

CHAPTER-V

TAMAS: A SAGA OF PARTITION PAIN

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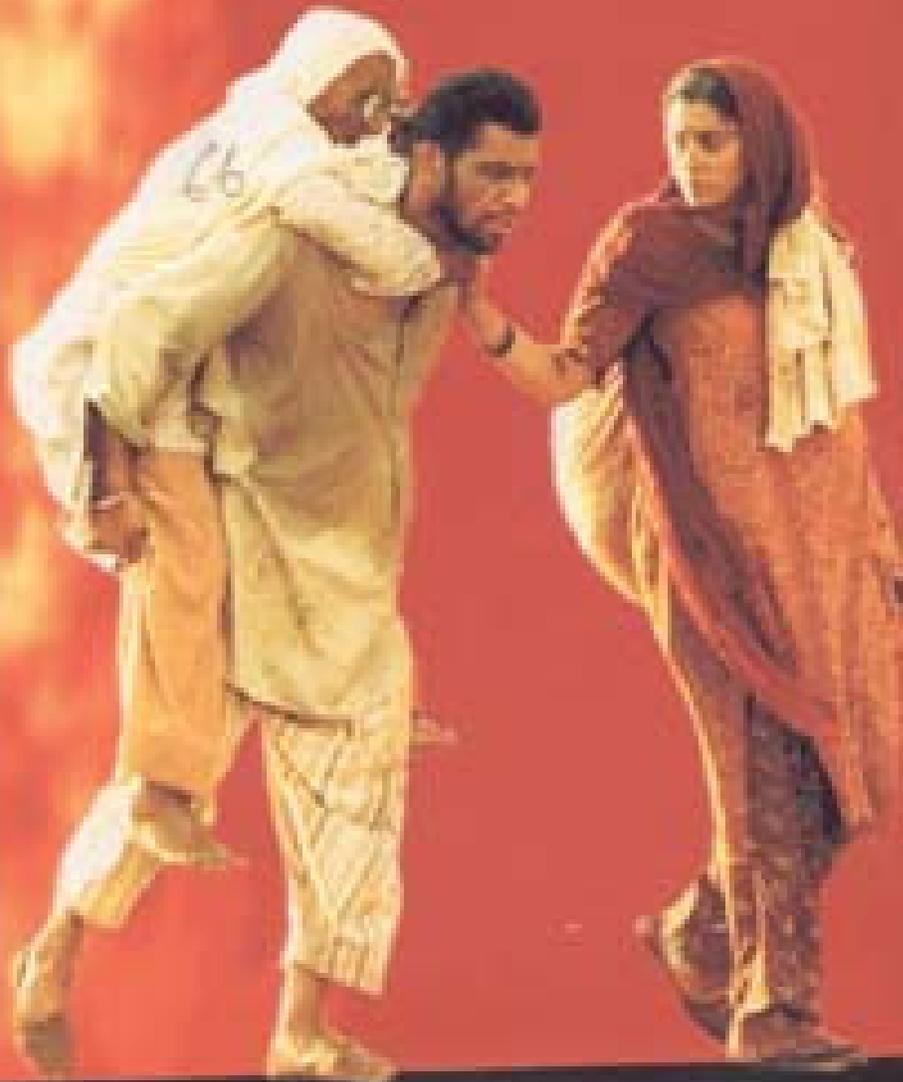
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Tamas

Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award

Bhisham Sahni



5.1 Birth and Parentage:-

Bhishma Sahani was born on August 1915, in present day Pakistan at Rawalpindi. He takes primary education in Hindi and Sanskrit at home. After completing his primary education he passes his High school in Urdu and English medium. He did his Post Graduation in M.A. from Government College, Lahore and doctorate from Punjab University. He taught in the degree colleges at Amritsar and Ambala. Sahani did some assignments in the honorary teaching and did some field work in business. In July, 2003 Bhishma Sahani passed away.

5.2 His Works:-

After Partition he shifted to India and turned to journalism. He works with the theatre company in Mumbai. He has well known knowledge of Urdu, Sanskrit, Russian, Punjabi and Hindi language. He also edited a number of magazines. He writes a several works. His collection of short stories like Bhagya Rekha (1953), Pahla Patha (1956), Bhatakti Rekha (1966), Nischar (1983) become very famous in the literature. He also wrote short stories for children's such as Gulal ka Khel and The train has reach Amritsar is very popular. He wrote a play known as Hanush (1977), Arvind Gaur (1933), Kabir Khara Bazar Mein (1981), Madhavi (1982). He also acts in the films such as Mohan Joshi Hazir Ho! (1984), Tamas (1986), Kasba (1991), Little Buddha (1993), Mr. and Mrs. Iyer (2002). Bhishma Sahani writes a five Hindi novel. His famous work Tamas (Darkness, 1974) win the Award in 1975 for literature. Bhishma Sahani won several Awards in his life. In 1986, a Govind Nihalani makes a movie Tamas: An unforgettable saga of Partition.

