In 1944, Gandhiji was released from gaol for reasons of ill health, while the rest of the Congress high command was still inside. Thus Gandhiji alone was to face the situation created by the failure of the 'Quit India' movement. It was a problem for the Mahatma from where to start, because the political situation in India was fluid. His 'inner voice' was mute but a beginning was to be made. He sought a meeting with the Viceroy Lord Wavell, but was rebuffed, while Jinnah welcomed him. Prolonged discussions were held between the two on the formula prepared by C. Rajagopalachari that the League and Congress should co-operate in forming a provisional government. A plebiscite should be held in the Muslim majority areas and depending upon its results, a separate state could be formed within the dominion.

This formula made two points clear: that independence could not be obtained without the co-operation of the Muslims and for that sake considerable concessions had to be made to Jinnah. Secondly, for the first time the idea of two nations was circulated in the Congress circle.
However these discussions broke down because Jinnah thought that since all the Congress leaders were in jail, Gandhiji had no representative status, vis-a-vis the congress. By 1945 the problem was no longer that of Wrestling independence from the reluctant Imperial Over-lords, but of reaching an agreement between the League and Congress.

A transfer of scene, as it were, took place and we were led to the political scene in London to witness the subsequent part of the political high drama. Churchill’s war cabinet was replaced by C.R.Attlee’s Labour Government. Not only as a war time promise, but also as an ideological inclination to grant India independence, the British government started taking quick steps. British economy was in dire straits and public opinion within the country was opposed to retain India. British soldiers in India were demoralised and were anxious to get back home. The R.A.F. strike in India and the Royal Indian Navy mutiny in 1946, made the British to wind up from India. Before they left, they wanted to leave India in safe hands. They, on their part, tried to bring the Hindus and Muslims together, but could not succeed because by that time the idea of two nations was so deep rooted that nothing else could have pleased both.
Jim Masseios in *Nationalism on the Indian Subcontinent* contends that Pakistan is -

"1) The result of shady manoeuvres and manipulations of the British because they continued to allow the minority view of virtual veto in determining the future of India.

2) It was the British tactic of divide and rule.

3) The British created the problem of the Hindus and Muslims to delay the transfer of power.

4) It was a Machiavellian attempt to sabotage the future independent India."¹

On the other hand the Muslim historian L. Hamza writes in his book *Pakistan a Nation*,

"1) The growth of Pakistan was the culmination of historical, economic, religious and social forces.

2) In accepting this demand of the Muslims, the British were merely recognising the historical inevitability of the same.

3) It was the British opinion that a minority should not, for all the times, be dominated by a majority."²

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² Hamza, L, *Pakistan A Nation* Quoted by Rajendra Prasad in *India Divided*, (Hind Kitabs, Bombay, 1947) p. 27.
Whatever may be the British tactics, the pity is that an eminent Indian leadership succumbed to those tactics and made the partition a historical inevitability.

Jim Masselos continues -

"The Congress committed a major tactical blunder, surprising in politicians of their experience and calibre. They failed to secure or maintain their base of support and their hold upon various sections of the population."³

Some factions of Indian society blame Mahatma Gandhi as being responsible for the partition of the country. But it is far from reality. After 1945 Gandhiji was side tracked by his nearest followers.

Jim Masselos writes again -

"By late December or early January, Sardar Patel and Nehru, perhaps the most powerful men in Congress had begun to think in terms of two independent dominions".⁴

Gandhiji's presence would have been an obstacle to these 'tired men of Gandhi'.⁵

4) Ibid, P. 179.
5) Shah A.B. 'Gandhi and Hindu-Muslim Problem', *Quest* (Jan/March, Bombay, 1970) P-120.
So he was coaxed as a one man boundary security force and was sent to the places, which were badly affected by communal frenzy. It is a pity that during these days Mahatma Gandhi was treated as an ordinary member of the Red Cross Society. In an interview with Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Gandhiji expressed his deep concern over the political condition in the country and said that the 'tall men' were not listening to him. He was ready to retain India's unity even at the cost of a civil war. On being argued by Jawaharlal Nehru that there would be Civil War, if India was not divided, Gandhiji replied that he was ready to face the Civil War. Therefore it would be a historical fallacy to blame Gandhiji for the partition of the country. The Mahatma should not be made a peg in the history to hang any hat on!

