

CHAPTER- 4

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“Partitioning two lives is difficult enough. Partitioning millions is madness.” (Chaturvedi, Dr. Roopesh, *The Partition of Indian Sub- continent* 39)

Literature has an undisputable significance in human life because it focuses on every matter and remains as a heritage for future generation can pass to its succeeding generation. It presents the social, political, communal, historical and cultural temperament of the society and people.

Many writers have presented their experiences of the Indian freedom movement in the form of novels, biographies, short stories etc. The pain, anguish, bloodshed, separation-all of those has been recorded by many literary legends and personalities. They have tried to expose the nature of selfish political leaders and their parties behind partition. Some writers suffered directly due to partition. Many of their novels are based on the insane butcheries committed in the name of caste, community and religion during or after partition. Partition was the darkest event in Indian History; it had shattered the happiness of Indians. Unity, brotherhood, and love for each other are the weapons which help India achieve its freedom and swept out the powerful reign of the British. Before partition our country was famous for its unity in diversity the Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and

Sikhs, lived here without any communal bias whatsoever but Partition left a permanent wound on the soul of the nation.

The freedom struggle had united the major communities of India but its ultimate result Partition shattered its broke the unity. There was a social and emotional integrity among the countrymen earlier but the partition of united India into two separate nations, India and Pakistan, created great hatred and bloodshed. Freedom did not come to India the way Gandhi and other great leaders had expected. Though the Congress tried to avoid partition it became inevitable due to the huge Hindu-Muslim massacre.

K.R.S.Iynger has rightly expressed,

The 'leaders' had sowed the wind of communal suspicion and partition was the result, like a whirlwind, the mad act of partition was uprooting masses of humanity, mangling them and throwing them across the border heap after heap. (*Cyber Literature: M. A. Jinnah and Partition 103*)

We can point out some prestigious novels based on the theme of partition like "*The Heart Divided*" by Mumtaz Navaz, "*Ice Candy Man*" by Bapsi Sidva, "*Clear light of Day*" by Anita Desai, "*Shadows of Time*" by Nigarmasroor, "*Train to Pakistan*" by Khuswant Singh, "*A Bend in the Ganges*" by Manohar Malgonkar, "*Azadi*" by Chaman Nahal and others.

The creation of the new nation called 'Pakistan', the sudden freedom, the transfer of power to the Indians and finally the painful partition of the peaceful land of Buddha and Mahatma

took place on the year 1947. Instead of rejoicing Independence, people were gripped with fear and terror. They had lost all their human values like love, sympathy, friendship etc. They had become aliens in their own home and country.

Communal riots and terror had reached the climax. People who were peacefully dwelling on borders began to leave their houses, lands, properties and relatives to save their lives, friends became foes over night, their love and sense of belongingness converted into hatred; killing, raping, looting and burning became the order of the day and mass migration like that of the Israelites in the old Testament take place. Radcliffe got the task of fixing the boundaries for the two separate nations India and Pakistan. He had to make a boundary that would divide a sub continent of more than 35 million people, who, despite religious varieties shared a common culture, language and history.

One of the most tragic problems of partition was to transfer the population.

The forty five mile of roadside from Lahore from to Amritsar along which so many passed became a long open grave yard....And every yard of the way.....there was a body. Some butchered some dead of Cholera. The vultures had become so bloated by their feasts they could no longer fly and the wild dogs so demanding in their taste they ate only the liver of the corpses littering the road.'(Chaturvedi, Dr. Roopesh.*The Partition of Indian Sub- continent* 39)

The emerging national political consciousness of Indians has been faithfully captured in the political fiction of Indian

Writers. When the nation was on the doorstep of new dawn, it also faced unparalleled demolition, blood-shed and agony. Famous partition writers Khuswant Singh and Chaman Nahal have successfully portrayed this irksome phase of our national history in their novels.

Like other writers of partition novels, Nahal was also unbiased while writing the novel *Azadi*, he never supported particular community. Lakhmir Singh in his article, '*Chaman Nahal: Azadi*' Wrote.

The novel in fact gives a picture of these riots in their totality, without presenting a Hindu or Muslims points of view. Nahal blames both the communities for losing their sense of balance and sainty.”(234)

The partition of the sub continent was the avenue of separating the two communities. Through political History many writers presented the causes behind the partition of India which includes the growing tension between both of the important parties i.e. the Congress and the Muslim League, the clash between Nehru and Jinnah, helplessness of Gandhi and insecurity felt by minor communities.

The Political leaders in the lust for power took the least care of loss and profit, friendship and enmity, grief and happiness of the sufferers of partition; they only focused on the geographical and the political boundaries, assets and other visible things. The bitter truth is that India achieved its freedom at the cost of huge human loss and pain. The partition was like

the betrayal of the common folk by the cruel, corrupt and inefficient government, politicians, officials and bureaucrats. When India gained its freedom from the British clutches in August 1947, it was divided into the Muslim dominated northern state of Pakistan and the Hindu predominated southern part the Republic of India. The Britishers who had come to India only for trade became its rulers. Though there were both blessings and curses of British rule, the intention of the Britishers was only to use the Indian assets but their methods were foul.

The Britishers neglected the Indian village administration which integrated agriculture and the manufacturing industry. British monarchism will be remembered as a dark period in Indian history because it ruined the society that was dwelling in peace with love. The Britishers have used the policy of 'divide and rule' for every aspect of human life. This policy sowed the seeds of enmity between the two major Indian communities i.e. Hindu and Muslims. Bill Davidson, a British sergeant who was against British rule had made the following comment on their rule in India in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*, "Local cultures had been destroyed everywhere. More so in India which had such a long History and Tradition." (*Azadi* 98)

Gradually, the young as well as the old generations realized and understood the real intentions of the Britishers behind each and every of their policy, and then little and great mutinies sprang against them and finally they realized that they would not be able to rule in India any more. The Lahore session of the

Muslim league was held in March 1940 under the president ship of Md. Ali Jinnah. The cabinet mission had mentioned the probability of the formation of Pakistan. The Communal riots started in North India from August 1946. The Muslims had made a volunteer organization known as Muslim National Guard and simultaneously to secure their religion and society the Hindu had created their own organization call the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sanghthan, RSS. In such crucial circumstances it was impossible for Britishers to continue to rule in India.

