

PORTRAYAL OF ANAND IN SAGAR'S BLEEDING PARTITION

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ABSTRACT

The greatest event in the history of modern India is the attainment of freedom in 1947 along with the Partition of the Indian sub-continent on communal basis into two sovereign political units; India and Pakistan. The violence and blood-shed of that time has left a tremendous impact on Indian writers. Ramanand Sagar's *Bleeding Partition* records the psyche of the people who yearned for freedom of India and Pakistan. The present paper tries to show the most unexpected and tragic consequence of the political decision to divide the Indian sub-continent i.e. how millions of people were forced to leave their homes and undertake a difficult and sorrowful journey against their desires and better instincts. Thematically, longing for freedom is the main motto of the novel, yet this paper aims to examine writer's presentation of violence and horrors in his novel through Anand, an immortal character.

Key words: - Partition, Migration, Refugee, Abduction, Intolerance, Cruelty, Rape, Looting.

The partition of India under the British into two independent sovereign states, India and Pakistan in August 1947, is, unquestionably, the greatest tragedy of Indian history. The British, for obvious strategic reasons, initiated and furthered the communal hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims. It resulted into two way exodus, desire for revenge, massacre, looting, arson and rape on a very large scale. Since independence the two nations have been at war with each other in 1948, 1965, and 1971. Due to its importance in Indian history the theme of partition has attracted major talents into fictional creation. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Chaman

Nahal's *Azadi*, Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* and Ramanand Sagar's *Aur Insan Mar Gaya* are some of the well known novels on Partition.

Ramanand Sagar is one of the greatest writers of Indian Literature of Partition besides he is an eminent writer, director and producer of films. Sagar has worked in the film industry for the last 40 years. From 1949 onwards he has been writing, producing and directing scores of thought provoking films which have won National and International acclaims. The impact of his work has been appreciated in all states of society from the common man to the highest in the land. His major achievement, a TV serial of Ramayan, is acclaimed as the most popular program ever succeeded. His immortal novel *Aur Insan Mar Gaya* has been translated by D.P.Pandey from Hindi into English as *Bleeding Partition*. This docudrama records the morbid degeneration of mankind during the partition riots between India and Pakistan in 1947. The novel has four parts: The Red Fountains, The Fire, I Am Saved, and And Man Died. Anand, the central figure of this novel, is a sensitive poet, lover pained by the madness that has enveloped his companions seized by a frenzy of communal passions; his compatriots who had spent decades in harmonious co-existence are reduced to perverted blood suckers. Anand's helplessness and his reactions to the violent situation give us a gripping insight into the deep recesses of the human psyche. This is the story of humans caught in the orgy of arson, violence and rape. It is also the story of the largest migration of human beings who had fallen victim to the politics of hate.

The Red Fountains, in the first part of the novel, is a significant beginning to show the agony of mankind. After centuries of slavery, India was getting her freedom and Lord Radcliffe was drawing a red line on the map of India to divide the country into two parts: India and Pakistan. With the partition big cities, small villages and farms were all aflame. It appeared as if the fires of hatred, terror and intolerance engulfed the whole sub-continent. Sagar has aptly used symbols to describe the terror and horror during that period. The city of Lahore is symbolized with a dead body, moon with a sick woman and the total lack of sound whose terror was like a heavy blanket shrouding the city muffled all sounds of life. Anand, the central character in the novel, was in love with Usha daughter of Seth Kishorilal who accepted the insignia of disgrace if Anand would save his property from the Muslims. They often both exchanged the silent greetings on their roofs but how two lovers can continue their love games when a deluge of humanity was rushing towards an unknown destination at the time of partition. Humanity, civilized behavior, culture

are all dead. Many Hindu rich people had tempted many Tonga drivers with money to take their luggage to the station safely through the Muslim localities but how one could get ones destination so easily. Everything was robbed and spoiled. Man had become the incarnation of the devil. But Anand was in belief that a day would come when war and evil will tire themselves out, when there will be complete peace-perpetual and everlasting and once again he and Usha would be in a blissful state of love as they were earlier.

Anand was in his deep thoughts when suddenly there was a fire in the street in the house of Shamasuddin, a Muslim. But there was not one man to fight the fire. Anand shouted for the buckets of water otherwise he would jump into the fire to save the family members. Then one of the group members sang a song motivating Anand: - “Shaheedon ki chitaaon par lagenge har baras mele; Wattan par marne walon ka” (p 29).Anand jumped into the fire to save the family but he found none just ashes. Everybody present there was surprised and tried to help Anand in his expedition. Anand felt a sense of achievement in his life because his fatal plunge into the burning house had forced the others to join him in putting out the fire. And that itself signified his victory.

