CHAPTER 6

Novels of Splendour

Three novels, Seven Summers (1951), Morning Face (1968) and Confession of a Lover (1976) will be discussed in this chapter.

'Happiness will revenge,
Upon past miseries.'

The shadows of pessimism which were so overpowering in Anand's earlier fiction have yielded place to the splendours of hope in these novels which are autobiographical and deal with what Anand calls the 'Seven Ages of Man'. They penetrate deep into the human soul and reveal those sublime areas of human consciousness which make life worth living in this world. Anand here goes on to re-create his own life, and in a broader sense, the life of a whole generation in these autobiographical narratives which are a part of an ambitious project entitled the 'Seven Ages of Man'.

Anand has said, 'With 'Seven Ages of Man' begins to appear insights, the piling-up of which makes a man truly human in so far as it may give wisdom of the heart as well as enlightenment from which may come Karuna, compassion, or pity or love.'

In these three confessional novels Anand emerges as an altogether different artist. He abandons the social conflicts of his earlier novels and seems to enunciate the meaning of life by encompassing the whole gamut of human relationship from birth to death, drawing from his own experience. This series is so broad in conception that in its epic swell 'signs, symbols, sounds,
words (are to) become the vibrations of the rough rhythms that are going through the universe. And alliance with the cosmos in all its multifarious miscellaneous absurdities, beauties and tenderness, even cruelties is possible. Anand tackles the difficult problem of using the felt experience of one person to represent the felt experiences of many persons in these novels and achieves remarkable success.

A sense of wonder, zest for life, compassion and the will to assert one's individuality and love for art and poetry are among the main traits of Anand's conception of 'Splendours'. Splendour manifests itself in man's indomitable will which he has derived from the forces of nature; in the desire to probe the mysteries of the unknown; in the earnestness to reveal the secrets of the universe; and in the compassion for the poor and the weak.

Hulk Raj Anand has built up the entire edifice of these novels on the foundations of his firm conviction that 'an autobiography is a personal thing and idiosyncratic of one eccentric individual. I think the life of any one of us may have some bearing in terms of other lives, as well. And especially for India where the novel...is a new form, it was important to try and slightly impersonalize the character so that I could look at him as a character with certain vigilence which would prevent self-adulation and self-pity and all things which happen to writers of autobiographies. I feel that the first-person singular form is important because in that the felt experience comes in with more immediacy than in the third-person singular.'
In these novels the hero is Krishan Chand, whose development is traced from birth through infancy and adolescence spent at home and abroad. The hero is absorbed in his 'ghaan-maon', indicating his inner turmoil and torments of growth against the hallenges of the outside world. These novels in which the narrator as the hero himself, record his progress from innocence to experience, revealing a process in which the inner life of our people is symbolized in the story of an individual who is an archetypal human being, wishing to inherit not only a regional culture but the meaning of forces which have shaped the destiny of man in our times. The use of the first person may create the impression that they are Anand's autobiography fictionalized, but they are actually autobiographical novels which show many departures from the author's own personality and experiences. They owe everything to his imagination in the reconstruction of the different phases of wariness of the hero-anti-hero.

Anand appears to have been influenced by Joyce in writing his series, but as he has himself pointed out, there can be no question of imitation:

'I went away from *The Portrait of the Artist as a young man* (instinctively) to the kind of method that Joyce had employed in *Stephen Hero*, which is simpler but more integral to Ireland at the time... as to India of the time of my hero Krishan. *Stephen Dedalus in the Portrait*...is much more abstract.'4

Dr Marlene Fisher elucidating why Anand chose to write these autobiographical novels, observes:

"His chief effort here is not to use fiction as self-
analysis or as an excuse to probe the unfolding of his own identity. Rather, in the 'Seven Ages of Man' the search is for human minima. It is not certainties he grapples with, but hunches...doubts...the direction towards becoming. The urges for freedom on all planes are the main motive force. The context is the whole life, the trauma of birth, innocence, experience of evil and good,...the struggle to mirror struggle itself in books which may be more than oneself."

Seven Sundays

The publication of this novel in 1951, amidst works of social protest, perhaps indicates the first flowering of the author's determination to portray the whole man and the whole gamut of human relationships in his writings through a series of autobiographical novels. This novel as the author says deals with 'the first seven years of my own half unconscious and half conscious childhood.' This roughly covers the period from three to seven years of Anand's life, that is, from 1908 to 1914. The models on which this work is based, are Tolstoy's Childhood, Boyhood and Youth (1912) and Gorki's My Childhood (1915). Anand comes closer to Tolstoy in shaping the narrative of the book. Like him Anand too has a remarkable capacity for wonder which enables him to look back on his childhood with vividness, and see the world with a child's point of view. He has encompassed the entire range of a child's feelings in the impassioned narrative of this book. Like Tolstoy he represents the vivid impressions of his childhood, his earliest recollections dating back to the age of three. The book is the product of the author's intense
urge to write about himself and reveal the inner life he lived during his childhood. Anand regards it as his major work.  Walter Allen believes: "Of all his works I know Seven Summers seems to be the best." Dr. Krishna Nandan Sinha, impressed by its excellence remarks: "Its excellence lies in the personal intensity, in the purity and immediacy with which the author records the experiences dimmed by the passage of time." The book is divided into two parts, 'The Road' and 'The River'. The titles have symbolic significance. The perennial nature of the Road and the River signify the passing of general human time as well as Krishan's progress from innocence to experience. Moreover, the Road stimulates self-illumination and discovery, whereas the River promotes a scientific understanding of environment and human nature. The Road stands for the individual's connection with society and his mythic past, while the River is the broad river of life into which all individual lives flow.

Although the hero-anti-hero Krishan Chander is modelled on the author himself, he soon assumes an individuality of his own in the course of the narrative and becomes the protagonist. We can trace his growth between the two wonders, his experiences, the one with which he looks at the endless stretch of Casurina trees at the beginning of the novel, and the other with which he receives the news of the onset of the war in Vilayat, at the end of the narrative.

We find that ever since he was gifted with the power of speech and understanding the child-hero has been extremely inquisitive about the nature of things around him. It appears that he
wants to capture the whole mystery of the universe in his little brain. His mother feeds him with stories about gods and goddesses and about famous heroes, saints and fakirs of ancient times. With the passing away of his infant brother Prithyi, the awareness of the invisible death seems to creep into him bringing a kind of uncanny fear. Unlike Wordsworth Anand does not philosophise and call the child, 'Mighty prophet and seer blest.' On the contrary, he emphasizes the misery of a lonely child: 'I am now inclined to think that childhood is not altogether the happy golden time as the sentimentalists make it out to be ... through compensation for the rigours of the grown up world.'

Krishan's spirit never breaks even in the midst of personal calamities that beset him in the form of recurrent illnesses. At so early an age he feels for the sweeper Bakshan and does not want his parents and elders to tell him not to touch the untouchables. He revolt against his father for the thrashing he gives him (Krishan) for stealing a mango. He senses the soft limbs of women, and is drawn to their tenderness, and loves his companions at play with the exuberance of a primitive. All the while he is growing through the process of awareness from innocence to experience.

In many respects Seven Summers is mainly the story of an Indian child. But the universality of the theme emerges in an unmistakable manner.

When we meet Krishan for the first time at Mian Mir cantonment where his father Ranchand is the Head Clerk in the 38th
Dogra Regiment, we find him playing in a 'haunted' garden across the forbidden road. He is running in a circle, occasionally stopping to wonder at the infinite stretch of the trees lining both sides of the ever-busy road that divides the sepoy's barracks and the white-washed, mysteriously still and exalted bungalows of the white Sahibs. He wonders where the road starts and where it leads to. Oblivious of the past and future, and excited by his own happiness as a wanderer in the open world, he is running around the grove. His ecstasy is temporarily hampered by the recollection of his mother's warning not to cross the road.

A caravan of camels passing along the road attracts Krishan's attention; the bells in their necks are tinkling, producing a strange kind of music. The road stands for the eternal journey to the unknown. The trees lining both its sides denote heaven's mercy on the weary travellers embarked upon the journey of life. The road also indicates the gulf between the rich and the poor. On one side of it are the dilapidated huts of the bondsmen, the scavengers and other menials working in the cantonment, and on the other the mysterious big bungalows of the white Sahibs and the Indian officers. The road is an ever present reality along which gods and goddesses, saints and fakirs, warriors and common men, women and children have travelled in the past and will travel in the future.

As Krishan is absorbed in listening to the music of the bells around the necks of the camels and looking at the strange
animals, a white calf whirled past on his bicycle, rendering<br>Krishan's entry into his garden possible. With fear in his heart<br>he pounces upon a rose bud and runs out of the compound. His legs<br>intertwine. He falls and begins to cry. His mother hears his<br>sobs and comes out to look for him. This is his first experience<br>of pain. The gardener Ilm-din picks him up and takes him home<br>where the consoling words of the mother lull him to sleep. When<br>he wakes up, he finds himself in his father's arms.<br><br>Krishan's first impression of his father is that of a legendary<br>hero like Raja Vikram or Arjun, or even God Krishna. He is a<br>referee at all hockey matches, and the only literate man to whom<br>come the sugarcane, bards, and other illiterate persons to get<br>their letters read or written, and also for loans of money.<br>Krishan's sensitivity and perception are conveyed thus:

'If my attitude towards my little brother Prithvi<br>was a mixture of fear, disgust and jealousy, my<br>attitude to my elder brother Ganesh was jealousy pure<br>and simple ... Towards my oldest brother Harish I<br>sustained a more intellectual ... My mother was milk and sugar<br>but my aunt Aggi was like the essence of curds ...

The love of mother plays an important role in the development<br>of a child. Anand suggests that this phenomenon is eternal. In<br>fact he makes the tenderness of women the ruling passion. Krishan's<br>mother Sundari has a dark oval face with intense brown eyes and<br>a strong chin. The author portrays her as a madonna. Her younger<br>sister Aggi is a poor woman wedded to Jaisingh, a drunkard.<br>Babu Channar Singh's wife Gurudevi, is a demure little woman with
a comfortable presence and a calm sad face and a voice of a cooing dove. They all embody the feminine principles which Amind emphasized in the later novels.

Amidst his innocence and happiness Krishan experiences the first awareness of death when his younger brother Prithvi passes away. Gloom envelops the entire family. This sad occasion brings uncle Pratap and Devaki from Amritsar. They appear to have been made for each other. The enticing Devaki carries with her the aroma of Motia and Molsari flowers. Her soft voice resembles the gentle breath coming from the tops of cluster trees. She is like 'Milk and Honey' to Krishan. He becomes attached to her and insists on going to Amritsar with her. But his elder brother Ganesha is sent with her instead. And the author brings out the sources of jealousy in postiveness. At the same time there is also the dependence on Ganesha, as a playmate which makes Krishan feel desolate now. Krishan mentions the glory associated with childhood:

'It is true that the lonely child develops an almost convulsive sensitiveness under these circumstances and creates fantasies for his own delectation, but the burden of his early effort, though profitable in the long run, is heavy to bear when the tender soul has constantly to jump from the dreamy existence of the garden boyer to the world of reality which is made up of parental routine of meal and siestas.'

The misery of solitude gives Krishan a peculiar strength of temperament and he learns to live on his own resources and to enjoy the dense shades of the groves and to witness the ever
changing life of the road whose past and future will symbolize in the later novels, the quest of Krishan Chander.

Among other characteristics the child-hero possesses are the spirit of inquiry and zest for life. At day-break, lying on a charpoi Krishan looks at the sky where he sees the various figures of Jinns and Bhuts, gods and goddesses in the contours of the clouds running across the vast blue expanse of the sky. Solitude imures him to long silence in which his turbulent spirit weaves fantasies of terror and happiness by turns.

The there is the fable of the bear who earns a livelihood for his master by dancing to the tune of a drum. Krishan yields himself up to the ecstasy and the memory of the occasion makes him exclaim: 'Oh, childhood, how easy it is for one to yield to the slightest happiness and the merest breath of sorrow in one's childhood.' It is innocence that invests childhood with certain splendour not to be found at any other period of life after full consciousness has enveloped it. In retrospect Krishan the confessor asks: 'And is there any joy as pure and sorrow as fleeting as that of childhood? What was the magic of those days which is not here now? Was it the innocence of one's soul or the sheer vitality of one's body?'