The Britishers have decided to transfer their powers into the hands of the Indian leaders in June 1948. In one of his letters to Ernest Bevin, in January 2, 1947, Attlee Clement confessed:

We have always governed India through the Indians. Without the tens of thousands of lesser functionaries we could not carry on. In a typical district of one or two million population it is quite common for there to be only one or two white officials....with the knowledge that the termination of British rule in India is not far off, how can you expect them not to look to the future? It would be quite impossibleFor a few hundred British to govern against the active opposition of the whole of the politically minded of the population. (web)

On June 3, 1947 Mountbatten announced that the date of transfer of power would be shifted from June 1947 to August 15, 1947. Attlee Government on eighteenth July passed a bill where he declared that two independent dominions shall be set up respectively known as India and Pakistan on 15th August 1947.

Chaman Nahal commenced his, Sahitya Academy and the Federation of Indian Publishers Award winning novel 'Azadi' begin from the exact date of 3rd June 1947 and deals with the anguish of partition on three main communities the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. It presents the huge massacre and the vast incursion of refugees spreading from the period of the announcement to its 'aftermath' and finally concluded with the murder of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948. D.R. Sharma in his work 'The Novels on the Indian partition' wrote: "Azadi, the mouthpiece of Chaman Nahal....Presents a brilliant close up of the profile of communal violence in Punjab." (15)

The Novel presents the traumatic experiences of the partition of the united India. The beauty of the novel lies in the balanced and unprejudiced picture of Hindu-Muslim-Sikh love and hatred, their emotional, social, cultural and political relationships. Paravati Rao's opinion regarding this is:

What makes Azadi memorable is the faithful, realistic and sincere documentation of the situation in the Punjab during the time of partition. Among the numerous partition novels in Indian English literature Azadi with all its structural and other flaws, is easily one of the most outstanding." (*IJELLH: The Impact of Partition on....384*)

Nahal got inspiration to write this Novel from his personal experience because he belonged to Sialkot at the time of partition.

In his autobiographical novel *Azadi* Nahal has remarked, '....A hymn to one's land of birth, rather than a realistic novel of the Partition.' (*IJELLH: Tyranny of Partition...174....*). He has portrayed the realistic picture of the partition by giving details of the political background and the effects of the partition on both the countries. While delineating the partition, he raised the cause, the process of the partition and the butchery of the political leaders with its effect on the people. Partition has changed the political ideology of both of the nations.

Azadi differs from most of the other partition novels in respect of canvas and unity of time, place and action. It has gathered unity of time and place. Its actions revolve around Sialkot and cover a period from 3rd June, 1947 to 30th Jan 1948. Before partition every countryman either Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or of any other community desperately waiting for the day when he can breathe quietly in the air of freedom because each and every Indian had paid something or the other to achieve India's freedom but the ambition of a few leaders, the ignorance of the common people, lack of communication, insecurity of minor communities in Hindu dominated country and most important of all the policies of the British had changed the real meaning of freedom.

When congress passed the Quit India resolution in 1942, Gandhi focusing on the unity of Indians, expressed:

The Hindus and Muslims would eventually come to a settlement between themselves. They had lived together in unity

when the British were not here; they would do the same again. And what other homeland these Muslims could have could claim but India? A majority of the Indian shock; they had emotional and sentimental ties with India which couldn't be snapped. If Pakistan was being claimed by the Muslims for an Islamic presence in India, that presence was already there. Could a decent Hindu disown his debt to Islam; Indian culture, such as it was today, was shaped by the Hindus and the Muslims both. No one in recent History had traveled so extensively in India that he could claim to know the very pulse anywhere which demanded separation of brother from brother, of community from community, it demanded unity. (*The Triumph of the Tricolour 15*)

Gandhi had always tried his best to unite the different communities, to diminish the hatred between them and whenever he got a chance to speak at the meeting of Congress or other nation movements he focused on unity and brotherhood. He loved Nehru as well as Jinnah. When he started a national strike against the Rowlett Act, he tried his best to show the positive activities of the Muslim emperors before the arrival of the English:

Many of the Muslims were even talking of emigrating from India and settling in Arabia or some other Muslim country. A Hindu may perhaps be happy to get rid of the Muslims. But he would be a stupid Hindu, an ignorant Hindu. For what would India be without Muslims! Talk not to me of the atrocities they committed upon the Hindus and the Sikhs. Given the chance, the Hindu would have committed as many atrocities upon them. Talk to me instead of the beauty they have brought to India, talk to me of their architecture, of the roads they laid, of the inns they built, of

the wells they dug, of the gardens the planted. And talk to me of the amalgamation of cultures which the best of the Muslim kings aimed at- in their own lives and in the life of the community.....Go and listen to a Muslim musician, if you doubt me. In all probability, he will be singing of the love of Radha and Krishna. (*The Crown and The Loincloth 140-141*)

Neither the speeches and fasts of Gandhi nor the melodious music could control the fire ignited by the English and others. Ultimately each and every effort of Gandhi to unite the two communities failed. *Azadi* presents a graphic picture of the partition experienced by the north Indians in 1947. Bhagwat Goyal says: "It deals with the political, social, economic, religious, psychological and cultural implications of 'Azadi' which India achieved in 1947." (Nahal's *Azadi* : A Review 124)

Apart from the Indian English partition novels, there are many Indian regional novels on the same theme. Hyder's *Aag Ka Darya* (River of the Fire), Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (The Skeleton), Bhishma Sahani's *Tamas* (The Dark) and a lot of other short stories deal with the same theme.

Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), the first novel written by a Muslim writer, is a heart touching novel on the theme of partition where she has presented the unexplained anguish of women during partition. It deals with the struggle of India for freedom and the ironic reward of this struggle.

It represents the hideous deeds of the communal riots and shows that the fight of the Indians against the English had

converted into a fight amongst themselves. It presents for the first time the Muslim point of view towards partition. The novel portrays a feeling of regret and grief because the original instinct for the partition came from the Muslims. Attia Hossain shows that the British had a great role in dividing India but they were not the only ones responsible for partition. The Indian freedom movement puzzled and misled when religion entered politics. The scenario grew crucial the vibrant dispute increased day by day. Jealous, disdain and the desire to demolish the other community became dominant. Manju Kapoor's debut and Commonwealth writer's Prize for Eurasian region winning novel, *Difficult Daughters* (1998) also in the series of partition novels, but instead of communal violence it focuses on the effects of the disturbance during the partition.

Khuswant Singh's most famous novel, *Train to Pakistan* originally entitled a *Mano Majra* is the first novel in English by an Indian writer about partition and has four sections- First is *Dacoity*, Second is *Kalyug*, Third is *Mano Majra* and last one is *Karma*. *Mano Majra* is a village where Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs live as brothers before partition but after partition it became the centre of communal hatred and violence. The novel presents the picture of terrible deeds committed on the border areas during the devastating days of the partition. It starts with the holocaust in the east and then provides the detailed scenario the madness of communal violence at the Indo-Pakistan Border in the North. The train loaded with corpses, their cremation and burial at the bank of river of Sutlej presents a horrible sight. The

people of peaceful Mano Majra then begin to believe on the theory of 'tit for tat' and the human killings and butchery started on both the sides of the borders.

Partition no doubt was a pointed decision but not an event in isolation for – it had repercussions on the lives of people as it resulted in geographical, economic and most important of all, emotional and psychological dislocation. (Singh, Veena: How difficult are...171).

Partition was the result of the communal suspicions sown by ambitious leaders who have the lust for power in their hearts. Dr. S. Chelliah, in his article writes:

In the nine months between August 1946 and the spring of the following year, between fourteen and sixteen million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to leave their homes and flee to safety from blood crazed mobs. In that same period over 6,00,000 of them were killed. But no, not just killed. If they were children, they were picked up by their feet and their heads smashed against the walls. If they were female children, they were rapped and then their breasts were chopped off. And if they were pregnant, they were disemboweled. (IJIRAH: Social and Moral 14)

It is not only the Indian writers who write partition novels. There are a few prominent writers from Pakistan also who wrote on the same theme. Mohumad Sipra's *Pawn to king Three* (1985) was the first partition novel by a Pakistani writer; it portrays the picture of a boy called Adan who lost his parents in the holocaust of partition massacres in Amritsar. The next novel is by a Parsi writer, who stands unbiased in her interpretation of the bloodshed of partition named Bapsi Sidhwa. She Wrote, *Ice*

Candy Man on the same theme and beautifully picturised the horrors she experienced at that cruel time. This novel was filmed by Deepa Mehta with the title *Earth*.

The other famous writer of Pakistan who wrote one of the best short stories about partition was Sadat Hassan Manto, who was compelled to migrate from Bombay to Lahore but unfortunately he died at the very young age of 43 of the despair of partition and his sensation *Dawn: 50 sketches and stories of partition* has a unique and important place in Pakistani literature.

A good number of literary works were written on the theme of partition but the present chapter deals only with the novel *Azadi* by Chaman Nahal. The novel begins with the announcement of partition by Mountbatten on 3rd June 1947. This is the point at which Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1962) ends. It seems that when Malgonkar left his novel, Nahal started to write. Ramamurthy has presented his opinion about Nahal's *Azadi* in his work *Azadi- point of view as Technique*'

.....are not only the socio-economic and humanistic implications of the tragic exodus of suffering millions from the lands of their birth but also the deep psyche disturbances and emotional transformation brought about by that traumatic experience in the inner lives of individual men and women. (131)

The Novel *Azadi* is divided in three parts-Lull, Storm and Aftermath. Nahal uses the word *Azadi* as the title in a satiric way because it means freedom but no character of the novel felt like

celebrating because it brought neither joy nor the sense of freedom but lots of killing, raping and looting instead.

Lala Kanshi Ram, the leading character in the novel becomes a mouthpiece of the victims who are deeply broken by the political events. He was a well established grain merchant in a Muslim Majority city, Sialkot. He was leading a happy life with his illiterate but a great life-long soul-mate, Prabha Rani, whom he tries to educate, his son Arun and a married daughter Madhubala. All the Hindus and Muslims live happily in Sialkot before the declaration of partition. There are almost four or five Sikh families who live as tenants of Bibi Amarvati. Lala Kanshi Ram has no interest in Politics but is deeply affected by Arya Samaj and Mahatma Gandhi. He knows Hindi, Sanskrit and Punjabi but is always comfortable with Urdu. While he had a disdainful attitude towards the British people and their government he admires their discipline and working attitude.

What mattered to Lala Kanshi Ram was the precision of the British Raj, which was seen in as small as act as the killing of a stray dog. No wonder they ruled the world over, no wonder, he said to himself. There indeed was no Raj like the Angrez Raj. (AZADI 27).

As millions of common people he also fears the division of the nation and his faith in Gandhi's oath looks shaken. He says to his wife- “

I am worried about the announcement the viceroy might make.”

‘... And you know these English; they would rather divide than leave behind a united India.’

‘Everything will be ruined if Pakistan is created.’ (AZADI 34-35)

Lala was very frightened when he realized the hurry of the English to leave India and was confused by their plan to hand over power to any constituted authority.