5.3 Ideology about Partition:-

Bhishma Sahani lived the partition period and suffered from the saga of struggle of Indian Partition. His work shows a highlight on social, political, tragically issues of the society. His series of work expose the darkness of human madness. Sahani's all works is full of heart touching experiences and portrait the horrible scenes of partition. His work was full of reality, excellence of characterization and its humanity.

He exposes the various important issues through his work. Bhasham Sahani exposes British policy of divide and rule. He also depicts the picture of shameful opportunism of the upper classes of both the Hindu and Muslim community. His work contains theme of communal riots and its darkness. He uses the sensitive techniques to expose human tragedy. His work gave the full canvas of reality of the painful saga of partition of India. Majorly his work focuses on real issues and problem of the society. He was portrait the lusty Indian and Pakistani political leader's behaviour in his works. Sahani were snatches the selfish faces through his work. He shows political hunger between the Hindu and Muslim community. His work was full of political sense.

5.4 A Saga of Pain in TAMAS:-

The novel opens in a dark room; Nathu was trying to kill a pig.

*"The clay lamp in the alcove flickered. Close to it, where the wall joined the ceiling, two bricks had been removed from the wall, leaving behind a gaping hole. With every gust of wind, the flame in the clay lamp quivered violently and long shadows flitted across the walls. But as soon as the flame steadied again, a thin line of smoke would rise it in a straight light, licking, as it went, the side of the alcove."*¹

The room was lighted by a clay lamp placed in the alcove. The lamp wavered with the blowing of the wind and it made the atmosphere in the room grimmer. Nathu was tired now as everything the pig slipped out of his grip. Nathu was breathing hard and the animal was running in all corners of the room. It had also scattered the garbage in the room and the stink made Nathu sick of this hopeless business. So far, Nathu had not been able to injure the animal and he could see only a few drops of its blood on the floor. Murad Ali had asked him to supply a dead pig, for it was needed by the veterinary doctor Saloria. Murad Ali gave him a crisp five rupee note and now he had to do it. Here author draw Murad Ali fearer look and was an employee of the Municipal Committee.

*"Besides Murad Ali was a man of contacts. There was hardly a person, connected with the Municipal Committee, with whom he did not have dealings. Waving his thin cane stick and walking..., his swarthy face, his bristling, black moustaches, his small, ferrety eyes, the knee-length khaki coat he wore over a white salwar, even the turban on his head, all combined to make him look distinctive. Without any of these, even without his thin cane stick, or the well-bound turban, he would not be what he was."*²

Now Nathu was in a fix. He had to complete the job before dawn. The clock in the Sheikh's Tower strike two and Nathu again moved to get hold of the animal. He pulled out one slab of stone from the wall and hurled it on the pig. The slab hit the animal and Nathu slipped out of the room. The moon had come out. He entered the room and saw in the weak light of the clay lamp, the pig were standing in the center of the room. Now it looked furious. The pig tried to walk but lurched to one side. It was dead now and Nathu heaved a sigh of relief.

With the scene of Prabhat Pheri, author described ancient tradition of Indian culture. The Prabhat Pheri is a symbol of peace which maintains religious respect to other religion of the town in the name of God. Next day early in the morning, very few people had assembled to start the morning march through the streets.

*"Just then a glimpse of light was seen far away. A man with a hurricane lamp had turned the corner of the Bara Bazar and was coming towards the Congress office. The light of the lamp fell only on the man's legs so it seemed as though only a pair of pajamas was walking through."*³

Now it was 4.00 a.m. and the Congress workers had started assembling in front of its party office. They were Bakshiji, Aziz, Mehtaji, Kashmiri Lal, Shanker Lal and the General, the energetic Sikh. They assembled in the room of the Party office to discuss various issues regarding the role of the Congress Party. They came out in the street with the party flag to march for peace. They had decided to do the work of cleaning roads and drains in Muslim dominated areas of the town.

They hoped that their gesture would bring the two communities closer. Now they marched towards Imamdin's mohalla. There is little beat raise of religious tension between Hindu and Muslim community in the town in the name of separation. Meanwhile Nathu was relieved his job and he was standing out in the lane. It was still dark and very few people could be seen. He started walking towards the other side of the lane. Suddenly his foot strike in opposition to something untruthful in the track.

*"At one place his foot fell into something sticky and slimy with a strong, pungent smell like that of cow dung. He steadied himself, extricated his foot from the half-broken pitcher. A swear-word was about to escape ...among young fellows in the town to fill a pitcher with cow dung and horse urine, and fling it into the entrance of some tight-fisted miser of the locality. It was commonly believed that the act would induce the shower."*⁴

It was an act of black magic to harm someone. Nathu was disturbed. He passed through the lanes flanked by Muslims and Hindu dhobis. Now he was on the open road and tried to overcome his nervousness. He has heard the muezzin's call from the mosque which was placed behind Imamdin's mohalla.

*"He had seen Murad Ali coming from that direction once or twice. But then, Murad Ali was seen everywhere in the town-walking in the middle of the road, swinging his cane, his thick, ...Nathu and quickened his pace. The fellow would be cross if he saw him loitering there. Murad Ali had given clear instructions that after delivering the carcass of the pig, Nathu should wait for him in the hut."*⁵

He heard the sound of singing by Congress Party workers. Just then, the slogans of 'Pakistan Zindabad' were heard from the other corner of the lane.