Anand's love of earth is revealed in Krishan's eating soil like the infant Lord Krishna and returning home besmeared with dust and thorns of the cactus fruit in his mouth. It is Ali a playmate of Krishan who has been instrumental in making him eat the thorny cactus fruits and soil. Ali even drags him towards
the cantonment, but he is rescued by Bakha before he can be bruised.

After this incident Ganesh is called back from Amritsar to provide company to Krishan. But this does not remove the troubles and difficulties of growing up. An incident more serious than the escapade with Ali occurs when Ganesh himself instigates Krishan to listen to the mewing of a newborn kitten from the bottom of a well. Urged on by his brother and without guessing the consequences, he throws the kitten into the well which results in the kitten’s distressed mewing followed by silence. The horror of this dreadful deed grips Krishan and he is filled with the fear of being punished by God, as well as remorse at the fate of the little kitten. His mother donates a golden kitten to the temple to expiate his sin.

A ride with Owen Sahib, and the love he receives from the sepoys of the regiment, single him out to be the much handled mascot of the rough sepoys whose humanity is lurking beneath the rough training to kill.

A visit to the sparrow house is another step towards the growth of Krishan’s consciousness and is indicative of his enormous zest for life. It lays open before him the amazing world of animals. The link between human being and the beast is sensed by him when he finds that everything he sees has life. This new world is shrouded with mystery which he will ever want to understand:

'In my naive mind I guessed that some queer mystery
filled everything around me, that something I did not know and could not understand must be revealed to me. And eager, impetuous, reaching out to the answers which I could not get, I went on wondering and surmising and building up fantasies about the things I did not know, piling up dream-clouds of the most varied shapes and forms above my head.  

Anand's keen sense of perception makes his descriptions of the zoo so living that the reader almost becomes a part of the narrative. Krishan is fascinated by the long neck of the giraffe, the sparrows feeding their chicks with their bills, and darting from one corner of the cage to the other, the shimmering yellow canaries, the cooing of the wild doves, the scissored cries of the parrots and the melodious 'coo-coo' of the koels. All these fill him with wonder and inflame him with the desire to comprehend the world around him. Commenting on those days Krishan says: 'For there was in those days, the fire of unquenchable light in my eyes and the energy of volcanoes in my little being.'

Childhood is the fertile period when we can absorb our heritage through tales and stories told by our elders. Sundari tells Krishan about the various gods and goddesses, heroes and kings, saints and Fakirs who once travelled along the road and created legends and myths for the posterity. The Road is thus invested with a deeper significance and initiates Krishan into deep reveries which make him ignore his parents' call and the gardener's warning:

'It was as if I had become possessed by the giant Jinn of the road and by all the Jinn-Shuts which had accrued to me through the tales and the fables...'
with the forefinger of amazement in his mouth Krishan looks at the high-way bustling with the march of the sepoys unnoticed and unhonoured, with rapt attention. Krishan’s account of his childhood curiosity is interesting:

'And my eyes were wide open with a boundless curiosity which was later to become the greed, the lust, the desire for good things and beauty... obviously in those days I was my own master, the supreme ruler of the phantasmaric kingdom of my strange visions and stranger dreams.'

Krishan’s birth is associated with poetry. The poetic explanation his mother gives about Krishan’s queries like, 'Where did you find me mother? Where did I come from?' and the mother’s answer recall the childlike quest and vision of the early poets.

The mother says:

'You were in my soul, my darling hidden like a secret. You were in my body like a pearl in a mother of pearl. You were my innermost desire. And I tried to find you. But I searched and searched and could not see you anywhere. So I prayed to God to give you to me. And God being a very kind person made you for me and put you in a little alcove in our house at Peshawar...'

When he is told about the fairy godmother who had attended on Sundari at his birth, Krishan wants to see her. To this the mother says: 'One day you will see her when you go to Vilayat beyond the seas.' The echo-augury comes true when Krishan grows up.

As he grows beyond the stage of sense impressions he begins to see that his brother Harish and sister-in-law Draupadi make an ill-matched pair. She compels her husband to leave his medical
education and also his parents' home. Unlike Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, she defies her mother-in-law and transgresses all limits of modesty in her behaviour. Anand sums up her character in a subtle way when he observes, 'She was a sentimental, humourless girl, obstinate and stupid. She was indeed a child of the ill-fitting Babu class of the early Iron Age in India.' On the other hand Krisha's mother Sundari sets up an example of ideal womanhood by her devotion to duty and selfless service to others.

Krishna sees the inconsistency and hypocrisy of religion even at that early age. The local branch of the Arya Samaj of which his father becomes the president seems to be the meeting place of disreputable characters.

The child dreads nothing more than the master's rod. Master Din Gul in his cruelty resembles Master Bishan Singh of Amritsar and Master Bada Singh of Ludhiana, who figure in Morning Face.

The most striking incident described in the novel is a visit to the Delhi Durbar. The coronation of George V, and his consort Mary as the 'Badshah and Malika of Hindustan' takes place at a gorgeous ceremony. Anand's ability to capture the sights and sounds of a moving multitude becomes an elaborate description of the people and the ceremony:

'I contemplated the horsemen who were riding in, with lances flashing in the sun, and the contingents on foot with their regimental colours fluttering in the slight breeze that invigorated the morning, and then the artillery in gay uniforms, shining and resplendent, while from among the sea of rustling faces on the packed
citizens stood gazed wide-eyed, intent, awe-struck by the glory of the army, proud that my father was in it. 

The Raja and Maharajas came along with a bustle, in their court robes of velvet and silk, decked with glistening jewels, and diamonds and rubies and sapphires. But the masked bands of all the Indian Army entered playing a march tune, and drowned the whisper. This god arrived, the train of cloak held by boy princes, who, in their surtouts of gold cloth and their turbans caught up with aigrettes, and their flashing robes, outshone in glory any children I had ever seen in my life. But the thunders of the bursting artillery drowned this talk and the specks of two figures were seen walking into the arena, and the audience rose to its feet and salaamed, while the dignitaries clapped their hands.

This scene is remarkable for its pageantry and the sense of wonder it arouses in the little Krishan. Ironically enough, just as the procession of the King and Queen is passing, Krishan gets lost and starts crying.

Their return from Delhi marks the beginning of new troubles for Babu Ramchand. The implantation of a bomb on the road to kill the viceroy is ascribed to the Arya Samaj. Babu Ramchand is asked to disassociate himself from the Samaj.

Krishan while he apprehends the weaknesses and fears of the British Sarkar, is also made aware of his father's lack of moral courage as well as his mother's boldness, truthfulness and hatred for the Sarkar. When in broad day-light, the Pathans attack and run away with seventy rifles from the magazine, Babu Ramchand is ruffled whereas his wife appreciates the daring of the tribals in
in defyng and humiliating the British Government. Babu Ramchand
sustains his wife not to speak such nonsense, but the peasant woman
is inspired by memories of her father fighting in the battle of
Chellianwallah for the Sikh Raj against the British invaders.

Religion is an obsession with Sundari but Babu Ramchand
has, in such matters, adopted an indifferent attitude. His dis-
gust at his failure to lay his hands on the fruits sent by Colonel
Lonydon on Christmas eve, before they are sanctified by religious
ceremony, makes him deride the conglomeration of Gods Sundari
worships with deep devotion. She is deeply hurt and weeps silent-
ly. The memory of the incident urge Krishan to remark:

'In the past I had always regarded my father as a hero
and had been somewhat afraid of my mother, for as she
prayed she would sit with her eyes closed and her whole
manner taut, and she seemed to me distant, detached
and not my mother but someone ugly and dead. And her
idols had such a sinister air about them, the evil
shadow of gods who seemed to take my mother away from
me. But now I felt linked to her in a love that was
simple and immutable and beautiful and sad. I put my
arms round her neck while she wept silently and I
clung to the tormented warmth of her dark face. And
the gods didn't exist any more ...

Anand seems to regard the child's love for the mother as
an eternal emotion. Krishan's attitude towards
his father receives
a further set-back when he is mercilessly beaten when he is found
sucking a stolen mango in a corner. This thrashing produces a
strong sense of resentment in Krishan and plays a very important
role in shaping his character.
'And it may be that the violent thrashing, which I received then made me hate him for ever on one side of my nature and largely transformed me into the uncompromising rebel that I became, gave the spoilt self-willed child in me the impetus of an over-developed sense of grievance and misery. Anyhow, apart from the instincts of early childhood, there sprang perhaps from this ridiculous incident the lava of violence in me which sizzled like an active volcano during my boyhood, till my whole life became a series of constant eruptions.' 17

The intense desire of a child to grow up and escape the humiliation and punishment of childhood, is there in Krishan too. He also longs for the life of splendour like that of the son of Longdon Sahib. The punishment he gets at home and at school makes Krishan observe: 'Sadness seemed to become the natural climate of my universe.' 18

The sorrows of childhood are counterbalanced by the happy and amusing episodes. Dumberi's yearly visit to the cantonment provides considerable mirth. It is also a satire on the bestial existence of the soldiers. The gloomy atmosphere of the cantonment is brightened by his visit. He goes about with a wooden gun studded with the coins of all the countries of the world, and amuses his spectators with his weird and brutal heroics. Holding his wooden musket tightly he begins:

'Be a man! Man's duty is to kill!' he raved frothing at the mouth, his pink face colouring a deep red and his whole body going rigid to perform the brutal onslaught. 'If the enemy hangs on or retaliates
strike him on the head with the butt of the rifle, 
kick him in the guts, and fell him. Then dig the 
bayonet into his belly, deep, deep but take it 
out to see that the enemy is punctured and bleeds 
to death. One, two, three, go ... 19

A visit to the Boat Bridge on the river Lunda and its 
fierce sweep away fills Krishan with excitement. He asks his 
father where this astounding velocity of the river comes from and 
why the waters do not flood the entire earth. When the father 
tells him about the Titanic flood that once swept away vast 
spaces of the earth Krishan's curiosity is further aroused and 
he asks, 'Why are there so many things in the world? Who made it 
the world? and why is/not possible to know everything?'. 
The father simply smiles at his impetuousity.

His later hatred for the whites which is to grip his mind 
for the rest of his life, is kindled when he is hit by Cunningham, 
the deaf English sahib, with a catapult for staring at him. The 
English disliked nothing more than being stared at by natives.

In spite of frequent calamities Krishan tides over every 
situation because of his indomitable will. In the Kabaddi match 
which follows soon after his visit to the river Lunda, he receives 
a serious injury on his head from a stone thrown by Ramcharan. 
An emergency operation is performed to save him. Laid up with high 
fever he watches the anxiety of his parents. He feels : 'The 
pity for myself became a kind of pity for my parents, and I 
accepted my fate with a kind of negative love and forgiveness, 
though I could not forget the physical hurt.' 20
The fever-tossed brain is a congenial home for hallucinations. It makes Krishna see a black and dreadful witch coming to take his life but he overpowers her. At the same time his terror makes him cry out for his mother who is a "Lone woman, untaught by fate, susceptible to the greatest joy, as she is to every kind of inward tumult, moving in narrow circles, cowering in her submission to a ready-made idol, she does not break when she is struck by something overpowering, but stands like a rock! Unaccustomed to absorbing much within herself as does man's more expansive spirit, she defends her offspring even as an animal does. 22(a)

The mother's love for her child is as intense and deep and as unfathomable as the ocean and as vast and eternal as universe. He adds: 'That is why in order not to trouble her with further importunities, it quietly goes off to sleep! It is not strange that the elemental relationship of mother and child persists among mankind, in spite of its dangers, when many other primateval instincts have been refined into knowledge and shame.'(b)

Although Krishna recovers from the crisis, the accident leaves a permanent mark on him and he feels a curious dread for everyone and everything. Yet, the child in him is always desirous of breaking new ground, and comprehending the world which is going to be the sphere of his own intense activity when he grows up.

'N curiosity became devouring. After the earlier phase of my life when I had been more or less egocentric, regarding the whole world as an extension of my wishes, when people and things outside were grasped with the
natural warmth of the hand and the eye, through the stage when I had begun to cultivate the gift of speech, but exercised it only to express myself. I know began to evolve a cocoon of self intoxication by absorbing the outside world more intensely through my shys and therefore. I was going to leave nothing to chance. 23

Krishna vividly remembers the love he felt for Rukmini, the daughter of Balmukund at Noshera. At so early an age Krishna becomes conscious of physical desire which is to become an intense human factor in his life.