In February 1946, the Cabinet Mission of three members, Lord Pethic Lawrence, A.V. Alexander and Cripps came to India and proposed a three-tier arrangement for keeping India united. The Muslim majority area was one unit. The second unit was of all the Hindu majority provinces. Finally, the centre which was to be weak with a limited control on all these provinces. Though the Congress and Muslim League agreed to this proposal in the beginning the Congress rejected it after second thought. A last ditch effort was made to break the
impasse. Nehru and Jinnah flew to London in 1946 to consult the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister. These meetings also failed.

The final scene of this political melodrama was played against this background. In February, 1947, Lord Wavell was succeeded by Lord Mountbatten, because Lord Wavell had reached a dead end and a fresh approach was needed. The choices before the British in India were limited. They should either attempt to control India by force or they should try to prevent civil war and retreat in the most honourable way possible. Mountbatten preferred the second alternative. He approached all the eminent Congress leaders but -

"The last to be convinced was Gandhi, whose role had been minimal in the negotiations of these last few years."¹⁶

In the mad rush for power, Gandhiji was side-tracked. He knew it, but he did not express his dissatisfaction to anyone. He was like an ice-berg. The interior Gandhi was more baffling than the exterior. Jawaharlal Nehru writes:

"What a problem and puzzle be (Gandhiji) had been, not only to the British Government but

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Gandhiji's approach to Hindu-Muslim unity was subjected to an acid test. A.B. Shah called it the Ram-Rahim approach. He wrote in 'Quest' s

"Gandhi was a philosophical anarchist and in his main, does not subscribe to the idea of Original sin. He thought that man is 'essentially good' and the spark of goodliness is within him. He worked on the assumption that if Hindus and Muslims could be brought together in a joint constructive endeavour, they would see that the unity was in their interest, and would learn to live in peace and harmony." 8

What A.B. Shah was trying to bring home is, Gandhi simultaneously believed in different philosophies and religions. This belief created a sort of confusion in his mind and because of this confusion, he could not visualise the real contradiction existing between Hindus and Muslims. No doubt Gandhiji borrowed from different religions, but these ideals were complementary to each other. He drew from all the scriptures and quoted from all the prophets.

If we believe that all great men think alike, how can there be any confusion in the mind of Gandhiji in accepting different religious principles. Gandhiji's philosophy had a large humanistic base. There was no scope for the narrow loyalties of any religion.

The second charge to consider is that Gandhiji failed to notice the idea of 'Original sin', that is to say man is born with some sin. The concept of original sin was not acceptable to Gandhiji. The basic concept of 'essential goodness' of man made Gandhiji believe that the Muslims are also good at heart, and given a chance, they can acquit themselves quite creditably. A devout follower of Gita, Gandhiji believed in the essential goodness of man. How could this belief of Gandhiji, one wonders, come in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity? One should not miss to notice the practical shrewdness and large humanitarian perspective at the basis of Gandhiji's approach. A.B. Shah contends that in the process of evolution man has lost his 'essential goodness'. Does it mean that man has invariably turned inhuman to-day? This is too much of Darwin's ape or apeing Darwin.

It is not that Gandhiji had to face difficulties from the Muslims alone. As Dr. Rajendra Prasad writes in his book India Divided, Gandhiji had to wait for five
years, from 1923-27, to set India and the Indian politics free from the "gangster politics" of the Hindu fanatics. Why such contradiction exists between the two communities is a basic point to be considered.

A.B. Shah rightly points out the root cause of it. The lack of individuation of the Muslim mind and basically individualistic mind of the Hindus are responsible for this. The gross collectivism of the Muslims, naturally cuts across the individual development of the Hindu mind.