Their leader Mehmood shouted against Hindus and their Muslim associate like Maulana Azad. He declared that Muslims in India were not safe and Pakistan would be their homeland.

The enthusiastic Sikh 'General' shouted slogans for a united India. Nathu was seeing all this silently.

Suddenly his eyes fall on a man standing behind Mehmood. It was Murad Ali who had instigated people like Mehmood to hate Hindus and Sikhs. Nathu slipped away and started running away from that lane.

"As they passed by him, one of them raised a slogan: 'Quomi Nara!' And the others answered, 'Bande Mataram!'. Hardly had they finished, when from a distance, the sound of another slogan was heard: 'Pakistan Zindabad!' Qaid-e-Azam Zindabad!' (referring to Mr Jinnah)"⁶

The exchange of hot words had subsided in the street and the Congressmen had marched towards the other side of the lane.

"Congress is the body of the Hindus. The Musalmans have nothing to do with it.' To which an elderly person from the other group replied: 'Congress is everyone's organization, of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims. You know this well enough, Mahmud Sahib. There was a time when you too were with us.'"⁷

On the other hand, Richard, the deputy commissioner of the area took his wife Liza on the top of a hill on their horses. They could see a big valley draw out from the base of the mount. It presented a panoramic view of the area which was rich in charming beauty.

"Before them lay a vast plain stretching far into the distance, interspersed with mounds and small hillocks. A blue haze hung over the horizon. High above in the cerulean sky, kites glided with outstretched wings. Beyond while the eastern flank, covered in a shimmering haze, barely revealed a range of low, reddish hills stretching far into the distance."⁸

Richard had brought his wife to this spot to show her the glorious sunrise that Liza was fed up with the dull routine in India. She could not appreciate the local environment. Richard started giving her historical details of the region and Liza was surprised to discover his historical sense. She realized that Richard love for Indian life and its cultural background. Richard had a good collection of idols and faces of Buddhas along with the items of Indian folk art. He also had a good library.

Richard began to tell Liza about the antiquity and history of Indians. He revealed the truth that people in India, whether Hindus or Muslims, had a common origin in Central Asia. They had common roots but were not aware of this fact. He told her:

*"These people know only what we tell them.' After a little pause he added, 'Most people have no knowledge of their history. They only live it.'"*⁹

But Liza wanted his personal attention. He told her about the mounting tensions between the Hindus and the Muslims in the area. Back at home, Richard continued to tell Liza about his fascination for Buddha. Liza was surprised to see her husband's enthusiasm for the historical and the dead instead of a beautiful woman by his side. He remarked about Indians by saying that

*"They are fighting both against us and against one another.'... 'In the name of religion they fight one another; in the name of freedom they fight against us.'"*¹⁰

Being a disinterested onlooker, Richard restricted himself to his social role.

*"If the subjects fight among themselves, the ruler is safe."*¹¹

The novel consists political conflicts. This leads the full rises of religious tension. The Congress party workers had started the cleaning of drains in Imamdin's mohalla. An old man advice them to leave the place cause their presence in a Muslim mohalla would increase the tension. To know about it, the Congress party workers cross the lane and reached the mosque where they see a black animal lying dead on the ladder of the mosque. It was a swine and green door of the mosque was closed. There was a great commotion and the Muslims were in a bad mood. Bakshiji with his companions removed the dead pig and hid it under a heap of bricks. Some stone were thrown on them and they decided to leave the place. Here Baskhiji had realized that the town would soon be haunted by vultures.

Both sided committees try to blame each other and request to Deputy Collector, Richard, to take steps to check communal violence. But Richard declined the proposal by saying that it was beyond his jurisdiction to order army.

Both sided committees returned hurriedly to their houses on hearing that a Hindu had been killed. Some Muslims like Maula Dad were hard liners and gave venomous statements against Hindus and Muslim friends.

The business in the town was divided between the Hindus community and the Muslims community. The Hindus had monopoly of cloth shops and the grain trade whereas the Muslims had the footwear stores and the transport business. On that fateful day, the Temple Bazar was vibrant with all sorts of activities and there was no tension visible on the faces of the people. The normal activities of daily routine had begun and the shops were flooded with the buyers. Khuda Baksha was in his tailoring shop as usual and he was talking to some burka-clad women. He was leading tailor of the city. He observed that the Gorkha chowkidar was cleaning the big bell on the temple. The bell had been installed in 1926 when the riots took place. The bell was used to send signals of danger. Now Khuda Baksha realized that again fires would rage in the city.

People had come to know the incident of the pig and now they talked in hushed voices.

