CHAPTER – III

Bhishan Sahni’s Tamas : The Awful Memories of Survival

The Partition of India is one of the most traumatic experiences of this country. The minds were disturbed, Indian had to undergo Psychological and Social changes. They were uprooted from their origin. The relations between the communities were changed each of them had to face many problems. Communities who lived like brothers and sisters suddenly overnight became enemies of each other and got ready to kill each other and even rape their women. They were not afraid of dieing that they were so furious on each other that they without thinking killed one another.

According to Sharad Rajimwale about the violence involved by partition as

“From the killings, rapes, kidnapings, looting and bandity, the south Asian populace continues to suffer from psychological wounds etched by partition. Arguable before the Indian Partition, the 20th Century had not experienced such as massive and excruciating migration of people.”

Bhishan Sahni’s epic work ‘Tamas’ i.e. Darkness written in 1974 is a novel based on the riots of the 1947-48. It is first hand experience
which he experienced at Rawalpindi. Tamas is a powerful and passionate account of the partition of India. This novel deals with the atrocities done by the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims on each other. Tamas has been translated to English and revered Indian languages including Malaki, Gujrathi, Kashmiri and Manipuri. Tamas won the 1975 Sahitya Akademi Award for literature. Govind Nihalani a well known Film Director made a Television Film in 1987. Sahni was one of the most protific writers of Hindi literature. The novel is based on the actual events that took place in North Western Frontier Province and the home of the writer. Sahni himself told Nonika Singh in an interview,

“I was a Mute spectator to the mayhem of those times. Moreover I was assigned the job of reporting the events to a local newspaper. Thus I was privy to the plight of distraught refugees”.2

There are several question that arise about partition. Who is benefitted by this partition ? Why do communal riots erupt ? Who is the winner ? Who is the loser ? and so on. All these and many more questions are to be found and so it creates interest amongst the scholars, historians, sociologists and students.

Tamas highlights the violence that erupted after partition it deals with the anatomy of the riots it also emphasizes about the effects of the
violence on human psyche. Tamas deals with all the social, political, cultural, historical and psychological issues relating partition.

The title ‘Tamas’ itself is an attempt to depict and condemn the ignorance and darkness involved in communal violence which happened during partition of India. As a novel ‘Tamas’ is episodic in structure. In Tamas the problem comes more dedicate became it deals with three major communities who were victims or the aggressors, in different parts of the country during partition, when Tamas Novel was written surprisingly no question were raised. However, when the television serial was made it was in 1988 that tension was created and questions were raised both potical and emotional. The readers and the common man was not ready to dig the old graves of tragic memories after so many years. This novel is set in a town on Indo-Pak border and is based on the actual events that happened in the town. The novel begins with Nathu who is told by Murad Ali to kill a pig. The veterinary doctor required a dead pig and was told that the pig’s are creating problems. The struggle of Nathu and the fight for survival of the pig. In this episode finally the pig is dead and Nathu is happy that he has killed him for Murad Ali. Nathu was actually not aware of Murad Ali’s intentions. The village was very normal as usual. People were busy in their own affairs may be household or religious. Tamas is a Saga of pain, experience of various religious
groups and organizations. Tamas has no particular central character like other novel. This novel highlights incidents or events rather than on character. Tamas has characters from all these major communities i.e. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The members of various political parties and organization play vital role in Tamas. The Congress Committee, the fundamentalists to the Hindu Mahasabha. The Sikh Gurudwara committee etc. all were active. All the Congress Leaders gather early morning. Master Ram Das sang the first line and all his group sang

“Those wedded to the cause of Freedom

Are like the Legendary Lover, Majnu

Deserts and Forests are their home.....”

On the other hand Nathu who was afraid of having killed a pig slowly, unnoticed stepped into the lane while it was dark he was hurriedly walking as he had to reach home because all the night he was away from his home and his wife who was waiting for him while going through the lane one after the other. Nathu wondered why the veterinary doctor needed a pig for ? But then he used console himelf saying that he has earned money. Suddenly a group of people crossed him. Who sang ‘Bande Mataram’ and ‘Quomi Nara’ had they hardly passed by the another group of people giving slogans of ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ crossed from the same group one said
“Congress is the body of the Hindu. The Musalmans have nothing to do with it.”

to this statement there was a reply from the first group i.e. from the congress group by an elderly person.

“Congress is every one’s organization, of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims. You know this well enough, Mahmud Sahib. There was a time when you too were with us.”

Both groups stood facing each other. Talked to one another over their ideas of organization and unity. After hot challenges both the group went their way congressmen moved forward resuming their Prabhat Pheri and the Muslims moved the other directions. But during the discussion of both the groups somewhere we find that people were mentally ready for partitions all the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

Those were the days when British Raj was in India. Richard who was the Deputy Commissioner and Liza his beautiful wife who has come to him after 6 months from England. Both of them go for a morning walk and to see the sunrise over the valley in a way this was a gift from Richard to Liza. Liza enquiries about the valley, the mountains and Richard who is interested in the historical geographical religious and cultural set up tells liza –
“But Liza, the valley has great historical significance. All the invaders that attacked India came through this valley. Whether they came from Central Asia on Mongolia.”

The way Richard was explaining it to Liza, she was surprised to see his interest in it. He further continues the topic.

“Alexander too came through here, Farther away, the valley gets divided into two routes, one leading to Tibet, the other to Afghanistan, Traders, Monks, dervishes for centuries used these routes, covering long distances. It is truly a historic area. I have been exploring these parts for the last one month. For a historian no area could be more fascinating. At numerous places you find ruins of ancient buildings, Buddhist monasteries, fortresses, caravanserais…..”

Richard was fully engrossed while describing the historical significance and he continues to say that all this is of his great interest. For Liza being the Deputy Commissioner Richard would some have carry his interest in history and culture. Richard also had rich collection of ancient, ethnic statutes and things as a part of his small museum in his home. His study about the people living there was also interesting. He tells Liza –
“The inhabitants of this area too have been living here since times immemorial have you notice their features? A broad forehead, brownish tint in the colour of their eyes. They all belong to the same racid stock.”

Richard continues to tell the details of how they come from and which religion they belonged to on enquiring about whether all of them were aware of their origin and history Liza was curious to know. Richard answers

“Most people have no knowledge of their history. They only live it.”

He also adds that there are Gods and Goddess of Hindus who are worshipped and the Hindus have big temples to worship were as The Muslims pirs (Saints) where muslim go in devotion and there is lot of religious activities going simultaneously. There is a fair where lot of enjoyment is done by the people irrespective of all religious but now they cannot visit the fair as there are tensions between the Hindus and the Muslims. While discussing about India and Indian’s Richard very happily describing all alongwith Liza returns home. Richard also makes her aware of how to recognize a Hindu Muslim and Sikh. When they come home she further wants Richard to tell her more about India. To her eagerness and all quest he further tells.
“Well, all Indians are quick tempered they flare up over trivial things. They fly at one another's throat in the name of religion. They are all terribly self-centred. And they all adore white women.”

During the course of discussion Richard was convincing Liza that they cannot go around as the place is not safe and there can be riots any time.

“No a riot may break out in the city. Tension is mounting between the Hindus and the Muslims.”

To her surprise she learnt from Richard that the Indians were fighting against the Britishers and now Richard tells her,

“They are fighting both against us and against one another.”

The Indians were fighting amongst themselves also. Simultaneously they fought with the British and each other, he further clarifies Lizas doubts,

“In name of religion they fight one another, in the name of freedom they fight against us.”

Liza a simple lady full of innocence tells Richard that they can stop all this but as it was the policy of the Britishers, ‘Divide and Rule’ so how could they stop them. To Liza Richard explains,
“Darling rulers have their eyes only on differences that divide their subjects, not on what unites them.”  

These were opportunities for the British they also wanted the Indians to fight on the basis of religion so that they can divide and rule. The Britishers wanted that the Indians be disturbed and may not be united because if they are united they fight against the British. So the Britishers do tried that there be some sort of tensions between the Indian Communities. Which Richard explains her all these issue. Liza is worried about the safety of Richard, because she is concerned about him and really loves him. Very anxiously she enquiries about his safety to her Richard explains.

“No Liza, if the subjects fight among themselves, the ruler is safe.”

The Congress Committee who were having Prabath Pheri were now cleaning the Lanes. They were following the ideas of Ghandhiji. The young and the old were participating in the work. Some did happily and willingly, a few did forcefully as a mark of respect to Gandhiji,

“Constructive work does not mean that you should actually clean the drain. It is only a symbolic gesture to make the residents aware of
the need for civic sanitation and gradually earn their trust and participation in the struggle for Independence."\(^{16}\)

The young generation of Shankar was unable to understand what one could achieve of doing this cleaning and how was it useful in freedom struggle and why Gandhiji was doing it. The Senior Member of the Committee Bakshi who tribes to explain them about the importance and also about the movement of Gandhiji in India and his freedom struggle.