The story of Raja Rasalu which he hears from his mother initiates him into adventurous exploits in the nearby hills and forests and even makes him compete with the boys elder in age in games and sports.

The myth of Lord Krishna which deals with the various brave exploits of the Boy-lover including his Rasleela with Gopinis, enthralls Krishna. He wishes to imbibe the spirit of the God-hero, who fights against injustice and rescues the poor and the humble and lives like a spark.

Krishna also comes in contact with Mama Dayal Singh, who figure prominently in his later life. Sharam Singh reveals to him the melodious song of Heer Ranjha of Waris Shah, which he hears with great love:

' My heart longs for the beloved, My heart longs
for the beloved,

some lovers laugh and laughing talk others,
cry and wailing, wander in this blossoming spring.'

My heart longs 24
The cry of the heart in Nari Shah's poem is to echo in the boy's heart as the theme song of life. Krishan tells how easy it is for a child to yield himself up to the slightest impulse of affection:

'And the flowering of a child's mind is an uncanny process as the bursting of the buds and ripening of fruit; a little touch of warmth can make it effulgent like the sun!' 25

Towards the end of the novel the hero-anti-hero grows more introspective as he looks back on the first seven years of his life. He feels that with the creative urge in him, he can be the master of his own destiny. It is through these impulses that Krishan's life becomes a vivacious stream flowing ever towards the vast ocean, crossing the barriers that come in the way but always questioning and learning.

The news of the outbreak of war and the cries of the sepoys 'Jang, Jang! Laria!' marks the end of childhood and the beginning of the new awareness. In his naive questioning lies the immensity of the desire to understand the world around him:

'Where is the war?', he asks. And the father's reply is, 'Child it is near Vilayat,' then he asks further: 'Why is it?' the father says:

'The Kaiser of Germany, the Sultan of Turkey and the Badshah of Austria are on one side and the Angrez Badshah and the whole world on the other side.' 26

The mother says that the war between the two powers is like the war between Pandavas and Kauravas in the Mahabharat.'
Her prejudice against the British Sarkar is so acute that she remarks: "It is all the fault of Pernagie who have invented these injane and defy code." When her husband remonstrates for bringing God into everything, she gives a very logical explanation: 'But people do not fight unless they are evil.'

The novel may be called the annals of innocence flowering into experience with the shadows of the violence of the world throwing on the hero-anti-hero mind the pale cast of thought. Commenting on the universal implication of the novel, Dr. Krishna Manikan Sinha remarks:

'It may not have the passionate intensity of The Big Heart, but its appeal is surely timeless. This is so because the nature of experience it seeks to communicate is universal and timeless. The hero of Seven Summers is a child of yesterday, today and tomorrow, there is nothing in him that is not for all time. He is alive to experience to the very marrow of his bones. In as much as a constant recording of feeling goes on in his mind the cumulative effect of the novel is one of unceasing exploration.'

Highlighting the qualities which add to the greatness of the novelist and of his work Jack Lindsay remarks:

'Anand manages to convey the simplicity and purity of the child's reaction, together with the incomprehended force of growing organism which has its own ruthlessness, its own insatiable appetite for delight and the fullness of sensation. As always, Anand opens crannies of light and hope in the worst darkness: the unbreakable spirit of man is the final theme - made convincing by
the open-eyed realism that misses nothing of squalor
delusion, cruelty, deceit in the social scene.'

To sum up the novel reveals the hero's boundless curiosity,
his inextinguishable desire to learn and his determination to succeed
inspite of innumerable difficulties and obstacles. The novel is
free from the didactic and sociological pre-occupations of the
author's earlier works.

The merit of the novel according to Dr. Harrex rests on the
very absence of the political or social themes. He remarks:

'The truth of Seven Summers as an episode of the heart
requires no philosophical or humanistic exegesis, no
didactic rationale. Fortunately none were proposed.'

II

Morning Face

Morning Face published in 1963, was a sequel to Seven Summers
and was Anand's first novel to win the coveted Sahitya Akademi
Award in 1972. In its 571 pages the novelist follows the next
six years of Krishan's life and in a qualified sense his own
coinciding with the period from the outbreak of the first world
the war in 1914 to the massacre of Jallianwallah Bagh in 1919.
The book is divided into three parts: 'The City of Dreadful Nights,
The Prison and The Regiment'. This division corresponds to the
principal periods of the hero's experience, his life at Amritsar
at Ludhiana where his eldest brother Harish is an Assistant Jailer
and in the Jhelum cantonment. It is difficult to agree with Saroo Cowasjee when he contends:

"None of those three titles are symbolic in the way that 'The Road' and 'The River' were in Seven Summers. There is filth and squalor in Amritsar, but why it should be called a city of Dreadful Nights is not satisfactorily established. Life in Ludhiana for Krishan is not very different from life in Jhelum cantonment, and the title 'The Prison' could as well have been applied to the section dealing with Jhelum cantonment, more so since in Seven Summers a cantonment is referred to as 'the prison of the armed camp'.

If we remember the fear of death which had taken hold of young Anand's mind because of the deaths of his cousin Kaushalya, and uncle Pratap and the impact of his own imprisonment and the terrible massacre of the Jallianwallah Bagh on him, the subtitles become meaningful. In this connection, it is worthwhile to consider the Krishan's reaction to Jallianwallah Bagh:

'As the news of the massacre had come just before half-light, the gloom in our lane mixed as it always was, with the smoke of the hearth fires, thickened into my own hallucinations of the ghost of those who had been shot dead.'

Further more for Anand himself life in Ludhiana was quite different from that of Jhelum. It was a veritable prison for young Anand when he was condemned to the mercy of an illiterate, short-tempered, orthodox and childless sister-in-law, who always ill-treated him and never gave the love that a lonely child requires. Then there was the tyranny of Master Boudh Singh, whose constant abuses and flogging had made the school a prison for
Anand and other boys. Anand has rightly called the second part 'The Prison' because his hero's experience is drawn from his own. Anand presents a vivid and authentic picture of the Punjab where the British atrocities had reached their climax. The entire political and social history of that period has been depicted with objectivity, yet the subjective element in the novel is necessarily there, because of the confessional motif of the novelist.

'From annihilation of the Gods to the transformation of earth, man, his thoughts and feelings...'

—Anonymous

This element, is however central to almost the whole of Anand's fiction. But in theSeven Ages of Man'series the transformation of the felt experience into art is more deliberate and obvious than in any of his earlier works. Moreover, these novels bear the richest fruits of the author's life-long creative experience, because they come at the very end of his career. In these novels, history, autobiography and fiction are combined together to represent the whole generation of the modern youth caught in the fierce wave of change from orthodoxy to political and social freedom. The development of the hero's character is handled with great care. He becomes increasingly aware of the shortcomings of the life around him and struggles to achieve freedom and love. A sound common sense and the need to test everything seem to be the leading traits of the hero. His growth which is often painful, corresponds to that of his country's. He paves his way through the strict restrictions of the orthodox society, the terrifying atmosphere of the school, and the atrocities of the
British misrule, and lives up to his ideals and vows of liberty, thus embodying the 'splendours' of life.

Anand makes the hero-anti-hero rise from the ashes of his discarded personality like the Phoenix which rises from its own ashes. He says:

"Though I was to be your creator, you took control of the book almost from the beginning and wrote yourself out, almost as you were the author. So it is really your book and I am only the catalyst of the words in which your body-soul burns and melts."

The hero's first appearance in Seven Summers has evoked varied and interesting comments regarding his symbolic significance. Some call him a Punjabi 'spark', while others take him to be the incarnation of God Krishna of the age of Mahabharat. But what the creator himself says about him is important:

"...the old myth was dormant in my heart and mind as these myths are inherited by every Indian...But as you will find out in your later incarnations, you are really not the Krishna of the age of Gods. You cannot be, because the age of gods is over. You seem to be aspiring to the new contemporary myth of man of the Kali Yug, the iron age, in which money itself as a vast impersonal mechanism of power, inexorably governs life as an Unknown Fate, as the Unknown Gods, or the Unknown evil, in men, commanded life in the past, pursuing its seemingly mysterious ends, indifferent to the feelings of men and women."

There is however, a certain similarity between the hero-anti-hero Krishan and Krishna of mythology, which has been discussed in the earlier chapter. Professor Iyengar seems to have seen the truth when he says:
'Krishan is a cross between the mythical Krishna and the average street urchin; and as Krishan grows he is seen to be both uniquely himself and the prototype of Indian boyhood.5

But it is important to note that a comparison between God Krishna and Krishan has its limitations. The resemblance can be seen only between the ideals Krishan follows and those preached by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Krishan wants to extend the scope of the ideals of struggle and love in the contemporary context by redefining them through living practice.

It must be stressed again that the work is something more than the personal odyssey of the author, whose universalist attitude is conveyed through the hero-anti-hero. In the epic swell of the novel the entire heritage of India is covered and reassessed.

The novel opens with Krishan, along with his parents and elder brother Ganesh, returning home to Amritsar from Jhelum cantonment. For Krishan, sensitive as he is, the home-coming to the city of the 'Golden Temple' is full of intense joy and excitement. He exclaims:

'Oh, the curves of my longing to embrace the whole world; Oh, the marvel of it all! Oh, the freedom of the bursting crowded streets, which was then my erupting cosmos! The very exuberant love of life which is very characteristic of Krishan is in evidence here.

Some time after their arrival, Krishan visits the 'Golden Temple' with his father. This produces in him two opposite
emotions: hatred and admiration—hatred for the hypocrisy of the
apostles of religion, and admiration for the gorgeous structure;
where life appears to be a kind of splendid fair, and the visitors
seemed imbued with faith. But one or two disgusting experiences
with the ash-smeared ascetics make Krishan hate them and their
abode, for the rest of his life. He observes:

'I was to be forever frightened in my secret heart,
of ash-smeared ascetics and began to loath all the shrines and symbols of all religion and found my mind, at
that moment set in the direction against Almighty God...
Because of the violent assaults on my innocence at the
Golden Temple I began to assert my ego with an aggressiveness which was to plunge me into with the elders.'

Krishan who is admitted to the P.B.N.School, soon realizes
that politics are intricately knitted into the British educational
system. A vicious English Professor has detained uncle Devadutta
twice in M.A. for being an Arya Samajist. Ever since the bomb
thrown at Lord Harding, after the coronation of King George V,
the Samajists have come to be suspected as anti-British. Krishan
also learns that Lala Lajpat Rai, the famous patriot who belongs
to the Samaj is spied upon by the C.I.D.

Krishan's sensuality becomes an increasingly powerful trait
in him as he grows. He finds solace from the isolation forced
upon him by his inflated ego, in the warm flow and aroma of women.
He is seen yearning to sit with women and be fondled by them.

Even at his early age Krishan is burning with the desire to
acquire all knowledge, forbidden or otherwise.
It may have been that, in the confined world of a little alley, I could not stretch out the bursting abandon of my body, lit by the energy that had earned me the title of 'spark' from the sepoys of Nowshera cantonment or perhaps I became dully conscious of my littleness in the world of elders' wise talk, and wanted to become tall and strong and know-all quickly, and thus, beyond the vanishing innocence of my childhood, I was already tasting the forbidden fruits of knowledge of those things which parents and teachers deny to the young in order to save them from disaster.

It is the period of Krishan's recurring illnesses which are sought to be cured by invoking the spirit of Main Lok. This very act of invocation creates terror in his heart. Uncle Devadutta, on the other hand, initiates him into the pure religion of ancient India:

"When the head ruled over the heart... when men and women were equal, and marriage was celebrated through the Swayamvara, the free choice by/woman of her man, when there was no caste... when there was no child marriage; when we were cousins of the Germans and the English and not their inferiors..."

Krishan's fear of ghosts and goblins, as well as his feelings for the pure religion of the Vedas, are submerged beneath the surface of the monotonous hell of the school which opens its portals to receive him. His intense longing to learn poetry and the language of the Sahibs is dampened by the 'demons' in whose charge he is put, and who torture him along with the others.