*"But the Pir Sahib does not touch Kafirs with his hands. He hates infidels. Earlier, it was different. Anyone could go to him. Only, if an infidel came for treatment, he would feel his pulse with a stick - putting one end of the stick on his pulse and the other to his ear, and thus diagnose the disease. But now he does not permit any kafir to come near him."*¹²

After completing the parable Karim Khan expressed his opinion that common people could never understand the designs of rulers and great people. And now, they also could not see into things as the English rulers had all seeing eyes. Meanwhile Nathu was listening to this parable and he learnt from that discussion that no one knew about his role in the entire episode. Earlier, he was afraid that everyone seemed to him talking about that pig. But a sense of guilt and remorse entered his being and Nathu felt restless. Suddenly Nathu saw Murad Ali coming and he stood in front of Murad Ali. But Murad Ali slipped away from the place, leaving Nathu more confused and perplexed. Nathu reached his house and he was pained to see tears in her eyes.

She was worried about his safety as there had been many incidents of violence in the city. They heard the sound of big bell on the temple and it signaled danger. People were running to save life and property. Richard knew that the riots had started but he had to wait for the orders from his superiors.

*"We do not interfere in their religious matters. You know that well enough, don't you?"*¹³

The noise continued all sorts of sounds-shouts, shrieks, ringing of the bell. Liza in her room felt,

*"as though she was in the midst of a thick jungle and the sounds she heard were coming from its depths."*¹⁴

People in the city had started thinking of safer places. Lala Laskshi Narayan was looking after security arrangements. He gave one mosquito net rod to his servant and one he kept. Lalaji had an apprehension of riots in the town. He was worried about his son Ranveer.

Many houses and shops had been set on fire and the fire brigade was unable to control fire at so many places simultaneously.

"As the day dawned, the town, as though stung by a cobra, bore a half-dead, half-alive appearance. The Grain Market was ...darken the sky, although during the night the sky had looked glowing red Seventeen shops had been reduced to ashes.

*At a road-crossing in Naya Mohalla lay the dead body of a horse. On the outskirts of the city, by the side of a road that led to villages, the dead body of a middle aged man had ...list of clothes required for some wedding had been found. A shoe shop on College Road and a tailoring shop adjoining it had been looted."*¹⁵

Now the rift between the Hindus-Sikhs and the Muslims was clearly visible. They dared not cross and trespass in each other's lanes. Everyone was a guard with lathis, knives and spears. All the government establishments had been closed and people preferred to stay indoors. Shahnawaj had taken Lalaji and his family in his car to his relative's house.

Here author describes Shahnawaj as a wonderful person, who look as though he ever do harm. A pertly man, broad-cheated, he always wear a plumed turban upon his head, dhobi-washed, well-polished shoes, spotless white, and finely starched cloths.

So Shahnawaj Khan also came to the rescue of his Hindu friend Raghunath. He visited their house to enquire about their safety. They had shifted to another house in a hurry and they had forgotten their jewelry box and cash box back. The wife of Raghunath gave Shahnawaj the keys of the chest to fetch these items. They had left their servant Milkhi there to guard the house. Shahnawaj went there and collected the boxes. He felt a surge of contempt and hatred for this dirty servant and he kicked him. Milkhi went crashing down the stairs and died. Shahnawaj handed over the boxes to the wife of Raghunath who went into tears out of gratitude. Though Shahnawaj had great personality but he also affect by the religious fanaticism. Here author try to shows that no one escape from the communal riots at that time.

Camrade Devdutt tries to organize a meeting between Hindu and Muslim leaders. In the meeting, agenda of communal tension was started with discussions. But the news of killings of Sikhs made them restless and everyone ran to assess the situation. In another incident, The General (Jarnail Singh) was killed in the street.

On the other side, after qualifying the test of initiation, Ranveer was filled with a new zeal. He posted his armed companions at strategic points to keep vigil. They were looking for any Muslim whom they could kill on the road. He was inspired by the heroic personality of Shivaji in his struggle against the Muslims, they had collected a sufficient amount of arsenal in theirs headquarter.

*"Ranveer was short of stature, that is why, he visualized himself in the role of Shivaji. With eyes screwed up he would survey the road below and the adjacent area. He had an intense longing to wear an angarkha and a yellow turban with a steel ring covering it, ...sharp commanding voice. He gave orders like a seasoned army commander, and enforced strict discipline on the members of the group. With his shoulders he would stroll up and down the 'armoury' in much the same way as Shivaji must have strolled, before taking on Aurangzeb."*¹⁶

Along with his four companions, Ranveer was ready to kill a Muslim. They saw a bearded person who was a hawker selling perfumes. Ranveer gripped the knife and gave a signal to his companion.

Inder followed the Muslim hawker. Inder walked with the hawker chatting and suddenly plunged the knife into the man's belly and ran away. He joined Ranveer and his companions.

Here Nathu had realized that probably he was a part of this tragic drama. He gave a serious thought to his dilemma. He was worried because he was instrumental in sparking off the communal riots. Nathu's wife also noticed a drastic change in his behavior. In this situation Nathu narrated the whole story of Murad Ali and the pig to his wife. But Nathu's wife consoled that he was not responsible for all this. She cleaned the floor and then washed it as if to sweep evil from her little house. She realised that something evil had again crept back into the hovel through a crack in the door. The shed rapidly becomes dark. Nathu's wife felt a presence of evil in the hut which went round and round for her house.