The Fire, in the second part of the novel, shows gruesome reality of the partition. People were moving from one place to the other for peace and safety half naked and helpless. The children cried piteously of hunger and thirst. Their utter exhaustion dimmed their eyes but they continued to look at their parents asking why had they been subjected to such tortures? On the night between the 14th and 15th August 1947, India had been divided. The situation in Punjab had been deteriorated; news of frightful happenings in Amritsar, Patiala and Ludhiana was trickling into Lahore. Special arrangements were made by the government through the trains for the Muslims and Hindus so that they could reach at their destinations safely. But these trains presented the scene of horror: they were crowded with the dead bodies of Hindu refugees from Pakistan and Muslims from India. The first train carrying Muslim refugees reached Lahore from Amritsar in a horrifying condition. Many of the refugees were dead but some sat on the hard benches of the compartment and stared mutely. They were alive, but in a death like stupor. There was fire all around. Hundreds of bodies littered every inch of the ground. Bodies were placed in stacks; there was no individual cremation, whole stacks were burnt together. The fire wood stocked at the cremation ground for burning the bodies had run out. A burning body had to act as fuel for

another. Desperate Hindus had themselves put whole streets on fire before the group of Muslim incendiaries could reach there to harm their wives and children. Nobody cared for anybody because no one had time to find out who called whom for help. In the midst of wailing shriek of the wounded mourning their dead, Anand was looking around searching for someone to hear only one voice i.e. of Usha.

Anand reached the relief camp with a child to whom he found and picked up in the turmoil. Tarachand, one of the victims of partition, had accompanied Anand into relief camp whose family had jumped from the upper floor of the building to an adjacent roof to save them without knowing that the roof was already burnt down. Seth Kishorilal was also there in the camp staring silently. His silence terrified Anand. Greedy Seth told Anand that he had saved money instead of Usha and her mother because the whole world revolves around money. He said that when a person had got money, he might get any number of wives. After hearing all this Anand got up hurriedly and walked off. Anand thought that death could be many times more beautiful than the life that lingers in that mutilated frame. Life was perhaps a continuous, endless torture, an eternal agony which can be brought to an end only through death. He cried silently, the tears staining his cheeks and by the time he reached at the mansion of Seth Kishorilal. He fell into the past pleasant memories of Usha. He tried to find out her ashes from a heap of debris, but only burnt his hands. Suddenly he heard the sobs of an old man who was not weeping for those who have died, but for those who murdered them. He was trying to console him. Suddenly they both heard a tumult of shouts and slogans. The old man pushed Anand in a corner of the room of Kishorilal's house and thus saved his life from a mob of around twenty of young Muslims. That old man was a Maulana who preached the Holy Quran and said that he who saved one life saved mankind. He made Anand to wear Shalwar (the traditional Muslim trousers) and to proceed on old man's mysterious mission. Mission was to release the three girls, one of them being Usha. It made Anand's hair stand on end. He rushed to Usha's side like a mad man and tried to release her but failed to untie the knots. Old man cut the ropes and released the girls and deputed Anand to escort them to the relief camp so that they could reach their destination. He also handed over a bundle to Anand containing the image of Lord Krishna; he had saved from the burning temple. By this act, he had attained a place higher than the one whose image he had saved from the fire. Here the old man stood like a gem that sparkle even in the darkest clouds of violence, hatred and communal riots.

Anand reached relief camp with the girls where Usha met with her selfish father. Presence of her father in the camp shattered his dreams again. But Usha without knowing the reality took it in a wrong way and asked him, "Have you started hating me because I was abducted by the Muslims?"(p 58) These words of Usha stung him like a snake. He decided to write a letter to her revealing all the truth about his love for her and her father's love for money. But before this letter could reach to her, she had committed suicide by taking poison. Anand thought that her last moments must have been intolerable because of the accumulated pain and the hatred she must have felt for him. That is why she sought refuge in poison. She did not commit suicide; it was he, her lover who had murdered her. (p58).His horrible cry pierced the silence.

The caravan for East Punjab started in the third part of the novel "I Am Saved". The villages that Anand passed were deserted. The earth was red with blood and the environment wet with tears. Terror reigned supreme-it was in the villages, in the atmosphere and also on the faces of the survivors. On the way he found a sanctuary in a gurudwara where a Sikh released him only after seeing a tattoo of 'Om' on his arm. That Sikh was in search of a Muslim to even the score for his third companion killed by the Muslims. Anand again reached in a refugee camp where people shared their miseries like the members of a clan. Everyone listened to the woes of others. The recounting of the stories of murder, loot, rape and arson was an endless process. One woman named Nirmala in the camp lost her mind considering Anand as her husband and the little child as her son Prem. Anand cried bitterly who could not bear to see the young woman losing her mind. When the unfortunate girl came to reality she turned to stone. But many happenings in the camp were not unusual. People cried, shouted, went hungry and without sleep, sometimes, they died too. Anand was the solitary exception to this rule. People came to him with their troubles in the hope of a solution. A little child was brought by Kishanchand whose mother was abducted by the Muslims rioters. The poor infant was half dead with hunger and fatigue. Nirmala had, after once feeding him, frozen like the Arctic Ocean. She told her story of misery where her husband had thrown her in woes instead of all love. She had to run for her life and chastity from the Muslims. But when she was able to escape her father-in-law gave reference of Sita and refused to accept her daughter-in-law. And even her husband, who silently claimed to be the reincarnation of Lord Rama stood quietly as his wife's fidelity and chastity were put to test. Her father -in-law sought to console her with the words: "You should not be sorry; we have taken vengeance. We have abducted more of their womenfolk than the number of our daughters and

daughters-in-law kidnapped” (p90). How a lady could get solace out of these words? And she left her so called home to find sanctuary somewhere. After hearing her sorry tale Anand, embracing trunk of a tree, cried bitterly. Now she was feeling relieved and started feeding the child in her lap.