Krishan describes at length the cruelty of the teachers of the P.B.H. school. This was the general trend all over the country.

Krishan's zest for life is seen in his desire to become a
flutist like Chota or Clayton. He even purchases a harmonica and soon becomes a nuisance to his mother. Despite his miserable experience at the school Krishan loves the complex life of Amritsar, with its fascinating bazaars, mysteries and adventures. He plays cards with Devaki, his beautiful aunt, steals into the room of Hari the gambler, goes with uncle Uttam Singh, the watchmaker, to hear the singing of courtesans on the top of his shop, and to see the dancing of their daughters. He, even addresses to an imaginary courtesan the love words he has heard his uncle Pratap using, when talking to Devaki. He confesses: "I had become a free, even wild boy, who wanted to taste exuberant rhythm in my being and specially because they were forbidden."

The dreadful awareness of death dawns upon him with the passing away of his beautiful cousin, Kaushalya, whom he has loved for her beautiful golden hair. And he is beset with eternal questions about life and death. When the prayers to save Kaushalya fail, he begins to feel that Gods and goddesses do not exist:

"Why my beautiful world of happiness had been so suddenly destroyed? Why was this death which had changed everything? What was this creeping uncanny frightening spirit which stole up and took my Kaushalya away? What was death? And what was the meaning of life?"

This confrontation with the reality of death makes him probe deeper and deeper into its mystery and face it with more vigour.
I now turned more inwards than outwards. And the rhythm of my fantasies would be merged into the rhythm of a boundless curiosity to know to find out things in the maze about me, and never to rest until the question has been answered. The death of my cousin Kaushalya seemed to me, even then, but gradually all through my life the first turning point in my growth from innocence to awareness. 12

However, the sheer vitality of his boyish spirit casts a veil over the gloom of his heart. His sensitive mind and innate curiosity respond even to such small things as a toy tree in a bottle. Trying to unravel the mysterious phenomena of nature, Krishan questions and conjectures:

'How was the tree put in there? Perhaps, it was made first and the glass bottle made afterwards.

I felt frustrated at not knowing the answer to this mystery. The frustration of going so far in knowledge and then feeling helpless, as in the face of Kaushalya's death or the tree in the bottle, or about not knowing where the stars went by day, gave me a pang of remorse at the inadequacy of my intellect ... 13

Uncle Devadutta infuses in him an ardent love for his country by telling him about the illustrious leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Hardayal, and their devotion to the cause of the nation. As a result Krishan's secret desire to ape the Tommies is replaced by hatred for them. The seeds of Indianness sown in young Krishan at so early a stage, grow and envelop his whole being as he advances in years. He begins to realize that his father's attitude is anti-national. It is said that in their fight against the British, the Kaiser of Germany has offered to help Lala Hardayal
and his followers. The two Muslim leaders Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali are also on the side of the revolutionaries. Many Muslims and Sikhs are deserting the English land since the Budge Budge riot of 1914, which claimed the lives of Eighteen Sikhs. Gurdit Singh, the leader of the revolt is still alive and living in Vancouver. People are seething with discontent and India appears to be ripe for 'Inqalab'. The drift of uncle Devadutta's narrative sweeps Krishan off his feet and produces in him hallucination:

'The images of distant lands and waters evoked fantastic dreams in my little brain. I was eating black bread, with pickles, as I sat enchained like a prisoner in a small boat tossed by huge waves of the sea ... And big fishes with terrible gleaming eyes covered with scales leapt up on all sides of me ... while the dead Kaushalya came to life and walked with mehand in hand towards the garden.' 14

Uncle Devadutta's disclosure of the secrets of the revolutionaries fills Krishan with admiration for the heroes of the revolution. He even feels that uncle Devedutta should have been his father instead of his own. He goes on to take a vow:

'... I would demolish my ignorance, and littleness by the clearest perceptions and conquer all the universe of thought like a young Vedic God, dream the wildest dreams and working, drinking energy from life and pouring it out in a generous abandon of love for everyone.' 15

Krishan is not only inquisitive about the political situation.
but also in doubts and questions which have eluded saints, seers, mystics and philosophers through the ages. He resolves to find out if God exists at all, before the end of his life's journey. He is deeply moved by the wretched condition of hill-men coolies and coppersmiths as against the luxurious life lived by the few privileged.

The tragedy of the 'Koma Gata Mara' makes Krishan a participant in the bereavement of the peasants of Amritsar district. He is filled with admiration for the brave Sikhs who had braved the dangers of the sea for full eleven months, as well as hatred for the 'Angrez Sarker' who had refused them entrance to Vancouver. He secretly takes a vow to become a rebel and follow the example of Abraham Lincoln, and make any sacrifice for his country's freedom.

Ghughi, an outcaste and a friend of Krishan, tells that the sins of his ancestors have condemned him to be an outcaste for several lives and no out-caste except Kabir could rise above his birth. This attitude enrages Krishan:

'Why the outcastes were condemned to live as untouchables whether there was such a thing as Kismat or Fate, and why bad deeds become good deeds because the higher orders did these things and wicked if the poor did bad deeds.'

This glaring distinction he observes between the high and the low makes Krishan doubt the existence of God more than ever before.
All this chaos! And these upper castes and lower castes. Our own low coppersmith brotherhood! Did God make them? If God punished, he could not be merciful. Therefore there was no God. The world was a big bad joke played by Yama. 17

He harbours two contrary feelings one of love, and the other of hatred for his father who is serving the British Government while his countrymen are fighting for independence. He wages a war against the supreme god, his father, and the elders. With his mind beset with inner conflict Krishna feels that everything is conspiring against him, even the roads and the yawning filthy tank of 'Yamadwar.'

His mother's assortment of divergent deities and saints like Yaa Khan, Guru Nanak, Krishna, Saiv Lok, Shiva and Brahma, makes him wonder who is the real god, if at all there is any. Deaths in the neighbourhood after that of Kaushalya, enhances his fear of his own possible death, and again disturbs him with the problem of the meaning of life and death. Traditional beliefs like the theory of re-birth, his own superstitions, terror of ghosts and his sense of mystery regarding future life remain imbedded deep in his mind without being satisfactorily answered.

Krishna's arrival at Lashiana is almost like entering a prison. Draupadi, his sister-in-law, a miserable, dull, illiterate woman, treats him as an outcaste. She is not kind either, to Harish, her husband, or to Krishna. But she has a soft corner in her heart for Ganesh.
Harish is an assistant jailor at Ludhiana. A shocking awareness dawns upon Krishan when he learns that most of the convicts in the jail are peasants who failed to pay their loans to the money-lenders. Krishan is now in a more precarious situation than he was at Amritsar. The tyranny of Bishan Singh equals that of Bisan Singh of Amritsar, but the former's homosexuality and spying for the Sarkar testifies Krishan. The frightening atmosphere is somewhat relieved by the kindness of Master Abdul Hamid a counterpart of Master Shah Nawaz of Amritsar. But as is the rule of our times, it is evil that overshadows good, and Krishan's fears continue to harass him.

Krishan is tossing between two violent worlds; an unhappy home and a hard school. Life in the 'Ocean of Nectar' was no better, but there was uncle Devadutta, the anchor of Krishan's rebellious thoughts. But here at Ludhiana, there is none to rescue him from the wretchedness of a split home and sustain him with the spirit of revolution. He is so unhappy that he even contemplates drowning himself in the well, but his innate love of life and his deep fear of death check him.

'I decided that one should not be sad, however awful things may be because breathing was better than inert face of the body when life had left it. I could never forget the vision of Kaushalya's face with the glazed blue eyes, as she had lain after her death.'

Krishan's poetic heart finds a parallel to his own condition, in the last Moghal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar's sad exile in Burma. His famous poem in which he mourns the loss of his friends and
family, and compares his life to a garden rendered barren in spring, moves Krishan very deeply. He identifies himself with the royal prisoner and begins to compose a song beginning, 'I am a bird in a cage'.

Krishan's attraction for Mumtaz, a beautiful courtesan and the mistress of Harish, is due to her own affection for him. And as like a distressed child, that he is, Krishan needs all the love he can get. Her gentleness, her smiles, her warmth, her soft musical voice and her sincerity of feelings, go deep into Krishan's tortured soul. He is deeply in love with her. He wants to gaze/her so deeply that I could drink her into me.\textsuperscript{19} Krishan's love for Mumtaz becomes the echo-augury of all those longings which I was to aspire to during my later prolonged adolescence.\textsuperscript{20}

After Draupadi's departure to Gujranwala, Krishan feels free, but gets an attack of fever. In his half sleep he recognizes the soft strokes of Mumtaz's palm on his head though he fails to open his eyes. He is so moved by her love that he represents Harish's hypocritical behaviour in not marrying Mumtaz. This is the most touching scene in the novel, and shows how love can influence the tender heart of a child.

Some days later, the news of uncle Pratap's death takes him back to Amritsar. Krishan's recollection of uncle Pratap's abundant and generous nature and his sudden demise put him into thoughts regarding the uncertainty of life again:

'And I was overcome by the uncertainty of life again, as after Kaushalya's death of how a man can be breathing this moment and then be dead the next moment.
And death had not come to me when I wanted it. Death was a strange thing. Inexplicable. Sudden. And terrible... I felt I could no longer be taken in by other people's words and opinions... I seemed to find pleasure in my broodings and in the mental achievements of knowledge, often derived from inside me, without the help of words. I had found myself in a jungle of tangled and complex vegetation, as it were, but now I was beginning to recognize the wood by means of the trees...... but now death— the death of uncle Pratap made me again feel weak, insecure, lacking in knowledge of life, of almost everything in it, of being again lost in the jungle, the mystery about which perhaps I would never know much, however hard I may try, the strange reality people called God, but which seemed to be in me, may be in my glimpses of my love for Devaki, Kaushalaya and Mumtaz as also in my own exuberance, in me and beyond me....' What was it? — if not love...'21

Krishan has a dynamic mind and his propensity for introspection is out of all proportion to his age and diminutive size.

Uncle Devadutta chastises Ganesh for his pretended docility before the elders and his quarrelling with Krishan. He also knows that the entire property of uncle Pratap will go to the possession of Babu Ramchand. He says:

'We should know that life is not merely a list of ancestral properties. And we should learn from the shock of death, how to behave in this life. We should know that if we conduct our personal lives in search of truth—that is the only kind of noble life...... And if these brethren are ignorant or have fallen then we should be bold enough to tell them....In our country there are so many superstitions and bad habits
through our servility to custom and the British, that only frank people and those who listen to their inner self can do something...Ours is a time for saints and revolutionaries...We must struggle—fight, fight, fight for Truth all the way!22

Krishan is deeply moved and feels humble when he hears these unorthodox views of Devadutta:

'I felt that my heart was like a nest in a tree from which the bird of my fancy flew in all directions of the world. If anything I would be, revolutionary and not a saint. I would struggle against everything for the "spark" of life in me. I would be proud to be called "Mutfa"—spark. I would live like a flame.'23

It is in such revolutionary ideas that the 'splendours' of life manifest themselves according to Anand.

The hero is confused by his varying feelings towards his family. He wants to his parents despite their pronounced worldliness. He dislikes Harish for not telling his father about Muntaz, yet he feels close to him. He hates Draupadi, but he has to be nice to her if he has to live in her house. He despises Ganesh, but he feels he should not be removed from him. He clings to Devaki in spite of her sullied reputation, for her perfume of Moti and Molsari flowers, and the charm and affection that radiate from her. Anand has indeed dexterously captured the conflicting emotions in the heart of his child hero, and this adds to the novel's artistic value.

Krishan looks at God from the unhappy child's point of view and expresses the rising wave of revolt in his heart against the Almighty, who, he sometimes thinks is revenging upon him for his
blasphemies. He becomes an iconoclast and assails all that is commonly believed by the ignorant people as gospel truth:

'I found that the seeds of these doubts were sprouting in my heart and mind like blood red oleanders of hatred, and this hatred was unique. It was not the insidious viciousness of Draupadi against my brother. It was the flaming red hot temper of burning revolt that would have set the dummy of the bearded Almighty on fire if it could. It was the aversion against all the images of God I had seen. It was turning away even from the sounds of prayer. It was a rejection of all the worship offered to Him.'24

But there is a lingering undercurrent of fear in this apparent bold defiance of God. However he gathers strength from uncle Devdutta's teaching that one should revolt against all the lies of people. Thus Krishan covers another milestone in his awareness. He feels that the saddest aspect of people's blind faith in religion is that they accept everything as gift of God, observe caste taboos, and their putrid and stinking life goes on as ever. It is no exaggeration to say that Krishan's littleness belies his soul's immensity.