On the other hand, Harnam Singh and Banto lived in a small village and so far their Muslim neighbours had been kind and friendly to them. The tea-stall of Harnam Singh had been a popular corner for passengers but now a strange feeling of anxiety and insecurity had created a rift between the two communities. Even the buses were late. Harnam Singh's wife Banto had advised him to shift to Khanpur where they had some relatives. Their son Iqbal Singh lived in Mirpur, twenty miles away, so they were unable to contact him either. Still, Harnam Singh believed that nothing would become normal. His friend Karim Khan had assured him many times but now he advised Harnam Singh to leave the village as things were getting out of control. Now Harnam Singh realized the gravity of the situation. Karim Khan warned him about the arrival of the rioters. He had no option but to leave his house and shop behind and to move to a safer place. He took his double-barreled gun and collected all the cash and jewelry. Some ornaments were buried behind the shop. Just then, they heard the sounds of '*Allah-o-Akbar*'. They hurriedly moved out of the village. They heard the sounds of breaking their doors. They saw their shop burning from a distance. It was safe to walk in the night and they had to reach some safe destination before dawn. Now they were worried about their son Iqbal and daughter Jasbir.

At dawn, they reached a small village Dhok Mureedpur. The birds had started chirping and it was the time for morning prayers. They walked through a beautiful countryside. The novelist gives a realistic description as:

*"Past a grove, consisting of sheeshum and mulberry and rosewood trees, they came to a small graveyard, holding many graves, some big, others very small, many of them in a dilapidated state. One of them looked like the grave of a pir for a lamp burned dimly on it and green festoons hung from its sides. They reached the outer fields. The wheat had ripened, ready to be harvested. From here they could clearly see the squat village mud houses, with their flat terraces. Cows and buffaloes were tethered outside the huts."*¹⁷

By now, they had reached near the first house. After some hesitation, Harnam Singh knocked at the door, expectant.

The tension reaches on high. By now, the situation in undivided Punjab was worsened. Near Mirpur in a small village, all the Sikh men, women and children had assembled in the local Gurudwara as they feared the attack of the Muslim rioters. They were singing devotional songs and the whole atmosphere was charged with a religious frenzy.

The gurdwara was packed to capacity. The entire congregation was swaying in ecstasy. It was a rare moment. The singers sang with their eyes closed, in frenzied exaltation: 'Who is there, beside you my load...'

*Everyone sat with hands folded, eyes closed and heads swaying to the right and left. Here and there a devotee kept time with the tune by clapping his hands. The ecstatic rhapsody expressing sentiments of supreme self-sacrifice was once again being heard launch his offensive, whether they would be outsiders or local residents. There was no trusting the enemy, but every 'Singh' in the congregation was ready for sacrifice.*¹⁸

The whole congregation including women was armed with Kirpans, Swords and Guns. The atmosphere of the Gurudwara was heavy change into the rain-laden vapors. The people converted their heads. The atmosphere creates a change in their subconscious minds. They were familiar to their past which saturated with the courage of sacrifice.

The news had spread that the Muslims in the village were collecting arms and storing in the house of one Shekh Ghulam Rasool. The Sikhs expected assault from that citadel where the Muslims had dumped their ammunition. The novelist provides graphic descriptions of this beautiful village.

*"The village otherwise was a lovely one, nestled in idyllic surroundings. Anyone visiting it in normal times would be enthralled by its picturesque beauty. As the saying went: 'God had made it with His own hands.' Overlooking the small stream ...slopes almost all the time. Stretches of green foliage covered its lower parts. At the foot of the hill there were innumerable springs in the lap of these idyllic surroundings that the inhabitants had been living from generation to generation."*¹⁹

But now 'these blessed people' were thirsting for each others' blood.

Suddenly Sardar Teja Singh, the leader of the community entered the Gurudwara. He looked tense and kept of sitting before the sacred platform with closed eyes for a long time. He touched the ground with his forehead, with tears in his eyes. Then he lifted his sword in the air and stood in the middle of the congregation. The atmosphere became very tense. After reciting the Ardas, the Sikhs was ready for sacrificing their lives. They were aware of the fact that the British rulers would never protect them. Just then, a lean youth stood up and spoke in favor of peace with the Muslims. It was Sohan Singh but people inside the Gurudwara were eager to shed their blood like their brave ancestors who fought against the Mughals.

The night fell and the Kirtan was resumed. Jasbir Kaur is the daughter of Harnam Singh and Banto who was married in that town and was a part of this congregation. Suddenly the Muslims attacked the Gurudwara and everyone inside was ready for the final assault.

In another village, Harnam Singh and Banto stood at the door of a Muslim. A Muslim lady with her hands smeared with cow dung opened the door and asked them to be inside.

After washing her hands, she offered them buttermilk. This Muslim woman Rajo told them to chalk out their future course of action as her son might harm them. She asked them to hide themselves in a room.