"Try to understand Shankar, what are we doing is only the symbolic expressions of our patriotism, it brings in close to our people, to the poor. When we come, clad in Khadi, brooms and shovels in our hands to their locality, they regard us as their own, it inspires confidence in them, which it won’t if we came to them in the western attire of coat and pant."\(^{17}\)

All the Committee Members were cleaning suddenly a man whispers something in the ears of the local lane residents and everybody disappears except a few children continued to stand and play. The women behind the curtains came and started to shut their door. The members of the committee were taken to surprise because they were unaware of what was happening and then suddenly one senior citizen warns them to go back he warned then,
“Clear out of here at once if you don’t want to be skinned alive.”\textsuperscript{18}

Bakshiji, was unable to realize what had happened meanwhile stone from all direction came in to them this created more chaos and confusion. While trying to understand they all gathered at one place to discuss and find out what the matter was. It was something serious. That was not clear. Suddenly they all looked at the Mosque across the road. The Mosque was known as “Khailon Ki Masjid”. They all looked at the steps of the mosque i.e. the entrance of the Mosque.

“Something blackish, like a bundle seems to be lying there.”\textsuperscript{19}

The conversation goes on then somebody could make it out what the bundle was and it is revealed that,

“It is the carcass of a Pig, Bakshji, someone has left a dead pig there.”\textsuperscript{20}

This scene disturbed every one and they all were frightened and didn’t knew what to do. Some advised to go back, whereas some had already left, whereas some of them were of the view that,

“we must remove the carcass of the pig from the steps of the mosque. Tension will keep mounting as long as the carcass is there.”\textsuperscript{21}
Bakshiji had decided to remove the carcass from the step clean the entrance so that these tension does not mount in the place. Bakshiji and Jarnail both caught the Pig by its legs and pulled it off the steps of the mosque. They dragged it across the road and pushed it behind the bricks so that nobody could see it. This act shown that not all the people thought alike. There were people like Bakshiji who wanted peace and no riots because nobody benefitted from riots between the communities. He was clever enough to realize what would happen and so he took the initiative because if many people had seen the carcass it would be definitely big communal tension only to avoid it he took led and did all for himself. He was the follower of Gandhi. He was not only concern of the carcass but he also wanted to clean the steps of the mosque. They all were tensed because one after the other events that created tension took place and they didn’t know how to control them. Bakshiji was engrossed in his thoughts about the riots and how many would be killed,

“It seems kites and vultures will hover over the town for a long time.”

He could realize that something dangerous was to take place. These would be mass killings loot and rapes. His experience and age made him realize the fate of the town. Nathu, a tanner, who does the work of skinning animals, is of prime importance. It is all because of Nathu that
the riots took place. It is Nathu who is at the bottom of the widespread riots and communal disturbance in the town. Nathu has a wife who is pregnant and belongs to Hindu Community. They are happy and lead a peaceful life. But unfortunately Nathu is used by some evil elements in the town only to disturb the peace of the town. It is Murad Ali who is instrumental in creating this problem. He pays Nathu to kill a pig for a veterinary doctor. Murad Ali is a man of influences and also an employee of Municipal Committee. When Murad Ali asks Nathu to kill the pig Nathu is suspicious about his intention because killing of pig is considered as unholy by the Muslim and Murad Ali was asking Nathu to do the same. But Nathu was not aware of what would happen. Nathu is given five rupee note and so Nathu does not question more and gets ready to kill the pig. When Bakshiji cleans the steps of the Mosque till then the news of the pig on the steps of the mosque spreads like fire. Due to this news every body is full of fear and all the shops shutdown. People hurridly run to their own homes and most of them assemble at the Mosque. While the Mosque episode is witnessed suddenly Bakshiji sees another incidence and that too of killing of cow. He saw a cow running towards them and she was followed by a young man who had a stick in his hand and his face was half covered. The man’s shirt was open and one could see a dangling talisman.
This incidence was a reaction to what had happened in the mosque. It was thought the Hindus killed the pig and put it on the steps of the mosque because pig was considered as unholy by the Muslims, on the contrary Muslim started killing cow because cow is considered as holy by the Hindus. It was an eye for an eye. These two incidence made both the communities furious and the killings began. The Neighbors who were friends for generations and lived like families and brothers suddenly turned to enemies and started killing each other. Therefore, Bakshiji was worried about killing and the number of dead bodies this town would have and the kites and vultures on the town to enjoy the dead bodies because it would be now mass killing. While the news of partition was spreading like wild fire there was discussion by all some spoke for and some spoke against. Muslims were of the view that they will have a separate state of their own. On the other hand the Sikhs and the Hindus thought that partition will never take place in reality. All the communities realized that now they would have difficult times and so each and every one began praying to God for his mercy on Mankind. The Vanaprasthi prayed God for his mercy by clapping his hands –

“Grant Mercy O Lord, to every one
grant every living creature your blessing....”

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They also enchanted the couplets,

“Much blighted had this land been by
the sins of the Muslims even the
Divine has refused us this grace,
and the earth its bounty”24

The Vanaprasthi along with a few Sikh leaders and Hindu leaders started discussing the strategies of attacks and also of self-protection.

“Our Primary concern is self-defence and safety. Everything must be done to ensure this. Every householder must immediately store in his house, a canister of linseed oil and a bag of coke and charcoal. Boiling oil can be poured over the enemy from the root-top, read-hot coals can be flung…..”25

Now the Sikhs and the Hindus were concerned about their own self-defence and safety of these two communities. One of the members wanted that the youth be activated and they be given training in various fields both learning of Lathis.

“How is it that our youth wing has gone into hibernation? You have put Shri. Dev Vrat to all sorts of other jobs. It is absolutely necessary that our young men are activized. They must be given
training in Lathi-Wielding. I would suggest that two hundred lathis be purchased today and distributed among them.”

When this was discussed one gentleman sponsored for the lathis. One of them silently said,

“This is the biggest short coming of the Hindu Character. We think of digging a well only when we are thirty. The situation is fast deteriorating, the Muslims have already stocked weapons in the Jama Masjid whereas we are thinking now of buying lathis.”

One elderly person talks of meeting the Deputy Commissioner because they think he can stop all this but the elderly person reports that one delegation has already gone to the Deputy Commissioner to discuss and in the delegation there are congress leaders and leaders of Muslim League. He also said that, they needed a separate delegation of Hindus and Sikhs were no muslim representative should be there.

“Of what use is such a delegation? A separate delegation of Hindus and Sikhs must wait upon the Deputy Commissioner and tell him of the doings of the Muslims. If you go arm in arm with the Muslims what can you tell the Deputy Commissioner? The whole thing has been spoiled by the congressmen. They keeping pampering the Muslims.”

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All were of the view that congress had spoiled and pampered the Muslims. Now for keeping the situation in control and to keep people alert a Bell was repaired urgently which was fixed in 1927 in an old temple popularly known as the Shivalaya. In dangerous time or the crucial time the bell would ring. The old man who gave the information said –

“God forbid that it should have to ring again”

he wanted to say that bad times should not come and the bell should not ring due to communal riots. Ranvir a young boy was made to kill a hen. So that he would be ready for massacre without hesitation and with daring. His fear would go and he would kill many people.

“Ranvir, you slaughter this hen. This is your initiation test. You have to prove how mentally tough you are.”

This has the way the youth was prepared by organizations. The second delegation visited Richard The Deputy Commissioner at his residence. It is through Richard that the writer has portrayed the British point of view towards partition. Richard is the shrewd administration. For him whatever happens in the town is tension free. He does not care for problems of the local people. He knows that they fight against each other on religious reasons and are even ready kill each other. Like typical
Britishers and rulers he is indeed happy to see the riots taking place in the
town. He thinks that the Indian leaders are very much responsible for the
condition in the country and that these bodies are a failure in handling the
situation. When the deputation asked him for help as the government and
that as the Deputy Commissioner be should look into the matter or
situation will beyond control and there will be great lose of life and
property. Richard was not willing to help them and he told them he was
an administrator –

“The administration does not enjoy a good reputation with you
gentlemen. I am a British Officer, and you have little faith in the
British Government. You won’t very much care to listen to what I have
to say.”