The arrows of my thought allied themselves to the sunrays which probed each corner of the earth, and my small boy's head was cocked with all the passionate ardour and vanity of youth. I prided myself that I could distinguish ideas from feelings and had attained to objective reasoning. I could feel the metamorphosis in the more vital inhale-exhale of the breath from my chest.'25

Hurt by Draupadi's ill-treatment, Krishan goes to Mumtaz who soothes the agitated child with a sweet inspiring song:
He is smiling away as he goes, after saying something.
Sparks of lightening are being lit, after he has rained
the flowers.
Man becomes mature after being knocked about,
The henna gets its colour after being rubbed in the stone.

The song inspires him to be a rebel poet so that he can express his
feelings in the loveliest words and in the most haunting refrains.
Waris Shah's epic makes him conscious of the 'pain of the heart,' which is the most recurring image in Urdu poetry. And in Krishan, the manifestation of this image is clearly visible:

'I had been set free by Waris Shah to encompass the
transpiring torment of every convict in our jail,
every bird and animal shot at by the Drill Sergeant
Thappa in fact, of everything of this earth. My
heart beat to the strange rhythm of the heartbeats
of the whole world, I realized that I wanted to love,
and love and love if only I was allowed to do so...'

A sudden vision of the spirit of a Muslim Divine at night
strikes terror in his heart resulting in a continuous/fever. He
is removed to Amritsar, but even the loving care of Devaki and
the expert treatment of Dr Manekshah do not improve his condition.
He is taken to Jhelum cantoment, where Dr Douglas and Dr Chunni
Lal succeed in saving him from the jaws of death.

Krishan's love of the English classics, and his desire to
make use of every moment of his life, distinguish him from other
boys of his age. He hopes to read after his recovery from illness
Shakespeare, Thackery, Dickens and George W.M. Reynolds to 'revolve
around my own intensities, even lamentations, and lunatic excursions into aloneness; so that I may be drenched in the sheerness of
The rebel in Krishan rejects all caste and class distinctions. When he invites Bakha home to get his share of 'An Auch', the latter hesitates though he knows that Krishan is free from caste prejudices. Bakha cannot forget that Krishan's parents are like most Caste-Hindus. The incident brings out Krishan's ideal of a meaningful life:

'Bakha had already gone deep into my 'elusive spirit' and got buried in my being as a kind of resentment against all those who stop the human flow erupting at any manifestation of the old Hindu prejudice. At any rate, I vowed in myself again never to accept caste in my life and go wherever the slaves were cleaning, washing and scrubbing, to become poor for Bakha's sake, to mix perfumes with bad smells, melt all my senses into one diffused personality and run into the thick of the welter of life "giving, giving, giving," as did my grandfather on my mother's side, the saintly Nihal, the devoted one at whose home the poor and the lonely fed day and night. Never mind what the cowards say. I would struggle ceaselessly, even becoming a Christian or a Buddhist or a little Sadhu if need be... No safe life for me. No shutting my eyes even to the hypocrisy of my family. Perhaps, if I faced ugly things like caste my father's compromises, and the superstitions of the priests, I may discover expressiveness and strength in words—provided I could keep my heart open and pure and innocent.'
Although Krishan suffers from a sense of guilt because of his adherence to certain natural impulses, such as his illicit love for Jumtaz and his resentment against the elders, he wishes to live a life of exuberance and purity, free from hypocrisy of old customs and rituals. 'I had a fire inside me which would burn up the false things and usher me into music, dance and poetry.' Apart from his being dubbed as 'Pilpili Sahib,' Krishan is also nicknamed 'The Son of Socrates' for his unending 'Whys' and 'Wherefores,' by his playmates.

At the cantonment, Krishan witnesses the merciless shooting of hundred of sepoys belonging to the Charwali Regiment in the name of discipline and justice. The horrible experience strikes terror and confusion in his heart. He says:

'I was jogged back from the timeless universe of infancy into the cruel life of regiment, where the Sahibs and the Indian officers held the sway and there they could shoot down those who did not obey their behests in the name of justice, order and fairplay. Yama seemed to be roaming about among us like a hungry monster.'

The consciousness of injustice pervades through the entire novel and gives it weight as a study of human behaviour.

Krishan is sent to Konawan to stay with Devaki as his parents decide to go on a pilgrimage. He is affectionately received by the beautiful Devaki. He analyses his aunt's affection for himself and his own for her, and wonders whether it is like the mutual love of a mother and her child, or his own sensuous love for Devaki, as he felt for Reynold's Sophia.
Enamoured of her divine beauty, Krishan captures her image in a song like that on the folk heroine Lachi:

The, how beautiful this woman, how pale and languid
And how much I love her.
For she is tall and graceful as a cypress,
Which bends so graciously and talks in whispers.
Till its very breath becomes a song.

Krishan invests his twin ideal of love and beauty with mysticism. Devaki's beauty is a source of inspiration to his poetic heart and he tries to capture it in verse. Just as, by virtue of his love he transcends the barrier of separateness from his beloved, Mama Dayal Singh and the saintly Nihalu, through their devotion and love have been able to transcend the barriers of aloofness from the Divine Being. He feels that it is the conflict between the physical and spiritual aspects of love and beauty that give birth to poetry.

Krishan is always deeply agitated because of his adolescent love for Devaki. And after several days and nights of utter confusion, he thinks of writing a novel in imitation of W.H. Reynolds' *Mysteries of the Court of London* making Devaki shine through an imaginary character, and exposing Mahant Nand Gir, the evil one with Ananda having feelings like his own. He is possessed by creative fury like Coleridge when he wrote *Rubai Khan*:

'I was surcharged with a mad tempestuous creative frenzy, a kind of delirium near to hypnotic abandon-
ment of madness finding external equivalents for the intimations, questionings and mysteries about people which occupied me. If I could persist with this plan
Here we get the first important clue to Anand's choice of the first person narration in his confessional novels.

Krishan is very unhappy to learn that Bakha is not allowed to acquire knowledge from any school as he is an untouchable. He advises Bakha to become a Christian. Perhaps the missionaries may take him to America where he himself wants to go.

His contact with Dr Chunni Lal results in another landmark in his awareness. Dr Chunni Lal is a strong nationalist who abhors the British:

"...they are blood-thirsty imperialists. See Babu Ramchand, they are killing each other in the giant war, for markets, for their goods, for colonies and men do not matter to these Merchants of Death, whose chief God is profit."

Krishan and the doctor's wife Shakuntala become friends. She shares her husband's nationalist views. She complains that many of the sages of the world were mostly men and much of the knowledge of the world is from the viewpoint of men and ignores the needs of women.

Anand has given a graphic account of the degraded status of Indians during the British regime, through Dr Chunni Lal who says that the emancipation lies in only what the enlightened Indians like Lala Lajpat Rai have been saying: 'Hindustan is our country and we want to run it ourselves.' He also tells
Krishan and Shakuntala about the activities of revolutionaries like Lala Hardayal, Ajit Singh and Chattopadhyay, who are roving all over the world to arouse Indians to revolution, and obtain financial and other aids from foreign Governments against the British.

Krishan's acquaintance with Lala Kedarnath deepens his hatred for the British and enhances regard for the revolutionaries and their struggle for India's freedom. He identifies himself with them:

'I felt I was the doyen of a new school of thought, frightened still no doubt, but dedicated to freedom and to the task of finding out half crazed and sick with excitement, but possessed of a prodigious vision far too big to be contained in my little head, unutterable, unnameable, a kind of superb reasoning which was proceeding through the disordering of my senses, a passage through madness, to which I may succumb or which may take me to my tryst with my destiny.'

He feels the spark of that passion which is to be found in all the revolutionaries:

'And now I was voraciously hungry for new horizons. I wanted to cultivate my soul with all the richness of India and I wanted to know more whys and wherefores for the passion which inspired Dr Chuni Lal and Lalla Kedarnath.'

Krishan continues to delve deep into the enigma of life and death and the mysteries surrounding God. Kedarnath tells him that mystics claim to have seen Him, but they merely speak of the ecstasy they feel on seeing Him face to face but nothing more. It is through prayer, devotion and Yoga, people have sought reunion with Him which means ending the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. God alone is
the supreme truth and everything else is illusion. Krishan remains
unconvinced and asks:

'And what about those who are left illiterate and
ignorant and have not even the possibility to know
the truth? What about Bakha and all his pains?
And what about all the people in the universe?' 38

Gandhaji's marriage brings the entire family to Amritsar
once again. The city is in the grip of the vicious Rowlatt Act
as a result of Mahatma Gandhi's launching of a nonviolent movement.

Krishan now realizes the difference between the two worlds
in which he is living — the world of compromises of his father,
and that of the ardent principles of the nationalists. The
collision of these principles produces such great a tension in his
heart that he falls ill again.

During his illness Krishan happens to read Gandhiji's
Hind Swaraj which moves him deeply:

'And I found entering into me the freedom — the
visionary word denoting a world away from the dead
ones who accepted the shadow of the demonic outsider,
a landscape without the fear of being shot down if
you protested, a fragrant garden in which there would
grow manicoloured flowers and grasses and orchards
of rich, ripe fruits, where there would come hitherto
unknown inventions and exalted ideas and new ever new
forms.' 39

Because of his curiosity to see what is going on in
Amritsar during the curfew imposed on April 1919, to foil the
Mahatma’s call for strike, Krishan too, becomes a victim of the police. He is arrested and given ‘seven stripes big and small’ on his back. Sundari rescues him next morning. (Dr. Kitchlew and Satyapal were also among the arrested satyagrahis and were given eleven stripes on their backs.)

That afternoon, the commissioner of the division hands over charge of administration to the infamous General Dyer who was to bring about the greatest tragedy in the history of India’s struggle for freedom, namely, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in which hundreds of innocent people were trapped and shot dead without even a warning.

Krishan is scolded by his father for his nationalist activities which according to him have tarnished the family prestige. Babu Ramchand’s wife, however, defies her husband boldly and defends her son against his wrath.

Krishan is sent to Kangra hills, where, the emaciated hillmen, women and children suffering from scurvy and other diseases add to his keen sense of human misery. This provides a striking contrast to the scenic beauty of the Sivalik mountain ranges.

In every walk of life Krishan comes across the same pattern, a few loyalists among many nationalists. It is found to be so here also, Subedar Garka Singh and Master Harihar representing the two opposing kinds. When the time comes for him to leave, Krishan feels the wrench of parting not only from aunt Nirmala, but also from the beautiful river Beas, and the enticing beauty...
of the Kangra valley.

On arrival at Jholam Krishan learns about Dr. Chunnilal's sacrifice of his government job in the cause of national freedom. Shakuntala is laid up with T.B. Krishan and the entire family bid a sorrowful farewell to the couple.

With the return of the regiment from the war, Babu Ramchand has to move to smaller quarters. When the school routine is resumed, Krishan and his class mates Ismat Ullah, and Hughees-ud-din take a joint vow to save the nation, whatever the consequences to themselves.

On the arrival of the regiment the school boys are lined on both the sides of the road to cheer and welcome the soldiers. The nationalist boys, however, sing Bahadur Shah's Zafar's ghazal:

Neither am I the light of any one's eyes,  
Nor am I the happiness in any one's heart.'

Lalla Lajpat Rai's visit upsets the school authorities while Krishan and his companions are excited. Amidst shouts of approbation from the people, Lala Lajpat Rai, a stocky figure profusely garlanded, appears on a pedestal placed on a bullock cart drawn by eleven pairs of caprisoned bullocks. The whole atmosphere is filled with excitement and the slogan, 'Lalla Lajpat Rai Ki Jai' seems to rend the sky.