Soon, it was a fine morning, Rajo asked them to put their gun behind and stay back in the dark room. Just then, Ehsaan Ali with his son Ramzan returned with a trunk. Harnam Singh recognized iron trunk. He threw down its keys. Ehsaan Ali felt embarrassed, but he assured Harnam Singh. He had business dealings with Harnam Singh. But his son Ramzan went mad with rage when he came to know about it. He pulled Harnam Singh, on recognizing him, moved away.

*"Twice Ramzan raised his pickaxe to strike, but both times he let it fall. It is one thing to kill a kafir, it is quite another to kill someone ...despite the fact that the atmosphere was charged with religious frenzy and hatred."*²⁰

It was past midnight when Harnam Singh and Banto moved out of the village. Rajo came out to bid them a farewell. Tears came into the eyes of the Sikh couple. Rajo gave two pieces of ornaments which she had found in their trunk. They moved down the slopes after Rajo bade them farewell.

The communal riots increase the hate between Hindu and Muslim people of the town. Here Ramzan play the role of religious fanatic person. Here Ramzan was surprised at himself as he let two Kafirs go. Earlier, while returning after looting the houses of Sikhs, Ramzan saw a Shikh running for his life. Along with his gang, Ramzan chased him throwing stones after him. This Sikh was no one else but Iqbal Singh, the son of Sardar Harnam Singh. He entered a cave to save his life but the Muslim riots stoned him and he was forced to come out. He was beaten like animals. Then one Muslim youths asked him to accept Islam otherwise he would be stoned to death.

*"Tell us. Will you recite the Kalma or not?"*²¹

He nodded his head and they took him to the village where his hair and beard were cut. The Barbar trimmed his beard like Muslim. Now he looked like a Muslim.

The Mullah asked him to recite the Kalma three times and now he was Sheikh Iqbal Ahmad. They promised to get him married to a beautiful Muslim girl. Inside his being, a storm continued to rage.

The Gurudwara was attacked by Muslims from the neighboring villages.

*"The Turks had come, but they had come only from one of the neighbouring villages. The Turks too mentally viewed their attack as an assault on the citadel of their age-old enemy, ...as a link in the chain of earlier confrontations in history. The 'warriors' had their feet in the twentieth century while their minds were in medieval times."*²²

The fight continued for two days and two nights. The Sikhs had already run out of ammunition. The dead bodies of the Sikhs were lying scattered all around near the Gurudwara. Now the Muslims demanded two lakh rupees but Sikhs disagreed. Now the beautiful Sayyedpur village looked like another inferno. The Muslims attacked again and now the remaining Sikhs prepared themselves for the final attack. Men took out their swords and went out of the Gurudwara to meet their fate. Women and children inside the Gurudwara prepared themselves for the sacrifice. Jasbir led the entire group charged with religious ecstasy. Here the novelist very poignantly describes the scene as:

*"Jasbir Kaur was the first one to jump into the well. She raised no slogan, nor did she call anyone's name, she only uttered Wahe Guru and took the jump. After her...Deva Singh's wife held the breast-fed child in her arms when she took the plunge. Prem Singh's wife jumped, ...Within a matter of minutes tens of women had gone into their watery grave, some of them along with their children."*²³

Vultures and crows were seen hovering in the sky. People started removing the dead bodies and wondered at the loss of human life.

*"The light of the moon turned pale. Slowly the day broke. The nightmarish atmosphere of the night began to be dispelled. Despite the smoke from the smoldering fires, On the path leading to the 'well of death', lay scattered hair-clips, ribbons, dupattas, broken peices ...had befallen the village. The doors of houses were either open or battered."*²⁴

After four days of rioting, army was deployed in the city. The government machinery had become active and the government officials could be seen busy in the restoration work. Richard was very busy and his wife Liza was fed up with his busy routine.

One big problem before him was the disposal of the dead bodies around. Meanwhile representatives of different groups in the city came to meet Richard but now he remained a disinterested onlooker and advised them to help each other. Liza was shocked to see the well where drowned. Richard told her that he would be visiting Sayyedpur.

More relief camps were established and the number of refugees multiplied. The clerks become busier and Harnam Singh reached the main relief camp to enroll himself and his wife Banto. He was oblivious of the fate of his son Iqbal and daughter Jasbir. He wanted to tell the whole story to clerk who was interested in statistics. Many more people like Harnam Singh were waiting for their turn. One Muslim Allarakha had abducted a Sikh girl Prakaso, and now she had reconciled. The two had living together.

New things were becoming normal in the city. People had started collecting in the local collage run by an American Christian Missionary. Many property dealers were busy in making deals. People were selling their properties at throw away prices. Everyone was worried over the incidents of rioting. A peace committee had been constituted and a bus was hired. It had the flags of the Muslim League and the Congress. A lot of people assembled to support the notion of Hindu-Muslim unity. A man sitting near driver's seat was grasping a micro-handset. He was making noise slogans of Hindu-Muslim unity in the refugee camp. He was no other than Murad Ali. Here the novelist portrays his sketch as:

*"It was Murad Ali, the dark-complexioned Murad Ali, with bristling moustaches, his thin cane lying between his legs, peering to the right and right with his small ferret eyes and raising slogans with all the passion at his command."*²⁵

Still, the members of the Peace Committee lacked co-ordination.

