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based on Pāli Sources from 6th B.C. to 5th A. D.

Secularization, or, in other words, 'de-divinization of human consciousness', a historical process has created a crisis of conscience for a modern man, who has lost faith in the existence of God, but, wants to become a Saint. The people with similar crisis of conscience, can fruitfully seek guidance from the Buddha, an Asian, from ancient India, who discovered the Path to solve the 'only problem', which not only modern Europe is seized with, but, is also influencing the rest of the civilized world. The Buddha delineated the Path which can lead such reasonable persons to discover the Nibbānic state of mind, and consequently, become Saints, *arhats* in Buddhist terminology, however, without professing faith in Almighty God, thus simultaneously, resolve the crisis and solve the 'only problem.' This book is an attempt to identify the Path.

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Studies in **PANJABI** **FICTION**

HARCHARAN SINGH SOBTI

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THE BOOK

The purpose of the book is to introduce some of the major Panjabi novelists and short story writers to other than Panjabi knowing readers. While analysing the text the non-availability of the books in other than Panjabi language is kept in view. An attempt is made to make use of textual references to the extent it renders the analysis intelligible. The choice of the novels, or the stories, made, as such, is prompted by a wish to acquaint the readers with some of the important themes worked out in Panjabi fiction.

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Dr. HARCHARAN SINGH SOBTI
M.A. LL.B. Ph. D.

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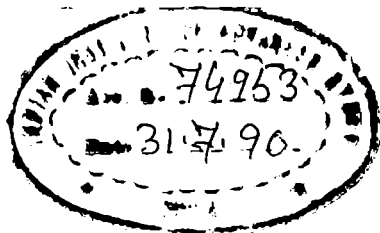
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DEDICATED

to

PAMMI BAKSHI

the blessed couple

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CONTENTS

Preface	vii
I. Bhāi Vīr Singh : A Study in Paradox	1-9
II. Gurbaksh Singh Preetlaṛī : A Study in Philosophy of Love	10-19
III. Nānak Singh : A Response to a Freedom-Movement	20-31
IV. <u>Amrita Pritam : A Portrait of an Artist</u>	32-38
V. Kartār Singh Duggal : A Theme of Partition	39-45
VI. Gurdīāl Singh : A Study in Social Transformation	46-55
VII. <u>Daleep Kaur Tiwāṇā : An Illusion of Woman</u>	56-63
VIII. Jaswant Singh Kanwal : A Study in Caste-Structure	64-68
IX. <u>Ajīt Kaur : A Study in Loneliness</u>	69-79
X. Gīāni Kesar Singh : A Tale of Woe of a Patriot	80-95
XI. Niranjān Tasneem : Communal Prejudice— A Case Study	96-104
Bibliography	105-107
Index	108-111

PREFACE

The purpose of the present book is to introduce some of the major Panjabi novelists and short story writers to other than Panjabi knowing readers. In case of novelists, except Bhāi Vir Singh, one novel of each novelist is taken up for class-analysis. Whereas, major themes of two very outstanding short story writers are taken up for discussion and evaluation. Paper on Ajit Kaur is an exception to the general rule of class-analysis. Rather, it is an attempt to present a psycho-spiritual analysis of the theme of loneliness in her writings. And, I must confess that the *deviation* is a result of my studies in Buddhism, I undertook since 1980. To pursue my studies further, in similar direction, I am working on *The Predicament of Women : A Psycho Spiritual Analysis of the Fictional World of Ajit Kaur*. I hope to publish the same, sometimes, in the last month of the next year.

While analysing the text, the non-availability of the books in other than Panjabi language is kept in view. An attempt is made to make use of textual references to the extent it renders the analysis intelligible. The choice of the novel, in each case or of the stories of two writers made, as such, is prompted by a wish to acquaint the readers with some of the important themes worked out in Panjabi fiction.

At the time of translating textual references, especially the rural expressions, into English language, I admit, I found it difficult to communicate its vitality and freshness. I believe in the *process* and not in finality.

There are certain mistakes, here and there, which I hope would be corrected with ease by the readers.

Some of my friends deserve special mention, who, in one way or the other, helped in the preparation of this book. For writing my paper on *Bhāi Vir Singh : A Study in Paradox*, I am grateful to Dr. S. M. Abbās Shārib Rudolvi, my friend and colleague with whom I discussed the problem and he told me about Najamulghani's book, *Tārīkh-e-Awadh*, which proved useful in understanding political phenomenon of maligning the Rulers of the Past in the interest of British Masters.

I am in no way less indebted to Miss Susheel Kaur, Deputy Librarian, Delhi University Library System, whom I, at one time, suggested to read Ajit Kaur. We used to discuss the image of woman portrayed in Ajit Kaur's fictional writings, at length. My analysis of Ajit Kaur's fiction is, partly, in response to Susheel's queries.

My special thanks are due to Sardar Harbans Singh, my friend, who, at one time, coaxed me to give shape and publish the book.

Not to express my gratitude towards Dr. K. L. Bhatia, in whose company, I always inhale the fresh air of love and friendship, is simply to keep it out of the framework of formalities.

To my wife Jindi and kids Shilpi and Rishi, I need not to express my appreciation for their co-operation in preparing this book, because, they are part of my Being.

My thanks are due to Mr. Sham Lal Malhotra, the, publisher who gave a practical shape to my idea of presenting this book to you.

HARCHARAN SINGH, SOBTI

16th November, 1986
D13A/30 Model Town,
Delhi-110009 (India)

BHĀI VĪR SINGH : A STUDY IN PARADOX*

(Based on Sundarī, Bijay Singh and Satwant Kour)

Contrary to the demands of normal psychical behaviour, Bhāi Vīr Singh (1872-1957) viewed the historical past inconsistent with the attitude he professed towards the contemporary regime. Normally, one's affinity with the past is a direct reflection of one's mode of living in the present. To elaborate : only those persons can be said, mentally and morally well-equipped, to discern the revolutionary contents from their amorphous cultural heritage, who are decidedly committed to nothing less than revolution. Bhāi Vīr Singh defies our hypothesis, and, to his disadvantage. In short : Bhāi Sāhib was critical about the rulers of the past, but, he believed in forging comfortable relations with the British Crown. Thus, we find him *involved* in paradoxical situation – situation, only, apparently absurd, but really true. To decode the meaning and motive of this paradox, alone, is our purpose, in this paper.

... .. *

Firstly, few words about the text. The text we have selected is a trilogy that consists of Sundarī (1898), Bijay Singh (1899) and Satwant Kour (1900). It is a trilogy in which certain sentiment rather than a certain character forms link between them. And the choice is not arbitrary. It is this trilogy that depicts historical past, we are concerned with. Then, it is a form of fiction. Our author's choice too, is most appropriate. The form of fiction is rightly said to be the most effective instrument, if handled properly, in the hands of a missionary.

* Paper presented in the Seminar on Bhāi Vīr Singh, organized by S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, Delhi University, in February 1982.

Bhāi Sāhib never fails as a missionary. He is rather *adorned* by his devotees. We are told by his biographers that he studied and passed his entrance examination from Mission High School at Amritsar. Part of the credit, for the missionary zeal, he imbibed, certainly, goes to this very institution. To add, it was this institution which prevailed upon the Sikh sentiment of four Sikh students, (Āya Singh, Attar Singh, Sādhū Singh and Santokh Singh), who expressed their desire to become Christians, which consequently led to the formation of Singh Sabhā, under the patronage of S. Thākur Singh Sandhāwālā, in the year 1873.

Bhāi Sāhib's choicest reader of this trilogy, at least, was no other than women-folk. Again, this choice was not without merit. Generally speaking, only the women-folk during that period knew Panjabi in Gurmukhī script. The men-folk, if educated, knew English and/or Urdu. The choice of women-folk as a reader, has no doubt, adversely affected the art of fiction, but this is immaterial. Bhāi Sāhib's main concern was not to create art-forms, but to preach effectively, and, which, he did. Bhāi Sāhib was interested in educating the family-unit the way he desired, that would form the essential base for restructuring contemporary Sikh society. Hence, his focus was on women-folk.

...

Now, let us turn our attention, for a while, towards the text. Bhāi Sāhib's entire focus, in this trilogy, is three-fold : (i) Hindūs are coward (ii) Sikhs are brave and (iii) the rulers, identified as Turks, are cruel and debauché. In Sundari, when Balwant Singh a new-convert to Sikh faith after the abduction of Surasti (later on named Sundari), his sister, brings her back, from the captivity of the ruler, to the parents, rather than expressing their admiration on his heroic act, he is rebuked, instead, thus :

“What have you done damned fellow ! Will the Turk forgive us now ? The moment he discovers that

our son is a Sikh he would doom all of us. And, moreover you have snatched away the girl from him; he would swallow us all like a starving lion. Be a good man and hand over the girl to the person from whose captivity you have brought her.”¹

Our author, also comments on the general tone of administration as : “.....The beautiful woman, wealth and pelf could hardly be the possession of a Hindū.”² The above dialogue and comments, reveal, *fairly well*, Bhāi Sāhib's grasp of the situation. There is no denying the fact that there were Hindūs who were cowards; there were Sikhs who were brave, and there were rulers who were cruel and debauched. But, to create an impression that all the Hindūs were coward; all the Sikhs were brave and all the rulers were cruel and debauched, this scheme of thought smells a design. The cowardice, the bravery, cruelty and debauchery emerge simultaneously, and the catalytic agent, no doubt, is the ruler. So, the main focus is on the despicable conduct of the ruler. This is not an isolated thing. It was a trend enlarged as phenomenon, that reveals its true nature, only when viewed in its proper historical perspective. Pandit Sunder Lāl's observations, while writing on Nawāb Wājīd Alī in his book *San Satāwan*,³ in this context, are quite revealing. He writes :

“In the words of Sir John this was company's general practice that whenever they took over any state, to denigrate the Rājā of that state in the eyes of his subject, they used to cook stories against his character. Unfortunately, books written by people like Arnold based on fictitious stories served as a base material for several novels. This concocted sins of Wājīd Alī Shāh were carried on from one book to another book and even today, innumerable countrymen of Wājīd Alī Shāh consider those dirty and false accusations as real.”

Out of several attempts aimed at character assassination of Nawāb Wājīd Ali Shāhī, one such book is Maulvī Mohammad Najmulghani's 'Tārikh-e-Awadh'⁴ in four volumes. The author, acknowledging the patronage of British Crown, for writing this book of history, expresses his gratitude as follows :

“Though the disinterest of the time has maltreated the Social Sciences and especially history, the time tried its utmost to put off the twinkling and burning lamp of history. But the Nature saved it from the unlimited darkness of death and made the British government as patron of history. Their patronage, protected the lamp of history from stormy winds. It is not required to elaborate and explain the extent of Kingly rewards and honours bestowed upon us every day. Because every intellectual knows it too well.”

Maulvi Mohammad Najmulghani, who did play clandestine role of historical dimension, but after all, was a writer with sensitive soul. He could visualize the contempt of his contemporaries for writing such a book of history. He writes :

“My contemporaries will certainly condemn me on this act that being a Muslim why I wrote a *Katchā Chitṭhā* (misdeed) of Muslim rulers”.⁵

This is nothing but a style of writing of a guilty conscience, whose main purpose was to denigrate the rulers of the past.

... ..

This was the one side of the picture, let us look at the other side, also. Elliot and Dawson while preparing book on medieval Indian history made selections from the chronicles written by the court writers whose main concern was the ruler and the battles he fought to expand and to retain his kingdom. These selections were translated and published in eight volumes. These volumes serve as a primary source for those scholars who

are not conversant with Persian and Arabic. At the moment, we are only concerned with the motive of the editors which they expressed right in the introduction, thus :

“.....It will make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule.”⁶

Prof. Khāliq Ahmed Nizāmi after quoting Elliot's intention further comments that :

“...He therefore blackened, ‘the Indian past’ to glorify the ‘British Present’ and used medieval Indian history as for the implementation of the formula : ‘counter-poise of natives against natives’, evolved by the British Army Commission. ...He was confident that if the “tyranny and capriciousness of despotic rulers of medieval India was discussed in that way it would make the Indians shudder at their past and hail the British regime as a blessing.”⁷

Elliot and Dawson's design adds new dimension to our discussion. Thus, to malign the past was part of the plan to glorify the present and the present was British regime.

The plan to glorify the British rule acquired a peculiar character in the context of Sikh-world. This refers to the prophecies, believed to have been made by the Sikh Gurūs. Max Arthur Macauliffe in the preface to *The Sikh Religion* writes :

“A few of the advantages of the Sikh religion to the state may be enumerated. One day as Gurū Teg Bahādur was in the top storey of his prison, the Emperor Aurangzeb thought he saw him looking towards the South in the direction of the Imperial Zenānā. He was sent for the next day and charged

with this grave breach of oriental etiquette and propriety. The Gurū replied, "Emperor Aurangzeb! I was on the top storey of my prison, but I was not looking at the private apartment or at those queens. I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down the Paradās and destroy thine empire."⁸

After that, Macauliffe, in the same breath refers to Gurū Gobind Singh, who said, that :

... "Then shall the English come and joined by the Khalsa, rule as well in the East as in the West. The Holy Bābā Nānak will bestow all wealth on them."⁹

Deriving results from these prophecies, Macauliffe concludes that :

"It is such prophecies as these.....which have made the Sikh among the bravest, the most loyal and devoted subject of the British Crown".¹⁰

Regarding the source of such prophecies Macauliffe only refers such as "Sikh writers state" (p. xviii) or "the following written by one of them". (p. xix). It would be quite futile to search for the authors of these prophecies. These are the creations of the collective unconscious. The masses have been preserving their aspirations in these forms. Any one who collects them at one place does not become their author and also does not remain only a collector. One who collects, also does that motivated by certain needs. The above quoted prophecies, so to say, associated with the Sikh Gurūs, depict aspirations of those alone, for whom the British rule had proved a blessing. They only wanted to have been sanctioned by the Sikh Gurūs.

