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Political Failure in Persisting the Communal Harmony in *Azadi*

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Abstract

The Independence movement was a major political and social transformation for Indian milieu. Before the partition, the daily life of the people, both Hindus and Muslims, was so richly interwoven into common foundation and there was so much resemblance in their ethnicity and practices that the partition came to them as a sudden shock which they were unable to bear. *Azadi* depicts this harmony. There was unity and harmony between the Hindus and Muslims of Sialkot till the partition. The friendship of Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhari Barkat Ali proves this fact. The unit and secularism of both Hindus and Muslims of Sialkot are also referred to by the facts such as Arun-Nur love story. Arun, the son of Lala Kanshi Ram loves Nurul and Nissar, the daughter of Barkat Ali. Although Arun and Nur professed different religions, their love-relationship was not affected by it. This secularism is again evident in the role of Munir, the brother of Nur. Munir not only approves of the love affairs of Arun and Nur but also inspires them to get married. When Arun is ready to become a Muslim for marrying Nur, as suggested by her, Munir advises Arun to keep religion but to keep it separate from love and marriage. He argues that even if they get married they can perform their own religion without any hesitation.

Keywords: Harmony, Community, Secularism, Catastrophe, Partition

The harmonious relation among different communities of Sialkot is also proved by the fact that Urdu was commonly used by Hindus as well as Muslims. Even the members of Arya Samaj, whose language was supposed to be Sanskrit, were using Urdu. *Azadi* delineates the psychological consequences of the partition. It points out how the ugly event caused havoc in the minds of the people and highlights the predicament of the souls, shattered by the unexpected tragedy. The novel makes a moderate attempt to diagnose the malady, leading to the inhuman catastrophe. The partition politics has ruined the humanity. It's the duty of the Government, the elected politician, so called leaders and social workers to generate and maintain communal harmony among the communal diversity by law and order. But without

(73)

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taking the supposed affected people into confidence, the partition of India-Pakistan was declared which led to traumatic life to a number of people. The then political leaders might have tackled the problem differently to make the beautiful land of our country like heaven as the people were enjoying their free life collectively. It is rightly said that the mass has no mind, but an individual can be convinced easily and that too very logically. To prove this that the contemporary politics was the worst responsible factor in degrading the moral values and ethics of a human being. To prove this Chaman Nehul has divided the content into three parts: Lull, Storm and Aftermath. These name themselves suggest the core them of the respective part.

Hindu-Muslim unity and peaceful life before the partition is described in the first part. 'Lull'. The havoc of the partition is in the second part and its tragic effects are reflected in the last part in different spheres-individual, social, cultural and psychological. The impact of partition on the psychology of communal thought and hatred which inspired them to commit violence and atrocities on the same Hindus whom only recently they considered as their friends. Sialkot was a Muslim dominated city. Yet, there was unity among people of all castes. There was seldom any rivalry between Hindus and Muslims. This fact is presented through the friendship of Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhari Barkat Ali and the love of Arun and Nur. Lala and Barkat were not only friends but just like brothers. Both the families heard each other's happiness and sorrow. Influenced by Gandhi's speech, Chaudhri Barkat Ali says to Lala Knashi Ram that he is his brother from the day. The author adds, "Lala Kanshi Ram Chuckled. He had always regarded Chaudharibarkat Ali as a brother, he did not need Gandhi to make him aware of that". One more conversation between Arun and Munir is also a proof of a healthy harmony in the society- "I'll become a Muslim, if your father insists," "You don't have to. Why can't you keep your separate religions? says Munir. On this Arun says, "How do we solemnize the marriage?" A ceremony in a civil court" was an easy answer from Arun." The atmosphere in Sialkot was peaceful-All people did their jobs calmly. There was really 'Lull' all over the city. The only excitement and even that of happiness was experienced on the New Year celebration called 'Hurrah Parade'. On other occasions, men worked, children went to schools and women gossiped after household works.