Bakshiji insisted that Richard order the Police to patrol and the
army brought in. He continued saying that at least curfew can be imposed
to bring situation under control. Bakshiji was forcing Richard to handle
the situation and he knew that Richard could easily do it if really wanted
to do it. He again and again agitates,

“But the situation is critical and calls for immediate action. Once
rioting starts, it will be difficult to control. If an aeroplane were to fly
over the town, it will serve as a kind of warning to the people. They will
know that the administration is alert. This small measure itself will prevent a riot from breaking out”

The deputation came out of Richard bungalow and that to without any assurance. They were all disappointed because Richard could do a lot as an administrator but he never wanted to help them and wanted the situation to worsen. He also suggests that they should go to Pandit Nehru for help but Bakshiji very cleverly reminds him that it was still the responsibility of the British Government. Richard also suggests that a peace committee be formed and they made an appeal to the people to maintain peace and not to fight or kill each other. This attitude of Richard demoralizes the committee unfortunately the riots begin and the Hindus Muslims and Sikhs started their war for survival. It was due to the dead pig on the step of the Mosque and thereafter the dead cow that riots began. All time friends became enemies, the psychology of all the people changed. The entire town was tensed. Hayat Baksh had tagged Lakshmi Narain to himself for his security. He knew Narain was afraid of the riots. He respectfully said to Lakshmi Narain:

“Rest assured, Lalaji as long as we are there, nobody dare touch even a hair on your head.”

Most of the Hindu and Muslim leaders supported the Hindu Mahasabha and also Muslim league. There were selfish leaders who were
Liza who came from England after 6 months wanted Richard to be around her but due to his busy schedule he could not spend time with her. She was all alone in the big bungalow full of frustration and boredom. She had given herself an opportunity of improving their relation but it seemed it was no use as Richard was busy in routine work. The tension that mounted in the morning was partly diffused and partly submerged because most of the shop were open and people were seen on the streets and the traffic was usual on the roads. The rhythm was the same of every day, of years, of generations. The Shivala Bazar was full of people. Women in the ornament shops, tongas on the street, children in the school, Tailor taking measurement, all the shopkeepers busy as if nothing has happened. As decided in the meeting the bell was repaired so that it could ring in hard times. Khuda Baksh had witnessed when the bell gave alarm. He was afraid of this sound of the bell.

“I tremble when I hear that sound.”

Karim Khan narrated the story of Khizar and Musa all his stories had moral to his stories,

“The moral of the story is : a ruler can see what you and I, ordinary folk, cannot see. The British ruler has all seeing eyes, otherwise how can it be possible that a handful of firanghis coming
from across the seven seas should rule over so big a country? The Firanghis are very wise, very subtle, very far-sighted...."35

Nathu was restless since he killed the Pig. He was worried about the incidence because it was the reason of the riots. He was trying to find out whether the people knew who killed the Pig so from one lane to another he kept on roaming aimlessly just to collect the information about the dead Pig. He was finding whether anybody knows who killed the Pig. Nathu time and again checked his pocket to check his note given by Murad Ali. Nathu was a changed man he could not talk to anybody, he was restless always and was nervous all the time. All right Nathu tried to kill the Pig and after killing all the problems were created due to fear he did not go home he wanted to find out the situation, he also wanted to know whether the people were aware of the person who killed the Pig. He had money in his pocket for a moment he thought he would to to Motia, the prostitute and spend the whole right with her but suddenly he remembers his wife and plans to go home. Nathu tried to hide his feelings and was getting more and more apprehensive. He was totally confused. Nathu decided to go back home to his wife who loves him without any expectation. He knows a man go to his wife in pain is relieved and relaxed, he thinks instead of giving money to the prostitute as well buy something for his wife. She will be happy to receive something from
Nathu. She will take him in her arms and love him. He knew his wife was kind enough. She never made demands to Nathu. All this Nathu was thinking inside the Nanabai’s shop. Suddenly the drum beats were heard and an announcement was made,

“Fellow countrymen, this is to inform you that Public Meeting under the auspices of the District Congress Committee will take place this evening at six o’clock sharp in Ganj Mandi in which the efforts of the British rulers to disrupt India’s struggle for freedom through their perfidious policy of divide and rule will be fully exposed, and a fervent appeal will be made to all the citizens to pressure peace and tranquility in the city at all costs. Citizens are requested to attend the meeting in large numbers.”

While the discussion was going on an elderly person who was sitting in the same shop when he suddenly remembered the mosque incidence,

“Has that rascal been arrested or not who defiled the mosque? The Swine! may his body be eaten up by worms, limb by limb.”

Suddenly, they all see a man who is very religious. He was a Pir, who blessed people and also healed them. It seems that he could read everybody’s mind. He was from Golra Sharif. Everyone believed that he
will deliver sermon or may be he had got the information about the
defiling of the mosque and he could certainly stay in the city for few
days. Slowly Nathu leaves the shop, while going home Nathu sees a huge
crowd of people coming out of the Mosque. This crowd was seen at the
time of Id. All sorts of thoughts came to Nathu’s mind. Hurriedly he kept
walking. While passing by Nathu saw the town was normal, people were
busy in their daily affairs and there was no tension around. Before going
home Nathu bought meat Kababs went to the wine-shop. After enjoying
he saw a know figure Murad Ali coming so he tried to wish him and tell
him that the work given to him was done but unfortunately Murad Ali did
not speak to Nathu and moved on, but Nathu went on saying ‘Saleem
Huzoor’ but Murad Ali did not recognize him. Nathu goes home and is
welcomed by his wife who was waiting for him for a long time. She is
happy to see him home. Nathu was lucky to have a good wife who
tolerated him, loved him and had lot of patience. Nathu stayed in Chamar
lane and there were a few houses of the same community. His wife had
good relations with all her neighbours. She was happy with Nathu and
was content with whatever little she had. She never demanded anything to
Nathu while Nathu and his wife talk suddenly the bell rings to announce
that there was Fire. The Grain market was on fire. Nathu was aware that
something wrong had happened because of the pig so he dare not get up
and see what had happened but his wife who was restless opened these
door and went out to see what had happened in the town but Nathu kept sitting. The bell was heard till Richards bungalow. Liza and Richard were fast asleep. Richards distant bungalow could hear the alarm bell. Richard kept on sleeping as if he was used to it, but Liza got up when she looked at Richard, she saw he had a remarkable nature, unattached, untroubled by the surroundings. Liza wakes Richard from his sleep to enquire about the bell after a long thought Richard tells her that it is not any religious bell he laughs.

“It is not a religious occasion, dear Liza, a riot has broken out in the city between the Hindus and the Muslims.”

Liza was made to understand that this is usual and he had to govern them. He could handle the situation and accordingly she should not worry about the riots in the Town and that she should sleep without any disturbance. Lalaji who was aware of the riots was concern about his families security. For his families protection he searches the wood chopper in the house. He was a prominent citizen and lived in a safe place. Lalaji was well known with the Muslim as he did business with most of them so he thought there was no need to be afraid of them. But when Lalaji learnt that the riots were broken and the grain market was set on fire he becomes restless and is more concerned about his son who is not at home.
“He didn’t say anything to me. It is to your speeches and sermons that he keeps listening, day in day out. How should I know where he has gone? On a dreadful night like this, the boy is not at home.”

Now and then Lalaji went to his roof to find out the situation of the fire because his godown was close to the grain market. On all the houses he could see, men, women and children looking at the fire. Lalaji was equally worried of his young daughter and his wife. Fateh Din, his younger brother and their father were also watching the same and they assured Lalaji his security

“Have no fear Lalaji. No one will dare look with an evil eye towards your house. He will have to settle with us before he raises his hands against you.”

Lalaji’s Neighbours showed their concern. They were friends for generation and even in times of riots and crises they assured him life and security. These words helped Lalaji in collecting, courage and security. Nobody in the town will dare to touch before they touch Lalaji they will have to first settle with the Fateh Din family a very strong support for Lalaji these words were a soothing balm for Lalaji. He further thanks them, the Fateh Din continues,
“Have no fear! It is hooligans who create trouble and harass decent people. All of us have to live in the same town after all, so why should there be any conflict? What do you say, Lalaji?”

This was a very matured statement which made all of them realize that these conflicts are created to harass the decent people when they all have to live in one place for next generations. These conflicts and riots were useless according to Fateh Din. He kept on giving assurance to Lalaji everytime and also reassured him security of life and property. Lalaji trusted Fateh Din but never trusted the present situation. They were neighbours for almost 20 years but none of them had any complain about each other. Lalaji had a son Ranvir who was interested in social work and works for the same. His father is worried about him and knows that the time is not good for Ranvir to be out in the night. His wife and daughter recite Gayatri Mantra for security and peace.