Shah writes again,

"One important thing to be noted is that the Muslim society, in any part of the world has not met with the renaissance of its own." 10

This is true of all the 'revealed' religions of the world like Islam, Christianity and so on. But Christianity came under the influence of the Greeks, the most individualistic community and it granted maximum individuality to its members.

However the following short-comings of the Hindu mind also came in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity.

1) The individualism of the Hindus made them narcissists. This was reflected through the thinking and functioning of the Congress at a later stage.

2) The caste-system of the Hindus came in the way of developing other civic virtues indispensable for nation building.

3) The Hindu fear of 'Pollution'.

4) The arrogance of Self-righteousness made the Hindus blind to the features of the Muslim Politics, which the hard-headed English could easily understand and exploit, without knowing much about Indian culture and society.

In this way, suspicion in the minds of Hindus and Muslims about each other, their hunger for political power and negligence of Gandhiji's words at a crucial moment, made the division of our country a historical inevitability. Such an experience generally gives birth to great fiction as can be seen in the second part of this chapter.
As we reflect now, the partition of our country as India and Pakistan brought one of the bloodiest upheavals in history. Twelve million people had to flee from either side and nearly half a million were killed. Many caravans and convoys of refugees were ambushed and attacked on the road side, resulting in mass-murder. Refugee trains were derailed and the people were hacked. Train loads of dead bodies were sent as 'a present' to either country.

A great national experience generally serves as a great reservoir of literary material, as can be seen from the literature of the other countries. R.P. Chaddah writes in his article, 'The partition in Indo-English Fiction'.

"The American Civil war, the Russian Revolutions, and the two World wars provided the basis for great fiction in the world. Many novels like War and Peace, A Tale of Two Cities, All Quiet on The Western Front, A Farewel To Arms, From Here To Eternity, The Naked and The Dead, and Doctor Zhivago". 11

In the same way the partition of India provided basis for

similar fictional exercise. Some of the novelists used the theme of partition directly and others indirectly. The following novels deal with the partition of our country on different scales.

1) Train to Pakistan 2) Azadi.
3) The Dark Dancer. 4) Distant Drum.
5) Sunlight on a Broken Column 6) A Bend in the Ganges, etc.

The human tragedy, caused by the partition, has found explicit expression in Train to Pakistan and Azadi. The partition caused immense loss of life and property through uncontrolled riots, plunders and murders. Kai Nicholson writes about Train to Pakistan.

"Khushwant Singh used the novel as a stage to voice his arguments vehemently. The novelist, however, has succeeded in communicating to the readers of the grossness and total insanity of the two nation theory and the Partition tragedy."

The predominant quality of Train to Pakistan is its stark realism, the absolute fidelity to the truth of life, its trenchant exposition of one of the great moving events of contemporary Indian history, the partition. The individual in Khushwant Singh's fictional world is silhouetted against the vast panoramic background and ghostly and

inhuman events. Mano Majra, a village, is a fixed point in space whereas the train is the symbol of movement.

"The train signifies the groups of multitudes of people who are on the move, heading for their various destinies. The train, in this context, implies the movement of the vast communities from their roots and areas of traditional growth to a new Jerusalem. The train also suggests the fate of individuals, the destinies of two newly born nations, consequent upon a political decision and the miseries, sufferings and privations which issue from it."

The train is ominous. 'It is like a ghost' (Train.... P 142). Thus the ghostly train, carrying the dead, becomes a symbol of disaster, destruction and death. Man becomes a butcher of his own fellowmen and the consequent genocidal has become a gruesome characteristic of a certain phase of the Indian history. Khushwant Singh depicts in Train to Pakistan the communal frenzy that gripped the people thus:

"Tomorrow a train load of Muslims is to cross the bridge to Pakistan. If we are men, this train should carry as many people dead to the other side as you have received."