But why were they in a hurry to leave? And why this reference to freedom in the plural? Didn't that mean they were thinking of Pakistan? And the congress leaders what trust could you put in them? Didn't Gandhi ji and Raja ji themselves as much as offer Pakistan to Jinnah in 1944? (AZADI 35)

Jinnah was the leader of Muslim League and first appeared in Nahal's novel, *The Salt of Life* and his role in partition is totally dependent on his relationship with the leaders of the Congress.

It was Jinnah who requested the British to provide the Muslims a separate Muslim country if they wanted to restore peace and happiness to the republic of India. Jinnah's demand for Pakistan was presented by Nahal through the character of Muzaffer Ahmed in his novel, *The Salt of Life*. When he said to Sunil, the great follower of Gandhi

The two-year Congress rule in many of the provinces, from 1937-1939, had convinced the Muslims of the totalitarian intent of the Hindus. The Congress rituals were all essentially Hindu rituals and the Muslim consciousness had been asphyxiated in the provinces ruled by the Congress. The act of 1935 was a blessing in disguise for the Muslims. It had shown them how the Congress would operate in a free India. Hence the Muslim League's demand

for Pakistan- a separate sovereign state for the Muslims. At Lahore in 1940, and now in Madras, the League had passed clear resolutions to this effect, and under the able leadership of Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah they would Insha-Allah see the Muslims of India got justice at the hands of British. He had been sent by the Quad-e-Azam personally to seek their collaboration. The Congress and the League should together work towards freedom. But towards the evolution of Hindustan and the evolution of Pakistan. (*The Salt of Life 488*)

Lala's terror represented that he put the blame for the partition mainly on Jinnah, Nehru, Baldev Singh, Rajaji and Kripalani, it was Gandhi and Raja ji who were responsible for bringing Jinnah into limelight.

Until then Jinnah had talked of Pakistan but he did not quite know what he meant by it. Gandhi by going to him not only gave Pakistan a name; he gave Jinnah a name too. Who took Jinnah seriously before September 1944? (*Azadi 35*)

On 4th of June 1947 when Mountbatten declared the possible date of India's independence as 15th August he suggested the leaders of both political parties tackle the problem before independence. Gandhi neither supported the plan of partition nor opposed it openly. The announcement on Radio was remarkable for every citizen because everyone was desperately waiting for it; "The speech was in English.....Arun had understood it all only too well, and in a shaken voice he said "Partition!" (*Azadi 54*)

The viceroy said that nineteen hundred and forty seven two independent countries shall be put in India, known as India and Pakistan. This announcement filled the life of many people with darkness. The Viceroy's speech was followed by that of Nehru "acting as a Prime Minister of the interim government since 1946, and his voice had boomed on the air many times in the last nine months. Yet never before had he sounded so tired." (*Azadi* 55) Nehru had failed to win the trust and sympathy of the people. When the radio was switched off people of the room commented,

...have partition if there is no other way, have it that way – we're willing to make sacrifices.....Had he gone mad? Didn't he know his people? Didn't he know the Muslims? And why the partition in the first place? What of your promises to us... (*Azadi* 56).

It seems that many Hindus who wished that they would be able to live in Pakistan were either innocent or ignored. Lala still hoped that they could live in Sialkot as earlier, but then gradually he witnessed the real picture of partition. The creation of Pakistan save a lot of happiness to the Muslims and suddenly the nice atmosphere of Sialkot was converted into that of hatred and bloodshed.

Muslims started celebrating their victory of getting Pakistan by cracking huge fire crackers and by staging processions. They started to show open hatred because Sialkot was a Muslim major city and Hindus felt insecure. Nahal has described a scene of a procession and presented the terror of Muslims in the Hindu Mohalla.

The procession came down Trunk Bazaar, and stopped outside the eastern entrance to the street. It was a wild sight. The mob was in a transport which exceeded pain or hysteria. As far as you could see, the Bazaar was a sea of heads. They were split into many small groups, and before each group here were two or three drummers.....many of them were dancing the Bhangra, the Punjab dance of victory... And together they shouted," Pakistan Zindabad long live Pakistan. (*Azadi* 61,62).

Due to the terror of the procession all the tenants of Bibi Amarvati was gathered on the roof top and denied to open the gate. When the Deputy Commissioner arrived, he handled the situation and expressed the thoughts about partition:

How do you cut a country in two, where at every level the communities were so deeply mixed? There was a Muslim in every corner of India where there was a Hindu..... Pakistan wouldn't solve the problem of a minority; it was going to create new minorities- Minorities which would be hounded out with a vengeance. (*Azadi* 72)

The Muslims freely looted and killed the minority Hindus and Sikhs. The minority people had to flee from their place to save their lives. Partition affects psychologically and emotionally as it had affected the pious love relationship of Hindu Arun and Muslim Nur the daughter of Lala Kanshi Ram's best friend Chaudhari Barkat Ali.

Their classmates had long known of their romance but after the announcement of Pakistan they had become suspects. He was now a 'Hindu' by carrying on with a 'Muslim' girl. And the

Muslim boys in the college stood watching them menacingly.
(*Azadi* 76)

Mohan Jha in his book *Chaman Nahal's Azadi; a search for identity* observes

.... In the flush of his youthful romance Arun could have elected to go in for Nur in preference to his parents but the communal holocaust suddenly makes 'a man' of him and he chooses to share the joys and sorrows of life with his parents.(40)

The gift of freedom to Arun, a school boy was to get separation from his first love Nur and lost his childhood and school friends, for Lala Kanshi Ram to left his whole life's outcome i.e. his land, house, shop, friends, reputations. While Muslims celebrated their victory of becoming a new country for them in the map of world, the Hindu and Sikhs felt like aliens in their own native place Sialkot and thought of saving himself against the impending attacks of the furious and militant Muslim mob.