Nathu had died in the riots. The novel ends on a note of anxiety, restlessness and depression.

5.5 Summary:-

The novel shows the diabolic communal politics deeply well-established in Indian culture. The novel successfully reveals how the communal leaders dress up the religious hate, and made battles between them. Tamas shows political leader and communal groups reset the minds of the people into darkness of narrow-mindedness and create the communal frenzy hovers over them. The novel portrays the picture of the mask of darkness rises during those critical days of independence. The novel Tamas was stand on his personal incidents as a youthful person who was a relief officer after partition. The tragedy of the victim's people had moved him greatly and realizes the harsh realities of life.

Tamas novel is an anatomy of partition which depicts how communal violence was generated. The communal leader gives a birth of violence and how blameless persons were fall into serving the hidden reasons of the communalists. The leader made a tension and hate climate at the cost of intercommoned harmony. As the title Tamas shows that the lack of knowledge of people and darkness of the people's mind involved in communal violence on the eve of the partition of India. A good number of episodes deal with communal disorder during the pre-partition days. The novel shows that how communal madness stalked the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent. The novel opens with the killing of a pig which sparked off riots when it was thrown on the steps of a mosque at the demand of a Muslim League. The novel presents how the tentacles of communalism spread into the rural areas. The novelist shows that three communities are responsible for this violence in the Partition. These three communities are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. They had mostly suffered from painful conditions, rapes, murders, conversions in the name of religion also. The novelist seems to read the lines between the evil designs of the British. Tamas is based on the real incidents during the Partition of Punjab. The novel represents the vivid memories of those traumatic days continue to disturb generation. The novelist shows the failure system of Indian politics. The novel was full of incidents of violence. The title of the novel is highly symbolic and suggestive. Sahani has exposed the danger of communalism and the inherent weakness of Indian society.

'Tamas' is a quite representative novel in its treatment of the theme of violence insofar as it highlights in many crucial aspects of the phenomenon. The episode sparks off the shaking that will disturb the town and the neighboring villages. After a few days, a pig is killed and thrown in front of the mosque. The dead is carried out by a poor Hindu Chamber, totally unaware of the reasons why he has been paid to do so by a rich Muslim leader Murad Ali. Ironically the defilement of the mosque, which will stir the Muslim reaction and the Hindu-Sikh counter reaction, is ordered by one of the faithful. The episode is tantamount to a denunciation of the real responsibilities of communal violence, residing in crooked stirrers up of the basest feelings. In fact, even though Murad Ali's real aims are never revealed in the novel, some political or financial guiding is implied in his offence.

The process led towards disordered atmosphere. The similarity of Bhisham Sahni's description is outstanding. The influential slaughter of the pig is followed by the virtuous response of the Muslim community. The first acts of retaliation: a cow is seen running, followed by a young man with a half-covered face; the Muslims of a poor district hurl stones at the local congressmen getting through their unusual social work. Rumors of slaughtered cows and stray murders spread uncontrollably, poisoning the atmosphere; the contending communities start amassing weapons of every sort and the first isolated killings are committed. Everyone looks upon everyone else with fear and suspicion; the habitual communication between neighbors is fragmented and finally ruptured; doors and windows are shut up; districts are turned into cultural fortresses, as Hindu people and Sikh people gradually leave the ones where they used to live side by side with the Muslims; all public activities are stopped. Communal hate is fanned by religious extremists, who work as professional agitators; Dev Vrat, who dominates his young followers and teaches them the inferiority of the Mlecch as and how to destroy them.

The turning point in the mounting pressure is represented by the episode of the fire set to the grain market, where the writer retrieves the musical metaphor to describe the upturned situation: the harmony of the town is definitely shattered and the din of the riots comes down on it in the form of a cracked pleasant-sounding tool. Another remarkable feature of Sahni's behavior of the event consists in its being paralleled with a religious festivity.

The novelist employs three different points of view to communicate the rising awareness of the fire, which breaks out during the night. But all contribute the same view: Nathu and his wife, from their hut, Richard and Liza from their bungalow and a rich Hindu citizen, Lala Lakshmi Narain, are all reminded in some way of religious festivities when they hear the noise coming from the bazaar. It is a bitter turnaround of truth, the one Sahni conveys in suggesting that faith can generate horror and destruction instead of joyous celebration.

The climax is finally reached with the clash of Sayedpur. It was narrated in almost ambitious manners. The Muslim and Sikh communities, even though on opposed sides are brought together by an equal state of mind. Both are inflamed by a "spirit of sacrifice" and a desire for "self-immolation", accused with an emotional force that their "fortress" are animated by a sensation of closeness and team spirit, which makes them feel like "one unbreakable entity" linked back to the ancestors of an heroic past of conquest: the Sikh's enemies are mentioned as "Turks" and the Muslims have assumed the role of "Mujahids" ready to launch a Jihad against the kafirs (Hindu). The extensive anger in which the two or more communities are trapped is then heightened by the repeats, the slogans and the beating of drums preceding the battle.

