided, into three parts- "The lull," "The storm" and "the aftermath".

The novel Azadi shows the picture of unity of Hindu and Muslim community. Sialkot, was a Muslim dominated city. Yet there was unity among people of all castes. The peaceful atmosphere of Sialkot was disturbed by the announcement of partition of Indian subcontinent. The scene of the leasing of the refugees is very emotional. This scene symbolizes thousands of such scenes. This was related to partition trauma.

To conclude, this novel mainly deals with the theme of partition. The novel Azadi is a record of the horrible incidents caused by the partition. It is not only tragedy but politics also play main role. In this novel, author did not criticize any one religion. As I mentioned before Chaman Nahal himself was one of those refugees who saw all trauma of partition at the age of 18. We certainly feel horrified when we read about the murders, mass violence, burning, killing, kidnapping and the condition of uprooted refugees caused by the historical partition.

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