....The cry of the new state, the name of Pakistan shouted repeatedly before him as insult, had split Arun Asunder. He knows the conspiracy of politicians behind the whole move. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali khan were coming into are estate; as was Nehru. Why else would they rush into Azadi at this pace- An Azadi which would ruin the land and destroy its unity? For the creation of Pakistan solved nothing. One would have to go around with tweezers through all the villages to separate the Muslims from the Hindus. Arun knew this, the game of which he and Nur and million

like them were only victims. But politicians gave ideas legs, even though they were the wrong kind of ideas. (*Azadi* 81)

After the announcement of partition, killing the Hindus and the Sikhs everyday had become the routine for Muslims. These people were trapped in their houses and it had become a herculean task for them to even earn their bread because their close Muslim friends had abruptly turned into enemies.

.....There were four or five cases of stabbing each day, and at least four or five fires. It was a mass killing or organized killing –not yet” (*Azadi* 105). The scene of Sialkot looked terrible, every night became more horrible for minors; “the fires were started in the night, and the four fire engines the city had were kept rushing from one fire to the next. More than murders it was fires that were frightening and demoralizing.....a red glow of death, which slowly spread out and became more menacing when the smoke came up. (*Azadi* 106)

The hatred between Hindus and Muslims during partition can be easily understood by the conversation between Abdul Ghani, a shopkeeper in Sialkot and Lala Kanshi Ram when he force Lala to give up Sialkot;

Why do you want me to leave?’said Lala Kanshi Ram. ‘We have been good friends-for years we have been such good friends’

I want you to leave because you’re a Hindu, and you don’t believe in Allah.’ (*Azadi* 112)

Gradually the life of the Hindus and the Sikhs become miserable in Sialkot, friends became foes, people lost their means of survive, it was hard to keep body and soul together,

then people started to take shelter in ‘refugee camps’ set up by the government. Lala ji had never expected such a day, but when the Muslims looted his shop then he realized that Muslims will never accept them in Sialkot. Despite their concern and attachment they were forced to migrate. All the Hindus and Sikhs were compelled under the horrible circumstances to give up their houses. Lala ji was not ready to leave his place but by persuasion of Arun and Barkat Ali, he started to move to Refugee camp. Barkat Ali Khan was Lala’s bosom friend. Both of them respected non-violence and Gandhi, wore homespun khadi and cotton shirts. Barkat Ali informed to Lala Kanshi Ram:

...either the Congress Muslims were a fraud to begin with, or they have changed sides. I’m afraid there is no organized body of Muslims denouncing what is happening in the city.....But it is of no avail; the poison had stepped in. added to the fact that every day hundreds of refugees from India continue to arrive with tales of terror and disgust. Whatever is happening here in Sialkot, things very much like that are happening on the other side too-let’s not make no mistake about it. It is not the collapse of Congress Muslims in Pakistan; apparently it is the collapse of Congress Hindu in India also. When refugees with stories of personal misfortunes land here, the politicians use them to their advantages to fan up further hatred. (*Azadi* 117,118).

Finally Lala left Sialkot and entered in the refugee camp where he faced the real communal violence. Partition is a bitter catastrophe for Lala ji and he accepts the necessity of migration

when his old and faithful friend, his practical son forced him to do so.

The government had made arrangements to transport minor Hindus in India and minor Muslim in their new country Pakistan. Either they were airlifted or were shifted by trains and foot convoys but after 15th August the new governments did not care about their basic needs and security. All the refugees had to survive on only the dry ration supplied by the government. The shortest way from Sialkot to India was through Jammu & Kashmir but from the first day to till today it is the bone of contention between the two countries and at the time of partition this route was closed for civilians and the refugees had to come from Sialkot to Dera Baba Nanak, by a foot convoy.

After entering the refugee camp the first shocking news Lala Kanshi Ram got was that his loving daughter Madhu and son in law Rajiv were killed in a train massacre. It was unbelievable for Lala and Prabha Rani to believe the unexpected and premature death of his daughter and son in law. To confirm the news he sent his son, Arun and Suraj Prakash, the son of Bibi Amarvati to the station where Arun came to know that Abdul Ghani, his neighbor with whom Arun used to spend his time in Sialkot and who was like a caring uncle for him, had killed Madhu and her husband.

so there was utter harmony among them, and the fact that Ghani was a Muslim and Lala Kanshi Ram a high caste Hindu

snever entered their heads. They spoke a common tongue, wore identical clothes....(*Azadi* 46, 47)

Abdul Ghani after partition had then become an enemy of Lala Kanshi and when Arun came to the railway station with Barkat Ali, Abdul Ghani said,

‘I’ m one of the khaksar volunteers, sir, helping to keep our city clean by cremating the kafir dead.’ And cynically, showing his teeth which lit up easily in the light of fire he said to Arun; ‘who told you your sister was killed, my boy? But don’t worry. I put her and her husband into the fire with my own hands, and they are now on their way to Dozakh, to hell where I hope they rot for every!’ He made no effort to disguise his venom. (*Azadi* 155)

As there is autobiographical touch in this novel Nahal narrates his pain of losing his real sister Kartar Devi during partition, through the character of Madhu.

During the communal riots in the wake of partition, his sister Kartar Devi consider staying in wazirabad is not safe and along with her husband tried to reach us in Sialkot but the train in which they were travelling was stopped along the way by a hostile mob and they were both cruelly murdered, as were hundreds of other on the train. (*Azadi* 14)

Violence spread on both sides of the country, as depicted in Khushwant Singh’s novel *Train to Pakistan*- a group of youngsters attack the Muslims and takes away their belongings and property, lootes their business and burns their houses in the same way, the Muslims burnt and looted the Hindus and Sikhs in Sialkot. This fact was justified by Chaudhari Barkat Ali when he

informed the Lala that the situations were similar in both countries.