People at that time had become so self centered nay selfish that nobody ever thought of showing any consideration for his companions. Hunger had driven the instinct of sex from their lives. Even women were not shown any leniency; as a matter of fact, nobody looked at them as women. The atrocities of Lahore had badly shaken up Anand’s mind. The happenings in the camp and the general environment there had created a similarity between Usha and Nirmala in his mind. He felt a strange kind of peace in his attitude towards Nirmala. Even Nirmala had a soft corner for him. She thought him as God, a savior. Next day in the morning people were beating a Muslim who escorted a girl to the camp to get better sanctuary. Anand saved him from them and when he saw the man; he was the same old man (Maulana) who saved him from the clutches of the Muslims. But again a Sikh named Ujjagar Singh came to kill the old man. He had lost his mind because he himself had killed his wife and children so that they did not fall into the hands of the Muslims. Every time he used to say: “I am saved; I am saved.”(p102). He held a spear in his hand given by his son and never forgot the words of his son: “Mother told me that the Muslims will come to kill us. Have you become a Muslim?”(p104) Anand asked the Maulana about the situation of Lahore. He compared Lahore with Delhi during the 1857 Mutiny. The beautiful city had been shattered into pieces. People, sick with hunger and thirst, licked the bleeding bodies of their wives, brothers and children to wet their swollen throats. When they went without water for some days, they were forced to urinate into each other’s mouths so that they did not die of lack of liquids. Anand cried bitterly after hearing all this. He deputed Kishanchand to escort the Maulana safely beyond the camp. But when Kishanchand returned to camp his tone was full of urgency and he was breathless because there was flood was in the river. All in the camp planned to evacuate the place. The whole group of destitute stood petrified by fear when a snake had bitten the girl to whom Maulana had escorted to the camp that morning. Anand tried to save her but in vain. He stood gazing at her dead body. A nameless terror gripped Anand but Kishanchand with the help of Nirmala and others helped Anand and Ujjagar Singh in crossing the water.

“And Man Died” is the fourth part of the novel where the noble man Anand died. After crossing the water, they all had joined caravan to reach India. Government had made arrangement for the chapattis which were dropped over that area for the victims. Next morning there was a confused sound of shouts when the whole group went a little ahead, they found Kishanchand locked in combat with a Muslim. Here Kishanchand revealed a truth before dying that he was a Muslim named Rehman who abducted a Hindu girl, but his conscious did not allow killing her child and he brought him to the refugee camp. The child brought by him was also died because of starvation. Till now Anand totally lost his senses and took the dead body of the child in his lap and continued walking. He had become totally insensitive to the happenings. The feeling was so heightened that at times, Anand appeared to be dead even though he walked. His belief in an everlasting peace had been shattered into pieces. Meanwhile plane came to drop the chapattis. People were crying and shouting to catch them. They were striking at each other in this haphazard Anand’s grip on the dead body of the child slackened and mixed with the chapattis which had been air dropped as a mission of mercy. But caravan went on and finally reached near the Sulemanki Bridge. Suddenly they heard a sound shouting Anand’s name. He looked back and found Maulana stood at the other end of the bridge but Anand caught Maulana’s throat tightly and his mad laughter rang in the atmosphere with the words:”I shall kill him! I shall kill him...Man is committing suicideHa-ha!”(p147) After hearing the loud laughter of Anand “Ujjagar Singh had joined the cacophony and the Pakistani soldiers started firing. Shots were ringing on both sides and slogans were being shouted. Nobody knew who had died and who survived. But man died in the last.

Thus bleeding partition by Ramanand Sagar presents scenes of violence, horror and terror of varying multitudes. The novel is a witness to the death of man and human feelings but author’s humanity and sympathy for mankind has remained inviolate. It shines forth in the character who are real in spite of being imaginary; who die one after the other but still live in everyone’s mind. Usha, Anand, Maulana, Kishanchand Ujjagar Singh and Nirmala- each one of them in his or her place, is a symbol of Sagar’s sympathy for mankind. The words that have flowed out of his pen are the dying declaration of man. Through his novel and its characters he is only holding a mirror to show the distorted features of man when human feelings and conscience have died in man and when thick clouds enveloped the skies and not a single star succeeded in penetrating the blanket of darkness.

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