It is no more surprising, now, at this stage of our investigation to find clauses such as 'loyalty to the Govt.' 'and

disqualifying those who are suspect in the eyes of the Govt, for becoming members etc.¹¹ in the constitution of Singh Sabhā. Bhāi Sāhib was ideologue of Singh Sabhā movement which he joined in the year 1892. He was loyal to the British Crown and his loyalty was very much in accord with the objectives of the Singh Sabhā. Any attempt to refute this charge of 'loyalty to the British Crown' must fail. Because, Bhāi Sāhib himself, has provided documentary evidence to that effect. In one of the issues of Khālsā Samāchār (weekly) of which he was editor, under the caption, "Blessings of the British Regime", he writes :

"It was a perpetual anxiety earlier as to how to spend this life, whereas, the question now is how best we are to live it. We are free from any worry from the enemies abroad, we have every comfort and several facilities e.g. railways, telegraph etc. Hospitals and post-offices are there to cater to our needs. Who has brought these blessings ? Solely because of the grace of the British regime we have all of them. So, we should be beholden to this regime and must prove ourselves to be the loyalist citizen."¹²

Obviously, the benefits enumerated are of material nature.

... ..

Not that we deny the historicity of the sufferings of some of the Sikh Gurūs and their followers at the hands of certain rulers of the past and intend to exonerate them, our only purpose is to expose the trend, at a specific juncture of time, commissioned by the British rulers to denigrate their predecessors to meet their political ends. And, Bhāi Sāhib, in our estimate, was too willing a partner in this campaign. He was a person with very delicate nature. It is safer also to criticise and condemn those who are no more alive or no more in power. But, it requires a courage of conviction to denounce

those who can make or mar your future. We don't think it is difficult at all to identify the class of writers to which Bhāi Sāhib belongs to.

Bhāi Sāhib, as a writer, aimed at restructuring contemporary Sikh society in the pattern, evolved by the Singh Sabhā movement, whose main concern, besides other things, was to remain on the right hand side of the British Masters. It was an attempt and (to the greater extent successful one) once again, after Mahārāja Ranjit Singh to alienate the contemporary Sikh society from the teachings and the practice of the Sikh Gurūs, and its effects, in quite visible form, continue to subsist in changed circumstances.

To conclude : Bhāi Sāhib's condemnation of the rulers of the past, was, in the final analysis, prompted by his motive to glorify the British Rule. This shows that he was not system-conscious and consequently that led him to a paradoxical situation. Had he been system-conscious he would have followed the path shown by the Sikh Gurūs, who had condemned any system built up to perpetuate dark human passions epitomised as Māyā.¹⁹

Notes and References :

1. Singh, Bhāi Vir, *Sundari*, p. 8 cf. *Bijay Singh* pp. 10-11 and *Satwant Kaur* pp. 16, 26.
2. Ibid. pp. 2-3.
3. Lāl, Sundar, *San Satāwan*. p. 27.
4. Najmulghani, Maulvī Mohammad. *Tārikh-e-Awadh*-pp. 3-4.
5. Ibid. p. 5.
6. Nizāmi, Khāliq Ahmed. Rashid, Abdur (Edts) *Elliot and Dawson History of India*. An Article : *General Criticism of Elliot's Approach to Medieval Indian History* (Original Vol. I p. 22) p. 763.

7. Ibid. p. 763.
8. Macauliffe, Max Arthur *The Sikh Religion* Vol. I. p. xviii. (preface)
9. Ibid. p. xix.
10. Ibid.
11. (i) Ashok, Sham Sher Singh *Panjāb Dīan Lehar*, p. 181. clause. 5 and 10.
(ii) Singh, Jagjit. Article on *Singh Sabhā Lehar* p. 65.
12. Kasel, Kirpāl Singh and others. *Panjabī Sāhit Dī Utpati Te Vikās*. p. 436.
13. (i) As a king (not only) one rules over the others
But, also exploits others and amasses riches (Māyā).
—Ādi granth p. 391-392
(ii) The king, worthy of throne should occupy it
Only those kings are true kings
Who have realized the truth
The kings (that we have) are not true one,
For they are torn by duality that leads to suffering.
—Ādi granth p. 1088.

GURBAKSH SINGH PREETLARI : A STUDY IN PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

Gurbaksh Singh's (1895-1977) philosophy of love is not original in the sense, that, none else prior to him, ever talked about it or lived up to it. And, it is not at all a reflection. Since, originality means to inherit a tradition or own a philosophy in terms of contemporary reality or mode of living. Foremost important thing is to be able to cast oneself in its pattern. Gurbaksh Singh while giving a clue as regard to the influence on his philosophy of love, refers to Mrs. Macatory, his kind friend, in his autobiography, *Meri Jiwan Khāni*¹ (1959) and writes that :

"In the select friendly circle of this very lady I came across that lady who inspired me to write a story, '*Pyār Qabzā Nahin Pehchān Hai*'² ('Love is not a Possession; it is a Realization') and provided a coherence to my ideas of '*Sahaj-preet*' ('Spontaneous Love') otherwise scattered and heightened the same to the level of art."

This is all about the influence that is available in his autobiography.

The expressions such as '*Pyār*' (Love), '*Qabzā*' (Possession) and '*Pehchān*' (Realization), contained in his dictum of philosophy of love, need not to be looked into with an aid of dictionary. In order to ascertain their specific meanings, better it would be, if we look into the nuances of these words as used in his writings. Gurbaksh Singh, let us hope, must have, in some

context, made statements regarding his views on love. He might have explained it, also; cast his (original) characters in the pattern of his philosophy of love; and restructured the characters of love-tales of folk-tradition, in the said pattern. Gurbaksh Singh's writings may needfully help to understand his widely talked about philosophy of love.

... ..

Gurbaksh Singh in the second part of his autobiography, *Manzil Dis Pat*³ (1964) indirectly declares Elizy as a heroine of his philosophy of love. This is the same Elizy who wrote a letter to Gurbaksh Singh, right from her wedding-bed, mentioning, that :

"I have got married. I am writing this letter from my wedding-bed. My husband is asleep, and I feel writing to you that you would ever remain my worth-remembering friend".⁴

Besides, giving an idea about the influence and heroine of his philosophy of love, Gurbaksh Singh has also spelled out the practical side of the same. During his stay at Naushehrā (Peshāwar), Gurbaksh Singh writes that, "second and young wife of his English Chief while telling his own wife used to invoke his hidden desires", that :

"Truly speaking, your husband is women's man— He attends to a woman with soft and loving care in such a way that woman's heart can hardly resist the warmth it receives."⁵

It was the husband of this very 'young wife', who, once wrote a long letter to Gurbaksh Singh, 'the substance' of which when abridged is as under :

"I had always thought that.....[She] is contented with family-life; she always seemed to me to be in high spirits... But, I gathered from last night's incident

that I could not be helpful in the development of some aspect of her *ātmā* (psyche). If your intimacy could make.....fully contented, I shall always behold myself indebted to you.....I would like to tell you, further, that I love you as much as I love her.”⁶

Telling about ‘last night’s incident’, Gurbaksh Singh reveals that he had declined the invitation of her husband to a dinner. “No sooner I uttered the word ‘no’ than she started sighing and crying so loudly that *chowki-lār* rushed in to...”⁷ The husband of this very lady i, e, English Chief, once invited Gurbaksh Singh at his residence and complained, that :

“I did lot for her and to-day she has disappointed me.”⁸ Continuing with the same, Gurbaksh Singh writes that :

“Her husband complained and giving my instance he tried to make his wife understand :

Look at him he has not let the peace of his family-life shattered.” Gurbaksh Singh further adds, that :

“To make them understand I explained my philosophy of love and told them that, that love which destroys the peace of family-life, that love for married couples proves a failure. I can stay in their lives to the extent it increases the domestic bliss of their lives—If it causes an obstruction to such increase, this relation of ours has become futile.”⁹

During the interpretation, “out of pain as well as a result of injured ego, she murmured, that if it has become futile, break it.”¹⁰

Then, in the words of Gurbaksh Singh “both the husbands discussed the matter and came to the conclusion that it is in the interest of peace in family-life that we should accept the

break off. Gradually, both the families got so far from each other that distance of one and quarter miles seemed to be one hundred miles".¹¹

When summed up, Gurbaksh Singh's philosophy of love is an idealized projection of an idea of not to shatter the peace of family-life. The substance of his philosophy of love, therefore, can be ascertained when viewed in this context. As regard to 'Naushehrā episode' Gurbaksh Singh himself has committed that :

"At this time, an incident, full of emotions, also occurred. This incident was not at all unique in itself, but it proved to be not less than a revolution. I ceased to be a peasant and this made me a writer."¹²

When, Gurbaksh Singh returned from America, on his return, the first story that he wrote namely, *Omā te Odhā Mālī* (Originally in English) was a literary transformation of 'Naushehrā episode.'

Gurbaksh Singh in addition to explaining the practical dimensions of his philosophy of love, has also frequently expressed his views as regard to its philosophical and literary nuances. He has used the expression '*pyār*' in terms of '*ishq*'. He writes, that :

".....but the first big revolution was '*ling*' [sex], and '*ishq*' is the [subtle and] soft form of this very thing."¹³

".....What *pyār* is ? It is soft and ordered '*ling*'"¹⁴

The word '*pyār*' is not only used in terms of '*ishq*', while linking it up with '*ling*', the views on its extended form have also been expressed. In the opinion expressed by Gurbaksh Singh himself, his [notion of] '*pyār*' or *ishq* is soft [and subtle] and ordered manifestation of '*ling*' (sex). But, in all, what does it mean ? This question too should be put

to him. And, Gurbaksh Singh has not left this question, too, unanswered. After his separation from Elizy, Gurbaksh Singh, once again, happened to meet her in Paris, discussed his philosophy of love with her and has recorded his deliberations, so to say, in his autobiography, in the words, that :

“Elizy ! Love-sick soul feels contented while finding its reflection in the hearts full of love. Soul, in fact, does not ask for possession. How many possessions, after all, one can procure ! —[Soul] only seeks its own reflection in others—and, wherever it finds its reflection, falls in love—this hunger [for love] is as huge as mountain, it's sea-like—how [only] one can satisfy it ! [Love] asks for both the worlds.”¹⁵

Certain aspects of Gurbaksh Singh's philosophy of love are still under clouds. Before we make an attempt to evaluate it, it is advisable to explore all its possible connotations. Gurbaksh Singh has not left anything, in this regard, unexplained. What is important, at the moment, is to acquaint oneself fully, with all that is said. Therefore, we take an opportunity to reproduce some of his ideas relevant to his philosophy of love :

*“Whom so ever I loved intensely, and I could be closely related to [her] body too seemed to me to be a flow of [her] subtle —soul, in my view, love has neither a gender (*ling*) nor age.”¹⁶

*“A love-meeting of whatsoever nature, possessive or devoid of possession, I dare not to call it unholy. The desire of every lover to meet is sacred.”¹⁷

*“Love is nothing else but one's own reflection in other's.”¹⁸

*“There is no doubt that love similar to that of *Sherin-Frahād* and *Sassi-Pannū* can commence once

and with one alone, but, this kind of love is not available to all and sundry. Still, every one longs, through out one's life, for one love or the other."¹⁹

So far, we have only looked into the statements that Gurbaksh Singh made identifying his philosophy of love. The statements made by an author is hardly a criterion. For that one has to probed into the creative process. Suppose, there is a discrepancy between what the author states and creates, then, he is to be judged on the bases of what he creates. Gurbaksh Singh as a fictional writer and advocating philosophy of love can only be judged on the bases of his original characters and also the manner in which he recreated immortal characters of love-tales of folk-tradition.

In the story *Omā Te Odhā Mālī*²⁰, a *mālī* (gardner) who is already married, firstly carries on 'rās' (love play) with his 'Suñī' (patroness), evokes sentiments in her then, as a result of resentment expressed by his wife, he withdraws. Omā, with broken heart runs away form *mālī*'s life. This way, *mālī* succeeds in keeping the peace of his family life, intact. Again, in *Vidhwā-Preet*, Prem addressed his beloved, Preeti, thus :

"My *Jhālī* (Silly) Preeti ! I have always belonged to you, and continue to be—you might be living in my home or someone else..."²¹ "...My own Preeti !..... don't create any hurdle in the way of your marriage... Learn to give love to your husband and me..."²² ...Love is never dependent upon [social] relation..... It is a '*Pechān*' (realization).....you might be married with me or with some one else.....you shall remain the same Preeti and I too the same Prem."²³

Prem, any how, seems to be scared of living married life with Preeti, his beloved.

'*Pyār*' (love) described in Gurbaksh Singh's original stories is altogether of different quality than *Ishq* depicted in

immortal love-tales of folk-tradition. He has also retold some of these stories. There is every reason for our anxiety, at this stage, to find out whether Gurbaksh Singh could contain an ideological stature of those love-tales or falls short and falls in to line with his original stories. Let us feel the pulse of any one story, say, *Sohni-Mehiwal*. There is a dialogue between Sohni and Mehiwal that fairly reveals the nature of their love. Sohni, at one time, addresses his Mehiwal, thus :

“You don’t know I am a daughter to a potter, and you are a prince, our marriage can not be solemnized.”

“Marriage is not my goal, my goal of life is to be *acceptable* to you.”

And, there was absolute *calm* on the face of Izzat [Mehiwal].

“But, today I am someone’s daughter, to-morrow, I shall be made someone’s wife. So, my *acceptance* is hardly going to do anything good to you.”

“Untill and unless there is none else equal to me in the heart of my Sohni, I feel fully contented.”

“What to talk of my heart, there is none else equal to you in the entire world. But, my marriage with you is not at all possible and I shall not be able to resist to be married with some one else.”