Killing unarmed people in the train was considered to be a great work of martyrdom. Muslims in Pakistan and Sikhs in Punjab prayed God to grant victory in this 'religious act'. In the name of God, God's children were killed. This Paradox has been expressed thus by the novelist,

"The boy cleared his throat, shut his eyes and began to recite the names of Gurus. He ended by asking for the Gurus' blessings for the Venture. The assembly went down on the knees and rubbed their forehead on the ground loudly proclaiming:... By the grace of God.... We bear the world nothing but good will."\(^\text{15}\)

Khushwant Singh does not fail to register a meek protesting voice against the slaughter. Bhai Meetsing says;

"All one can do is to crouch in a safe corner till the storm blows over....I have done all I could. My duty is to tell people what is right and what is not. If they insist on doing evil, I ask God to forgive them."\(^\text{16}\)

Bhai Meetsing's Muslim counterpart Imam Baksh says,

"If we have no faith in God then we are animals". He continued, "All the world respects religious man. Look at Gandhi! I hear he reads Koran-Sharif and the Unjeel along with his Vedas and..."\(^\text{15}\) Ibid. p-152.
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid. p-168.
Sashtras. People sing his praise in the four corners of the earth. I have seen pictures in a newspaper of Gandhi's prayer meeting. It showed a lot of white men and women sitting cross legged. One white girl had her eyes shut. They said she was the Big Lord's daughter. You see, Meet Singha even the English respect religion."17

Unshakable faith in religion is a characteristic trait of a charismatic leader. Gandhiji's faith in religion made him an undisputed leader of the masses. But the writer is equally harsh on the pseudo-religious people. He writes -

"India is constipated with a lot of humbug. Take religion. For the Hindus, it means little besides caste and cow-protection. For the Muslims, circumcision and Kosher meat. For the Sikh, long hair and hatred for the Muslims. For the Christians, Hinduism with a sola topee. For the Parsees, fire-worship and feeding Vultures. Ethics, which should be the kernel of religious code, has been carefully removed."18

Consciousness of the bad is an essential prerequisite to the promotion of good. This consciousness of good and bad was lacking in the people, who were consumed by

17. Ibid, P-49.
18, Ibid. P-171.
communal frenzy. Juggatsing is the only character, who symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. In fact the tale of one individual is closely linked here with the community. The conclusion is obvious. Collective destiny dominates the individual's fate.

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1957) depicts the hopeful dawn of the Indian independence and the tragedy of the partition, the mass massacre and the vast exodus of refugees. Spanning the period from the announcement of the Cabinet Mission Plan on 3rd June, 1947 to the aftermath of independence and the murder of Mahatma Gandhi on 30th January 1948. The novel dramatizes the impacts of the momentous events of history on a few individuals, particularly on the members of the family of Lala Kanshi Ram. They are uprooted and forced to migrate to India, where they had neither work nor place to stay. It is a novel of epic dimensions, worthy of its theme. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but in the very temple of delight, veiled melancholy had her shrine also and the fruits of independence were discovered to be rotten, ere they could be tasted. Was it the same freedom for which a thousand agitations were launched? One would be compelled to ask oneself. It reminded us of the ancient battle on the Kurukshetra. *Azadi* brings out effectively the irony in the following words, that is at the root of the novel.
"Jinnah and Liyaqat Ali Khan were coming into an estate as was Nehru. Why else would they rush into Azadi at this pace - an Azadi which would ruin the land and destroy its unity? For, the creation of Pakistan solved nothing." 19

This stupendous drama in recent Indian history, the way it affected the lives and feelings of the people, is the frame work of the novel. But no one individual is hero or heroine in this novel. The real theme of the novel is the entire suffering humanity which was migrating. Azadi is also a work of deep human significance. Inspite of his traumatic experience Lala Kanshi Ram declares,

"I have ceased to hate....Yes. I can't hate Muslims any more.... what I mean is, whatever the Muslims did to us in Pakistan, we are doing it to them here." 20

There are also some Muslims in Pakistan like Choudhari Barkat Ali and the Hakim Sahib of Narowal, to whom every human being is as dear as their own lives. They failed to understand how the people, who till yesterday were living like brethern, had turned into hounds overnight. Here Chaman Nahal has aptly counter balanced the bloody drama of Partition with some delicate humane sentiments like the love between Arun and Chandni.

Chaman Nahal gives a fair picture of Gandhiji. He does not blame him for the partition.