His daughter Vidya informs her mother that Lalaji was going out. Both of them are worried about his life and security. The father wants to go and find out where he was because it was bad times that the town was going through Ranvirs mother warned Lalaji to give him good education and let him play like normal children,

“He is not your son alone, he is my son too. Where will you go looking for him? The school is long since closed. He is a sensible boy,
he must have stayed back somewhere. One of his friends too had told us that all the boys were at Mastery’s house. How many times did I tell you that you should not try to make a Hindu warrior out of your son, that he should devote his time to study, play games, eat well and become a strong boy. But you wouldn’t listen. You insisted on his taking part in drills and exercises and lathi-wielding, knowing fully well that we were destined to live our whole life in a Muslim City. To live in the ocean and make an enemy of crocodiles, who will call it wise? You are seeing the result now….”

Lalaji realized that his son would be in trouble. His wife never wanted Lalaji to go out and so she suggested to take help of their family friend Shah Nawaz who is influential and rich man and besides his home was the house of Lalaji’s relatives. So they decided to send Shah Nawaz a message through their servant Nanku. Far outside he could hear the slogans of ‘Allah-o-Akbar’ and ‘Har Ha Mahadev’. The situation was very worse. It was difficult for the family to spend the whole night but according to Lalaji’s wife they would send Nanku early morning but Lalaji insisted that he should go right now without any concern for the servant but Lalaji’s wife has a lot of concern for the servant Nanku and she protests sending him out during crisis of that night –
“I would again beseech you, wait patiently till morning. Leave yourself in God’s hands. We shall see what can be done tomorrow. Nanku too is the son of some mother. Don’t push him into the jaws of death.”

Lalaji’s wife had concern for Nanku a servant whom Lalaji wanted to send out. She was so human and also showed her concern for Nanku’s mother. She warned her husband not to put their servant into trouble at this odd hour during the riots.

There was lot of problem in the town. Ranvir was not at home Lalaji and his family were worried about the situation, they were people running through all the streets and were followed by the other group of people some wanted to kill and some of them were running to save their lives. Whole night this went on and Lalaji was fully tensed. Next morning the grain market was still burning and people gathered in groups discussed about the previous nights incidences and discussed about people who died and of which religion. Automatically the Hindu never passed through the muslim lane and the Muslims never passed the Hindu lane. Things suddenly changed. Once upon a time friends became enemies overnight that was very surprising and left people panic and disturbed. The schools and colleges were closed, the doors of the houses were shut everybody was thinking of life and security on the other hand
Ranvir did not return home last night but the message that he was safe was given to his family. Shah Nawaz himself came to Lalaji and took the whole family in his car only the servant Nanku was left behind to look after the house.

Shahanawaz was kind enough to help people. He took Lalaji’s family and safely dropped them to their relatives then he went to see his close friend Raghu Nath. Shahanawaz was very much concerned about his safety also, both the friends greet each other in Raghu’s house, talk about safety and riots. Raghu Nath’s wife requests Shah Nawaz to get her Golden Jewellery box from the house and she needs it in times of trouble. Shaha Nawaz immediately without any hesitation he promises her and leaves these place. This act of Shahanawaz highlights the true relation of the Hindu and Muslims relations for generation. Their love and affection for each other for their family and friends. Even in times of riots they were altogether as before. It was partition that divided people, region and communities otherwise it was a place like Paradise to live. Helping each other was their nature as a result till certain time till the situation gets worse, they all cared for each others and even after that slowly these situation got worse and the mentality changed accordingly. They looked at each other as if enemies for ages. The three communities had tough time during partition. Similar was the situation in other parts of borders.
Dev Datta speaks of riots in Ratta and he seriously thinks of looking into the matter seriously i.e. riots in the town and thinks that there should be some major steps to be taken in order to stop these communal riots,

“To put a stop to the riots, it is imperative that we bring together leaders of the congress and the Muslim league, to arrange a meeting between Hayat Baksh and Bakshiji”.44

Dev Datta a day before managed to call some people to discuss about the riots and how to stop it. While doing so he did not get good response people shut their doors on his face and Hayat Baksh agreed to attend the meeting even though he was not happy to do so but somewhere in his mind he had a strong feeling of a separate nation for muslims,

“We shall not rest till we have achieved Pakistan…….. Pakistan will become a reality!”45

Dev Datta’s concern can be understood. In any case he wanted the riots to stop and for this he was ready to make all necessary efforts on his own. He spoke to people who never answered properly, who ignored him, who were desperately waiting for a new Muslim nation but Dev Datta was a true comrade, if the leaders did not listen them he wanted to
convince the party workers of the various Party’s to help him stop the riots,

“Leave out the leaders. Let ten persons each from Congress, the Muslim League and the Singh Sabha be brought together and have a joint meeting. No, this too will not work. This proposal will have to be discussed in the party office with other comrades Mother problems. Every effort must be made to stop communal riots from spreading to the labourer’s colony. To have only one comrade there is not enough. Ratta is a Muslim area. Comrade Jagdish is there, but he alone cannot be effective. Besides, two or three comrades must be sent to the villages, they must go from village to village, and try to stop the riots from spreading. We have a few comrades.”

Dev Datta is worried of the riots and the situation in Ratta. Some how he wanted to stop the riots. He wanted that the party workers of various party’s should be involved to stop these riots. He never wanted riots he wanted peace and to communicate this message he wanted to send comrades to stop the riots, convence the people and also protect them from killing each other on communal grounds. Not many people were happy because of partition became they knew what they would go through and what would be their fate. Where all the people were worried so equally Dev Datta Parents were also worried because they knew Dev
Datta was going out to help people and was not worried about his parents who were old and wanted their son to be safe like any other parents would want but Dev Datta was going out to help people and was not worried about his parents who were old and wanted their son to be safe like any other parents would want but Dev Datta was rather reluctant and he promises his mother that he will be back home safely. He was equally concerned with these security of his family. His father who was old and his experience tells him that the people will not listen to him and it is no use to talk to the leaders and party workers of various party’s. He father urges that he should not try bringing them altogether which is useless,

“Why are you breaking your head against a wall ? The swine won’t agree. He must disgrace us. He has no thought for his parents ! He thinks he will stop the riots. Bastard !”

Dev Datta was a young boy, he worked for the labourers, load-carriers, coolies. He used to gather them and lecture them about their rights and awareness. He was too young to be a leader but he was keenly interested in issues relating laborers. On the other hand the situation in the town was detoriating. Shop were closed, roads were deserted many shops were looted, people were assembled in groups discussing the Hindu killed, the Muslims and the Muslims killed the Hindus. The people of that town were aware that Dev Datta had connection with all the three
communities and so he was told by these people of handing over the dead bodies to the respective communities and also gave him these message so that he can deliver the message to the other community,

“Go and tell them if one of our men is killed we shall kill three of theirs.”

In these communal riots everybody wanted to kill the other not only that they also wanted to kill many. Whatever one thought could do and as a result the riots spread all over the town. Nobody was in a position to understand or listen they could understand only one thing and that was communal hatred and killings. There was lot of discussion and the appeal of peace is signed by leaders of various party’s. Hayat Baksh and Bakshiji also sign the appeal. There was information that there were riots and a few Sikh were killed. Dev Datta’s father insisted that his son should not go to any other place because there were riots and anything would happen but Dev Datt insisted that he had to go if not these situation would become more worse. Jarnail was killed. Jarnail would stop anywhere, any shop or any corner of the street and start his speech to stop the riots. He used to tell the people about Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhiji who spoke of freedom. Freedom from the Britishers and unity in India. He delivered his speech in times of riots and was killed before he finishes his sentence,
“Saheban, Hindus and Muslamans are brothers. There is rioting in the city, fires are ragging and there is no one to stop it. The Deputy Commissioner is sitting in his bunglows, with his madam in his arms. I say, our real enemy is the English man who makes us fight one another. We should not be taken in by what the Englishman says Gandhiji says, Pakistan shall be made over his dead body. I also say that Pakistan shall be made over my dead body. We are brothers, we shall live together, we shall live as one .....

Hearing is powerful speech, who were protesting or who wanted riots and Pakistan suddenly hit a lathi on Jarnail’s head and he collapsed on the ground. He was a person who understood the situation and who never wanted Pakistan a separate nation.

Lalajs son Ranvir who was away from home whole night was planning a stratergy to attack. He had to pass a test of slaughtering the hen and he did it, with this act he developed supreme self-confidence. Now he was a changed person full of authority and daring. His group was the group of young ‘warriors’. Ranvir was short and so he visualized himself in the role of Shivaji. There young boys were continuously preparing for the attack on the Muslims. Ranvir declares :
“Time has not yet come for the use of boiling oil. It is when the enemy attacks your fortress and other weapons become ineffective that you pour boiling oil on the enemy.”

This is how one community was attacking the other. Cruelty can be seen in Ranvir’s statement. All wicked, thoughts came to the minds of the ‘warriors’. Actually they were planning for all situations. They were ready to attack in all possible ways with any type of weapon. Inder who was one of the four was asked whether he could manage to kill and they were also given proper training of power and how they could do it. They were shown demonstrations and were taught to handle the weapons. Ranvir enquiries with Inder,

“We want to see your footwork. Give us a demonstration of how you will turn on your feet while attacking the enemy. Pick up a knife from the window – sill.”