“You need not resist. Let some one call you his own. In case, none else than me comes to your dream, I shall feel highly contented. Let any one else put your arms around (his) neck. But, your Self, oh Sohni’ should *intoxicate* me alone. This is all that I long for.”²⁴

Gurbaksh Singh’s Mehiwal can just overlook his Sohni while arm in arm with any one else!

Gurbaksh Singh in the story, *Qais Di Lailā* has impoverished the entire phenomenon of love while reducing it in to two things : i. love and ii. duty. Lailā is now married to Iban. She is, now a queen as well as beloved of Qais. After depicting her in conflicting situation, she is portrayed as having overcome an ambivalence and resolved to be duty-bound. Gurbaksh Singh as if fully satisfied, writes, that :

“Lailā continued to perform her duties of a queen.”²⁵

This shows that *Ishq*, as eulogized here by Gurbaksh Singh, belongs to lower order of reality i. e., lower to duty. *Ishq*, therefore, is only second to *farz* or duty.

In short : Gurbaksh Singh in his collection, *Ishq Jinhān Di Haddīn Rachiā* (1959) has imaginatively reconstructed *Ishq* in the pattern of his philosophy of love—‘Love is not a Possession; it is a Realization’. It is in this manner that Gurbaksh Singh as a writer has worked out unity between his precept and practice.

There is hardly any difficulty in deriving a conclusion that Gurbaksh Singh himself has confessed that *Ishq* depicted in our love-tales of folk tradition alone is true and hence authentic. But this kind of love is available to only a few. Those who are not *blessed* with it, therefore, should subscribe to the idea of love lower in order. This would help in keeping them away from the possibilities of committing a *crime* of destroying the peace of family-life.

Ishq as depicted in our love-tales of folk tradition, confronts in one or the other, the so called ‘peace of family-life’. Where as, Gurbaksh Singh’s ideal of *Ishq* abstains from similar *misconduct*. Heroes and heroines of original love-tales not only believe, but live up to (and consequently die) the conviction that one and the same person should

be one's both an object of love and sex. Love-tales of *Shīrin-Frahād* and *Lailā-Majnū*, belonging to semitic tradition, when assimilated, are in no way alien to indigenous tradition. Heroes and heroines of both the semitic and indigenous traditions hold the view that *Ishq* unto itself is sacred, and it hardly needs any sanction from any authority, what so ever. In fact, what they mean is, that it is marriage devoid of *Ishq* that is otherwise, and, hence illegitimate. And a matrimonial relation blessed with *Ishq* alone is true and authentic. For us, 'ling' or sex being soft and ordered means to be human through and through. To be human is to be free from stains of exploitation. Human relation between wife and husband can only flourish if both are believed and practised to be complementary to each other. Rest is nothing but exploitation mutually agreed upon, that provides fuel to lust or *Kāma*. The original tales, preserved in folk-tradition, decry this very lustful relation, devoid of *Ishq*. Gurbaksh Singh, in a way, presents the revised version of these love-tales, and, by implication, advocates lustful relation between sexes. This kind of relation, in a very subtle way, perpetuates that social system which breeds upon exploitation in the sense that it causes self-alienation. Where as, *Ishq* as portrayed in folk-tradition, when realized, results in fulfillment. This is why *Ishq* comes in conflict with class-society that ultimately depends upon the division of psychic being, for its survival. Gurbaksh Singh's ideal of *Ishq* advocates this very division of psychic being, and, is, thus, helpful to the protagonists of class society. His ideal of love is, no doubt, satisfying for those who have accepted division of their psychic beings, *what ever may be its genesis*, as natural and therefore, insurmountable.

Notes and References

1. *Meri Jiwan Khāṇi*, 2nd edition, p. 238.
2. This story is included in the collection *Anokhe Te Ikale* (1940).
3. *Manzil Dis Pai* p. 115.
4. Ibid. p. 75 (ñ).
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. p. 75 (gh)
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. p. 75. (chh)
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. p. 75 (j)
12. Ibid.
13. *Ishq Jinhān Di Haḍḍin Rachiā* (1959) p. 12.
14. Ibid. p. 15.
15. *Meri Jiwan Khāṇi* p. 300.
16. Ibid. p. 32.
17. Ibid. p. 34.
18. Ibid. p. 155.
19. Ibid. p. 238.
20. This story is included in the collection, *Preet Khaṇiān* (1938)
21. Ibid. p. 121. (Edition : 1950).
22. Ibid. 192.
23. Ibid. pp. 192-193.
24. *Ishq Jinhān Di Haddin Raciā* op. cit. p. 57-58.
25. Ibid. cf. Kishan Singh *Ishq Jinhān Di Haḍḍin Rachiā* an article published in *Alochanā* monthy Journal.

NĀNAK SINGH :

A RESPONSE TO A FREEDOM-MOVEMENT

Nānak Singh's (1897-1971) novel, *Ik Miān Do Talvāran* (1960) deals with, historically known as *Ghadar* of 1915—a freedom-movement. The theme is historical—an historical movement. It would be appropriate, therefore, to study it as an historical novel. The novelist too pretends to have opted for the said genre.

It is an historical movement itself that takes the form of central character in historical novel.¹ Since, an historical movement imbibes the aspirations of people belonging to a definite class, as a result, unlike in a a-historical novel, the main character never constitutes the centre of historical novel. The main character in historical novel emerges as an apex of historical movement, and hence, is deified as its hero. The novelist prepares a ground for the main character/hero to facilitate his appearance at an appropriate point of time. This is why he is depicted in developed form. While portraying him in the developed form his personal life is never probed in to. An historical objectivity is depicted in such a manner that the possibilities of his appearance on the historical scene become logically convincing. The novelist is under obligations to depict crisis where such a character is portrayed as an embodiment of this crisis. To portray an historical crisis, the novelist analyses the social forces operating in a given historical epoch.

After the novelist has depicted different views, about the crisis, representing people belonging to different classes, the hero of the novel appears on the scene. The novelist has already mentally prepared the genuine reader to welcome such a hero. As the hero is an apex of an historical movement, so, to fulfill its mission he organizes it and also provides leadership to it. He manipulates those factors to strengthen the movement, otherwise scattered. Since, he is an embodiment of an historical movement, besides inheriting helping factors, he can hardly escape from historical illusions. The hero of an historical novel is, no doubt, embodiment of historical movement, but his personal life can not be altogether pushed in the background. His personal life, of course, needs to be probed in to within the frame work of historical necessities. As he is, at once, both an individual and representative, short comings of his personal life have to be described keeping in view the historical realism.

Historical novel is certainly not a chain of incidents engineered in sequence of time. Narration of incidents in time order is not accepted norm even in history-writing, today. Historical novel deals with the aspirations of the people identifying themselves as having spontaneous relation with the concerned movement. It is true that the novelist has to focus his attention, primarily, on the two main warring classes, but, he can hardly overlook the role of vacillating lot. The picture of any historical epoch remains incomplete without making reference to such lot. Historical crisis spares none. It must, therefore, reflect in all the prevailing social relations and institutions.

The most important requisite in historical novel is that historical picture depicted therein must be authentic. The only

criterion for which is the social reality. The apex or the hero of historical movement, so to say, can not be higher in magnitude than that of the movement. The masses constitute the base of the movement and hero its apex. The base and apex when and if depicted in dialectical relation to each other, only then reveal their respective characters. In the case of relation depicted contrarily the historical picture turns out to be an altogether inauthentic. The authenticity of historical picture, to add, does not depend upon the historical facts alone. Historical novel is a piece of art, and to read it as a historical document amounts to display one's distaste for literary art. The novelist conceives historical epoch in terms of 'spirit of time'. In order to reconstruct the 'spirit of time' the novelist is at liberty to create new character and situations. But when he intentionally or otherwise attempts to create 'spirit of time', he creates difficulties in understanding the 'spirit of time' and the process of changing the 'spirit of time', as a result, is definitely hampered.

It is quite natural to fall victim to an historical illusions. But, what we have to see is whether the novelist could depict the class-consciousness, the product of concerned historical epoch in emotional terms and in some recognizable pattern. The emotional pattern depicted therein must be intune with the total image of the novel. This is the only way to adjudge the image literary in nature.

While creating an authentic historical milieu, the novelist makes use of environments, as well. The environments are created with an aid of local colour. The novelist aims at transforming historical personage in to art-forms. The temptation of the novelist to portray historical personages speaking their own native languages in respective idioms is misleading and it damages the art-form of the novel. Historical novelist is

primarily a novelist and not a historian. He has to present history transformed into art-form. The poetic truth, consequently, is much wider and deeper in scope than historical truth and hence universal.

... ..

Undoubtedly, kartar Singh Srābhā and none else is depicted as the central character in this novel. Even the title of the novel *Ik Miān Do Talvārān* is borrowed from the dialogue between Ragbir (Biri) and Srābhā. Sarābhā tells her, that :

“There is no secret at all, rather I am telling you in the very presence of your brother that two swords can hardly be accomodated in one sheath.”²

Sarābhā furthur explains it, saying :

“What I mean to say is that when there dwell two tendencies contrary to each other—anti national and patriotic—is it not fair to compare it with two swords (forcibly) put in to one sheath”³

Nānak Singh on page 78, eulogises Sarābhā calling him, ‘*Sardare-e-Āzam*’ or ‘chief of the chifs’ and on page 92, he is adorned as, *Ghadar lehar dā rūhe-rvān*” or ‘life-force of *ghadar* movement.” In short, for Nānak Singh the novelist, Sarābhā is an apex of the movement. As defined earlier, the main character of historical novel forms an apex of the historical movement one is concerned with. The ground is prepared for such a character before he actually appears on the historical scene. The base and apex, as a matter of necessity, must be depicted in dialectically relationship with each other. *Ghadar* movement brought forth Sarābhā and he become an apex of the movement. Whether the novelist has worked out the whole

process or not? This is the fundamental obligation of the novelist he can hardly overlook.

Historically speaking, the basic thing about the *Ghadar* movement¹ is that it originated in foreign country. Indians went abroad in search of employment or for higher studies. A good number of them got employment in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway and some of them could manage their jobs in mines and mills. The willingness of hard-working Indians 'to work for less' and 'to work for longer hours' coupled with number of other factors made them popular with Canadian employers. All this adversely affected the interests of white workers. As a result the white workers launched campaigns against their influx in to Canada; spread stories to malign them; and started humiliating them in public. Their plight found expressions in poetry. We find a poem published in the magazine namely '*Kirti*', which reads, thus :

"Oh (my) stomach !
It is just because of you
That I am miserable.
I wander from one place to another and kicked,
I go to Burma, Germany, China and Japan,
And 'am called black coolie and slave.'"⁵

Again, in '*Ghadar Goonj*' identical feelings are expressed in the following words.

"The whole world calls us coolie
Why is it that over flag is not unfurled any where !"⁶

Three things clearly emerged from the above two references : (i) they go abroad in search of food; (ii) they are humiliated and (iii) they must throw away the yoke of slavery and be a free-nation. This sentiment 'to be a free-nation'

was crystallized in the form of struggle that took the shape of movement. The novel as a piece of art demands that day to nay humiliating experiences of Indians living abroad should be painted in such a manner that the birth of *Ghadar* movement appears to be timely and natural. The need for daredevil like Sarābhā substantiated. But Nānak Singh instead is satisfied with were narrating the genesis of the movement as following :

“The value of freedom can be realized only, while, living in a free-country.....But, when the environments of free countries, gradually, started influencing their minds and hearts, its result was but awakening generated red-hot hatred against slavery, particularly when the natives (European) started misbehaving with them in the way they were used to do so vis a vis people belonging to slave countries...”⁷

Nānak Singh the novelist missed an opportunity to describe maltreatment given to Indians. Since he overlooked one of the fundamentals of historical novel, as a result of that Sarābhā's appearing on the historical scene could hardly be convincing. The reader was not yet ready to receive Sarābhā and he knocks at his door. The reader in such a situation fails to recognize him, and, consequently, can hardly own him. Nānak Singh set aside an artistic device and made use of miracle. First time, we meet Sarābhā when he meets Lala Hardy in *Ugāntra ashram* (San Francisco) and introduces himself in these words :

“What is a living of a slave !”⁸

Nānak Singh as a literary artist was under obligation to describe the circumstances that generated hatred against slavery in the hearts and minds of Indian people. Prior to introducing Sarābhā, Nānak Singh, from page 83 to 88, has only given an outline of *Ghadar* movement, as a historian. Here, Nānak Singh

fails as an artist, as he did not make use of his creative imagination. He overlooked the fundamental need of historical novel. As a result of that the full-blooded historical picture could not emerge. When 'Ghadarites' settled down in India, their style of functioning, no doubt, was secretive but it was must to depict elaborately the fight going on between two warring forces. From page 112 to 114, we do find references to dacoities; informers are also condemned, here and there. But the fulsome picture of instant life, constantly remains out of focus. Different views of people towards one and the same historical movement does interfere in their day to day living, some people always remain in dwindling posture. Our novelist has not displayed his awareness towards these social realities. The possibilities of emergence of fulsome historical picture were doomed. Nānak Singh seems to be more inclined towards historical facts, and has quoted historians to validate his position. Therefore, it appears that his first loyalty is towards history and not towards literature. As an artist Nānak Singh failed to depict historical consciousness derived from historical facts, in the pattern of (human) emotions in artistic form.

Ik Miān Do Talvārān commences as a regional novel, and there is hardly any other device than to make use of local colour in writing such a novel. It helps in creating intended atmosphere. But Nānak Singh has availed of local colour only while talking about Dyāla. Whereas, these chapters have very little to do with the main problem of the novel. Here, he can be said to be obsessed with an idea of his native land i, e, Jhelum (now in Pakistan). The proper use of local colour could have only added in the authenticity of the novel as a piece of art.

...

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...

The existence of novel, primarily, comes in to being through narration. Poetry, dramatic elements and description are only helping factors. There is much less scope of poetry and dramatic elements in novel, so are used infrequently. Description alone is the co-traveller of narration. Narration provides movement to the novel, where as, the role of description is to control its movement in such a manner that it does not adversely affect gravity of its movement. Now, to be able to strike such an artistic balance, one requires a rare genius.