"For the last thirty years, since that wizard Gandhi came on the scene, it had taken the stand that India was a single nation not two. And Gandhi was not only a politician, he was a saint. He had an inner voice to satisfy too... And Gandhi was shrewd surely he saw it all. He wouldn't give into such butchery. If nothing else worked, his fasts unto death always did." 21

To some characters in this novel Gandhiji was a man, who in ten years time had revolutionized the spirit of the country. To some others he was a Mahatma. People came not to listen to his speech but to pay homage to him. They bowed their heads to the rostrum with folded hands, and went away. To some pessimists like Bibi Amarvati Gandhiji was a culprit.

"It all happened because of the partition. And it was Gandhi who sanctioned the partition."

"That is not true" Arun felt he had to put the record straight.

"It was the other congress leaders, like Nehru and Patel."

"They were his stooges."

"No auntie. You are wrong there. In the final days they did not listen to him." 22

21. Ibid. P-42.
22. Ibid. P.360.
The underlying irony of history of *Azadi* resulting in Partition, suffers the author's attitude and the final expression through numerous ironies of events of pathetic similes, which are too deep for tears. The vast surgical operation of the proverbial Siamese twin resulted, as it were, in terrible bloodshed. But there is also the overrejuvenating presence of life in death itself, which provides a kind of transfusion of moral and spiritual values, so badly needed by humanity in conflagration. The cosmic pain and bloodshed are but a prelude to the birth of a new humanity. The forces of life are triumphant over death. The novel closes with,

"The machine went whirring on, its wheel turning fast and its little needle moving up and down, murmuring and sewing through the cloth. The door of both the rooms shook with vibration." 23

On this finale of the novel Madhusudan Prasad comments,

"The initiative has now passed into the hands of the individual. No longer a passive victim, he is stitching out his own destiny. Love and creative action, these are the supreme values, which form this moving drama of hatred and violence." 24

23. Ibid. P. 366.

B. Rajam's *The Dark dancer* resorts to partition in order to give a convincing end to his narrative of the eternal triangle, with his heroine dying in the post-partition riots. The two clear strands of the story, the tragedy of Krishna's marriage and the tragedy that followed the partition of our country, do not merge but stand apart in the novel. It should be admitted that though the novel deals with a similar plot, it never reaches the height of *Dr. Zhivago*, wherein the personal and the national perspectives merge together. Krishna, in his moment of agitation, tells his Cambridge girl-friend that it was the British who had stirred up all the trouble for the whole generation to come. The girl retorts,

"In all our three hundred years of occupation we haven't done what you have done in three weeks of your freedom."  

The prominent theme of B. Rajam's novel is the East-West encounter, with the partition background. B. Rajam's views on the partition are as detached as he himself is from the country of his birth. The writer obviously misses the deep socio-political and psychological undercurrents that cut across each other, ultimately leading to the partition of the country.

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In his novel *Distant Drum*, Manohar Malgonkar, centres the action round the success and failure of the Hindu protagonist to win his lady's love and also to maintain his friendship with his Muslim friend Abdul. Kiran Garud and Abdul were serving in the military. They faced the riots of early 1947 together at Delhi. After partition they found themselves fighting each other, torn by the conflict between friendship and loyalty. The writer does not miss to depict the subtlety of emotions that stirs the two friends. The partition may be a political necessity, but to change loyalties overnight and to find both the friends fighting against each other, involves a deep concern and overall revaluation of human relations like friendship, love, loyalty and so on. However the writer succeeds in giving a correct picture without making his sympathies very clear.

In his other novel *A Bend in The Ganges*, we get an epic representation of the whole struggle for Indian independence and its aftermath. Malgonkar has two purposes.

1) to tell about the basic factors responsible for the creation of two separate nations, and

2) To probe into the ideology of Ahimsa.

The first part is concerned with the friendship between Debi and Gian. The partition and especially the
quickness with which it was carried out, covers the last three chapters. All this is shown through the experience of the heroes; Debi moving towards Lahore to escort his parents and Gian along with Debi's parents, moving out of Lahore to India. Having seen death and destruction around, Debi ponders,

"Is this the independence which India wanted? Is this the sunrise of freedom? Who is to blame?" 26

He found a convenient person, Mahatma Gandhi to blame.

