ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to study the moral vision of James Baldwin, a Black American writer with special reference to three of his novels, Go Tell It on the Mountain, Giovanni’s Room and Another Country.

The second chapter deals with Baldwin’s first autobiographical novel Go Tell It on the Mountain, where we can see the black experience of Christianity. The emotions are Baldwin’s own and the language is the very dialect spoken by the black American. It is the story of the conversion of John Grimes. The Negro remains a victim, the white man is the oppressor. For blacks, the world beyond the Harlem ghetto seems remote and dominated by the whites. The Church offered the only refuge from the brutality and degeneration of the Harlem ghetto. John Grimes becomes a believer by entering into a sanctuary that is protected from the outside world.

The Third chapter deals with his next novel Giovanni’s Room. Baldwin examines, homosexuality against the whites. When love fails, conventional ties of relationship fail and so men are forced to take refuge in homosexual relationship. Baldwin treats homosexuals as perverts who are bound to undergo the process of suffering and punishment. His protagonist David is a
bisexual white who lives with Giovanni. David’s girl friend Hella on discovering the homosexual relationship between David and Giovanni deserts David. Baldwin here critically evaluates the theme of friendship with the help of homosexuality.

In Another Country the problem of the constant conflict between the whites and blacks is discussed. Different kinds of people are contrasted between one another: black and white, male and female, married and unmarried, homosexuals, bisexuals and heterosexuals. Baldwin has exposed the cowardice of the whiteman who refuses to confront his role in enslaving the black Americans.

American society is shown to be both immoral and amoral in the context of racial problems. The people are torn apart, divided as the oppressor and the oppressed. These novels attempt to provide a moral code. The colour problem might provide the immediate background, but Baldwin examines the universal problem of the oppressor and the oppressed. In fact, Baldwin’s spiritual quest transcends the limitations of the social problems to discuss the questions of brotherhood and love in an egalitarian society. In this context it will be interesting to compare Indian society with its caste system,
the oppression of the lower caste by the higher caste. The feelings of the oppressed have to be assuaged as a therapy. Baldwin also discusses the themes of love and hate which arise as a result of conflict, due to colour, race, gender and nationality. The human psyche is a universal phenomenon in the contest of which James Baldwin’s call for another country can be glimpsed as an urgent message, necessary to our crisis ridden world.