Ghadar movement is the subject of narration in this novel. This movement originated in foreign country but its field of action was India. In order to cast such a movement in to a pattern of narration, it requires a concentration of an extraordinary nature. Nānak Singh lacks such a concentration. Rather, it is disintegrated. Dividing novel in to three Sections is not uncalled for. What is uncalled for in the present case is total absence of artistic relation between these Sections. The absence of this very relation is irritating. All the three Sections are only mechanically linked up with one another. Nānak Singh's artistic imagination comes to being only while describing the state of affairs in India. Foreign remains foreign even to his imagination. Obviously, in such a situation it is not at all possible to give form of narration to a movement. In the absence of recognizable form of narration it is hardly possible for description to play its exclusive role. Description is put to use either while bringing forth the regional dimensions in the first Section of the novel or at the time of repeating historical facts. Description hardly finds a place as a friendly co-traveller of narration. Description unto itself seems to be an independent unit. The required relation, as a result, between the two is annihilated.

The mode of existence of narration and description helps to discern the attitude of the novelist, as well." When the novelist takes the position of a spectator of the movement, it is but natural for him to make excessive use of the device of description. But, when he participates in the movement, he narrates. It is not an essential for the novelist to have participated in person. He can do so imaginatively. Nānak Singh the artist has viewed *Ghadar* movement from the point of view of a spectator. This is why description takes the place of narration. And, this is not a matter of chance. Rather, it is an inevitable resultant of Nanak Singh's standpoint. Nānak Singh categorically stated his standpoint in his introductory remarks, when he writes :

".....There is no doubt that I have never relished theory of violence of what soever kind it might be."¹⁰

One can safely deduce that Nānak Singh the person continues to dominate Nānak Singh the artist.

Due to total neglect of the artistic relation between narration and description, lot of unwanted things escaped from the notice of the novelist. We have already referred to that part of the novel that deals with Dyālā. What sort of image Nānak Singh wanted to add to the novel when he thought of introducing the romantic love of Sarābhā for Bīri ? As a matter of fact Nānak Singh imbibes the sentiment that he shares, thus :

".....I have long-standing grudge against my countrymen who in the name of 'isms' did not show reverence due to innumerable martyrs whose sacrifices for the freedom of country were much more in proportion to others besides being first [to initiate the process]."¹¹

The sentiment can serve as base for art but it can not, in any way, take the place of art. As a result, no definite image of novel could emerge.

...

To build up a fictional world one has to take material from the society. Man and his environments are inevitably dialectically related to each other. It is this dialectics that takes the form of plot and characterization in the novel. Plot symbolizes totality of circumstances. Like man in society the character is dialectically related to plot. When Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) writes that there can be a tragedy without a character, but not without a plot, he is referring to this very dialectical relationship. Again, while talking on his theory of *mimesis*, he speaks of man in action.¹²

While evaluating *Ik Miṇ Do Telvārān* from the point of view of plot-construction and characterization we can hardly afford to overlook that we are assessing historical novel. Earlier, when we discussed the nature of hero of a historical novel, we concluded that Sarābhā is not shown born out of circumstances. An attempt is made to depict the character of Sarābhā only through his conversation with Lālā Hardyāl, whereas, social process was needed to be described in action. And, Sarābhā comes out to be an artificial character. The novelist is at liberty to create new characters and new situations to bring forth 'spirit of time'. Sarābhā's love for Bīrī is not a historical fact. The novelist has availed of his liberty as an artist. But the entire episode of love has only shattered the image of Sarābhā as a hero. He is depicted as a sentimental lover and this is not intune with his role in history. Sarābhā's love could become his vital force. This kind of love is depicted in Panjabi Qissā Poetry. Modern Panjabi writers badly failed in not inheriting their glorious tradition.

Not only Sarābhā is lifeless as a character, Bīrī, Master

Dalip Singh and Sudharshan too, suffer from the same deficiency. Forceful characters can come in to being as a result of struggle. These characters became revolutionary through reading revolutionary literature, alone. The revolutionary literature can help to keep up the revolutionary consciousness alive and burning, but revolutionary consciousness has to take its roots in the circumstances. It is, after all, living that determines the consciousness.

Nānak Singh, comparatively, feels at home when characterizing Bābā Sukhdev Singh the counter revolutionary. His success at depicting character of a tody is a matter of anguish. This reflects his class-character. It is because of his class-character that Nānak Singh failed to cast *Ghadar* movement in to artistic form. Also, he never relished violent revolution. This too, caused derailment of his imagination. In the absence of concentration of mind imagination is bound to be derailed. The concentration of mind is possible only when it is rooted in purpose. Nānak Singh's only purpose is to preserve the memory of immortal martyrs. It is a welcome sentiment. But, unfortunately, this purpose could not take the shape of historical novel. We are unhappy with Nānak Singh the artist who pushed aside the fundamental requisites of historical novel and could not transcend his class-character even in imagination.

Notes and References

1. For detailed account of the constituents of Historical Novel, See :
Georg Lukācs, *The Historical Novel* pp. 37-39; 43; 49; 59.
2. *Ik Miān Do Talvārān* (Fifth edition : 1967) p. 184.
All references to the pages are from this edition.
3. Ibid.
4. For Details see ;

- Singh, Khushwant and Satinder Singh, *Ghadar*-1915 pp. 1-4; 14-15; 19; 21; 22-31; 39-40; 42-44; 55-56.
5. Published in the issue of February, 1928. p. 10.
 6. Published in *Ghadar Goonj* No. 1 in 1931. (First edition 1914) p. 1. Under the Caption *Sachī Pukār*.
 7. *Ik Miān Do Talwārān*, p. 84.
cf. Jajit Singh. *Ghadar Party Lehar*. pp. 99-100.
 8. Ibid. p. 91.
 9. Georg Lukács, *Writer and Critic* pp. 111 and 116.
 10. *Ik Miān Do Talwārān* p. 5. (Introduction).
 11. Ibid.
 12. For details Sec :
Butcher, S.H. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*.
Chap. VI on *The Function of Tragedy* and Chap. IX on
Plot and Character in Tragedy.

AMRITA PRITAM: A PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

Knmar the artist, in Amrita Pritam's (b. 1919) novel *Chakka Number Chhatti* (1971), being very eager to remain intune with art "does not relish at all, to forge any relation with anything else, excepting art."¹ Earlier, Kumar made use of his art in decorating several pavillions and now he added a hotel in the list. Kumar's friend Kewal Krishan, "who got training in art alongwith Kumar,"² "gradually, established his reputation as a businessman in government circle, that he employed small artists to carry through his business assignments. From a propritor of a firm he grew into a big contractor,"³ Few years a go, "he earned exactly rupees serventy thousand with the help of Kumar",⁴ This only means that Kumar's art is just a productive activity—a labour, and his art-products are hardly different from the articles manufactured in factories—a source of wealth for the wealthy. In the words of Karl Marx (1818-1883) Kumar's art is not as natural an act as that of silk-worm producing silk.⁵ The fundamental character of Kumar's art is to perpetuate alienation and his art-activity merely an alienated labour. In the state of alienation, an act is not an intrinsic part of one's being, rather it is extraneous to it. Such an activity is hardly a source of fulfilment. It only alienates oneself.⁶ An alienation manifests not only in the form of result, it is spread through out the process of act. This alienation manifests in the relations an alienated being forges with oneself, the others and nature. A 'thing' with which Kumar does not relish to forge any relation excepting art is woman. An alienation of Kumar, the alienated being must inevitably reflect in his relation with woman. He needs woman only to satisfy his sexual hunger. Alienated Kumar can enjoy woman only in alienated form. Kumar is of the view that "one need not dread

from a relation forged against the payment of rupees twenty,you make payment and forge a relation. Don't pay, it is broken",⁷ "Kumar wants to enjoy woman when he needs, but, he is not prepared to tie himself to a woman for number of years"⁸ He has been visiting that woman who would charge rupees twenty per day but never asked for his freedom."⁹ He could enjoy sex as well as maintain his freedom. While talking on art and woman we have added money too, in our discussion. Money too gives birth to alienation, rather, it adds into it. Clarifying the damaging role of money, Karl Marx writes, that :

"The distorting and confounding of all human and natural qualities, the fraternisation of impossibilities—the 'divine' power of money—lies in its 'character' as men's estranged, alienating and self-disposing 'species-nature.' *Money is the alienated 'ability' of mankind.*"¹⁰

The use of money, as stated above, has put Kumar on wrong track. He seems to have assumed that all that is not possible to achieve as a human being can be managed with money. The use of money in this way has damaged Kumar's potentials. His basic human (personal) nature is badly affected. Kumar's above indicted relation with money has further pushed him in to the dark cell of alienation.

Obviously, Kumar is scared of (human) relations because of his attachment to individual freedom. As if, relations only breed slavery, and this does not go well with his temperament. As a matter of fact, Kumar misjudges alienation as freedom. He is not aware of the history of human relations. Every body knows that human fulfilment is not possible without human relations. What we need is to ascertain the kind of relations. An escape is no solution, at all. Bābā Nānak was critical about

siddhas on this very ground. It is true that bourgeois relations breed nothing but slavery. Instead of condemning bourgeois relation, (This is not possible for Kumar to do, because, he himself is in line with it), Kumar negates the very foundation of society. When, he is doing all that to keep up his relation with art.

...

Kumar is standing on the slippery ground of his philosophy of life; he is conscious of it :

*“.....But, when Kumar set his foot down on the floor wet with light, he felt his foot would *slip* [while treading on] wet floor”.¹¹

*“.....It seemed to him that, one day, Alkā is likely to drag him in such a way, from that peak of freedom, he was enjoying, resulting, in a slip, and he would fall in to the deep pit of love.”¹²

*“.....And any day.....Any day Kumar's foot would certainly slip from the path and as a result of that he would fall into deep pits of attachment.”¹³

*“It seemed to him that if he goes to sleep, he would slip down the branch wet with sleep and fall into deep well of dreams.”¹⁴

*“He was having a feeling that he had slipped down his own branch of ideas, and, day by day, going downward in the deep downunder of helplessness”.¹⁵

*“I am standing on the thin line and don't know at what time and which side my foot would just slip.”¹⁶

Kumar's feeling about his slip grew deeper at every step. He would slip and fall in to 'deep pit of love', 'deep pits

of attachment' and 'deep well of dreams'. Deep pit/pits and deep well etc. reflect Kumar's unconscious state of mind. In fact these expressions symbolise bourgeois mode of living. Darkness is their underlying feature. This darkness symbolises the substance of bourgeois culture. Kumar's imagination being misguided he misjudges light as darkness and vice versa. This is why love and attachment appear to him as pits. Kumar's grip on his philosophy of life and living continued growing loose. Love and attachment for Alkā could, only, make it possible. Who is Alkā ? Alkā is a pupil of Kumar the artist. Kumar's studio is in Kāngrā valley. He calls it '*Chakka Number Chhatti*'. In fact we get true picture of Alkā, when, while talking to Kumar, one day, she disclosed her inner desire, saying :

"I wish I could be that woman whom you used to pay rupees twenty for your visit."¹⁷

Day succeeded day. They developed such a relation with each other that whenever Kumar desired a woman he would pay rupees twenty to Alkā and satisfy his hunger. Now, Alkā was part and parcel of the dream-world of Kumar. Once, Kumar had a feeling that Alkā assumed the form of a rope and which continued to bind him even in dreams.¹⁸ Alkā was now haunting him, perpetually. Kumar, now, would see Alkā in a prostitute. Sometimes, he would find a prostitute in Alkā.¹⁹ Alkā and prostitute were, now, interchangeable beings. But, at one stage this idea started torturing him that "this hunger for flesh was exclusively confined to the flesh of Alkā, which means that he had fallen in love with Alkā."²⁰ Kumar also confessed before Alkā, saying, that "now, Alkā ! it was out of my control, and now every thing is in your hand."²¹ Kumar is fully aware of his ambivalence, too. He tells her, that, "Alkā ! I can not own you without forgoing my freedom. Alkā ! I want to have you."²² Alkā, identifying the affinity between love and freedom, responds, saying, that, "you can not.....untill your love and

freedom merge in to each other and become one.”²³ Kumar still insists that, “Alkā ! these are two different entities, how can they merge into each other ? they will never...”²⁴ Alkā, as a final note, gives expression to her inner feelings, saying, that :

“I shall wait for that day when I would be no more extraneous to your (inner) being”.²⁵

“An extraneous thing continues to be extraneous” retorted Kumar. “I don’t comment, but, when it becomes intrinsic, convey it to me,”²⁶ Alkā summed up the whole matter. Alkā’s await to be an intrinsic part of Kumar’s inner being seems to suggest the course for the dealiention of Kumar. But, Kumar could hardly bear with his love and attachment for Alkā. Shooting pain in Kumar’s chest is sure sign of his collapse.²⁷

... ..

A very important aspect of Alkā’s personality still remains unexplored. On the one side Alkā awaits to be an intrinsic thing for Kumar and on the other she is willing to marry (any one) at the instance of Kumar. Alkā tells Kumar that she is willing to the extent that, “If you are not satisfied with one marriage, she can marry twice, four times and for as many times as you want.”²⁸ It is not just a jesture (*adā*). It means for Alkā marrying any one else at the instance of Kumar and for latter’s satisfaction is not against the propriety, at all. The plan is made to get married with Captain Jagdish Chandra. It is a different thing that Alkā, ultimately, refrains from marrying Captain. Kumar did tell Alkā to marry some one else, but, his sense of loosing Alkā continued to reflect in his paintings.²⁹ The basic thing is that Alkā can marry any one other than Kumar, whom she does not love. When Alkā has accepted Kumar as a ‘king of her heart’, there is nothing morally wrong to accept rupees twenty from Kumar as a fee.