Family’s who were friends for generations were ready to kill, stab and were also prepared to pour boiling oil on them. What a change in psychological attitude? They were also trained to how and what to do and were also made aware of the situation and how to handle it and what to do in worst case.
“Never aim at the enemy’s chest or back. Always plunge the knife into his waist or stomach. And when the blade is inside, give it a twist; this will pull out his intestines. If you attack the enemy in a crowd, do not pull out the knife. Leave it there and get lost in the crowd.”

Such a planned strategy. This communal riots proved human being as inhumane and even worst than animals, Ranvir, Manohar, Inder and Shambhu all these four young men had lot of hatred in their minds for muslim and any how they wanted to attack and kill them in large numbers in every and any situation. They had promised themselves that they will do whatever they can to attack their enemies. Inder came out and wanted to kill the scent-seller. He followed him to a long distance, then he started to walk with him and the scent-seller kept talking to him all about his business and about his sell, his customers and so on. But Inder’s intention was something else as he was waiting for an opportunity to kill this poor scent-seller. But the scent-seller was unaware of the fact that this young boy would kill him and he started protecting and discussing with him as if he was trying to make this young man comfortable. The scent-seller was a very poor man had he not come out it would have been difficult to have his meals so it was his compulsion otherwise he would not come out of the house in bad times.
“The town is stricken by drought, as it were. This is not a day for
selling one’s wares. But then I thought, if I can make even a few annas,
it will not be bad. If a peddler sits at home, how will he eat?”

Suddenly he realizes that something has pricked his body it was the
boy who killed him. He was shocked and he died not of stabbing but
because of fear. So cruel the act of killing was. Finally, Inder was
successful in killing one person. This was a great achievement for him.

On the other hand Nathu was totally disturbed. He went home, his
wife was waiting for him desperately, his confusion was regarding the
dead Pig on the steps of the Mosque and it was the main reason that
people started killing each other. He was in two minds whether to tell his
wife or not of what he did in the night. Sometimes he felt he should tell
her the truth and also who told him and he also thought will his wife trust
him but he again felt his wife was a good lady,

“Should I Speak out ? Tell my wife everything ? She is a
sensible woman, she understands and I shall feel relieved.”

But again he thought if he is arrested by the Police all sort of
thought came to his mind and he also thought of meeting Kalu who was
supposed to bring a pushcart to take the carcass. He wanted to ask Kalu
where did he deliver the Pig ? All this was in his minds. But after all he
gave up the idea and wanted to forget everything that had happened. Nathu also thought of Murad Ali who had asked him to kill the Pig. Nathu thought of going to Murad Ali but he knew that he was very influential and so he could put Nathu in trouble. Nathu thought of going straight to Murad Ali and thought again,

‘but what will Murad Ali say? If there is evil in his heart, he will push me out of his house, hold me guilty and get me arrested. He is quite capable of doing this.’

There was lot of struggle going in his mind, about the Pig, the riots, the Scavenger Kalu, Murad Ali who told him to do it, and he was worried about his wife. His wife could recognize that something was wrong with Nathu and his behavior was not usual. She tried to ask him and finally she pressurized him and than she was told the whole story by Nathu. She was shocked to learn that the riots in the town were because of Nathus act of killing, the Pig, she turned Pale, she after listening this warned Nathu not to tell anybody and keep silence otherwise they would come in trouble. She tries to make Nathu comfortable and relax but equally she is worried about her husband. She is also a social lady who thinks that they should visit the neighbours house where one of their community person is killed. The character of Nathus wife is that of social lady with tolerance, full of understanding and a very matured lady. Nathu
is fortunate enough to have a wife like her who loves him, who cares for him protects him and is very satisfied with him. Even in worse condition she helps him to cool down and to forget what he did and warm him not to tell anybody. Next day the lane’s are vacant, the tea shops are vacant the town is totally empty. Harnam Singh and his wife are the only couple who stay there rest all the muslim houses are there. Banto wife of Harnam is a Sikh family. Every now and then tells her husband to leave the place as it was not safe for them and that they would be killed? In the communal riots the Muslim would kill them out of hatred. Banto wanted to go to Khanpur,

“Let us get away from this village and go to Khanpur where some of our relatives are living. In this entire village we are the only Sikh couple, all the others are Muslims.” 56

Over night fear of death disturbed the couple. All these years, all their life they lived happily but now it was impossible for them to stay due to riots Harnam and his family stayed for generations and now she wanted to go away leave for some other place and she was not even worried about her business which they had setup over the years for her safety was the priority. Banto tried to explain Harnam but he did not agree. There were many questions which arose in his minds and so he never wanted to go to Khanpur.
“How can we shutdown a running shop and go away? Riots and disturbances keep taking place but that is no reason why one should close down one’s business. And where shall we go? Shall we go to the city which is already in flames? If we go to Khanpur, who will feed us there? What if our shop is looted when we turn our back on it? How shall we live? Shall we go to our son? He is living twenty miles away in Mirpur. He is as much alone there as we are here. Let us leave ourselves in Guru Maharaj’s hands and stick on where we are. If we go to our son, won’t we be a liability on him? Will he try to protect us old people or try to save his own life? For how long can we fed by others? And for how long can we live on our savings?”

Harnam thought running from the situation was not a solution instead face the situation and stay in the same place. In these communal riots the people were confused and full of fear for life than property. They were ready to leave everything as it is and go to safe villages and relatives where their communities were in large number because they felt safe and life was guaranteed in a group. Every time Banto heard anything like Killing or looting she used to become nervous and again request her husband Harnam to leave the place and go to her sister’s village and safe their lives. Harnam assured her that Karim Khan has given a word that nothing will happen than why to worry. He also consoles her by saying
that they have done nothing wrong to anybody and never thought ill about anybody so they were safe in the same place where they are living for generations. Harnam was undisturbed and also took God’s name this made Banto cool and gave her courage to fight against her insecurity and anxiety. Karim Khan assured security but one afternoon he passes Harnam shop does not stop were as Harnam thinks Karim Khan is coming towards him to advise not to leave this place but things had become more worse. Karim Khan never stopped at his tea shop and slowly passed by and muttered while pretending to cough:

“Things have taken a bad turn, Harnam Singh, your welfare lies in leaving the place”.58

These words from Karim Khan shock Harnam because it was Khan who assured him life and safety and now the same person has changed Harnam was shocked. Karim Khan understood Harnam situation so he further continues that the people of this village will not harm but he cannot tell about people who come from other places,

“Local people will not do you any harm but it is feared that marauders may come from outside. We will not be able to stop them.”59

These few words from Karim Khan meant real danger and that something was terribly wrong and he understood that even in such worse
situation for the love and affection of Harnam Karim Khan took the risk to come out of his house warn him about his safety and security. Karim Khan who was a Muslim wanted Harnam a Sikh to be safe and leave that place as soon as possible without wasting time. All this he did because of the concern for Harnam. They cared for each other and that is why in odd situation Khan took the risk to approach Harnam and secure his life. Psychologically everyone dear and near ones were forced to leave because of partition Harnam goes inside his house and informs Banto about Karim Khans information and also tells her that Karim Khan has advised them to live as soon as possible because there was danger and he could do nothing about that.

Banto and Harnam were shocked yet Harnam wanted to stay behind and face the consequences whatever it may be. He was ready to face any situation because it was difficult for him to run away in such a situation with his wife Banto who was sixty years old. Both of them had crossed sixty and in this age things were difficult for them. So he wanted to stay there and not leave the place rather fight,

“If it comes to killing or getting killed, I shall shoot you down with this gun first and then kill myself.”

In these riots the loved ones were ready to kill the family members because of security. If some one lived alive, they had fear that they would
be toured and one cannot even think of loosing and seeing or even thinking of what would happen to the family whom they loved dearly so before they die they were ready to kill their own blood. This is what partition did, the couple finally decided to go away to some other place for safety. Harnam collected all that he had i.e. money his wife took whatever gold ornaments. She could and the rest she buried in the backyard of the house while they were getting ready to go they could hear slogans by the Muslim league leaders. Of these were Pakistani slogans Harnam and Banto had a small bird as a Pet myna whom they loved as a child. In times of crisis they never forgot to let the bird fly as nobody was there to take care of him. This was an human attitude that alongwith human security. Harnam was also concerned about the Pet. Before leaving the cage the Pet who was also fond of this family blessed Banto by rote:

"God be with you. Banto ! My God be with every one."