Lala who was so extrovert and social before partition had now totally changed. He had now become a pure introvert, and analyzed the situation of the refugee camp as follows:

What the leaders of India offering the people of the Punjab was an enormous bluff, he felt. They had neither the power nor the intention of maintaining the minorities in their homes; they had not the power of saving their lives. They should have devised means of mass migration to begin with, before rushing to partition. Now they should at least keep their mouths shut and not mislead the poor, credulous people. Jinnah and Nehru were villains enough. ...Kripalani was the worst offender. More than the others, it was he who so loud about the minorities staying where they were. (Azadi 177, 178)

It shows the pathetic condition of the minorities on both the sides of the border. There were millions like Lala Kanshi Ram who suffered the pain of separation without having committed any mistake. It was the common masses who faced the horrors of partition; “The two new governments were parties to fratricidal war, and how could unarmed men and women withstand organized slaughters?” (Azadi 178).

Nahal had projected the scene of Boundary Commission beautifully. Sir Cyril Redcliffe, the British Commissioner had given the charge to divide the country geographically in two parts within five weeks. On 17th of August the Boundary Commission's award was announced.

After the Boundary Commission's award was announced on the seventeenth of August, everyone knew where he stood-on a part of Pakistan or in India. Violence in the Punjab reached an unprecedented pitch after the announcement of the award. Both sides felt they have been shabbily treated. The Sikhs were angry to lose fertile lands in Montgomery area; much to their surprise, the boundary line, but for a small sector along the river Ravi was drawn along the Sutlej River. The Muslims were aggrieved over the award of the sections of Gurdaspur district to India, which gave India a contagious border with Kashmir state. (*Azadi* 180)

When the Hindus and the Sikhs were staying in refugee camps Arun underwent a psychological trauma after meeting one of his old classmates Rahmat Ullah Khan who had become an army officer. Being an old friend Arun had positive thoughts about him and Rahmat also treated Arun nicely, but partition had injected its venom in their friendship too. One day when he asked Arun to bring Sunanda, a beautiful Hindu married lady, to his bed, Arun could make out the reason of his nice behavior. After facing a lot of misfortunes and tragedies the refugees leave for the next destination, Dera Baba Nanak, the border town on the Indian side nearly about forty seven miles from Sialkot. The foot convoy had to face a heaps of problems everyday.

In each village they passed, they found the remains of parties that had been attacked and butchered. In many cases, the dismembered human limbs and skeletons were still lying there and the stench was intolerable. And they saw only bearded Muslim faces in these villages. The Hindu population had been completely driven out or completely exterminated. Hindu and Shikh places on worship had obviously been defiled, because outside of them there

were obscene words written in Urdu. When at a few of the places, the Indian officers enquired if there were Hindu families there, the bearded Muslims smiled insolently and said: 'look for yourself.(*Azadi* 238)

While the convoy was staying at Narowal, the biggest misfortune-befell them. A huge Muslim group attacked on the camp. The terrified refugees scattered and hid themselves under trees or in the open fields. Nahal has presented the massacre of the garden, where the refugees had hid themselves, very lively.

in the gardens, which ran over a mile by the side of the road, dead bodies were lying allover; there were bodies on the road as well.....most of the dead fully dressed. Only a few women lay with their breasts exposed, with a dead chila next to the breast. Most of the children lay with their faces downward. The men lay on their backs or on their sides, their mouths open. (*Azadi* 241).

Lala while moving forward came to know that Dr. Chander Bhan, who had brought the news of Madhu's death was him also killed by the Muslims and his wife and two daughters were captured by them.

Partition had created a huge wall between the psyche of the Hindus and the Muslims. It was hard for the Hindus and the Sikhs to survive in the camp with their religions so they had to perform many rituals against their religion. Niranjan Singh, husband of pregnant Isher Kaur committed suicide but didn't cut his long hair even when he knew that his wife needed him most in such a crucial situation:

‘Think of me,’ said Isher Kaur

‘You know what our dharma says:

Lose your nhead, if need be

Don’t lose your Sikh faith!’ (*Azadi 207*)

When Bibi Amar Vati told her husband, Gangu Mull to join them in the foot convoy he refused but as he couldn’t live with his Hindu religion so he readily accepted Islam and even changed his name from Gangu Mull to Ghulam Muhammad to continue living in Pakistan. As the convoy moved forward, situations became the most crucial.

Partition had destroyed the feelings of the people. They had lost respect and humanity and behaved like animals. They had no fear of God in their hearts. The communal differences, bloodshed and hatred were at its peak. Both the countries were committing crime in the name of religion. The blind killings, lootings, rapings had converted the boundries in red due to bloodshed. The seeds of hatred were sown so deep that we feel the effect of it even today.

Though everyone had suffered due to partition but women suffered the most because they underwent the worst abuse and maltreatment. At the time of partition they were treated worse than animals, they were kidnapped, raped and forcefully converted to other religion and were finally sold in the markets for prostitution.

A number of abducted Hindu and Sikh women were in their custody. Many of the kidnapped women disappeared into private homes. A lone Muslim dragged a woman away and kept her for his own exclusive use or he took her with the consent of other Muslims converted her to Islam, and got married to her. The rest were subjected to mass rape at times in public places and in the presence of large gatherings. The rape was followed by other atrocities, chopping off the breasts and even death. Many of the pregnant women had their wombs torn open. The survivors were retained for repeated rapes and humiliations, until they were parceled out to decrepit wrecks- the aged, the leftovers who couldn't find a wife, or those Muslims who wanted an additional wife. In the mean time all over again. (*Azadi* 246, 247)

At Narowal a heart breaking news reached Suraj Prakash and Arun that a women's naked parade was organized by Muslims in the market. All the women in this procession were Hindus and Sikhs who were kidnapped by the Muslims. The procession expressed the height of hatred, communal prejudices, moral debasement and cruelty of Muslims towards the Hindus and the Sikhs. Nahal has picturized the pathetic act in a realistic way: Gundur in his work, '*Partition and Indian English Fiction*' Quotes,

The victims of the partition were neither Muslims nor Hindu nor Sikhs but women of all these communities. Women were put to death, nakedly paraded in public, raped, abducted and forced to prostitution. (192)

The administration knew about such parades but it did not interfere in such events. The news of the parade had shaken the

refugees. When we read the novel we feel the unsaid painful story of women, because Nahal had so beautifully described the torn spirit of the women of the procession.