Malgonkar here expresses his views on Hindu-Muslim unity.

"The Hindus and Muslims were traditional enemies. They would never be able to live together." 27

On some other occasion Shafi Usman, the revolutionary says,

"Non-violence is the philosophy of sheep and the creed of cowards." 28

Non-violence does not suit the weak and the coward. In fact it demands greater heroism than violence, as the Mahatma in this country and Martin Luther King in America demonstrated in their own lives. Malgonkar has not been able to appreciate the Gandhian Ahimsa fully. It failed

27. Ibid, P-294.
not because of its imperfections, but because of corruption and lust for power among the people who surrounded Gandhiji.

It is also known now that Gandhiji was opposed to partition, because he thought that partition would not solve the Hindu-Muslim problem. He was right because even after the creation of Pakistan, an equal number of Muslims are still living in India. Then how can Pakistan be claimed as a Muslim State? The Major preoccupation of Malgonkar in these two novels appears, as G.S. Amur writes, 'to discredit Ahimsa' calling it 'a philosophy of the sheep.

Sunlight on A Broken Column by Attia Hossain also deals with the partition theme. It represents partition as an enormous event and its effects on the lives of the Muslim community in India. The first three parts are united by the narrator's point of view. The heroine falls in love with Ameer and marries according to the dictates of her rich uncle. Ameer joins the army and dies.

The fourth part of the novel deals with the critical period of Indian history. The communal violence

changes the idealistic outlook on the life of the narrator. When she visits her house Asiaa, the home of her childhood, she finds,

"There were strangers living in the rooms, once so private and guarded: strangers, who were names in government files...their presence here...was a part of stational calculation in the bargaining of bureaucrats and politicians, in which, millions of uprooted human beings become just numerical figures."

All these novelists viewed partition from different angles. Khushwant Singh takes the political aspect of the partition for granted. For him the partition was inevitable. All that his villagers are concerned is 'it is Mahatma Gandhi's government in Delhi' and 'people sing his praise in four corners of the earth.' On the other hand Manohar Malgonkar looks from the points of view of Gian and his creed of non-violence, Debi Dayal the terrorist, Shafi Usman and Hafizkhan the communists. Therefore the entire discussion appears like a scientific analysis of the situation rather than what emerges from the characters and situations.

Other novelists have managed to voice their political affinities or grievances through their characters. Perhaps, Chaman Nahal is the only exception, who looks at the partition as directly concerned and connected with him. He accepts the partition as a fact and talks about the problem of rehabilitation of the refugees. He neither convicts the British nor the Mahatma for this cataclysm and carnage. He bravely accepts mass murder, plunder, and brutality as a celebration of the Baptism of freedom, though with restraint and reservation.

No novelist blames Gandhiji for the partition of the country. Their concern appears to be the expression of that ghastly experience in an artistic way. A writer may differ on the ultimate objective of the Gandhian non-violence but he has not succeeded in showing violence as an alternative to non-violence. In fact violence cannot be the alternative to non-violence. In these novels we find that the Gandhian myth was still holding on the Indian ethos, but the charisma of Gandhiji has started waning slowly because of human lust for power. The waning of charismatic power is also a logical culmination in the life of a charismatic character. Charisma does not live forever with a mythical character. As Krishna Kripalani writes,

"In less than three decades he (Gandhi) took command of political struggle, he had brought
the nation to the very gates of freedom. Seeing the gates open, there was a mad rush to leap over the last hurdle. The unseemly scramble for prizes began. Sadly the wizard stopped aside, broke the magic wand and watched sorrowfully the desperate stampede, hordes rushing in hordes fleeing out, some in glee, some in panic. How many would be trampled under, would be himself be spared? He had no wish to be...."32

A New India emerged at a terrible cost and deviation from the Gandhian path in our personal and national life became more and more final as our nation staggered on after freedom. In the next chapter it's analysed how this happened.