But, Alkā's suggestion for marriage and its acceptance, fundamentally, is an immoral act. It is immoral, because such relation is devoid of love. Relations devoid of love, alone, are immoral. At this juncture, Alkā, seemingly to be some one different from Kumar is in fact in line with Kumar. Kumar too, when hankers after 'flesh' definitely sides with those who practice dichotomy between flesh and psyche. The division of society into classes has its roots in the division of human personality. In order to alienate man from himself and from others the seeds were sown in this very soil of division. At the time of depicting this dimension of personality, Amrita Pritam's (creative) imagination seems to have gone astray. Fidelity ought to be with *Ishq*. What kind of *Ishq* or love it is, when one surrenders to ill conceived notions ? No lover can ever imagine his beloved warming some one else's bed. Alright, we do not high-rate Kumar as lover. But how Alkā could accept all that ? Alkā's love too, does not seem to be above board. Her fidelity is also not free from stains. Alkā's decision to lead a life of widow is nothing but an attempt to cover up these stains. One can adore those in heart who are gone or died of shock, like Rānjhā. To live as dead beings, for the sake of those, who are no more, is to show disrespect for life. Life in itself is a great boon. We started with Alkā's fidelity. Both Alkī and her fidelity stuck-up on half-way.

Notes and References

1. *Chakka Number Chhatti* p. 15. (Third) edition : 1971). All references to pages are from this edition.
- 2-3. Ibid. p. 67.
4. Ibid. p. 55.
5. Marx, Karl *Theories of Surplus Values* (Part I) p. 401 : "Milton produced 'Paradise Lost' for the same reason that a silk-worm produces silk. It was an activity of 'his nature'."

6. Marx, Karl *Economic and Philosophic Mss of 1844*, p. 6 :
 "What then, constitutes the alienation of labour ? First the fact that the labour is 'external' to the worker, i.e., does not belong to his intrinsic nature; therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself....."
7. *Chakka Number Chhatti* p. 51.
- 8-9. Ibid. p. 11.
10. *Economic and Philosophic Mss of 1844*, p. 121.
11. *Chakka Number Chhatti*. p. 14 and 27.
12. Ibid. p. 36.
13. Ibid. p. 44.
14. Ibid. p. 53.
15. Ibid. p. 85.
16. Ibid. p. 95.
17. Ibid. p. 11.
18. Ibid. p. 38.
19. Ibid. p. 135.
20. Ibid. p. 54.
21. Ibid. p. 62.
22. Ibid. pp. 63-64.
- 23-24. Ibid. p. 65.
- 25-26. Ibid. p. 100.
27. Ibid, pp. 81, 105, 139.
28. Ibid, p. 100.
29. Ibid, pp. 128-130.

KARTĀR SINGH DUGGAL : A THEME OF PARTITION

Suveerā, the heroine of Kartār Singh Duggal's (b. 1919) novel, '*Ik Dil Vikāoo Hai*' (1968), tells the tale of her woe right from the beginning. Let me begin from the middle.

'The wise' tell that *division* which creates people as high and low is but natural. Individual/individuals have nothing to do with it. It is all destined. One needs to be a man of good fortune. Who could alter one's destiny ! Destinies remain unaltered !! These are hard to undergo a change.

The only way to 'justify' history, is to identify it with a course of nature. 'The wise' delineated this way. And, it 'worked'. In ancient Greece slavery was accepted as a 'gift' of nature. Today, we know that slavery was only a part of historical process and with the disappearance of an epoch slavery also disappeared. The wise are never altogether extinct as a Light. They appear on the face of history, time and again, prompted by historical compulsions. We must listen to them. It so happened, they say, that when means of production belonged to one and all, the clever ones misappropriated the means and became the sole owners of the means of production. From this resultant ownership originated ruling class. Because of this kind of ownership the gap between the rulers and the ruled was created and to accelerate it was in the interest of ruling class. There was no way other than to justify the gap thus created between the classes. In order to rationalise the gap the rational outlook was necessarily eulogised. In this manner human personality was cut into two segments, mental and manual. A new style of living originated

from the soil of such a fissured human personality. The roots of multiple division of human personality are in this very soil. The divided human personality and 'new' style of living, therefore are interdependent.

Well, if the seeds of *division* are sown in the soil, how can we expect the fruit of unity !

...

Suveerā, while telling the tale of woe, reveals that how, one day her mother Malikā, not of her alone, but touched the affected vein of entire womankind. At times, the words uttered in the state of helplessness take the form of verse. And, Malikā, as if, was reciting verse.

".....A woman's heart is never contented with money. A woman's heart is never contented with beauty. A woman's heart is never contented in ruling [over others]. A woman is contented when she is blessed with the undivided love of her lover. When she gets that sight which is free from the stains of having looked at some one in the neighbourhood"¹

Then after some interval of time, Suveerā too seems to have had similar feeling of disgust :

".....It is the biggest defeat for a woman if her husband shares her love with some other woman".²

Malikā's tale of woe is as if being repeated in Suveerā's life. May be that daughter is sharing the pains of her mother ! Who knows !!

The name of the other half of the love-story of Suveerā is Frahād. Frahād, whose very first sight created a stir in her heart as if, "there was lightning in the clouds"; as if, "there was a touch of a cool breeze".³ Frahād, on seeing whom Suveerā's values of life underwent a sudden change."⁴ Frahād,

on hearing whose name she felt as if she was "Sheerin the immortal" and who was searching for Frahād from "time immemorial."⁵ Frahād, about whom she used to talk about with herself and embellish loneliness with the image of Frahād. She used to contemplate and desire :

"If you be mine I would keep awake during nights and smoothen the wrinkles of your bed-sheets.....
If you be mine I would wash your toes with dew drops. If you be mine I would pick up the pebbles on your way with my eye-lids. If you be mine I would catch hold of the clouds, catch hold of springs, keep the perfumes in my grip. If you be mine, I would relish darkness, and waiting would yield pleasure..."⁶.

Suveerā tells that, "then he was mine."⁷ A marriage between the two was solemnized. Both the hearts were tied together with the thread of customs. Now, Frahād was Suveerā's husband and Suveerā Frahād's wife. Husband-wife relationship is of peculiar kind. Sometimes, lover is 'killed' and sometimes the beloved, and at times both are 'killed'. There is hardly anything else more injurious to love than marriage ! How inimical they are to each other!.

Not much time had passed that Suveerā experienced a shock. She is miscreable, "I had burnt all my boats and jumped in to the sea. And, what I saw that the bank I had chosen as my sojourn was not there at all"⁸. Whether sea came out to be a gutter ? Or the very banks got crumbled ? Frahād came out to be an infidel. He had illicit relations with Janak, with Māliti and with many other women. Suveerā herself saw Frahād in compromising posture with Janak.⁹ Māliti's tale of woe Suveerā heard herself from the mouth of Māliti itself.¹⁰ Suveerā had a (loving) sight of Frahād but full of stains. Suveerā,

deprived of undivided love of her lover was utterly helpless and dumb founded. Suveerā's life,—life deprived of love—continued to be barren, at every successive moment of life, and was gradually intensified. There was utter despair! Nothing but stark barrenness !!

In the state of despair Kanwaljit entered in Suveerā's life as a ray of hope. In the state of utter barrenness Kanwaljit entered in her life as a spring. Who is this Kanwaljit? he, not only proved blessings for Suveerā but also a boon for Frahād. Kanwaljit is newly appointed in Frahād's office. Kanwaljit was the same Sardar boy, going on bicycle whom Suveerā's eyes constantly chased. As a result, Suveerā developed a deep sense of deprivation.¹¹ "Suveerā remembered only this much that her neck got twisted like *Sūrajmukhi* that night while looking on this stranger going on bike. She never behaved like that.....who was he whom she kept on watching..... And, she hardly felt bad about it....."¹² On seeing that stranger not only her neck got twisted, her heart too was in the same state. One standing on the corner was none else but Kanwaljit.

Now, Kanwaljit accepted an offer to stay at Frahād's home. Yes, he only accepted to stay at home. As a consequent upon that Suveerā started feeling at home. And, when she wanted to know the cause of it, why it was like that? On asking from herself she used to tremble right from top to toe.¹³ This state of mind is of mixed nature and rather difficult to decode. Suveerā tells, that, "while in his company she used to feel better as a woman, a wife and as a human being. She was waiting for all that to occur since very long."¹⁴ Obviously, Suveerā never had enjoyed the company of Frahād. It appears as if Frahād was no more the centre of Suveerā's psyche. May

be that reason is her affinity with Kanwaljit. No, it is too early to say that. It appears, that Kanwaljit is not yet fully introduced from Suveerā's point of view. Suveerā too is anxious to identify her relation with Kanwaljit. She hardly knows about it. She thinks, "may be that he is uncle of their kid ? Frahād's friend ? My brother in law (*Devar*) ? Frahād's younger brother ? My sympathiser?" No, so difficult to find out. Then, she would switch over to *azal*, the First Day, "May be that they know each other right from the First Day."¹⁵ On seeing Kanwaljit Suveerā would feel that still there is truth in the world.....People have not yet abandoned self-less love.¹⁶ While in the company of Kanwaljit, Suveerā would not feel anything missing (in her life). Her all desires as if fulfilled. While in Kanwaljit's company Suveerā would feel absolutely calm and contented.¹⁷ Suveerā at the time of introducing Kanwaljit, appears to be so sweet, delicate and truthful :

"My love for Kanwaljit was similar to my reverence for God. How can one run away from God ?"¹⁸

Then this sacred love was maligned and that too by Frahād, and none else. Frahād, whose own hands were stained with dirt. Frahād, whose tongue, was stained with dirt. Frahād, whose soul was stained with dirt. It so happened that :

"One day.....Kanwaljit down with fever.....
Suveerā sitting on Kanwaljit's bed.....moving her
fingers is Kanwaljit's hair.....so as to console
Kanwaljit.....Kanwaljit, suddenly went into
a sleep..... Suveerā also went into asleep.....
Now, Frahād is standing there.....Suveerā having
support of the pillow half-sitting and half lying.....
Prostitution ! This is prostitution. Frahād shouted.
Prostitution is going on in this house. Frahād
shouted more loudly."¹⁹

Sleep robbed Sassī. Sleep got killed Mirzā. Today sleep robbed Suveerā of her God. Suppose, some one is lost in this crowded world, has any one been traced ! or returned on his own!! Suveerā, even then, tries for that. She does not leave hope. Suveerā narrated all the misdoings of Frahād committed against her. Also told him about Kanwaljit's story of sacrifice. Suveerā did not conceal from Frahād even this that had he wanted he would have sold her bid by bit. Suveerā was willing to sacrifice anything for Kanwaljit.²⁰ But, (her) God had already left the home. Kanwaljit was no more, there. Suveerā was miserable. Frahād was repenting.

... ..

The reason of Suveerā's misery was her being divided. She was divided among Frahād and Kanwaljit. Suveerā, in order to achieve an undivided love of her lover, had fought against those circumstances that would result in the multiple division of human personality. And, she fought with full integrity. But, how difficult it is to prevail upon the changing circumstances and when the change is very much in accord with the prevailing system. Suveerā's life got a sudden and new turn. This turn of circumstances was very much in tune with her divided being. May be, that Duggal wanted Suveerā to arrive at this juncture. Suveerā's being was already divided. Now, she prepared herself to fight for freedom of country—partition of country. She took part in that. "Pākistān Zindabād", "We must have Pākistān."²¹ she lend support to these slogans. Actually, she meant to demonstrate her divided being. Partition of the country was just a matter of chance. While participating in the partition of the country alone, she could cover up her divided being in the garb of partition.

Suveerā, who always stood for an undivided state of being was carried away by the flood of *division* and, thus, sacrificed herself after the design of the rulers.

Notes and References

1. *Ik Dil Vikāoo Hai* ((Edition : 1977). p. 56
All references to pages are from this edition.
2. Ibid. p. 164.
3. Ibid p. 35
4. Ibid. p. 41
5. Ibid. p. 42
6. Ibid. pp. 46-47
7. Ibid. p. 47
8. Ibid. p. 63
9. Ibid. p. 87
10. Ibid. pp. 156-157
11. Ibid. p. 122
12. Ibid. pp. 122-123
13. Ibid. pp. 125-126
14. Ibid. p. 126
15. Ibid. p. 127
16. Ibid. p. 132
17. Ibid. p. 173
18. Ibid. p. 183
19. Ibid. p. 207
20. Ibid. p. 209
21. Ibid. p. 214

GURDIĀL SINGH : A STUDY IN SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Gurdiāl Singh (b. 1933), in his very first novel *Maṛhi Dā Deevā* (1964), took up the subject of social transformation taking place in Panjab—feudal relations giving way to bourgeois relations. For a fair comprehension of the continuing process of social transformation, it needs to look into the anatomy of feudal mode of living and thinking. Dharam Singh's father, just one day before his death, and in the very presence of Jagsīr's father, apprised his son of his relation with him, saying :

“Dharmiā ! you must regard Ṭholā [Jagsīr's father] as my embodiment. And, mind it, if you ever discriminate against him I would not get peace and my soul shall remain under constant torture in the hell ! Your entire property is the result of his struggle against the odds—how he crushed the rising heads of the Snakes! —Otherwise, I was of no worth. Although, we were not born to one and the same woman, yet we have been real brothers in our previous birth. There seems to have gone something wrong with our *bhakti* that he took birth else where.”¹

And, Jagsīr's father, at the time of his death, while handing over Jagsīr to Dharm Singh, very humbly addressed to the latter, thus :

“Now, Dharm Sinhā ! your father had handed me over to you and I am handing him over to you. Now

you are his only saviour. Regard him as your brother.”²

After the death of his father, Dharam Singh very obediently followed the instructions of his father. He did not discriminate against Jagsir's father, at all. He carried through the responsibilities of marrying his daughters. In addition to (*stri*) labour due to him, Dharm Singh's father had also left four *bighās* of land, at the disposal of Jagsir's father. Since the days, Jagsir had come of his age, he would see his father ploughing that field as if 'his own'. Even after the death of his father, Jagsir would regard that piece of land as 'his own'..... Twice a year, when Jagsir would go to plough this field as 'his own', these two days for Nandī were of no less duration than two years and till to-day she had been celebrating these as days of festival.”³