A similar attitude, which contributes to the merging of the single selves in the anonymous, genocidal self of the group, within which the disjunction from individual responsibility allows brutality to be unleashed, is that attributed to the Sikh women who, in order to save their 'honor' from the Muslim attackers, commit suicide by throwing themselves into well; women share the same spirit of sacrifice and the same altered state of mind as men. However the picture of the women's self-immolation takes on almost mysterious overtones, as if to submit the unspoken mystery that even today surrounds the memories of such incidents; in fact some of the expressions used by the writer point to this interpretation: "the women come out of the gurudwara as if under a spell and they look like fairies flying to their watery graves."

The climactic conflict of Sayedpur, the theme of violent behavior is explored by Bhisham Sahni in a number of episodes where he depicts the psychology of individual perpetrators. One of them is a fifteen year old boy Ranvir, started to cruelty by Dev Vrat, in order to be part of Ranvir submits to

the harsh training that will lead him to prove his mettle by striking a man for a futile motive and to discover that killing is not difficult. The case of the Muslim person Shah Nawaz who remains loyal to his friend Raghunath. Shah Nawaz helps with generosity Hindu friend. In spite of this, he repeatedly and viciously hits Raghunath's servant for no reason at all. The man's faculty to separate well from bad seems to have been suspended by the horrors and the sorrows he has witnessed. An unsounded savagery is also embodied in Baldev Singh. He was one of the Sikh warriors in the Gurudwara convinced. His family has been slaughtered in violence. The general frenzy was destroying his real basis and killed his mother by the 'Turks'. He falls prey to an uncontrollable agitation; he steps out of the temple and kills the first Muslim he meets, who happens to be a harmless old black smith. There are more instances in which dissimilar feelings - an expressive support, the need to belong, the logic of justice or simply fear - drive common people to commit unspeakable deeds or even to imagine them, thus spreading the intoxication of hate.

Bodies were not the exclusive targets of violence though. In a harrowing episode, Bhasham Sahni impressively shows the cruelty of psychological violence. A young Sikh victim, Iqbal Singh is intercepted by a group of Muslims; among them there is an acquaintance of his which steps back, turn away his eyes and submits to the dishonor of the nasty scene. Iqbal Singh is thrashed and stoned, then is forced to conversion, but the roles of tortures and tortured do not change in the least. The Muslims take happiness in harassment and crushing him. The full hideousness of inhumanity, though, is conveyed by the portrayal of the victim stripped of all dignity and reduced to objection.

Despite the outrageous atrocities, compassion and humanity still lived on in some recess of the general fury, through complicated by the folly of the time. This is what Sahni relates in the story of Harnam Singh and his wife Banto, an old Sikh couple compelled to flee from their house. They wander around unable to realize that just the day before, in the company of their Muslim friend, they were lamenting the unreasonable animosity between communities; it seemed to them repulsive but remote. Exhausted and thirsty; they find comfort in a Muslim family who, instinctively responding to the

ancient duty of hospitality, give them shelter at the risk of their own lives; even the son - Ramzan - though caught in communal hatred, cannot bring himself to kill the people who have knocked at his door to ask for help. More than other episodes, this one shows how often people inflamed by religious frenzy were basically normal, decent individuals carried away by an unnatural situation.

Another example of good will is given by the few local politicians who do their best to prevent the conflict, appealing to the contending parts' common sense. The activists, Devdatt, Sohan Singh and Mirdad, are engaged in an effort to bring together the leaders of all political parties. They try to persuade people that fears and tensions are mounted by those who want to divide them. Jarnail, a humble congress member of staff, is murdered while he reminds his associate society of Gandhi's teachings and of the British realistically, however unhappily, Bakshi is not as positive. His intuitive vision of kites and vultures hovering over the city will come true when the birds will literally fly there in large numbers after the battle of Sayedpur; a perilous peace has been re-established.

Sahani makes a direct comment that the communal violence has been a major problem in the Indian subcontinent. Tamas presents true accounts of violence and migration.

5.6 References:-

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- 2) Ibid, P. 4.
- 3) Ibid, P. 12.
- 4) Ibid, P. 28.
- 5) Ibid, P. 32.
- 6) Ibid, P. 33.
- 7) Ibid, P. 33.
- 8) Ibid, P. 37.
- 9) Ibid, P. 41.
- 10) Ibid, P. 50.
- 11) Ibid, P. 54.
- 12) Ibid, P. 130.
- 13) Ibid, P. 145.
- 14) Ibid, P. 145.
- 15) Ibid, P. 161.
- 16) Ibid, P. 192-93.
- 17) Ibid, P. 226.
- 18) Ibid, P. 228.
- 19) Ibid, P. 233-34.
- 20) Ibid, P. 269.
- 21) Ibid, P. 275.
- 22) Ibid, P. 282.
- 23) Ibid, P. 293.
- 24) Ibid, P. 294-95.
- 25) Ibid, P. 350.