But the atmosphere of peace and harmony was drowned in the bloodshed aroused due to the announcement of India-Pakistan partition. The Muslims started celebrating the creation of Pakistan with drum-beating and fire crackers. The very announcement of partition had adverse effect, though not on a few people who are in real sense humanistic but on many other badly nurtured persons. They started to tease Hindus asking when they are leaving for India. If the contemporary politics might have taken the decision so wisely, the in humanistic situation might not have been occurred. The majority Muslims of that Pakistan was so eager to exile Hindus from there forgetting all the loving, caring and warming relations among them. It shows that the human beings became like beast. Sometimes we may notice that even



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the pet animals too miss their separated group member. One quite suited example of it is Arun-Nur love affairs. They love each other whole heartedly. Perhaps that's why before the partition, the Arun who was telling to Munir, "I'll become a Muslim, if your father insists" and Munir who was telling to Arun, "you don't have to. Why can't you keep your separate religions?" have turned their tables against each other. After partition, the contemporary hatred of Muslims towards Hindu had abolished their love. Now they started to argue against each other as- "Why should I become a Muslim?... Why shouldn't you? That is if you love me," Arun had asked Nur "Why shouldn't you become a Hindu?" Thus their romantic life was overpowered and love was overshadowed by the debate and existing reality.

His sister's cold blooded murder by none other than his uncle Abdul Ghani made him a strong willed person, and without thinking about his paramour Nur, who expected him to embrace Islam for their love, he left Sialkot without hesitation in search of a secure life for his family in the newly formed India.

Moreover, the partition has the provision that Hindus must leave Pakistan as it is meant for the abode of Muslims only, so far Hindustan is concerned it still on Ashiyan for any religion. This partition decision became 'Black Decision' as we can see that after more than 60 years too, we have been facing the same hatred and fighting for Kashmir for possession. Due to this kind of provision the Muslims started burning one Hindu 'Mohalla' every night. Meanwhile, Hindus too started the same things in India. They couldn't tolerate the Muslims nakedness. When they were burning Hindu Maholla one by one, they received a train from Amritsar which was full of wounded and murdered Muslims. That had added fuel to the fire. They killed and wounded Hindus to take revenge against their action in Trunk Bazar and soon the Hindus were forced to leave for the refugee camp. 15 million refugees poured across the orders to regions completely foreign to them. Nahal could elucidate its psychological influences of the millions e.g. the complete loss of contact and communication with one another throwing them into a state of complete isolation and alienation and making each a prisoner of his single self. Now the communal violence at Sialkot becomes more brutal. They begin to disturb the peace and happiness of the Hindus by stabbing them, burning and looting their houses and property and raping their women. LalaKanshi Ram is a string example of the victims of partition whose individual loss and mental agony due to becoming landless, homeless and uprooted men are very clearly described as-

"LalaKanshi Ram could not sleep at all that night. It becomes clear to him how vulnerable the minority community was and that soon he too might have to leave. It hurt him, he thought of it, and he paced him room restively "Refugee, refugee, indeed!" He shouted, when he understood the work, "I was born around here, this is my home-how can I be a refugee in my own home?" His sorrow was found no bottom. It was out of control. "His eyes filled with tears as he felt so unprotected and forlorn." He began to cry. His heart stopped him in taking a quick decision to leave his mother land for him it was his mother land as he was



The Creative Launcher

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born and brought up in new Pakistan. He refused to accept his family's suggestion that they pack and leave. How could he leave? He would rather die here.' People lost faith and confidence on the political leaders and government appeared to be against the people. If government might have decided, it could have never given a chance of occurrence taking the supposed affected people due to the partition in their confidence. LalaKanshi Ram field grieved at the role of the government. His grievances reflected thus, "Father we'll have to leave" Arun said. Before he could finish his sentence LalaKanshi Ram cut him off," Why will be have to? Why? Well the government seems unable to protect us and we'll have to go the save our lives/" He further says, "Why can't the government protect us? I've seen communal riots before in this country. How were the English able to put them down? 'Let's say the government is incapable or unwilling to control the situation. What then? Shall we wait here and perish? 'He is right' said Prabha Rami, fear gripping her heart. 'Aha! Incapable or unwilling- which precisely?' LalaKanshi Ram ignored his wife and addressed himself to his son. 'If unwilling, the government is party to murder. If incapable, we Indians had no right to ask for freedom."

The communal elements in the government were also responsible for the growth of communalism. It is apparent from commissioner by his Muslim Bodyguard. The intentions of the communal leaders are revealed by ChaudhariBarkat Ali who says to LalaKanshi Ram. "Let me like this. Either the congress Muslims were a fraud to begin with or they have changed sides. I'm afraid there is no organized body of Muslims denouncing what is happening in the city."