In spite of Dharm Singh's advice and humble requests made by Jagsir's father neither Jagsir's, father nor there after Jagsir himself were in any way in a better position than rest of the *sīris* (bonded labourer). Agreed, that inspite of desiring to transfer four *bighās* of land in the name of Jagsir's father, Dharm Singh could not affect the transfer, in the face of existing bye-laws of *ālthā* and *adnā* ownership of property. But this is also fact that this family of *sīris* spent their days of life wretchedly living in the court-yard of sweepers. Jagsir happens to realize his wretched condition only after ill-treatment of Bhantā directed against him. When Jagsir looks over at his court-yard, he feels, that :

“This court-yard of sweepers.....At the very roots of *theh*, these houses similar to cells.....dog-houses” “And the dirty water flowing right from

the top of *theh*, falls on the heads of *siris* living over here... . . . the dirt of land lords.....”⁴

The human element that we find in feudal mode of living is a reality. Gurdial Singh, keeping in view the demands of literary art has rightly depicted the same heightening its effects to the extent of wholesome possibilities. And, this is also true that without even slightly damaging feudal system itself the human side of it is properly looked after. Rather, this kind of policy, no doubt human in its content, further strengthens the system. Legends full of human consideration and associated with the names of *Rājās* and *Mahārājās* hold testimony to it. Karl Marx (1818-1833) has exposed this policy adopted with a view to perpetuate feudal system, and he writes, that :

“.....Similarly, those working on the estate have not the position of day-labourers, but they are in part themselves his property, as the serfs, in part they are bound to him by ties of respect, allegiance and duty. His relation to them is therefore directly political, and has likewise a human, intimate side.....”⁵

Jagsir's father was *siri* of Dharm Singh's father and there after Jagsir became Dharm Singh's *siri*. The ceremony of '*bhān pharāion*' or 'handing over' is a fair indication of 'human, intimate side' existing between two families. But, at the same time, the deplorable condition of the *siri* family can not be explained in any other way than to accept it is a *boon* of feudal policies.

... ..

The human element available in feudal mode of living, reflects in the personal conduct of feudal lords. Because of their conduct displaying human consideration, it was but natural for their 'subject' to regard them as venerable. The venerable ones

take the form of models. In order to gain respectability among common people, it becomes imperative for them to adopt their style of living that includes language and dress etc. In short : every attempt is made to imbibe (class) consciousness of feudal lords to look as respectable as they are. Any landlord within the feudal structure is in position to become model for his workers, because after all, he is a *rājā*, though at a lower level of hierarchy. On account of these, factors the consciousness of ruling class continues to cultivate the consciousness of the people belonging to lower strata of society. Karl Marx has beautifully summed up this phenomenon, apprising us of mode of functioning of class-society, stating, that :

“The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.”⁶

To be tied to an idea of social respectability, as in the case of *sīri*-family in *Maṛhi Dā Deevā*, is nothing but the true reflection of the phenomenon stated above. The commitment to caste-system, tribal traits, *punn dā sāk* or ‘marriage without consideration’, and Jagsīr’s deliberate attempt to not to carry through his love-relation with Bhānī, and a desire to own a property, all these underline only one idea of gaining respectability. Nandī was the daughter of *sānsī*. Nandī happened to meet Jagsīr’s father and fell in love with each other. Nandī, without bothering about her tribe, eloped with Jagsīr’s father. When the whole group of *sānsī* started searching for her, she, on her own, returned to them. While girding up her *ghagri* or loincloth and putting *gandāsa* on her shoulder, like a lioness she came forward.⁷ On seeing Nandī in this form, her father requesting all others to refrain, with choked voice, from a distance, addressed Nandī, thus :

“Look Nandiye ! you are dead for us, and take us dead for you, right from this day. You may do as

you please and we are not going to bother for you, any more.”⁸

Nandi had defied the social norms of her tribe. Nandi was a rebel. Nandi's father had excommunicated her from the tribe. He did not bother about her, any more. What Nandi did and what inversely she got all this holds testimony to the strong ties of tribalism. Nandi being a daughter of *sānṛi*, firstly loved *sīri* and then eloped with her. Nandi's conduct like that was a grave attack on the respectability of the tribe of *sānsi*. The last words of Nandi's father are enough evidence of his disturbed state of mind, caused due to the deep sense of loss of respectability. It is a sure sign of success of caste-system that those who are victim of it, adhere to it all the more.

Nandi being excommunicated by her parents, could not get her four daughters married in a well-to-do family. In spite of her best efforts, Nandi could not convince Jagsir's father that ‘if their daughters were to live deplorable married life then why not to give them against some consideration.’⁹ Jagsir's father, an adherent, to the concept of ‘marriage without consideration’, while refuting Nandi's stand-point would express joyously, that :

“One who would forsake one's *dharma*, following worldly ways can hardly be called a man.”¹⁰

To what kind of peculiar world Jagsir's father belonged to ? He belonged to the world where ‘marriage without consideration’ was considered the highest form of *dharma*. ‘Marriage without consideration’ speaks of the morality of the high-ups. It is because of this fact that it is considered to be the symbol of respectability and all the more reason for the *sīris* to adopt it as a social norm.

It was an idea of social respectability that always came in the way of Jagsir to express his love for Bhānī. Bhānī continued to taunt him, regularly, in the words, that :

“In case you have some self-respect you must talk face to face. One can not carry through when frightened.....I wish God must have given you as much manliness as He has blessed you with beauty. Look at his thighs as if some one carved them out in a die. I crave to eat them up like a melon with my teeth.....”¹¹.

*“I have been marked with stigma on account of you and you are so much indifferent (towards me).....”¹²

Jagsir could respond to all these taunts, only this much, that :

“What do you know Bhāno, in what way 'am also spending my days (of life).”¹³

Jagsir's reply was hardly satisfying for Bhānī. She kept herself regularly busy in evoking man in Jagsir, telling him :

“What has happened ! still the whole life is there. May be that you are thinking to part company. Beware ! don't leave (me) in the lurch”.¹⁴

Bhānī had been sending messages to Jagsir through Raunkī, also, as :

“Bhānī told me, to tell (you) to come over there, sometimes. (He) must be feeling sad and that would help in a way.”¹⁵

And, inspite of all these 'open invitations' Jagsir could not arise to the occasion and become 'manly'. But, what was the reason ? Nikkā the barber one day gave good beating to his

wife Bhānī and Jagsīr out of provocation picked a quarrel with him. This created a scene and it became a talk of the town. Jagsīr's father earned a bad name, he felt very bad about it and told him that :

“*Jagsiā* ! if you wish that the people, in my old age, should show all possible disrespect to me. then, I would prefer to jump into the well.”¹⁶

Jagsīr, in turn, assured his father that “done is done, and nothing shall happen like that, in future.”¹⁷ ‘Nothing shall happen’, it is this assurance that always worked as check on Jagsīr. Also, an idea of social respectability did that in its own way. An idea of social respectability got deep down in the mind of Jagsīr to such an extent that even rebellious love like that of Bhānī could not uproot it. In short : Jagsīr failed to overcome the notion of ‘name and fame’. Rather, it led him on the path of ‘restraint’. This ‘restraint’, infact, ‘eulogizes’ suppression.

A constant desire to burn an earthen lamp on *maṛhi* speaks of another hidden desire to be a man of property (even in successive generations). How can one be respectable without being a man of property !

Under the impact of Dharm Singh's son Bhaṇṭā and his wife the existing feudal relation takes a new turn and begins to take the form of bourgeois relation. Bhaṇṭā is of the opinion that :

“People, today, are killing each other for money, and his father had left four *bighās* of land at the disposal of one *siri*, just for nothing. Tall young man are too willing to work as *siris* against one fifth of the share. But, he is allowing a snake to hang round his neck, unnecessarily, against one fourth of the share.”¹⁸

Many a times a quarrel arose between Dharm Singh and Bhantā over this issue that, "how can one blessed with sons tolerate a *maṭhi* of a *siri* built up in his own field ? Again, this amounts to a badomen"¹⁹ Not only that, Bhantā sold out a *ṭāhali* to one Ṭehliay Shāh, grown in 'one's own land', under which Jagsīr's father *maṭhi* was situated. When Ṭehliya Shāh's men were cutting down the *ṭāhali*, Jagsīr happened to reach there and during a quarrel, with Shah's men he claimed that he was the owner of *ṭāhali*, saying.

"Whosoever might have sent you, this *ṭāhali* is 'mine' and no one can touch it without my consent."

"But, when he uttered the word 'mine', Jagsīr fumbled and Bhantā's face appeared before his eyes."²⁰

Many a times Bhantā used bitter words for Jagsīr and would taunt him :

*"I know you and your father so well ! You did not spare even the skin of our innocent elders and had been playing tricks (with them). And surely you did not raise palaces for them out of your earnings".²¹

*"Oh you low-down ! you lived on our bread and now behave like that !"²²

And, the fact is that, earlier, Dharm Singh and his father lived on the earnings of Jagsīr and his father and now it is the turn of Bhantā. 'It was Jagsīr's father who crushed the rising heads of snakes and raised property for them'. It is low-down on whose earnings feudal lords (or land-lords) depend through out their life. Generally speaking, the class that rules economically inevitably rules ideologically and as a result truth is distorted inversely.

When feudal relations turn in to bourgeois relations, there too, it is the long inherited allegiance of down-trodden towards

their masters that continues to operate. When Nandi learns about the uprooting of *ṭāhali*, she begs for on this very account, and bursts out, that :

“Listen my son Dharmiā ! Our two generations rendered their (whole hearted) service to you. He spent whole of his life, crushing the heads of snakes, to serve your interests, and now my son, since he was born, is working hard for you like a black bulland I have been washing your dirt till this day.....and you oh Dharmiā !.....rascal.....this is how you return for all that we did for you..... this is the return ?”²³

When Nandi is sure about the demolishing of *maṭhi* she addresses her dead husband, saying, that :

“You died in harness, earning for these devils....”²⁴

Now, Nandi is no more under illusion and tells her son Jagsīr, that :

“Why did you tell a lie, my son, before me ? I was in know of it, that, sooner or later, these rascals are going to return in this way for our services..... How can these *Jāts* do any good to us whom they feed like throwing a piece of loaf to dogs at a distance.....”²⁵

Nandi's these elegiac notes are nothing but a testimony to the break off of the bonds of allegiance to that class. Nandi at least sang elegiac songs, whereas, Dharm Singh and Jagsīr could not do even that much.

When there is a fight between feudal and bourgeois culture the defeat of the former is inevitable. But, historically, feudal culture took up arms against its own progeny, the bourgeois culture and faced up to it. The fall of feudalism as

depicted in *Maṛhi Dā Deevā* falls short of the image imbibing this contradiction. The absence of such contradiction seems to be the consequence of 'human considerations'.

Notes and References

1. Singh, Gurdial, *Maṛhi Dā Deevā* 2nd edition 1967. p. 18
All the references to the pages are from this edition.
2. Ibid. p. 19
3. Ibid. pp. 14-15
4. Ibid. pp. 66,87
5. Marx, Karl, *Economic and Philosophic Mss.* 1844 p. 57
6. Marx, Karl, *Communist Manifesto*. p. 125
7. *Maṛhi Dā Deevā*. p.
8. Ibid. p. 13.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. pp. 39-40.
12. Ibid. p. 52.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. p. 81.
15. Ibid. p. 119.
16. Ibid. p. 46.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid. p. 19.
19. Ibid. pp. 19-20.
20. Ibid. p. 86.
21. Ibid. p. 62.
22. Ibid. p. 61.
23. Ibid. p. 90.
24. Ibid p. 151.
25. Ibid. p. 106.

DALEEP KAUR ṬIWĀṆĀ :
AN ILLUSION OF WOMAN

Bhāno is the central character of Ṭiwāṇā's (b. 1935) novel *Eh Hamārā Jiwāṇā* (1968). When woman, as a result of 'bad luck' forms the centre of fictional writing, she has to, necessarily, confront with the lust of man. Every woman is not lucky like Heer. But, our Bhāno is bit different. She is made of different clay. How can Naraiṇā Amli measure the depth of her being ! One day Naraiṇā, quite innocently asks Bhāno, "Don't you feel like having a son"?¹ Bhāno too being free from malice and devoid of fear; and as if *Saraswati*, the goddess of learning was having her abode on her tongue; then which man would face the grandeur of her speech ! Bhāno responded, saying :

"If you so desire, let God grant it. But, I feel that since the day he passed away, my innerbeing seems to be still. Now, what can sprout from there !"²

Bhāno's these words are nothing but clear indication of her loyalty to Sarwan, her first husband. She feels still within, without Sarwan. Who in the absence of Sarwan, would cultivate her inner being? Now, her being is not likely to flower, to yield fruit. If, Bhāno is not going to yield fruit of what use she is for Naraiṇā ? Who would be his heir and inherit the property ? This is one anxiety that the men of property have inherited. At the first sight, it appears that Bhāno does not respond to it.

...

The wise tell that the division of labour had, in fact, its roots in the fact that only woman would procreate and man was free from this act. While, both man and woman,

confronting with this phenomenon of nature crossed many stages, and finally, arrived at the stage of marriage.³ This stage (of marriage) seems to be civilised one. And, to a certain extent it is. But, its fundamental principle also is to perpetuate an institution of private property. Woman should tie oneself to one man alone so that the latter may have his true heir. Thus, institution of marriage is not at all based on love. Again, this binding is for woman alone and man enjoys freedom to the possible extent. Therefore, this was the first institution that had its economic base. The natural was *interpreted* in economic terms. Collective ownership gave way to private ownership. Man formed an axis of this institution. Woman served as a means to produce children, so that, through true heir an institution of private property could flourish, well, as desired. The seeds of hatred were sown adversely affecting the relationship between man and woman. As if, it was for the first time that man betrayed woman. Monogamy was no doubt a progressive step. But, it can hardly be denied that it was this institution that, alongwith slavery (of woman) empowered man to misappropriate collective wealth and convert it in to private wealth. One more an ugly aspect also came into light. It became abundantly clear that the interests of one could be served only at the cost of others.