They were all stark naked. Their heads were completely shaven; so were their armpits... The women walked awkwardly, looking only at the ground. They were all crying, through their, eyes shed no tears. Their faces were formed into grimaces and they were sobbing. Their faces were free, but so badly had they been used, so wholly their spirits crushed, their morale shattered none of them make any attempt to cover themselves with their hands'.(Azadi 249)

K.K.Sharma and B.K.Joshi in his book *The Epic and Psychological Delineation* commented on Nahal's realistic picture of the horrible scenes of unbelievable communal violence, "Azadi portrays vividly the horrors of the partition, the colossal violence that still haunts the Indian psyche." (89)The narration, the words used by the writer to present the condition of the women make the reader cry, it is his narrative skills that have made his scenes realistic and picturesque.

The procession moved through the bazaar and along with the procession moved a river of obscenities- foul abuses, crude personal gestures, spurts of sputum, odd articles like small coins, faded flowers, cigarette butts and bidis that were thrown at the women. As soon as the women came near, that section of crowd become hysterical. 'Rape them, Put it inside of them' 'the filthy Hindu bitches' 'The Kafir women.' Some said worse things. Then came the shower of spittle. Almost everyone spat and hundreds of tongues were pushed forward inside

of their teeth and hundreds of lips twisted into ugly openings and hundreds of uplifted faces canon-like fired the saliva. (*Azadi* 250)

Religion is like a tree, having branches like peace, brotherhood, respect, humanity, sense of belongingness love and non-violence but partition had converted these branches into hatred, jealousy and insecurity instead of brotherhood. People are now stood with guns, swords and knives to cut the throat of the people of other religious groups. S.Bhagwat in his article *Nahal's Azadi; A Review* commented,

Religion which is supported to be an embodiment of human and spiritual values, became an instrument of hatred, rapiousness, evil, exploitation, sadism, torture, murder, rape and wholesale destruction. (124)

Arun was a school going boy but partition had snatched his childhood. It was seen that at his small age he had started behaving like an adult. Partition had snatched his emotional support and badly torn his heart. First he lost his childhood love, Nur, daughter of Barkat Ali, and then his sister who were also like a friend to him. Finally they reached Narowal, where two tragic incidents occured. Arun killed Rahmat Ullah Khan, for he had raped Sunanda and he also lost Chandni, his love. Suraj Prakash, Sunanda's husband was stabbed to death.

Suraj Prakash's body was found later in the day. He was stabbed through the abdomen; his face was also mutilated- both his eyes were taken out. More than two thousand bodies were discovered that day, so savage had been the vengeance, every single body had been badly mutilated.' (*Azadi* 266)

From Narowal the convoy moved to Dera Baba Nanak and after crossing the Ravi River and entered in the Indian Territory. Finally they had reached Amritsar, in India their motherland and felt secured. Lala shouted in a satisfactory and loud voice, 'Vandemataram'. Prabha Rani and many others picked up the soil and rubbed it on their foreheads. Many others bathed in the Ravi River to purify themselves.

Finally when they reached Amritsar, every one visited their relatives who offered tea and food but none offered them shelter. No Hindu or Sikh in India was ready to accept their relatives. The refugees felt like aliens in India too. They only got smiling faces and words for their welcome. They said that they were happy for having safely arrived in India. Even the government did not provide them the necessary facilities for survival;

If they had imagined their troubles would be over the moment they reached Indian Territory, they were disillusioned. Not only were the arrangements to house and feed the refugees inadequate, their very presence was resented by the local people. Their number had exceeded all the expectations and the food was running short.'(Azadi 274)

The condition of Amritsar was just like any city of Pakistan

The city looked as if it had been bombed from the air. Not a building in Hall Bazaar, the main through fare of the city, stood intact; they were in total ruin. The roofs were gone the window frames burned out, they walls collapsed. And this continued block after block, and bazaar after bazaar, charred and blacked walls, and

heaps of rubbish of what must have been impressive, many storeyed buildings. These were the houses of the Muslims, who had now been driven out. (*Azadi* 274)

The scene of Amritsar railway station has been presented in a very rustic way by the writer in his novel. Lala Kanshi Ram was waiting on the railway station. He heard the passer by saying: “They are taking out a procession of Muslim women through the bazaar” was the saucy reply. He spoke as if this was the routine here; he showed neither surprise, nor curiosity.” (*Azadi* 274) Looting, killing and destroying the property were common in both the nations during partition. As the Muslims were ruining the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan similiarly the Hindus and the Shikhs were devastating the properties and lives of the Muslims in India.

The situations were pathetic in both the countries, even the scenes of cities; villages and railway stations were similiar in both India and Pakistan.

It was a train carrying Muslim refugees to Pakistan; it had been stopped at the signals outside of Amritsar, when the Muslims were massacred..... The platform was recently washed but patches of blood were on its floor everywhere. Indian soldiers stood guard with machine guns, but they were only a façade- like their counterparts in Pakistan. They had failed to protect the Muslims. (*Azadi* 275)

Lala ji told his wife that he couldn't hate Muslims anymore even when he knew that he can't get his daughter back.

