



Theme of Love And Sacrifice in Khushwant Singh's *Train To Pakistan*

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ABSTRACT

The famous novel under the title *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh is not exactly the real page from history dealing with the politics prevailing in those days. Rather it is the graphic description of the chain of unfortunate events that led to unprecedented enmity and communal clashes and massacre of innocent people who became victims of the communal frenzy incited by the self seeking politicians who became the villains of peace at that time.

His writing aims to educate readers about the happenings that made sworn enemies out of the age old friends and turned the event to become the bloodiest and most shameful in the history of world in general and India, in particular. The imaginary love characters Jugga Singh and Nooran in Mano Majra where the people of all castes and creed live in love and harmony only reflects the social commitment of the author in his inimitable style.

The characters portrayed in the novel who profusely love each other are writhing with pain at the time of forced separation reassuring good times for each other. And this is what only a unique novelist like Khushwant Singh could write. Khushwant Singh's revelation of a train packed with corpses, the pathetic massacre of the Hindus in Pakistan, the vengeance of Sikhs, and finally the sacrifice of Jugga to save the beloved is directly or indirectly a message and an example to save the humanity and the nation. There is no doubt therefore that *Train to Pakistan* presents a remarkable example of love, sacrifice, togetherness and humanity which essentially the highlight of this research.

Keywords: *Massacre, Vengeance, Humanity, Love, Sacrifice.*

The novel *Train to Pakistan* is the creative recreation of the real. The characters of the novel portray immense faith in the goodness of humans. We recommend all English students to read this novel which represents excellence of literature and portrays true picture during partition of India in 1947. It brings to light the lesser known blues of India-Pakistan partition 1947 and handles the subject in a matter of fact style without suppression or exaggeration of the facts. The narration of the novel is simple and straightforward. The characters in the novel are fictitious but real enough for narrating truth of the events. It mentions a fictitious town named **Mano Majra** where the masses before partition live in harmony without prejudices of caste or creed. The situation deteriorates with the news of communal violence in Punjab and Bengal.

The book ironically portrays the evil that India's partition created. In spite of winning the freedom the country put at stake things that should have been clearly avoided on amicable basis. The consequence of these things is felt even today among both the countries living as arch rivals with no holds barred. Jugga Singh, the protagonist, falls in love with Nooran, the daughter of local Mullah's (weaver by profession) daughter. It is to understand that the inter-religious love was strictly forbidden in the days of this novel.

The author genuinely opines that literature should be designed to encourage harmony in the society so that the people of different hues and cries can live together in peace. Through Mano Majra, Khushwant gives a remarkable example of love and human feelings. The bloodshed keeps going on in many villages at the border but people of Mano Majra live like brothers. And at the time of partition, when Muslims were compelled to leave Mano Majra, the people of both the communities weep bitterly expressing their close affiliations with each other.

The train at the **Mano Majra** Railway station becomes the epicenter of communal tension where common man remains a dumb spectator befooled by the powerful. The news triggers Communal clashes and massacre of innocent people who become victims of the communal frenzy incited by the villains of peace who are self seeking politicians. Vivid account relating to the massacre of Hindus and Muslims is given especially in the border towns of India. People are killed mercilessly and the commoners face lots of suffering. The situation is described brilliantly in the inimitable style of the novelist. Khushwant Singh attributes atrocities on both sides, the Hindus as well as Muslims; "Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped."⁽¹⁾ The **British Raj** played treacherous role by remaining a silent spectator to the killings. This precipitated deep crisis to the situation. Sanity, love and affection amongst people transcending caste differences could only bring respite from the crisis.

Khushwant Singh himself had been a witness to the dark events narrated in *Train To Pakistan*. He was only 32 at the time of India's partition. He candidly admits that he could not do his

bit of contribution to prevent communal riots and partition of the country. Khushwant Singh's heart was writhing with pain as he could not do much beyond remaining a silent spectator to the horrific events. Khushwant Singh, thus, wrote the novel, *Train To Pakistan* to relieve himself of the mental tension arising from the guilt of remaining a passive spectator to the chain of dreadful events that followed at the time of India's partition. Juggat Singh, Iqbal and Hukum Chand are the main characters in the novel, *Train To Pakistan*. Jugga Singh is a local badmash who is arrested as murder suspect of the money lender Lala Ram Lal. Jugga Singh, at the time of murder was making love with his Muslim sweetheart Nooran. After hearing the sound of fire shots, Nooran gets terrified for life when Jugga says: "No one can harm you when I live. No one in Mano Majra can raise his eyebrow at you and get away from Jugga. I am not a badmash for nothing." (16) This reflects human approach transcending caste barriers in Khushwant Singh's literature.

Khushwant Singh describes the pathetic night before the migration of Muslims; "not many people slept in Mano Majra that night. They went from house to house- talking, crying, and swearing love and friendship, assuring each other that this would soon be over. Life they said, would be as it had always been." (132) However, the report of massacre of the Hindus in Pakistan spreads like wild fire and that disturbed the peace of Mano Majra. Following this, Sikhs plan to kill Muslims to avenge killings of Hindus. Fortunately, some sane and God fearing natured people like Lambardar and Meet Singh report the matter to police the Magistrate, and Hukum Chand, .Hukum chand, a great human asks the inspector to release both Jugga and Iqbal. Through characters like Hukum Chand, Meet Singh, Lambardar, Imam Bakhsh and Jugga, Khushwant Singh demonstrates the supremacy of love for the Nation and humanity above everything. Khushwant Singh depicts creative imagination and herein lies his success to demonstrate triumph of humanity and love over narrow barriers of caste.

The riots break out in most of the border villages of India. Despite the provocations of the communal riots, the common people of the village Mano Majra keep their heads cool. Imam Bakhsh even is not ready to leave the village for Pakistan. He announces: "what have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers." (126)

The bravery of Jugga Singh is brought about in the story, when he attempted to save several innocent lives and his lady love, Nooran too. The crises began when horrifying train with corpses entered the village. When the Sikhs decided to attack the Muslims travelling on train to Pakistan and Nooran is likely to travel by the same train, Juggat sacrificed his life. Nooran was Jugga's motivation. What he did makes him simply incredible.

Jugga gets information that the train carrying Nooran is the target of the avengers. They have stretched a rope a little above the funnel of the engine across the bridge to cut the Muslims into two, sitting on the roof of the train. Jugga conks out their mission by climbing the steel span of the bridge, he starts beating the rope severely with a rod. He cuts the rope vigorously and the same time the avengers set him on fire. Fortunately he cuts the rope successfully. Jugga saved his sweet heart as

well as other Muslims but the train went over him and went on to Pakistan. Khushwant Singh has given a great example of love and sacrifice through Jugga Singh.

Taslina Nasrin, a renowned author has also contributed in presenting the reality of riots in her *Lajja* but she could not create a humane like Jugga Singh of *Train to Pakistan* who sacrifices himself for love. Khushwant Singh is distinguished from the 19th century naturalists like Emily Zola who depicts the sordid reality of life. Khushwant Singh really deserves praise for his different style of writing and multifaceted themes.

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