...

Bhāno once complained to her husband Sarwaṇ against the *misconduct* of his four unruly brothers. Sarwaṇ could not stand all this and immediately severed himself from his brothers. Sarwaṇ spent one full year, happily. Sarwaṇ's brother remained disgruntled throughout this period. Whereas, Bhāno cared least for them. Bhāno tells the remaining part of the story to Santi, thus :

“Then, one day, they picked to quarrel over the distribution of water. God knows, what was in the

mind of these damned souls that they hit him on some delicate part of his body or it was just a matter of chance. Then, to the best of their own efforts and intentions they tried to get him cured but of no use. Lastly, on the tenth day, in the evening, we lost hopes. And, he passed away on that very night.”⁴

Bhāno, still, has something more to reveal. She continues to tell, that :

“A good number of concerned people persuaded me Babay ! saying, that they are after all his brothers. Why not to marry one of them. I thought, that if I live here, it would be a constant torture for me. Babay ! what to tell you, it is not possible to forget Sarwan. Even the birds cry their heart out for him. Some times, it comes to my mind, that may be, that he lost his life on account of me. Had I not been there would not be any quarrel amongst the brothers and resulting in the loss of his life.”⁵

Bhāno eulogises Sarwan and calls him *Satyamān*, (truthful being), because he does not allow the circumstances to take shape in such a way that it becomes possible for Bhāno to develop promiscuous relations with his brothers. If such things occur, then one can not be sure of his heir being legitimate. Sarwan died at the hands of his brothers. Also they quarrelled over a turn of distribution of water. To the best of their intentions and efforts, Sarwan’s brother could not save him. Why did they make efforts to save him ? In rural life one’s brothers stand for one’s strength. It was because of this factor in rural life that Rānjha’s brothers sent messages and wrote letters to him requesting to return to his native village.

One thing is clear that brothers fought among themselves

over a woman and land. Sarwan, in fact, kept Bhāno tied up to monogamy. As an individual he must be kissing and hugging her. But, how to forget that Sarwan being a husband is also the custodian of the tradition of monogamy. The tradition of monogamy stands for the property. And, Bhāno is quite unaware of this aspect of the tradition. Bhāno lived and enjoyed the personalized relation and recalls the same. An evil of private property is being covered up with the aid of this type of personal relation, and to be able to see all that was beyond the comprehension of Bhāno. In fact, it suits the ruling class to be kind and generous in its personal conduct. Even those who are adversely affected are not aware of their plight ! Bhāno while talking to Narainā tells him, that :

“When.....when he [Sarwan] died I intensely wished that had he left some one, [child] I would have spent my days of life banking upon that, (peacefully). And, after that.....after that.”⁶

Desiring some one i.e, child, as a token of love of Sarwan, is not simply the projection of one's personal desire, the consciousness of ruling class too, is inherently playing its role.

... ..

When Bhāno is wife of Narainā, how Narainā can tolerate Bhāno's liking for Jāgar ? It is but natural for Narainā to accept whatever Jāgar tells as true. Because, the fear is in the very heart of Narainā himself. Narainā desires for an heir to his property and that too, through and through, legitimate one. It is because of this hidden desire that Narainā gives a good beating to Bhāno. There is no doubt, at all, that Narainā loves Bhāno very much. But, the same Narainā, longing for an heir, marries Bhāgwanti the daughter-in law of Hariā. Once, Narainā expressed this very desire before Bhāno, saying :

“Look Bhāno ! had I a son, that would help in the continuity of my family-name, then there was hardly any need (to go in for marriage like that).”⁷

How far Naraiṇā’s loving warmth for Bhāno could conceal its true nature ! Naraina’s wife Bhāgwanti gave birth to a son. Now Bhāgwanti was feeling as if on the top of the world. Bhāgwanti started a whispering campaign against Bhāno. It was becoming difficult for Bhāno to pull on and live in that house. It is under these changed circumstances that Santi tells Bhāno about the right of ownership of property, thus :

“But, now she [Bhāgwanti] is going to be the owner of entire family-property, you are not likely to get anything. You a stupid one did not get anything documented. And, you see ! that she got everything settled (in her favour) before *Panchāyat*. Now, she is the sole owner (of property).”⁸

Bhāgwanti became owner of property, not just on account of thumb-impression, but, because she gave birth to a son, who is the sole heir to property and she is the mother of such heir. The birth of a son alone would provide roots to the family. And, inheritance is now blessed with longevity. Naraiṇā too, because of the birth of a son, feels helpless before Bhāgwanti, and, frankly expresses to Bhāno, saying :

“If a son had not born, I would have told that nasty woman (*Sāli*) to leave and loiter the way that pleased her. But, now Bhāno, you see.....”⁹.

Yes, of course, Bhāno, being unable to give birth to a son, is, therefore, advised by Naraiṇā, thus :

*“Bhāno ! you see, you know, that Fathā of *Chondhey wāla*..... He is too good a person. Poor man is all alone. He had a son, who passed away many years ago. He owns enough of land. I had a

talk with him. He told me, that, if Bhāno agrees to.....”¹⁰.

*“Also, Fathā is too good a person. Besides that he is nearing fifty and can hardly (afford to) be a bad one.”¹¹

*“Bhāno ! don’t feel bad about it. Had there not a son I would not have bothered about her, at all. And moreover you will be better off at *Chondey wālā*. Again, Bhāno ! one is not the master of one’s destiny and one has to live as pre-determined.”¹²

Naraiṇā is trying to console Bhāno as if she is ĩmere a child. And, the entire matter ends at destiny. The destiny too, interferes in the matter of food, alone !

... ..

Bhāno is wife of Naraiṇā, and, she continues to long for Sarwan. It is but natural for Naraiṇā to feel bad about it. Naraiṇā is absolutely justified when he complains that :

“.....But, when I embrace you, you are hardly present, and, switch over your imagination else where.”¹³

Naraiṇā’s reading about Bhāno is not far from truth, because, “Bhāno, who was asking Naraiṇā, a bit earlier to go to his bed, felt as if he was a stranger. She also realized that there was a lifeless darkness and she was lying with some stranger”.¹⁴ Bhāno is only formally living with Naraiṇā, and her being is intune with (the memory of) Sarwan that feeds her soul and she feels happy. On the face of it, this speaks of love between the two. But, what kind of love that could be ? After the passing away of Sarwan, Bhāno’s ‘inner being seems to be still and nothing would sprout from there’ when we learn that, it appears that Bhāno is unwilling to give birth to such a

heir who would only provide longevity to the institution of private property. In that case, she would prefer to be a barren. Now, we have to find out to which class of society Sarwan belongs to. One, who stands for exploitation? And, when Bhāno expressed her satisfaction at the time of a son born to Bhāgvanti, thus :

“Oh no Babay ! he too is mine, our (family) got its roots. May God bless all like that. I had wished at the devil and wanted son to be born”.¹⁵

Bhāno also expresses her satisfaction in these words too, that :

“In these three years we have deposited rupees two twenties over and above rupees fifteen hundreds in the bank. Gradually, we shall get our mortgaged land vacated. Otherwise, people would taunt our son, in future.”¹⁶

It is hardly difficult to ascertain that not only Sarwan but Bhāno also is victim of what kind of social division. The consciousness of both is rooted in the system based on (class) exploitation.

Bhāno was victim of an utter illusion that none other than Sarwan could cultivate her. Bhāno's this very illusion is all that she has as capital—Sarwan's 'love' for her. It is this capital, that, finally, renders her barren. Lorca's Yermā¹⁷ too is barren. But for her it is a curse. Yermā revolts and refuses to continue to remain barren. Revolt is not possible in the absence of energy. Yerma's inner creative-energy takes the form. Her revolt takes the shape of violence—violence directed towards revolution. Yerma's impotent husband becomes the object of her attack. Yerma's revolt against her impotent husband, infact, is the reflection of revolt of the people of Spain against their ruler. Daleep Kaur Tiwāṇa's Bhāno relishes being a barren. Reason? Bhāno's illusion. Bhāno is unable

to get out of the net of illusion. And, for that one needs to have a required (social) consciousness—that consciousness which can bring about a radical change in her class-out-look. Whereas, Bhāno's illusion had absolutely, shattered her creativity that could be instrumental in demolishing the institution of private property. What else could be the way to fulfilment for Bhāno !

Notes and References

1. Tiwāṇā, Daleep Kaur, *Eh Hamārā Jiwaṇā*, First-edition p. 22.
All the references to the pages are from this edition.
2. Ibid.
3. For detailed analysis of the subject, see :
Engles, Frederick, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and State*.
4. *Eh Hamārā Jiwaṇā* p. 15
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. p. 22
7. Ibid. p. 95
8. Ibid. p. 100
9. Ibid. p. 104
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. pp. 104-105
12. Ibid. p. 105
13. Ibid. p. 13
14. Ibid. pp. 19-20
15. Ibid. p. 100
16. Ibid. p. 96
17. Yerma is the title of one of the plays of Spanish playwright Gracia Lorca and Yerma is the central character of this play.

JASWANT SINGH KANWAL :
A STUDY IN CASTE-STRUCTURE

In case, caste comes in the way of *Ishq* (love) whom to blame ? caste or *Ishq* ?

Kanwal in his novel *Hāni* (1980) has used caste as one of the device to identify his characters. For instance : *Tāpi-mehri*, *Jagnā-brahman*, *chhimbiān* (di nūlm Pyaro, *Biro chuṛian di Kuṛi* and *Jaṭtan dā mundā Lābha* etc. *Mehre* (water-carrier), *brahman* (priest-class), *chhimbay* (washerman) *chuṛe* (sweeper), and *Jāṭi* (land-lord), all these identity-marks denote notion of caste distinction, deep rooted in the social structure of Panjab. And, this device used for the characterization is very much intune with the theme of the novel. It also helps in depicting the truth of social behaviour. The choice of caste as identity-marks also indicates author's awareness to portray an authentic fictional image of society concerned. The distinction at the level of caste not only speaks of differentiation it conforms to discrimination of high and low, as well. At the same time, an aspiration to become high, also inherently, continues to be there. When Kārā's (Kartārā) mother eloped with some *Jāṭ* he was in her lap. And Kārā was proud of being a son of a *Jāṭ*. But, people are very obstinate. They refused to admit his plea. Even then, Kārā had a great desire that Tāpi should welcome him as *devar* (brother-in-law). And Kārā was all prepared to sacrifice his *Jaṭki Shān* that was no more than an illusion¹.

When one can be proud of being a son of a *Jāṭ*, when in fact, one is not, then one is justified to be proud of being a son of a *Jāṭ* when in fact, one is. Lābh Singh like Kārā, though is

not proud of being a Jāt, but, certainly he has regard for that. It is this sentiment of Lābhā that comes in the way of his love for Bīro.

Let us know, who is Bīro ? No harm in meeting her. How does she look like ? What about her features and face ? And, what about her being ? Her complexion is dark but seductive. Her eyes are as big as that of deer of a jungle. Her features are sharp and cute. The charm of her beauty was such that even her girl friend Dhanto could not resist the temptation of falling in love with her. Dhanto could say only this much that, "I wish I were a boy and I would have enjoyed your being to my fullest satisfaction, even at the cost of going to prison." Kanwal further adds, that "while speaking like that Dhanto had forcibly embraced Bīro."²

This is the state of mind of a girl ! What to say about boys !! The young sweepers sighed for Bīro. They could do only that much. The Jāt boys went a step ahead. They sang songs of her complexion, features and youth within her hearing. They were courageous enough !

But, what to talk of touching the *chummi* none could even dare to deface the foot-prints of Bīro. They knew about Bīro's temperament. They were under no illusion that Bīro was not just a girl, she was, in fact, female-cobra of the jungle. Kanwal has also provided a very important piece of information about Bīro that it was because of the 'surveillance of cobras' that helped Bīro to safeguard her 'treasure of virginity.'³ Kanwal is after all the creator of Bīro. His knowledge about the ins and outs of Bīro is but natural.

Bīro for whom the young boys of the village long to die for her every inch, the same Bīro is mad after Lābhā. Lābhā infact loves Bīro out of depths of his heart, but is helpless. Since, he is son of a *jāt*, whereas, Bīro is a *chūṛi* We can

not accuse Lābhā that he is a base. Only, he lacks courage to fight against the caste-base of the society.

...

Kanwal as a novelist has been quite conscious while describing heavy-heartedness of Lābhā caused being a *jāt*. The problem raised is centred round caste-distinction. Or, it is caste that is the main hurdle. Kanwal has described caste as a hurdle in different perspectives.⁴ Let us pick up just one instance for analysis that shall conform to our views regarding love-relation between Lābhā and Bīro. Bīro asks Lābhā to kidnap her saying that, 'now it is time to test your manliness'. But, what the poor Lābhā can do ? He is a son of a *jāt*. But, he has a name among the *Valleys* or addict. He commands a good respect. "In case he kidnaps Bīro that would tarnish his image. Even small fries would taunt him that Lābhā, while kidnaping *Chūṛian di Kuṛi* has defaced the *Valleys*"⁵ or addict. It is very difficult to ignore taunts of the folk. Even Bhagwan Rāma could not ignore it. Lābhā tries to build up an argument that, "what, (if you) get married else where, it is not going to be a break off."⁶ What a strategy ! He refrains from marriage on one side and at the same time longs for continuity of *relation* with her. One thing goes to his credit that he also refrains from *spoiling* her.⁷ And, Bīro is not a child-like, who can be led astray by these words devoid of any substance. She reacted like a female-cobra and told him that :

"I should wander along with you before marriage, get defamed, and continue with the same even after marriage. Do I owe anything to you ?"⁸

"Who says that you owe me ?"⁹ What else Lābhā could have said ? One can only *say* when one is truthful. "So, you

suggest like that because I am a *chūrian di Dhi* !¹⁰ Bīro seems to have discovered the truth of 'mutual relation'.