And the same words Banto repeated for the bird where one person was ready to kill the another, these animals blessed and prayed for their safety. Myna learnt this words from Harnam. Myna’s cage was taken to the backyard by Banto and the bird was asked to fly but myna kept sitting in the cage did not want to fly and leave the family. The tragedy of partition was not faced by human beings but also by the birds. They never
wanted to leave their homes where they lived. Finally, Harnam and Banto left with a little cash, a gun and the clothes. Going towards the Pucha road was dangerous because slogans and drum beats could be heard from that directions so they had to take another route i.e. down the bed of the stream and there they heard a thin, soft voice it was the Myna who had followed them

‘Banto, May God he with you! May God be with everyone!’

The bird never went away and kept following the couple. They loved the bird and the bird loved them like a child. Sounds of Drum Beats slogans could be heard. The barking of the dogs was heard, they could also hear the noise of breaking the shop and breaking the house and naturally it was Harnams shop and house that was attacked. Harnam was grateful to Karim Khan for having warned them in time and because of Karim Khan their lives were saved. Things had changed and so everything was alien to them. Twenty years they stayed there, they saw the shop burning. But very important for them was their lives and their protection they had no time to waste but reach a safe place. Harnam holds Banto’s hand,

“Keep walking so long as the shades of night provide you cover. Soon enough the day will break and terrors of the day, like hungry wolves, will stare you in the face.”
While going in search of security, Harnam and Banto were also worried about the son and daughter. Then they decided to knock the first door who ever it may be. Banto enquire whether Harnam knew anybody in Muridpur to her Harnam Singh smile,

“No one gave us shelter where I knew everyone, our shop was looted and our house set on fire. Many of the villagers had been my childhood playmates we had grown up together.”

Such a tragedy that the place where he stayed, played, grew up, shared joy and happiness was a part of life changed suddenly to unknown people, place and friends. Now they were in new place, unknown, which community was not know they were even ready to die and Harnam tells his wife,

“Banto, if we find them hostile, then I shall first finish you off with my gun and then kill myself. I won’t let you fall into their hands so long as I am living.”

On the other hand gurudwara’s were full of Sikh men, women and children. They all were praying to Lord for safety, life and security. They sang ‘War Song’ this type of song was sang three hundred year’s earlier by Khalsa before going a war. After hundreds of years Khalsa were again taking swords with Turks. Everyone went into past when same things had
happened. Looking the present situation created by Partition the Sikhs were ready to sacrifice. Measures were taken to protect everyone in the Gurudwara. Specially young girls and women. Weapons like gun, lathis swords, lances etc. were placed against the back wall of the Gurudwara.

Just near the Gurudwara was a major threat of a Muslim house where all the weapons of the muslims were stored. Preparation were going on to launch Jihad against the Kafirs and anytime, there would be firing from that house. The Sikhs kept a watch from the top on all sides and were predicting that the enemy would attack from the backside. Otherwise this village was full of beauty. Its picturesque beauty was appreciated and loved by the visitors. It was a village actually as if God made it with his own hands. The water stream, the birds, the orchard everything was beautiful. For miles together one could see fields which projected the life and richness of the community which stayed there. All of sudden Sardar Teja Singh entered the Gurudwara he was in a bad position. He bowed and touched the threshold of the Gurudwara. Afterwards, he went to the Granth Sahib, the Holy Book and bowed his head for a long time. The entire congregation was silent and shocked to see Teja Singh doing all this activities. He went to the corner collected the sword which was his maternal grandfather’s sword who was in the
royal count of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. As soon as he raised the sword young Pritam Singh, bursted the slogan:

“Jo Boley So Nihal!”

And to this the whole congregation answered as ‘Sat Srikal!’ Sardar Teja Singh was full of emotion of sacrifice

“One again, today, the Khalsa Panth needs the blood of the Guru’s Sikhs.”

with his intense emotion he continued,

“Time has come when our faith will be put to test. Time has come of our trail. The Maharaj has only one behest for this time: “Sacrifice! Sacrifice! Sacrifice!”

On one side they were ready for the attack on the other hand they also were ready to have talks with the Muslims. Some of them thought that they should have a dialogue with them instead of killing each other. One frail young man wants to have a dialogue and understanding against the enemy.

“We should not forget that we are being incited against the Muslims, and the Muslims against us. Due to rumors of all kinds tension is mounting and tempers are running high. On our part we
should try our best to maintain contact with the Muslim and continue to interact with them and see the violence does not break out."

While the hot discussion was going on various issues the young girls in the Gurudwara were having a feeling of insecurity. Among them was Jasbir daughter of Harnam and Banto. She was married in this village. She was called as ‘the daughter of the Guru’ because she could say the Ardas in a very sweet voice and everybody was familiar with her voice. She was a devoted follower. One Nihangs reports Kisen Singh that he has seen the dust which is coming towards the village and the danger is very near to them. It was the marauders from outside. The situation was beyond control it had taken a serious and dangerous turn. The congregation could hear the drum-beats very clearly because they were very close to the Gurudwara. Jasbir Kaur was ready with her Kirpan. She took the dupattha off her head hung it around her neck and similarly all the other women also did the same. The whole atmosphere reverberated with the slogans of the Sikhs and the Muslims. Many Sikh families had left behind their old parents due to some or the other reason. The situation in the Gurudwara was tense and everyone was worried of everyone.

On the other Harnam and his wife were in search of shelter. They reach the first house and knock the door for life, safety and security, she urges to the owner of the house to open the door in a loud voice:
“Kind ones, open the door. We are in distress.”

Listening to this statement of his wife Harnam felt stricken and remorse. He had never though that his wife will have to beg for shelter. The door was opened Harnam told the lady his tragedy how the whole night they kept walking. He also told that he had a house and shop. He was well to do in Dhok Ilahi Baksh but unfortunately their house and shop were looted and burnt down by the marauders. While the old village lady was listening, she could understand that they had gone through a tough time. So she allowed them to come in and sit. Inside alongwith the old lady a young girl Akran was also present who was shocked at the behaviour of the old lady who took them inside the house. After some time the old lady washed her hands and went inside and brought butter milk for them.

‘Here, drink some butter milk. You must be exhausted.’

This warm welcome given by the old lady brought tears in the eyes of Harnam because this was the human treatment given to them in times of crisis. The whole village was burning, there was no trust left amongst one another yet this old lady gave them shelter and protection in her house. Harnam and his wife were very grateful to this old lady. Harnam had with him his gun hanging on his shoulder yet the old lady was not afraid of him. Harnam cries like a child and blesses the old lady,
'May God bless you sister, what you have done for us we shall never be able to recompense.'\textsuperscript{71}

Giving these blessings Harnam and his wife looked at each other because the milk served was in the utensils of a Muslim family. Unfortunately they landed in the house of a muslim who took great care. The old lady knew that they were hesitant to take the butter milk in her utensils she understood their discomfort. She was quite a matured lady she continues,

‘If you are carrying any of your own utensils, I can pour the buttermilk into it for you. We have a Pandit's shop in the village. I could go and get a couple of utensils for you, but how do I know if the Pandit must be there? You may not take it from my hand but how will you pass the day on an empty stomach?’\textsuperscript{72}

The communal riots changed the psychology of the people they were ready to kill one another and this old village lady who was a muslim gave protection and shelter to a Sikh couple and also gave them butter milk to drink. This she did because she had concern for them. She was already to bring utensils from the shop for them. This incidence shows that all these, three communities were like brother and sister it was the partition that separated them from each other. Outside the house there were riots amongst the muslims and the Sikhs were as this old lady was
giving shelter to the Sikhs without the permission of her family members who were not at home. Such a big decision she took in their absence. Suddenly she informs Harnam that her son is a member of the league and both her son and her husband are gone out with some men and will return soon and how they will treat them was not her business. She showed that she was helpless out of fear Harnam and his wife not knowing what to do got up they, the knew that outside there would be insecurity and they will be killed but had no option without a word they decide to leave and reach the door as soon as Harnam was about to open the door. Once again the old lady has compassion for the couple, she stops them, 

‘wait. Don’t go. Put the latch back. You knocked at my door with some hope and expectation in your heart. We shall see what happens. Come back.’

For the second time the old lady permits them to stay in her house. Though a Muslim lady she had compassion, she also knew her son would kill them or do atrocities on them yet as a good human being she calls them back and assures that she will also do something. This shows whatever community one belongs to there is love and compassion in each and every heart. The old lady asks them to climb the ladder to take shelter,
“Go up the ladder into that loft and sit there. Don’t make any sound. No one should know that you are here. For the rest, leave it to God.”