“What I mean is, whatever the Muslims did to us in Pakistan, we’re doing it to them here!”(*Azadi* 284)

In explaining the incidents of trains, Khuswant Singh in his famous novel “*Train to Pakistan*” wrote that Sikhs attacked and killed the Muslim refugee passengers train and sent it across the border with the thousands of corpses and wrote ‘Gift to Pakistan’ on the engine of the train. Indians received a similar gift from Pakistan too. When Lala Kanshi Ram and others reached Delhi in the hope that they might get proper facilities and means of survival there, they felt very disappointed. “He saw unfriendly faces on the platform. It was difficult for him to find a porter to carry his luggage. The porters knew these refugees did not have much money on them.”(*Azadi* 285)

In Delhi Lalaji tried very hard to get an apartment and a shop for survival. He said to the officer,

Sir, I’ll be ruined if you don’t come to my rescue. I only want a small flat and a small little shop to be allotted to me.... From those Muslims left behind. Refugee property... there were three hundred thousand Muslims in Delhi and most of them had gone. We too have left property back in Pakistan. (*Azadi* 287).

There were many refugees who didn’t get any shelter in India too and the government and those powerful leaders could never understand their pain. After a lot of negotiations, by facing a lot of humiliation and disgrace Lala Kanshi Ram was a successful in a brick hutment in the Kingsway camp on Alipur road. It was no less than a heaven for his family. “After about

four months of irregular living under canvas, they found this a luxury.”(*Azadi* 297).

Gradually situations started settling down in Delhi. Like other refugees Lala also had lots of wounds of partition in his heart and they all expected that the first Prime Minister of India, Jawahar Lal Nehru would definitely sort out their problems, so they visited his residence;

There was a huge crowd outside Nehru’s residence. The police would allow no one in. he waited for hours. Many in the crowd were shouting slogans. It was no organized demonstration; each man stood only for himself. it was easy for the police to resist such a crowd and they did not open the gate. Later it transpired Nehru was out of Delhi that day....They ‘re liars, said Lala Kanshi Ram to himself, for he saw cars going in and out of the gate constantly. A shining limousine would draw up the gate was swung open....(*Azadi* 290).

Through this statement Nahal wants to reveal his hatred towards the leaders who committed such a hideous crime of dividing the country. The last part of the novel is *Aftermath*, which deals with the assassination of the historical hero of *The Gandhi Quartet*, Mahatma Gandhi.

They were playing devotional songs over the All India Radio. A news bulletin came on and it confirmed what the man had told him. It said that Gandhi ji that evening had died at the hands of an assassin. He was walking to the prayer meeting from his room in Birla House; when a man approached him and fired three shots. Gandhiji’s last words were ‘Hey Rama’ before he fell. The assassin, the announcement said, was a Hindu to remove any misgivings, it was repeated the assassin was not a member of a minority community. (*Azadi* 303, 304)

People had hatred and anger in their minds for him; it is justified by the conversation between Bibi Amar Vati and Prabha Rani: “Have you heard? Gandhiji has been shot dead.’.....’it is good he is. He ruined us,’ said Bibi Amar Vati.” (*Azadi* 303)

Even Lala Kanshi Ram who respected and thought Gandhito be his ideal, when he heard this news didn’t react very much “....paid no serious attention to it, though a part of his mind said, wake up, these are good words. Gandhiji was dead-fully dead, completely dead. He found anything after that irrelevant and insignificant.”(*Azadi* 304) It was the impact of partition that people forgot their goodness; they were now filled with venom for the political leaders. The whole family however paid respect towards the Father of the Nation by not eating their food and by mourning over his death.

The adages ‘Change is the law of nature’ and ‘Time heals the scars’, came true for Lala Kanshi Ram and the other refugees. Though they could never forget the pain which they had felt, they slowly tried to adjust and make themselves busy in their new lives in Delhi. Basavaraj Naikar says,

All of them suffer from a sort of existential loneliness.... Displacement, loss of land, home, roots, friends and relatives, death of his daughter and so on have awakened in him(Lala) the deep seated Hindu philosophical feeling Vairagya or detachment... Kanshi Ram experiences the essential spiritual loneliness of man. (*The Trauma of Partition* 59)

After the process of partition and resettlement of the refugees a survey was made to check as to how much property was left by the Hindus and the Sikhs in every part of the new nation, Pakistan and it was entitled 'After Partition' by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The statistics revealed that:

.....The amount of loss incurred by the refugees as a result of migration from Western Pakistan to India, that in Delhi alone up to July 22, 1948, over 94,364 claims were registered with the Registrar of claims. The registered value of 66,583 claims from out of these, so far consolidated comes to Rs. 806 crores.”²¹ The refugees have not only faced the material loss but psychological and emotional loss also. Rama Jha in his review said, “Lala Kanshi Ram whose experiences symbolize the soreness and sufferings of the millions affected by the partition. (*Azadi* 22)

Lala Kanshi Ram realized that only compassion, communal harmony and sympathy might provide him peace at heart. O.P.Mathur has rightly observed Lala's conditions and said that

....takes a stance which clearly demonstrates his freedom from commitment to anything except love compassion, tolerance and forgiveness, in a word, 'freedom of spirit and mind' which alone makes political differences of religion peel off and reveal the essential humanity of man and idiocy of the evil that seeks to raise artificial walls of hatred between one human being and another” (*academic research journals: political turbulence* 126)

Though the whole novel has presented the holocaust of partition but Chaman Nahal has summed up his novel with a ray

of positive hope when the hero, Lala Kanshi Ram adjusted himself in the new city Delhi and Arun resumed his college. Asha Kaushik in her book *Politics, Aesthetics and culture: A study of Indo Anglican Political Novel*. remarks that

....although beginning on a note of ambivalence and uncertainties of national integrity in the face of religious fanaticism, moral degradation and political fragmentation, Azadi closes with the affirmation that a nation... our lives even annihilating tragedies. 24

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