Krishan, Ismatullah and Bhagwan Singh are expelled from the school. But there is no sign of despair on their faces.
On the contrary, Bhagwan Singh sings a song in a soft, soothing voice reminiscent of Mumtaz's:

'The beloved will become kind, let the inner pain begin,
She will come of her own accord when the tears begin to
affect her.' 41

Krishan's love-sick heart recreates the images of the Urdu Ghalal:

Captain O'Sullivan successfully persuades the Head Master
to take back the expelled boys. In response to the gratitude
shown by the boys O'Sullivan remarks: 'With Irish part
of me I am fighting the English part... The English, you see
have been doing in Ireland what they are doing in India, shooting
down the people because our people want freedom... Our
leader De Valera is in jail as Gandhi is in jail... The
British have now reached the height of their civilization they
know how to kill those who love freedom... He adds:
'The world is bad enough -- a bad very bad place. But one
must fight even for the half lie against the Big lie otherwise
the big lie will prevail... 42

Like Raja Rasalu Krishan cannot remain confined to the
narrow world of his father's wishes who wants that he should
join the medical school at Agra. He is burning with a desire
for new adventures:

'I want to be a revolutionary, even a mad man...
I will make myself mad, deliberately, by loving
ardently by suffering, by searching, by adventures,
beyond the dreams of Raja Rasalu.' 43

Lala Kedarnath, before leaving for Lahore comes to see
Babu Ranvansh and candidly tells him:

'Krishan will become a monster in your eyes, because young as he is, he has stolen enough fire to breathe the word freedom spontaneously. He is my flame."

Master Harihar in the Kangra valleys has earlier expressed a similar view about Krishan that he will live like a 'flame'.

After Kedar Nath goes away to Lahore, none except O'Sullivan is left to boost up his moral courage to live with the spirit of freedom. It is only poetry he takes recourse to, that will sustain his life. He feels that just rhyming lines with one another does not make a poem, though Helen has already inspired him to make a two-lined verse of his own which he shows to Captain O'Sullivan:

'O, Helen, will you be my marigold flower?
If you will be Krishan, my God...

He prays to Goddess Saraswati, one of the few deities in whom he believes:

'Let me love, so that even if I am destroyed, half thwarted, I can touch the pupils of the big eyes of many many young Gods and Godesses, sources of energy. I must become a supreme rebel, voice of suppressed men's smouldering fires, walker of rough paths, harbinger of strange visions, of unseen freedoms, not a mere babbler, but bursting into a million actions, so that words become deeds.'

Krishan reveals the ardent desires of a child to utilize the highest limits of human capacity for the welfare of the
underprivileged and for the liberation of his country. Krishan moves on unceasingly by the continual personal and external calamities, towards the achievement of his ambitions, which are as infinite as the blue skies, as unfathomable as the deep seas, and as fierce as the erupting volcanoes.

The novel is not merely the story of Krishan's childhood but a living document of that period of Indian history which saw the most terrible atrocities of the British regime. It contains a rich philosophy of life and inspires the reader to live like a flame like its hero Krishan Chander. In thought-content it comes close to Longinus' idea of the Sublime. In its appeal it is universal.

The hero's nature undoubtedly evokes myths, and traditions. But unlike as in the Mahabharat, where there was God Krishna to advise Arjun and take a crucial decision for him, Anand seems to emphasise that in the Kali-yug or the Iron Age, the individual is the centre of understanding man's plight, and his evolution to higher consciousness. Thus Krishan is not only connected with Lord Krishna, but also with Arjuna, who represents human understanding and action.

The experiences narrated in the novel pave the way for the realization of truth. Dr. Sinha elaborates this point, when dealing with the mythical references in the book and their modern relevance:

'In fact, there are experiences to be lived through if one has any pretense to blossoming into truth.
The quest for life ultimately, becomes the quest for art as he finds himself in the creative enterprise of
writing poems, richly entwined with feeling and vision. Krishan Chander, like his mythical prototype, Krishna, enacts the soul-drama of existence, especially in his myriad love-hate relationships in the phenomenal world. He also imbibes something of the splendour and beauty of Helen of Troy, the strength of Hercules, and the comely myth of Narcissus so as to supplement his failing courage or replenish his lonely, loving heart.47

Morning Face then, concentrates on bringing out the 'splendours' of life through the humanity, courage, aspirations and exuberance of Krishan. One feels that Anand after decades of involvement in the miseries and struggles of his countrymen wants to affirm his deep faith in man and in the glory of life in the 'Seven Ages of Man' series. Its complex theme, its striking incidents with their deep significance, its powerful characterization, and last but not the least its highly absorbing narrative style, all contribute to make Morning Face one of the richest and most ambitious of Anand's works.
Confession of a Lover

The third novel in the series Confession of a Lover deals with the next stage in the development of Krishan, the unheroic hero who is tossed between his soul's exuberance and his rebellious nature on the one hand, and the pragmatic, hypocritical world of compromises created by his family and the elders of the copper-smith brotherhood, on the other.

Krishan Chander indulges in self-analysis. He feels the conflict between his adventurous free spirit which made him overpower the bullies who had made a first year fool of him one morning, and his helplessness to prevent the exploitation of his aunt at the hands of his own father, and the ill-treatment of her by his own mother. He is filled with remorse and hatred for the greed of his father, pity and disgust for the ignorance of his mother, utter bitterness for the perfidy of Harish, for the insidiousness of Ganesh and for the double talk of the elders of the brotherhood. He himself wants to love everyone and learn everything and grow to master his 'Kismet'.

The spirit of freedom overflows in him. He wants to imbibe the spirit of that freedom which was cherished by great men like Gandhi, Nehru, and Dr Kitchlew of the Jalianwala Bagh fame. He cannot tolerate the hypocrisy openly practised by the apostles of religions and the decree accorders presiding over brotherhoods. He bursts out in indignation:

'Who cares for these oldies, the swine! We must disown...
the Brahmins and the Mullahs and the big bearded ones! We must learn to rebel... The important thing is to be—to become rebellion itself. Free, free, utterly free... Rebellion and freedom and not acceptance and death should be our principle. Once we are free all of us will grow and discover marvellous things, we will become big people. We will make a new life.

We see Krishan wandering about Kucha Farir Khana, the Khalsa college, the City Students Association lodged in a sophisticated building in Queens Road, and the Ram Bagh gardens. From the two heritages—one from the skilled coppersmiths, and the other from a 'servant of the Sahibs' Krishan wants to escape into the charmed life of poetry, with a or without the actualities of the Gandhi movement. He feels desolate in this vast world and is perpetually beset with uncertainty and doubt. He questions the very existence of God, who is said to be benevolent to the good, but has proved to be neutral in the case of Devaki. He probes deep into the core of the matter to find out the truth. He was deprived of his lovely, innocent cousin Kaushalya at the age of nine, and his uncle Pratap died in the prime of his life. These deaths have urged him to search for the truth behind life. Dimly he gropes into the universal man of faith, as propounded by the Sufi saints and poets. There is also the poet Iqbal who, though a Muslim, does not believe in the Judgement Day which, he says, occurs everyday in man's life, and not only after death. One is on trial throughout one's life. Reciting prayers in Arabic without understanding them is sheer folly. He deplores Hindus hating Muslims and Muslims hating Hindus. He believes...
there may be some good even in bad people.

Krishan opposes submission to dogma and convention and even to one's own parents if they are orthodox. Moor, for instance, learns to shake off the evil influence of his orthodox father and the tutor Master Ishaq by Krishan's defiance: 'I was sure that this was not the way life should be, unthinking and dumb accepting fate and Allah Miyan, betraying the truth inside me all day and everyday.'

The poet Iqbal shows the will to create God Himself. He did not exist in all the faiths of a mankind. But Krishan's denunciation is more revolutionary: 'I would invent God merely to demolish Him.' Supernatural conception of God or spirit means nothing. It is through love that we make others feel our presence. He says: 'I suppose when each one of us carries the other when we project ourselves towards them.'

Professor Henry, though an Englishman, is a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, and wants the Britishers to quit India. He has studied Indian philosophy and believes in the wisdom of the Vedic Rishis. He is against Western civilization which has staged a giant world war. As a theosophist, he has associations with Mrs Annie Besant, and believes that the much sought — after heightened consciousness of the theosophists means 'a new awareness when you identify yourself with the whole universe'. He finds the nature of God as revealed in the Upanishads far more profound than that given by Christianity. We learn that he developed this conviction only when he met Annie Besant, who was once an
agnostic. However, Krishan is sceptical about the greatness of a religion which has the inbuilt caste system in it. He remembers with deep feeling, condemned creatures like Sakha, the sweeper, Ramcharan, the washerman's son, and Chota, the flute player son of a vagabond.

Despite all the odds, Krishan is determined to sustain himself by his urges for freedom: 'I would have my anxieties, my difficulties and tears but I would also laugh,' he says. He is so greatly moved by the discrimination against the untouchables, that he feels he would murder all the Brahmins for their crimes, even though it would be an unGandhian thing to do.

Krishan is vexed by the fundamental philosophical questions like 'Who am I? What is life? And what is existence?' His learned professors fail to answer these questions. Continuing his tirade against traditional faith, he asserts: 'I would not believe in the old, old customs; I want to have a new faith of my own, away from the rituals...'. He delves deep into the ethics of logic, the questions of Maya and Brahma, but is plunged into a deep inner turmoil his 'Ghaon Magoon', unrest, confusion and conflict. He wants to know whether there are two worlds—one of the spirit, the other of the matter. Whether God has made the universe and created soul and body, or is there only one world—body-soul: soul-body?

Krishan becomes conscious of the transition from the naïve of childhood to boyhood and youth, when he becomes aware of the subtle change in his attitude towards Devaki which is now more
reserved and sensual, and devoid of the innocence of childhood. He recollects the joy of basking in the sunshine of Mumtaj's smile at Ludhiana, and the open acceptance of kisses from Shakuntala, the wife of Dr Chummi Lal at Jhelum, but such love was a special privilege of childhood. There is unmistakable touch of sensuousness in his love for his aunt. He raises his voice against the ex-communication of Devaki for consorting with Noor's mother. He that the cruelest aspect of our religion is to deprive a widow of all rights to participate in any auspicious event. Devaki complains: 'Hai, son! They did not even let me cross the threshold and stand inside to greet the bride of my adopted son! And when it was the question of spending on the marriage it was I, who was the mother-in-law.' Krishan is her only hope in this world. She completely breaks down on learning that Krishan may be removed from her 'bad influence' and that her cousin Ananta may not be allowed to do the household jobs of fetching and carrying for her. She ends her miserable life by taking poison. This sudden blow shakes Krishan's whole being, and causes acute mental disturbance resulting in nightmares. Having no faith in God he rejects the idea of retribution in Hell and torture reserved for the soul. He begins to believe in the Buddhist idea that the world is replete with pain. The lost thought of having his beloved aunt for ever is too much to bear. He cries out:

'Oh, where have you gone suddenly, leaving me alone?'

But he is sure that all these 'ravings could not solve the mystery of the corpse floating on the waters of
Hell like a raft, kissed by the waves, until it dissolves in the darkness of the horizon on the other side of the shore, leaving me to mourn in my nightmares.  

Professor Henry consoles Krishan by philosophizing: 'Death', he says, 'continues into life, dust to dust becomes the body—one with the air, the water and the sky, until it is the supreme Brahman.' Krishan remains unconvinced, but Professor Henry, it seems, is determined to win the heart of his disciple. He says:

'Time is a river which will flow into ocean. Perhaps she is in you if you can feel her... No one but the wounded can heal himself. We must float in that river and go to penetrate the invisible in the vast ocean... Death is not an evil, if one accepts death as mere passing away. But what actually touch Krishan's heart are the words: 'Darkness sang to the light and the light of love was peace.' The poet Rimbaud of France tries to calm himself by conscious disordering of the senses. Krishan wants to go out of his senses and get rid of his perpetual vexation. He says the 'the logic of illogic is my logic.'

Professor Henry's philosophical approach does not satisfy him, but the analogy of Krishna and Balram given by him binds Krishan and Noor together more intimately. He finds some recompense for the loss of Devaki in the friendship with Noor, which is now elevated to divine level through the analogy.