Time was difficult and the couple had to listen to what the elderly lady said and went to the loft and set thereafter sometimes the old lady also asked for the gun he had, there was no option than handing over the gun now he was armless but he left everything to God while they were facing all this trouble, they missed their children. They were worried about the son and daughter Jasbir suddenly voices grew louder and Akran and her father-in-law brought in a big black trunk. This was Harnam’s trunk which they looted. It was locked still. The person who brought the trunk was Ehsan Ali who was known to Harnam.

Ehsan’s daughter-in-law Akran is excited to open the truck in all this she forgets to tell about Harnam and his wife who are taking shelter in their house. Rajo the old village lady comes out to see her husband Ehsan and later offers him butter milk and informs him that she has given shelter to the Sikhs in their house. While the daughter-in-law is hammering on the lock to open Harnam opens the loft and tells Akran,

‘Child, why are you hammering at the lock? Here is the key. It is our trunk.’
In crucial times whatever Harnam had he wanted to give. He was ready to handover these keys to her and also declared that it was their trunk. Harnam was happy to see Ehsan Ali because once upon a time both of them would deal with one another. Ehsan Ali calls Harnam down and continues to speak to him regarding these times that they were facing then. Ehsan Ali tells Harman in bold voice

‘Thank your stars that you took shelter in my house. Had you gone elsewhere, you wouldn’t have been alive by now.’

Ehsan Ali warms him to leave because he is afraid of his son who works for the league and any time he can come alongwith his men and kill him. Harnam is confused does not know what to do and tells Ehsan that he was ready to do whatever he tell them to in order to save their lives. Ehsan also tells them that the people were searching them the previous night and if they come to know that he was hiding here his family would also come in trouble. So the best thing was to leave his house. As Rajo was a compassionate lady so was her husband Ehsan. He wanted to help Harnam and serve his life because he knew if Harnam steps out he would be killed. So once again Ehsan and his wife help Harnam by hiding them in the godown, it was all done because of their previous contacts. Ehsan Ali continues to tell Harnam
‘It is out of consideration for our past contacts, Harnam Singh, otherwise by God, what the Kafirs have done in the city, makes one’s blood boil.’

Rajo took them to the godown and locked them. After some time Rajo brought butter milk and chappati for them. They eat and sleep. All of sudden they heard noises from outside, it was Ramzan and his wife. His wife Akran had informed her husband about he Kafirs and the shelter given to them by Rajo and Ehsan Ali. He was furious and wanted to kill, hearing this round Rajo Arrives on the scene and tried to stop Ramzan who has become wild to kill them. He break open the door and pulls Harnam holds he throat and twice he tries to kill him but only because he knows him he does nothing but before that he shouted on the top of his voice to his mother,

‘Stop chattering, Ma. In the city they have killed two hundreds Musalmans.’

Due to these riots all were disturbed and killed hundreds of people. It was easy to kill a kafir and it was difficult to kill someone whom you know. This act showed that people they knew irrespective of any caste, they could do no harm became for years together they lived happily as one family how could overnight they change? In the midnight Rajo led Banto and Harnam out of the house and showed them the safest way she
also carried the double-barreled gun and very gracefully handed over it to Harnam. When they step out they see villages burning in all directions. Rajo helps them but she does not know whether she is protecting them or pushing them in the Jaws of death. She said,

‘Everyone to his or her fate I do not know whether I am saving your life or pushing you into the jaws of death. Fires are raging on all sides.’

saying so she handed over a small bundle wrapped in a cloth. To Harnam which were Banto’s ornaments found in the trunk Rajo gave them so that in difficult times they would be of use of them. Whatever Rajo did for the couple was full of kindness, generosity Banto burst into tears,

‘we must have done some good deeds in our past life to have met you.’

Taking her permission the couple started their journey to an unknown place full of strange thoughts and fear in mind. During partition not only mass killing took place but in many cases there were people who forced the other’s to accept their faith their religion for eg. The muslims forced the Sikhs to become muslims and this was done forcefully if not accepted then they were killed. Ramzan and his friends followed a Sardar
and finally managed to catch them and forcefully convert them to be a Musalman. Iqbal Singh the son of Harnam Singh agreed to do so as he wanted to live. He was taken to the village, his hair were cut, his beard was sheved all the necessary changes were made according to the religion. An elderly man and mullah arrived and then the Quran was read and Iqbal Singh was converted, he had no option. He was taken in a procession now he was the friend of the Muslims, everyone embraced him and he also to some extend looked like a Muslim. His marks of Sikkism were replaced by the marks of the Muslim faith. All this made Iqbal restless but was helpless. He was dead although he was alive his faith was snatched from him and replaced to another which was difficult yet he did it because he wanted to survive and this was the only way.

The Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all these three communities had to face bad times and this events and incidences have left mark on their minds which cannot be erased even today. They lost their loved ones, their villages, their property and even their faith.

On the other, the Sikhs in Gurudwara were in bad situation. The Muslims had come from the neighbouring villages. For two days and two nights the fight went on till the arms and ammunition was exhausted and it was impossible to continue. Seven dead bodies were lying in the Gurudwara among them who had wives their husbands heads were on the
laps and others were lying on the ground. A few dead bodies lay scattered here and there in the village. The dead body of Sohan Singh who had come from the city to prevent the riot from breaking out was also lying near the lane of Gurudwara. In this riots many people were also killed by mistake, the people of their own community killed them without knowing who they were. The building of the Kalsa School was set on fire. Kishen Singh in the Gurudwara kept on firing. The crowd in the Gurudwara was helpless, they knew that they would be killed by the Muslims who are approaching the Gurudwara. The slogans of ‘Allah-o-Akbar’ were heard from all directions. During these riots there was settlements even in terms of money. The Sikhs in the Gurudwara were trying to pay an amount to the mediators so that the Turks would go away and their lives be saved. It is only after that money would be handed over. Teja Singh sent for the younger Grathi:

“Try to strike a bargain for any amount upto one lakh rupees, starting from a low figure. We shall make the payment only after the outsiders have gone to the other side of the stream. Make it clear to them. Thereafter, they can send three of their men for money, our representatives will be standing with the money bags.”

The situation in the Gurudwara was Pathetic, the ‘Mujahids’ sitting on the sheikh’s terrace had come from outside and were narrating stories
to each other and sharing their experiences. One narrated about a girl who was running away to save her life but was caught by the Muslim boys and raped one after the other. When it was the turn of one of them he found that he had rapped a dead body,

‘By God it is true, every word of it. When my turn came there was no sound from her; she wouldn’t move. I looked at her, she was dead. I had been doing it to a dead body.’

Just to take revenge they turn so inhumane that they were not aware of these fact that the girl whom they all had rapped died during and when the last few were to rape she had died and they had raped the dead body. No where in human history we find an example of rape where a dead body is rapped, this happened only during partition. The marauders were in village and the threat had increased, the slogans and drum beats could be heard very clearly because they were near then. The younger granthi was going to bargain was also killed and his elder brother shouted. The entire Gurudwara was shocked they could realize the fear and what would happen. There was fire all over. The ladies in the Gurudwara were scared. Jasbir Kaur was also in a state of frenzy. The number of dark figures crawling was increasing due to fire in the lane, they were clearly visible. It was Jasbir who took the led all the women in the Gurudwara saw that now it was difficult and so they decided to do
something. They hold the hands of their children, two or three women had small babies they started walking toward a small lane which took them to the slope right up to the well. This was the well which was used by these women daily for bathing, washing their cloths or to gossip. Nobody knew why they were rushing towards the well. As soon as they reached the well Jasbir was the first one to jump into the well. After her one by one many woman climbed up hold their children and jumped into the well.

One women held the breast-fed child in her arms and jumped. One Mother jumped into the well living her son on the wall but somebody pushed the child into the well and thus sent him to his mother. All the women jumped one after the other. When the turks came they saw the dead bodies and not one women alive in the Gurudwara. They could hear heart – rending cries of women and children coming from inside the well. Kites and Vultures had arrived this village specially near the well. The marauders had left the village. They carried with them what they could. On the way to the ‘well of death’ one could see the ribbon’s hair-clips, dupattas, broken pieces of bangles. The whole village was scattered and nothing was left behind. Suddenly some sound was seen by the villagers. The indication was that the British would take care of everything. The very presence of the aeroplane changed the atmosphere of the villages.
and started to come to normal. Over whichever villages the aeroplane flew there the drum beats, the looting and the slogans stopped. People started to lead a normal life. Had the Britishers done this act a day or two before there wouldn’t had been riots and massacre but as if the Britishers wanted the communal riots. They were successful in creating rift amongst these communities who lived like brothers and family members for generation. The Britishers if really wanted peace, law and order could do it but they wanted to see this and enjoy. Slowly the situation changed. In front of the mosque Qutab Din street in all lanes, all the streets at the crossing of two or three somewhere four soldiers were sitting or standing by the road side doing their duty.