The contemporary political leaders or rulers couldn't save the female section of the society too from the trapping eyes of the Muslims. *Azadi* refers to such social troubles through an account of the atrocities committed by the fanatic Muslims upon Hindu women in the parade of the bazaar of Narowal to prove the fact that how fatal and nasty could be the outcome of communal hatred. Nahal describes it so pathetically as, "the procession moved through the bazaar and along with the procession moved a river of obscenities-foul abuses, crude personal gestures, spurts of sputum, odd articles like small coins, faded flowers, cigarette butts and bidis that were thrown at the women. As soon as the women came near, that section of the crowd became hysterical 'Rape them' 'put it inside of them' 'The Filthy Hindu Bitches,' 'The Kafir Women'. Thus the society was affected too much in moral and cultural sphere. People's morality was so degraded that they had completely forgotten the honour and dignity of women of whom they were born. The cause of such degradation was nothing but communal hatred grown by the partition.

People were very optimistic regarding the life after freedom. They expected a life of dignity, equal opportunities and democracy but they received just the reverse. The whole novel is an anticlimax. The anticlimax reaches its climax when the refugees from Pakistan are treated in an abusive and indifferent manner at Delhi. There is no welcome. There are no



The Creative Launcher

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emotional reunions. The refugees are treated as intruders- a nuisance. LalaKanshi Ram is rebuked when he requests for a room and a ship to be allotted to him. He was made to feel, small and debased'. The novel revives the pain of partition. This incident is much penetrate as the people of same blood did not welcome them lovingly, not even the rulers or the political leaders did something to console them. They just passed on a resolution without planning a perfect strategy for the better India. The peaceful and prosperous life of LalaKanshi Ram is destroyed with the announcement of partition. A rich merchant turns as a penniless pauper. Kanshi Ram dosen't brother to lose his property but he loses his beloved daughter. Kanshi also loses his heartfelt loving friends and Sialkot. The parents are unable to look at even the dead body of their daughter. They witnessed thousands of the bodies of Muslims massacred as a retort in India. Kanshi Ram's mind doesn't want to quench for the thirst of the murder of his daughter, moreover, he forgives the murderers of his daughter Madhubala.

This burnt experience has made LalaKnashi Ram a mature person in the end. Although excessive bereavement and deprivation were thrust upon him and his family in the wake of the partition he seemed to have no complaints against anyone. On the contrary, he adopted a philosophical attitude towards life, and his earlier zeal for materialistic gains in life was transformed into an ambition for the peace of life. The murders and loot that he had witnessed did not agitate him anymore, but enabled him to evolve into a pensive and reflective individual who could distinguish between right and wrong. In fact there comes a point in life when torture does not agonize man and may lose its enervating attributes exactly what transpired with LalaKanshi Ram.

Instead of passing a rash judgment against those who perpetrated numerous miseries on him and his companions and family, he told his wife, 'Forgive, that way alone you can make peace with yourself.' The characters in the novel suffered from the pain, agony, traumatic effects, murders, mass killings and violence. Besides, the torture and pain that was suffered by women were really worse. The women were the primary victims because they were the vulnerable targets of sexual violence. As the storm breaks out in the city, LalaKanshi Ram, Chaudhari, even Bill Davidson all are in worse situation. In the refugee camp, Lala gets again a bad news of the demise of Madhu, his daughter, who while coming from Wazirabad to Sialkot by a train, is attacked and slain by some fanatical Muslims. Madhu's death is the last blow to break Lala completely. It becomes too dangerous for Hindus and Sikhs even to walk in the streets. All and sundry, who does not look like a Muslim, is stripped to see whether he is circumscribed or not, Despite lots of difficulties, Arun and Suraj take risk of going to Barkat Ali and then to the Railway station to find out Madhu's deceased body.

Here the novelist throws a flood of light on the massacre as, "...dismembered limbs, dozons of them legs and bands and things, and feet. The fire had consumed other parts of the



The Creative Launcher

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bodies; it was the part which had not fully burned that stood out. And there were skulls. Again dozens of them, the others faced the sky or looked sideways. Bare jaws, scooped out eye-sockets, gnashing teeth. Very often a skull cracked open with a popping noise, its bones distressing into the heap around. Since it was a quite night, the sound came like the crack of rifle, it was an unnerving sound.” Nahal effectively establishes how partition affected the two nations in general, and suffered a lot. Like uprooted trees, it was very painstaking for people to settle down in the new land allotted to them, as a result of communal frenzy. The common lot was unable to understand the reason behind these upheavals propelled by the great leaders in India.

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