Krishan asserts that Gautam is right for he was aware of the pain of life. Like Hindus he did not preach Moksha and salvation. He taught Karuna—pity.
The desire to see the poet Iqbal and meet Yasmin at Lahore as suggested by Noor, serves as an effective relief from the strained atmosphere of the 'Ocean of Nectar'. Love has the power to remove the 'twists and turns' of the soul and make life more intense. Highlighting the role of love, Noor quotes Iqbal:

'Iqbal, your love has smoothed out all,
My twists and turns,
I had wished for a long time that some one,
Might straighten my crooked soul.' 14

Yasmin comes into the life of Krishan like a houri. He is introduced to her as an open eyed poet who has unrestrained desire 'to know everything—the known and the unknown.' He wants to be awake to test everything before he will accept it. Love is immortal and therefore the object of love is also without end. Adonis was immortal to Shelley, so should Yasmin be to Krishan. It is only the physical love that dies, professor Henry says:

'The sublimation of love is higher. Passion does not clear the lamp; it clouds the chimney with its smoke.' 15

The splendour of life rests on realising its higher values and not in the mean mercenary pursuits.

Krishan is still groping for happiness in himself and others, by setting aside the accepted importances. His disgust against his colleagues is expressed thus:

'I hate those fools, all taking degrees to get jobs.
I loathe all those who sit in the Judgment, priests Chaudhars, Sahibs, Police Officers and Professors—
they lie all the time! I may be confused and uncertain and even bitter, but I do not hate in a small way. I hate in a big way. To me the white Sahibs are death. All the knights are death. All the pompous swine are death. All those who are not poet are dead. 16

The love of Yasmin in whom he sees the re-incarnation of Devaki, transforms his whole being. Krishna is against the taboos and conventions wrought by men to shackle women. He cries out: 'I realize the injustice to women, injustice to Devaki, injustice to Naseem—they murder the soul of women.' 17

His meeting with the poet Iqbal confirms some of his cherished beliefs. Iqbal's ideals are in tune with his own indomitable will. The poet says:

'We must change our outlook. We must take inspiration from the West, yet we must differ from them. But they have shown that the world is made by man and not by God. Man makes himself.' 18

Poetry must not be confined to hackneyed phrases: 'Poetry', says Iqbal, 'is the quest of truth more than religion, it is a part of love.' 19 One must not immerse oneself in set patterns. The poet's views on religion are equally unorthodox. He says:

'Reciting the Suras of Quran without understanding their meaning seems nonsensical to me and to assert the existence of God seems to me arrogant. Actually make God and become Him. As an ultimate reality He is the outcome of the coherent creative life of man. Every Indian under his skin is a Vedantist in this sense. We are perhaps the most soulful people in the world. But Hindu religion has destroyed everything of the Vedic spirit.
through its closed systems and rituals... My professors in Cambridge, MacTaggart and Bergeon in France, believe in God as dynamic creative action, as against our mystics who believe in God as silence. In my Jivar I have asked for the growth of man, of the individual. 20

His views about marriage are equally striking: 'Nothing can be more wonderful than a Hindu Muslim marriage.' 21

Our hero achieves the highest value of life, as he feels, when he lands in jail for the alleged bomb conspiracy case with Lala Kedarnath in Lahore. In an attempt to overthrow the British Government, three of Lala Kedarnath's friends sacrifice their lives. In the light of this, he feels a sense of shame at being bailed out through the efforts of Dr Iqbal, though outwardly he welcomes the release. Krishan's parents appear on the scene and the poet gets him off on the ground that he was ignorant of the whole affair. Lala Kedarnath, Badrinath, and Sri Ram who survive the accident, solemnly deny making the bomb, to the police, and later before the magistrate. They contend that they were doing some experiments for their normal practicals in chemistry when one of the test tubes burst. The trial scene in the court of a magistrate becomes impressive because of the presence of the historical figure Lalla Lajpat Rai. The whole atmosphere is surcharged with the undercurrent of the freedom movement. The concrete facts of the struggle for liberation are interwoven into the spirit of India itself.

After his release Krishan goes to pay his debt of gratitude to the poet along with Yasmin, who is asked to recite any poem
Shepherdess she loves best. She chooses Iqbal’s poem ‘The Orphan Boy’ and recites a melody that the creator cries out with her appreciation and blesses her and by implication her possible marriage.

Condemned by his father for alleged participation in the bomb-making conspiracy, and despairing of his love for Yasmin, Krishan runs away to Bombay. He meets Reverend Williams on the way, who pays for his ticket and gives him a letter of introduction to the English journalist Mr. Horniman, who is a follower of Gandhi. Before he can see Mr. Horniman, Lach Khan, a Pathan peon takes him to one of those dirty hovels which he rents out to the coolies and labourers. Krishan is shocked to see the wretchedness of the poor and the oppressed and remarks: ‘It was better to get drowned in the black waters than survive in the rat holes by the slimy drains.’ Being a nationalist himself, Mr. Horniman greets Krishan, the rebel, cordially. In the eyes of Krishan Horniman is like Captain O’Sullivan of his father’s regiment. The journalist introduces Krishan to Mermaduke Pickthai who has adopted Islam after relinquishing Christianity. Mr. Pickthai is also a pro-Indian nationalist and is conscious of the brutality of General Dyer in 1919. As a matter of fact he desires to go to Amritsar and apologise to the people for the murderous cruelty of his compatriot, and to convince them that all Englishmen are not like the butcher Dyer.

Next morning when Krishan goes to the sea he witnesses the splendour which he had longed for in the Punjab plains: ‘The waves came like the frightening swish of some wild music. I felt
as though I had walked into the first morning of the world... I looked at the nimble sun, till I was blinded. Liquid gold was pouring down on the earth. This makes him recollect the joys of his happy childhood which he has failed to experience in his youth. Like Wordsworth he asks: 'Where had those moments gone. Perhaps happiness was only in moments of innocence, when one was quite empty and received the joy of life.' He cogitates over the mystery of creation sitting on the edge of the sea, and resolves to search for the secrets of cosmic phenomena.

On his return to Amritsar, on Harman's persuasion, he learns that Yasmin is not happy with the railway guard to whom she has been married off, and this man has two more wives. He grows impatient and wishes to rescue Yasmin. She is both and obsession and an inspiration. His unrestrained emotions find expression in the Absent One, a novel, which he begins to write. Professor Henry guesses Krishan's infatuation for Yasmin and advises him:

'The fact that a person falls in love may be an accident but love itself is not a series of accidents. It is the only permanent reality of life, which helps one to destroy sex desires and lead one to the highest consciousness. Love resolves all conflicts.'

This philosophical idealisation of love does not go home to Krishan. He is for hugging the concrete images of love in his arms.

Krishan analyses his relation with his father who is always chastising him for his love of poetry, for following Mahatma
Gandhi, for his involvement in the terrorist movement and for his infatuation for a married Muslim woman. His father's mercenary attitude and servitude to the British Government work themselves into his consciousness. He is determined to end all tensions.

The pursuit of petty things in everyday life brings narrowness to man's vision. Krishan wants to have a sublime vision of life and to live in right action and right thought. He desires to lift the suppressed to divine glory. He believes:

'I must not accept life by merely noticing it. Writing about love must become a passion. I must not concede smallness to the small in life. I must go forward and progress towards the secret higher self of Iqbal. Beyond my febrile ignorance, the understanding of causes of petty squabbles is important—the appeasement of my ghaam-maan even if it be through the relief of writing more words in my novel The Absent One. Strangely the day when I do not write something or the other seemed to me a wasted day.'

The visit of Mrs Annie Besant to lecture in the Khalsa College not only provides a rare opportunity to Krishan to see a national heroine, but also strengthens Krishan's cherished ideals. She loves India so much that she calls it her motherland, she exports students:

'I believe that this ancient land has a high destiny in future. It has been the teacher of mankind in the past. It has been reduced to nothing in the present. It has no status, no dignity. I believe that we can only live together if our people do not oppress one another, exploit them, deny their culture and
make them fight each other in the name of religion by the imperial method of divide and rule... Let me take you to the glorious past of India. Our age is the reverse of that age. So you cannot imagine that a time like that could have been. But the poems and thoughts of the Vedic period show us clearly, how, on this very earth of Punjab, a fresh new people destroyed the local superstitions, and evolved the noblest ideas. And thus was built up one of the first civilizations of the world.'

She recites a Vedic hymn in Sanskrit and renders it into English:

'The Earth has her hills and valleys. Here are the wide plains. She is the bearer of the plants of many, many uses. May she stretch out her hand and be beneficial. I. The progress of man from barbarism to civilization is bound up with the emancipation from tribal and material intrapings to self consciousness, which perfects man's natural genius through questionings. The growth of reason led to evolution of the great concept of the divine law or cosmic order. Among the most exalted poems of the world, the Rig Veda has the first explanation of life in the hymn of creation: Non being then existed not, nor was there being. The mediavel saints Baba Farid, Kabir and Nanak, Muslims and Hindus, brought the old heritage forward. They believed in one God and preached love. They rejected casta. They were against cruelty, injustice and violence. Today Mahatma Gandhi is teaching us the same truths. He is teaching us not only to attain political freedom, but freedom from ignorance, freedom from casta, freedom from slavery to custom. He is leading us to new innocence beyond sadness, melancholy and disgust, to a new joy in devoted labour for this country—as a part of the whole world...'' She emphasises that only a three pronged drive of the Indian people could liberate us: 'the struggle against foreign rule, so that India became a member of the British Commonwealth; the struggle against false gods; the struggle against one's
own bad habits, like child marriage, dowry and uncleanliness, spitting in the streets, backbiting, envy and greed.'

Concluding her speech, she urges the youth to follow Gandhi, the regenerator of the Indian people. She finally recites a Sanskrit shloka and gives the English version:

Lead me from the unreal to the real,
Lead me from darkness to light.'

The lecture causes tremors in the hearts of the students against the pro-British Chief Khalsa Diwan, which governs the college and manages the Golden Temple at Amritsar. Principal Walters and Professor Henry are transferred. Professor Teja Singh and Professor Bawa Markishan Singh are arrested. And the bigwigs bring the police to the campus.

These unjust actions of the authorities provoke immediate reaction from the students. A committee is formed by the student leaders to uplift the status of the Sikh Shrine, and obtain the reinstatement of the professors. The athlete Piano Singh calls for Dharma. And Krishan, who is already converted to Gandhi, comes forward to participate. Others follow him. The Satyagraha soon gathers momentum. Mahatma Gandhi welcomes the movement, aimed at reforming the holy shrine, and restoring peace in the college. The involvement of the intellectuals raises the issue above communal motivations. The nonviolent movement brings the people from the villages as it could touch off the grievances of the peasants against the unjust rule of the nobility, whom the British government supports. Some students feel that Gandhiji, by initiating the people into the nonviolent movement, is making weaklings, compromisers and cowards of brave people. They begin to
acknowledge their bad habits and are willing to fight for purity. The movement goes on for one month and ends in victory. Krishan who has to go to jail finds it difficult to remain completely nonviolent during the movement, and passes through a spiritual awakening to humility.

But when Noor and Krishan go to the college, they find that tension created by the strike still prevails. Krishan receives a hero’s welcome. Piara Singh and Krishan are called into the Principal’s room, where the new Principal Lal Jagnohan and the poet Bhair Vir Singh are sitting. The latter explains the changes they will make in the management of the college and confirms the reinstatement of the suspended professors. The students outside want Mr Malhotra and Professor Henry and call their leaders traitors. Sarmadi attacks Piara Singh and the mob rushes towards Krishan, pushing him into the Principal’s office. Krishan receives some injuries and is taken to the surgery of Dr Bhatia. On Krishan’s recovery Noor brings Yasmin to meet him.

After coming through one ordeal, Krishan plunges into another, to rescue Yasmin from the clutches of her cruel husband to have her for himself. To distract Krishan from his pursuit Mama Dayal Singh tells him: ‘Love like greed can have no ends. What if you meet her and possess her, it is like the child wanting the moon. You must go beyond all that is transitory, impermanent like desire.’ There are, he continues, stages of growth, ‘there is beginning, stopping, decay and destruction of everything including desire and then there is the future dimension of life.’ Mama Dayal Singh wants
Krishan to see his Guru in the Beas Ashram. But Yasmin is never out of Krishan's mind, despite all these sermons. Soor hands over a note from the beloved narrating the hardships and frustrations she is undergoing in her husband's home. She/Krishan's love as the only recourse to save her life. They make the excuse of visiting the Beas Ashram with Yasmin and Naseem and go there with Mama Doyal Singh.