Army was seen in the villages and town. It was on the fourth day of these riots the curfew for eighteen hours has been clamped on the city. Slowly the curfew hours were reduced. The Deputy Commissioner was on the round of the city. People slowly started opening their shops to start their routine business, people could go from one locality to the other. The news of two refugee camps accommodating refugees from twenty villages came. On the other hand two Government Hospitals – one in the city and the other in the Cantonment were already giving treatment to the wounded and also the dead bodies were taken care of. They were also disposed of. Whatever news came the name of the Deputy Commissioner

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was taken with high regards and very prominently. During the curfew one young boy was standing out of and he was shot. Richard, the Deputy Commissioner people thought was a very sensitive man and he has handled the situation properly but according to many it was the Deputy Commissioner who was responsible for the riots. Slowly the political parties took interest in the welfare of the people. The Deputy Commissioner was looking into everything personally. He showed his worries for the wounded, about the dead bodies he asked the Health Officer regarding the well,

‘I would like you to visit the village where women jumped into the well. Otherwise there is great danger of a contagion spreading.’

Richard was taking care of all small things to show the perfection in his administration. The people of various political parties visited him and requested him for maintaining law and order that time he refused to do so and now with keen interest was looking into the matter personally. Mr.Kapur, the Health Officer was given instructions by the Deputy Commissioner. What should be done of the dead bodies, the Health Officer said,

‘That’s the only way, Sir throw the bodies into pits and bury them. There can’t be a funeral for each deceased.’
They did not want to find out the religion of the corpses and collect all and bury them together. Funeral for each and every dead body separately was highly impossible. He knows that now he will have to work hard to solve this problem created by the people. He further adds

‘At first go and kill one another, and then expect the government to dispose of their dead too with proper ceremony.’

Richard was at the Relief Committee Office and was taking the updates. He showed as if he was very much concerned about the dead and the alive.

‘We would like public bodies to assist the administration in running the refugee camps. Arrangements have been made for the supply of ration, tents have been pitched as you know. We shall need some doctors, and quite a number of volunteers who can assist us in looking after the refugees.’

The whole delegation that had visited him before riots were now in the relief committee and were really surprised to see the Deputy Commissioner in the role. After making an appeal Richard expected some response from the relief committee as well as assurance of help. Lala Lakshmi Narain stood up:
‘We assure the Deputy Commissioner Sahib Bahadur that the citizens and all the institutions shall whole heartedly cooperate with the government. It is our great good fortune that the so capable and sympathetic an Officer is the head of the Administration in these distinct and is present in our midst.’

All the members of the committee were pretending as if they were happy with the presence of the Deputy Commissioner. Bakshi was becoming restless as he was aware of the tactics played by the British.

‘This is the role, the Britishers have all along played – they first bring about a riot and then quell it, they starve the people first and then give them bread, they render them homeless and then begin to provide shelter to them.’

Many people were of the same view about the British rule in India. Liza wife of the Deputy Commissioner was bore and restless she was not happy because Richard was busy in his work and could not spend time with her. She started drinking like before. When Richard reached home he found Liza in a critical position, fully drunk and lying on the sofa. Richard knew she could not walk so he picked her up in his arms and took her to their bedroom till they reach the bedroom Liza wakes up. Richard thought she must be hungry but she made fun of Richard. He realized that Liza was unhappy and frustrated because he could not spend
time with her. He tried to make her explain that he was busy with these riots and the wounded people. He said to Liza,

'I have too much work on hand these days, Liza, you must understand. The Grain Market in the city has been burnt down, and no fewer than a hundred and three villages raised to the ground.'

Liza was shocked to know so many villages were destroyed, so many men, women and children were also killed and while she was discussing Richard told her that he was going to Sayedpur where many women and children jumped to their death. He also advices Liza to accompany him to that place, the whole journey would be wonderful and to her surprise the whole villages were burnt and for Richard it was lovely and be romanticized that place. After reaching in Sayedpur next day Richard was trying to be romantic, he was talking about the beauty the birds and all beautiful things around. How could Richard do this inspite of so many people who were killed in a cruel manner? When they reached the well Richard was not serious about the event. He continued telling Liza about the stream, new kinds of birds found in India, the fruit orchard etc. Liza was surprised to see a changed Richard. She never anticipate such a behaviour from him in such times. Liza kept looking at his face,
‘what sort of a person are you, Richard that in such places too you can see new kinds of birds and listen to the warbling of the Lark?’

After her comments he makes her understand that he cannot work with all emotions. He was an administrator and he cannot be involved fully, if not it would be difficult for him to do his job for a day. Even if one hundred and three villages were burnt, he could not involve in that emotionally because for Richard, these one hundred and three villages were not very serious affair, he continues,

‘Not even then, this is not my country, Liza, nor are these people my country men.’

Richard was not very much concerned with what had happened. Became India was not his own country nor the Indian’s were his country men only because this country and its people were not his, he did not care to what happened. How many were killed and what was destroyed. This was the typical attitude of the British administrator and also was in a mood to see destruction of this country and he would enjoy it. Richard was hard in his behaviour and Liza was shocked to learn this. In the camps names of these missing people, the statistics of the loss of property, goods were taken down. Every were people were reaching their beloved one’s either dead or alive. Their houses were burnt, shops looted and everything was changed. Everybody came to the registration table to
give information or collect information and also expected some help from
the Government. Prakasho the daughter of the Pandit was kidnapped by
Allah Rakha a Muslim young man. This was reported but her family was
not aware of what situation, she was in Allah Rakha brought the nikah
clothes and performed nikah rites and married her. For two days she did
not it or speak to anybody, but on the third day she and Allah Rakha had
come closer, the caste system between them had been erased. Prakasho
realized that he really loved her so and she accepted his love irrespective
of his caste. In partition times this also happened that real love was
protected even in times of riots. Both of them were happy as they realized
their love for one another.

It was decided to have a meeting of the peace committee. The place
chosen for the meeting was the college building which was neither Hindu
nor Muslim nor Sikh. The Principal too was not an India. He was from
the Christian Missionary. All the political leaders, prominent people had
arrived for the meeting. People who were present, there were talking
about the property prices, high and low. Muslims left the Hindu locality
and likewise Hindu and Sikhs from the Muslim areas. Now in the
meeting hall all were very normal, irrespective of their caste. Sardar
Mohan Singh who was watching all this was speaking to one person next
to him,
‘Come what may, ultimately we all have to live here. There may be ups and downs and fits of frenzy, but the reality is that all of us have to live here, small tensions are of little consequence: even the utensils in a kitchen keep striking against one another. Neighbours too have quarrels, but the fact remains that all of us have to live here. To think of it, a neighbor is like one’s right hand.’

There were words of wisdom after great human loss and historical tragedy. Men who had gathered there for the meeting were all discussing various issues and all of them were deliberately avoiding the issue of riots, killing and rape. They were talking about elections and who would be their candidate. Some of them were discussing the Herbs and the herbal medicine. Dev Datta managed to bring all the political leaders under one roof for the peace communities meeting and actually every one was there. Hot discussion of Hindu, Muslim and the congress and who did what for whom began. The Muslim league gave slogans and spoke of achieving the goal of Pakistan and also continued further blaming congress not supporting or representing the Muslim. Mr. Herbet stood up gave a speech on how things should be improved and what major steps should be taken to improve the situation. He also suggested that the members of these peace committee should visit each and every Mohalla, locality and town and spread the message of peace. A bus was arranged
for the members of the committee and this proposal was accepted by all. Sponsors came to help this committee they paid for bus, for petrol. On the representational figure, there began a hot discussion every one wanted a representation. The bus of the peace committee was brought with loudspeakers fitted into the bus and the eminent leaders would address the public at regular intervals and appeal would address the public at regular intervals and appeal to maintain law, order and peace in the city. As the members came out there were slogans of,

‘Long live Hindu Muslim Unity.’

And this was very shocking after such a blood sheed and communal riots, they were one again the harm was already done. Murad Ali who was instrumental in killing the Pig and creating problem in the town was sitting next to the driver raising slogans. Nathu was killed in the riots. Richard and Liza were discussing about all these affairs and whether Richard would be transferred and if it hardly made any difference for Liza.

Bhishan Sahni described the aftermath of the partition in Tamas in details. We find the refugees in worst condition. ‘Tamas’ is based on actual incidences witnessed by the writer himself. The writer has also suffered during partition. The novel is written in episodic manner. Atrocities done by Hindus and Muslims are mentioned in the novel.
without any discrimination. We find in ‘Tamas’ that it has no particular major character in the focus. The novel is full of riots killings rape, looting, stabling, death and destruction. ‘Tamas’ projects the ‘darkness’ in the political history of India.

People Leaving their homelands due to Partition
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