All the four reach the banks of the river Beas where they stay in a Dak Bungalow, Krishan and Yasmin set out in a hide and seek for each other which symbolises their search for love. The portrayal of their passionate love has a lyricism that recalls what the poet Mir says:

'I spurn all other joys the world can offer, when the beloved is in my embrace.'

Krishan, too, has forgotten everything else and is totally engrossed in his love for Yasmin. They are involved in an idyll on the banks of the river Beas which is one of the tenderest scenes in the novel.

Their return to Amritsar finds them preparing for their B.A. and B.Sc. examinations. Krishan's studies are interrupted by the memory of Yasmin. When Soor is studying the mystery in the test tube, Krishan is observing it in the broad face of nature. He says: 'I sing of the dazzle of the sun and find the mystery behind her splendour.'

Naseem returns with a message from Yasmin that she is pining for Krishan and is trying to snatch an opportunity to come to him finally. Her demon husband suspects that she had gone to
Amritaar to meet her lover. 'I will murder the man,' he cries. Krishna loses all hope of getting Yasmin and decides to end his life. But he is saved by the unexpected arrival of his mother. He learns that sorrow must be faced and it is a sin, an unpardonable sin to end one's life. He seeks support in the words of Iqbal: 'The self of an individual is in the process of becoming even though he suffers, and pain is helpful to growth. Dukha was not the ultimate end as Buddha believed, but relative.' Krishna is wavering between this belief and disbelief—a conflict created by his miraculous rescue. He observes:

' Surely there was a God who had decided, in spite of my revolt against His very existence, to be merciful. And He felt that the punishment He gave me was too disproportionate for my crimes of disbelief or He was punishing me properly by condemning me to live and suffer for my bad deeds. Could there be other unseen influences at work? Something that I must find out. I must pursue knowledge, even religion. I must conquer myself—all my ill feelings. Apart from discarding the rituals and fraudulent Brahmins, I must seek the meaning of prayer, inquire into the urge for self realisation.'

Krishna goes to investigate the meaning of self. It is not merely the congeries of thoughts, as Hume said, but as Iqbal would say: 'An active mind with will for action.' He adds further: 'Only knowledge may provide an escape from solitude.' As against his father's wish he adopts poetry as the vocation of his life. 'Through poetry and prayer says Iqbal, one could attain insight and integrate oneself.' Iqbal prognosticates that there is an
ultimate equilibrium in the universe above 'ghaon-moon' and that expansion of the soul into awareness is possible. The anarchic life of Kucha Pakir Khana is no place for such sublime quests. He wants to go the legendary valleys of Kashmir, where, he says,

'...my anger and frustration may go and my unrest may reveal my destiny...Guru Nanak was said to have wandered into the mountains up to Mount Kailash in search. I must do the same. I must leave the fanaticism of complete disbelief and give my free spirit a chance. I must clean mind of conflicts to have visions...My love for Yasmin could probably reveal that I loved other people also. I must discover the invisible deeper links with ancient poets which had come down into my wild imagination. 33 Krishan now begins to follow the teaching of Hama Dyal Singh: 'Today I shall not hate but love and love and love.' 33

Noor is aware that Krishan would not dare to receive Yasmin if she comes to him with her one year old child and another in her womb by himself. He honestly confesses: '...I still loved myself and my pleasure more than I loved Yasmin. I was a megalomaniac. I wanted the experience of making love, but did not want the burden of her 33...But he finally resolves to accept Yasmin if she comes to him. Krishan and Noor decide to go the 'perfumed garden' Kashmir and call Yasmin there. The journey is adroitly arranged by Noor. Yasmin and Naseem are to join them later in the happy valley;

'If there is a paradise anywhere,
It is here, it is here, it is here,'
Krishan echoes the words of Emperor Shah Jahan. But while Krishan is seeing his beloved in everything, the shocking news of Yasmin's death comes in a telegram sent by Naseem. Krishan's immediate reaction is that 'the swine had killed her'. Like Orpheus he wants to go to the border land of death and touch her. Perchance he can bring her back to life.

Many suspect 'something black in the pulses' on their unexpected return home. People know about Yasmin's death. Ananta, the rogue is the only person to sympathise with Krishan. 'Life changes, everything changes. Even love fades away,' Krishan wants to bury himself in the grave beside his beloved. But that is not possible. He wants to escape—but where? He is afraid that his parents may come from Ferozpur cantonment. He knows that the household of Noor will no longer receive him. He cannot go to the Ram Bagh gardens for fear of the police. He becomes a prisoner in his own cell. He learns about Ganpat's perfidy and the torture of Drabha at the hands of the police. Munoo the little boy has gone to the market to work as a coolie and earn a living for his master. Krishan thinks of the pathetic situation and bursts out: 'Everyone was a slave, a convict, condemned to live. God had betrayed us all. He had deceived us with minor joys and then left us to stew in the juice of our sweat and tears and sorrows. This includes the oppressors who are the slaves of their demonic impulses for power over others.'

Ultimately Krishan goes to meet Noor. He also thinks of writing an elegy like Tennyson's In Memorium dealing with the pain Yasmin might have suffered at the time of her death.
recollects the Buddha's words: 'Pain is the essence of existence.' But the Buddha has also said: 'I teach the ending of dukha. Nothing is permanent in this changing world. One could rise from the unauthentic existence to authentic existence. One could work out his own salvation through karuna-pitya.' Here even sorrow has its own grandeur. He observes: My disenchantment had brought me to the brink down. But the shock of death had also brought freedom from sentimentality and ignorance. Did one have to learn one's lesson only through suffering?

Noor apologises to Krishan for leaving him alone. He narrates the scandal the elders had spread about them. Noor has no alternative but to bear the disgrace patiently. Krishan is a rebel and cannot tolerate such cowardly advice. He speaks out:

'Things will never change. We young will never be allowed to come into our own to be free. It is a crime to be young in Amritsar. One is a goonda, if one ventures out to Lahore. Why must marriages be arranged without our being consulted? As for the girls they are goats given away to the highest bidder, who can cut them up at will. We are not to think our own thoughts, feel our own feelings.'

These words infuse courage in Noor. He appears meek, but has a rebellious spirit inside.

Krishan wants to go to Lahore to see the poet Iqbal and put flowers on Yasmin's grave. The poet's views about death are not at all pessimistic:

'Those facing death die but are not extinguished
in reality they never leave us. Death only means the renewal of the will under the cloak of sleep. It is a call for awakening." 41 Shelley in his _Adonises_ expresses a similar view:

"He lives, he wakes, his death is dead, not he,
Mourn not for Adonis."

These words sink into Krishna, though he cannot believe in immortality.

For revealing Acharjahal's secret love for his son Moti's wife and his father's for Devaki, Krishna is severely abused.

And when his mother comes forward to defend him, she is kicked by his father. Krishna cannot tolerate that his innocent mother be penalised for his crimes. He decides to leave home and breathe the free air of Europe.

Krishna decides to see Dr Iqbal and go away to various places of learning in Europe, like Heidelberg, where his poet hero had taken his Doctor's degree in Philosophy. The ambition to take a foreign degree fills him with joy. He alights from the train at Mian Mir cantonment, advances towards the Shalimar gardens to brood over the last broken appointment with Yasmin.

He says, 'something was urging me to proceed on a pilgrimage to the West, penetrating farther and farther in the space and time across the immeasurable oceans and unbounded earth like a lost child trying to find himself in the world fair.' 42 He finds the gates of Shalimar gardens barred. So, he proceeds towards the poet's residence. The poet welcomes him and is shocked to learn of Yasmin's death. He deplores the depth of frailty, despair and ignorance in which our people are sunk:
'They are the slaves of their own weaknesses as much as the cruelty of the Sarker. To be sure it needs a willed effort to make the Self; also knowledge, to belong to the higher sphere of consciousness. And yet in Asia, we have accepted defeat, despair and melancholy. We have been conquered and looted and decimated, and now we are indigent. We have forgotten the joy of living—to grow to evolve—you know son, pain is often necessary. It brings awareness. We have begun to fight against foreign rule but not against our slavery to old customs, spells and sophistications, well one of your Hindu philosophers Aurbindo, says, 'Meditate'. I say 'Act'.

The poet's comment on death of the innocent which men usually ascribe to God is: That is the tragedy of man—the tragedy of his lack of will to arrange life for higher purposes. They sell their daughters—all of them ignorant ones. To Krishan the poet seems more his father than the father who had given him birth. Iqbal immediately endorses Krishan's desire to go to Europe. He offers to towards his one month's stay abroad and advises him to book a berth on the Italian boat, through Thomas Cook and Sons, Bombay. He also promises to write to Professor Nicholson.

Krishan's going abroad means a transition in his life from his world of narrowness to the new broad world of the West. He says: 'I will adventure beyond the surface to initiate myself into challenging everything. He would probe into the ultimate mystery of life: What is man? What is he here for? What can he do or think? And where is he going?'

His mother gives him some money by pawning her jewellery
His principal Jagmohan contributes a cheque and an overcoat for the bitter English winter. For Moor life without Krishan would be unbearable. And Krishan realises the value of friendship. In a poignant scene in Ram Bagh gardens, the souls of the two brothers—Krishna and his Balram, as Professor Henry had called them, fuse into each other, in an almost mystical togetherness. Apart from his friends and relations, except his own father, even his enemies came to see him off.

The novel thus centres round its protagonist, the new Krishan more than the God Krishna whose play acting in this world symbolises the 'Ras Leela' of Brindavan. Krishan too has his gopis Kayshaliya, Devali, Dattas, Shakuntala and Yasmin with whom he enacts life's drama in the twentieth century India.

Thus, the narrator Krishan, projects the emergent desires of men in our times. If these desires are not fulfilled and the novel ends unhappily, as not in the Bhagavad Gita, it is because the absolute harmony of the old world myth has yielded to the disharmony of a cosmos broken to bits by the new, more powerful, Kansas of the modern world.

The hero—anti-hero assumes a new form as the individualist who seeks knowledge as well as love. He seeks to be the self-conscious human being, whose ego enters the age beyond the God-King avatar. Inheriting the vibrations of the 'Rasleela' of the woods of Nandura, he goes to look for himself on the banks of the Thames. The essence of his being may have been nourished on the milk and honey of the native landscape, but
he assumes a new mask on his dark face.

The transition of consciousness, from the innocent happy childhood of Seven Summers, and the vitalising experiences of Morning Face, has gone through the devastating impact of adolescent emotions and thoughts making the Confession of a Lover a series of conflicts, the crucible of the dramatic novel as against the old recitals of the Bhakti cults.

The book is, therefore, a powerful portrayal of man's inexhaustible capacity to shape his awareness, as revealed through the personality of Krishan. Although, the novel treats of an individual, yet it portrays the despair, frustrations, hopes and aspirations of youth everywhere in our country, seeking the first and the last freedom. Each insight of Krishan evinces a resilient will, scorn of time-worn customs and rituals and what the elders think to be their traditional privileges.

The passionate love scenes depicted in the pages relate to the perennial love of the Ras-Leela, from which Balk Raj Anand seems to have drunk in the bhakti of his mother in the 'Ocean of Nectar', cleaned by the sufferings of Krishan himself and his companions.

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Seven Summers


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4. Ibid., p. 58.
6. Ibid., pp. 14, 15, 16.
7. Ibid., p. 27.
8. (a)(b). Ibid., p. 38. (a)(b) denote extracts from the same para.
10. Ibid., p. 49.
11. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
12. Ibid., p. 52.
13. Ibid., p. 53.
15. Ibid., pp. 105-106.
16. Ibid., p. 123.
17. Ibid., p. 125.
18. Ibid., p. 128.
19. Ibid., p. 143.
20. Ibid., p. 146.
21. Ibid., p. 156.
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23. Ibid., p. 162.
24. Ibid., p. 212.
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II

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9. Ibid., p. 52.
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41. Ibid., p. 547.
42. Ibid., pp. 562, 563.
43. Ibid., p. 565.
44. Ibid., p. 569.
45. Ibid., p. 570.
46. Ibid., p. 571.

III

Confession of a Lover

2. Ibid., p. 58.