... ..

Bīro's scrutiny of her love-relation with Lābhā gives her sufficient clue to the inner world of her own being. The process of self-assessment, though, was set in only after Lābhā's refusal to comply with her desire to kidnap her, yet, Bīro had been having inkling that, "His (Lābhā), conduct shows that he would fall short of expectations."¹¹ Now, Bīro thinks that "it would have been better if she had fallen in love with some *Jheer*, or with some one from court yard, who, at least, would not have hesitated eloping with her or felt afraid of dying".¹² Reconsideration takes the form of repentance. Repentance means going backward. The repentance rather gets more intensified when Dhanto too reminds Bīro of the facts of life, and the facts are that Lābhā is a *Jāt* by caste and Bīro a *Chūri*. At one stage, Dhanto requests Bīro to ask Lābhā to go to Modan, her lover, and bring him. Here, Bīro lashed out at Dhanto, telling her, that,

"Oh ! I see, you want to elope. You damn ! You told me that it was bad and now it has become good, oh you low-born !" ¹³

"No Bīro ! It was different in your case. He is a *Jāt* and you are a *chūrian di kuṛi*..."¹⁴

If Lābhā has a regard for being a *Jāt* then, Bīro too has a (inner) feeling of being a *chūri*. Both the sentiments were kept alive by the surroundings. So, the surroundings ultimately, prevailed upon.

Kanwal has also depicted a fight against the surroundings through the love relation between Dhanto and Modan. Both of them fought against the surroundings with full vigour. Both of them came out to be successful in *Ishq*, so to say, because caste did not come in their way. Both belonged to one and

the same caste or *brādrī*. Moreover, they were also engaged with each other.

The structure of the novel depicts, primarily, the caste-structure of rural Panjab. In this way, love-relation between Dhanto and Modan constitute the main plot of the novel and that of Lābha and Biro only secondary in importance. If one is said to be *successful* in its mission there is no harm in calling the other unsuccessful. But, here one very important point emerges. Contrary to the settled norms of literary creation, the secondary plot has provided vigour to the main plot. This is, indeed, great literary achievement of the novelist.

The love or *Ishq* of Lābhā and Biro for each other could not overcome the hurdle of caste. Their love continued to be infected with the social disease of caste.

Notes and References

1. Kanwal, Jaswant Singh, *Hāñi*. 5th edition : 1980 p. 13.
All references to the pages are from this edition.
2. Ibid, p. 25.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. pp. 127, 131, 138.
5. Ibid. p. 83.
6. Ibid. p. 84.
7. Ibid. p. 115.
8. Ibid. pp. 84-85.
9. Ibid. p. 85
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. p. 65
12. Ibid. p. 89.
13. Ibid. p. 107
14. Ibid.

AJIT KAUR : A STUDY IN LONELINESS*

Ever since, Ajit Kaur began writing, critics continue to display their lively interest in knowing about her art of fiction. First mentionable name is no other than Gurmukh Singh Jeet, one among the pioneers, setting a tradition of studying Panjabi fiction in a systematic manner. Jeet in his book, *Samkalit Panjabi Khāṇi*.¹ (May, 1957) identified Ajit's style of fiction as 'upbhāvik' (sentimental) and suggested to dispense with. At the same time, Jeet provided upto date informations as regard to the publication of Ajit's stories in different magazines, at different times. Jeet's efforts are not without merit as he provided chronology of publication of Ajit's stories, stored at one place, likely to be useful for any critic in future, interested in studying Ajit's evolution of art of fiction. Thereafter, Dr. S.S. Uppal in the second edition of his book *Panjābī Khāṇikār*² published in 1970, (First Edition : 1954) admired qualities of 'Kāvīkrang' (poetic treatment) and 'Komalā' (lyrical qualities) contained in Ajit's stories. Simultaneously, Dr. Uppal underlined the fact, that, that it is 'Kām' (lust) that forms the focal point of Ajit's imagination as a story-writer. One thing more. Dr. Uppal's entire focus has been on the contents of Ajit's stories. And, it also gives an impression of deriving social significance contained therein. But, Dr. Uppal's vision being devoid of any definite social philosophy, hardly helps in reconstructing social milieu, reflected in the stories, in a recognizable form. In this context, Sādhū Singh's crisp formulation acquires added significance. Sādhū Singh in his book entitled *Ajit Kaur Dā Kathā Jagat*³ (1978), consisting of hundred and four pages, concludes, that :

* Based on stories included in an anthology entitled *Sāṁian Chitṛtān* (1980).

"To actualise the desire to have *Sālam-Sabūt* (integrated) home is the motivating force that pervades in her entire gamut of writing."

and to achieve that end,

"Her heroines search for *Sampūran Mard* (integrated man), but come across, only *adh-paṁṇe* (piecemeal) beings."⁴

Let us remember that *Sampūran mard* shall ask for *Sampūran aurat*.

This only means that women inhabiting Ajit's world of fiction, in the final analysis, is in search of domestic bliss.

The present writer, in his book *Prasīdhī Panjābī Novel* (1980),⁵ analysed Ajit's *Fālṭū Aurat* and contended that freedom is a negation of some value and hence, there ought to be, necessarily, positive counterpart. Again, the question is not that of the *freedom of woman*; it is rather to emerge as free-being or woman. Continuing with the same trend, Prem Singh in his paper, *Bandhan-mukat Istri Dī Seemā*,⁶ and based on *Sāvian Chīṛiān*, comments, that :

"The basic problem of these stories is to depict the position of woman in society or to establish woman as free-being."

While elaborating his contentions, Prem Singh adds, that :

"That, free-woman too shall come into being, only, when man also completely emancipates himself from the clutches of economic inequalities and social pressures. This means, that in the absence of social system based on justice, the dream of free-woman shall continue to remain a mere dream."⁷

A foregoing analysis shows that woman inhabiting Ajit's world of fiction is either a commodity or a domestic being and who is, therefore, hardly anything more than a second

citizen. Anyhow, in both the cases, she suffers from loneliness. An attempt is made in this paper to unravel the mysterious loneliness.

...

Woman provides a fulcrum to fifteen out of sixteen stories. As a result we find woman involved in more than one social dilemma. Woman is portrayed as a mother. She is also a wife; a beloved; a friend and mere a woman. When woman happens to be a friend she desires to become a beloved, rather than a substitute for beloved (*Ik Mariā Hoīā Pal*). And, when she is adorned as a beloved, she longs to be a wife (*Panj Rupewālā Kāmm*). So, she is always itching to be what she is not. When woman's desire to become wife is fulfilled, she finds herself miserable in more than one way. Sometimes, she is named Gulbāno, and, at times she is known as Manjrī. Again, she can be called Māsī or Mrs. Chaudhry or Tārā or Śānti. Gulbano's husband Khush Dil Khān, like a demon, treats her like a captive, kept in the castle. As if she is a fairy.⁸ Moreover, Gulbāno is encaged like a crane-bird.⁹ And, Gulbāno worships an image of Channaṇ in her heart. Hence :

“There was a Gulbāno
Who belonged to Khushdil Khān,
But, was miles away.
There was a Gulbāno
Who was miles away from Channaṇ
But, was close to heart.”¹⁰

This wife hardly needs a husband; she longs for lover.

When wife was named Manjrī, her husband used her just to warm his bed.¹¹ Being a Māsī, and not beautiful, she was of no use to her husband.¹² Mrs, Chaudhry was charged with promiscuity by her husband.¹³ Śānti has husband but he

is (regularly) impotent.¹⁴ And, Tara's loneliness has been part of her life. Her husband is a minister and she only wants that he should publically accept her as his wife, thus, enabling her to capitalise his position.¹⁵

When woman is wife, beside a mother, at times, strange things happen. Śāntī's husband is impotent, and she feels '*bilkul mehfooz*' (absolutely secure) in the grip of steel like arms of her son, Lalit.¹⁶ In the story, '*Sūlt Ute Laike Pal*' amidst the torture inflicted by husband, children alone seem to provide a sense of security.¹⁷ The life of wife, therefore, is not a bed of roses.

When woman is mere a woman, she is known as Geetā (or Geeti). She can, also, be called Jūhī or Faridā or Monika, for that matter. Ajīt has categorized Geetā as *Fāltū Aurat*. Her identity is as under :

"Woman for whom you pay for warming your bed, and for one you need not. For one you need not pay is wife. She is to be provided only with bread and clothing. Slave ! Even then wife is in a respectable position. One, for whom you pay for warming your bed is a prostitute. *Vaiśya* ! And, the woman who hangs in between, for one you have neither to pay nor any promise to provide with bread and clothing and she does not share status and respectability of the man whose bed she warms. Prohibited relation. What is she ? What sort of woman she is, Umesh ! *Fāltū Aurat* ! *Fāltū* ! Superfluous !"¹⁸

And, Jūhī comes to realize, that :

"I am also a coconut-shell. The wine of life can be poured into me and enjoyed. Neat. It will harm the least. The entire bitterness [of life], all that is

vomitive, wholesome madness—can be poured in to coconut-shell and enjoyed. I am also a coconut shell. After drinking from shell it is thrown away, and the pleasure they take alongwith. Happiness, they carry to their homes—to their wives, to their children ...Home... ...not *barāti*.....Home.¹⁹

How Faridā, in the *mehfil*, brimfull with sex and wine, broods :

“This room, though full, how much empty it is ! where from the ceiling is leaking and emptiness is dripping from it.....*ṭapṭap*.”²⁰

Monika, while sitting all alone in moonlit night was having a feeling of it; as if a cold fire.²¹ And a woman living in *Kamrā Number Aṭha*, to do away with her loneliness is contemplating to advertise in the newspaper—wanted a lover.²²

Women have different names and are living in different set-up. Nevertheless, all are linked up with one another with one thing, and that is, loneliness. It is due to this affinity, that all the women are contained in one woman. Woman is under constant torture due to loneliness. In the story *Ikal Dā Rang*, after parting company with Rāju, she (in first person), while assessing the taste and colour of loneliness, imagines that :

“What, after all, is the taste of loneliness ? Bitter ? what, after all, is the colour of loneliness ? brownish ? black ? or like a yellow withering leaves of autumn helplessly scattered by the [force of] wind.”²³

Bitter, brownish, blackish, black and yellow—all these expressions denote the substance of loneliness. The taste and colour of loneliness that pervades through out in her writings, under discussion, is not different from this. This very loneliness needs to be examined.

... ..

It appears, since, woman is fighting for her freedom against none else but her own father, brother, son and husband, and being deprived of their goodwill falls prey to loneliness. Not only that, she is fighting against man whose mother she is; his daughter as well; a sister, and a wife too. Besides that she gives birth to man, she brings her up. And, man also for the welfare of her mother, wife, daughter and sister, undergoes stress and strains. This formulation is pleasing, only, when viewed from surface-level. The problem is much deeper. To view a person merely from the point of view of man and woman is to reduce it to the level of physical being. The distinction between man and woman is not merely a physical one. These are two traits of character. An understanding of man and woman is not possible if we overlook these two as traits.

Keeping in view the woman inhabiting in the fictional world of Ajit Kaur, and suffering from loneliness, a question can be asked, Whether man is a answer to the woman's problem of loneliness? (And, again, whether woman can solve the problem of man's loneliness?) Which man? What kind of man? (And, again which woman? What sort of woman?) A woman suffering from loneliness can transcend it through *vasal* or unison. And, for that she has to plan an inward journey. It is a switch over of energy (that flows in to various faculties) from without to within. What is, after all the inner being? One is born out of unison of man and woman. As a result, in the innermost core of being, there dwell both man and woman, in some form, that creates bisexuality within. Every human being is bisexual in the sense that it combines both the masculine and feminine characteristics irrespective of being a man or woman. This psychological truth was discovered in India, long ago, and projected in the myth of *ardhanārīśvara*. We find a beautiful episode in *Śivapūrāṇa*²⁴ that tells about the *ardhnārī īśvara* form of *Śiva*. *Brahmā*, it is stated, commissioned *Prajāpatīs* the male beings to

initiate the process of creation, but, of no avail. Later on, *Brahmā* contemplated upon *Maheśvara* and latter appeared in the composite form consisting of male and female corporeal organism. The process of creation is stated to be a result of this happy union of male and female organism. This unison of male and female takes the form of masculinity and femininity, ingrained in human psyche. *Sakhi-Sampradāya* founded by Swāmī Haridas of Mathurā, contemporary of Akbar the Great and Gurū of Tānsena, the Great Singer, that advocates the view that 'there is only one Male' and all others are females' has its roots in this very composite human psyche. The (male) adherents of this *Sampradāya* dress themselves like woman, identify themselves with *Rādhā* and conduct themselves, likewise. Those who are attracted towards this kind of devotion to *Īśvara* or God in the form of Krishna, certainly imbibe disproportionate quantity of feminine traits in their psychic beings. It is a case of projecting femininity rooted in the male biological organism.

The fact of human beings imbibing composite psychic nature is also acknowledged by 'Gurū Nānak (1469-1539 A.D.) when he says, that :

"There is a woman in man
and man in woman
Only wise can discern it."²⁵

Bisexuality as a psychic phenomenon is a subject of study in modern psychology, too. "Every individual....." discovered Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) "displays a mixture of the character-traits belonging to his own and to the opposite sex; and he shows a combination of activity and passivity whether or not these last character-traits tally with his biological ones."²⁶ Freud identified activity in woman as a masculine trait and passivity in man as feminine one. And passivity, as such, [might have its roots in male-dominant society. Anyhow,

psychologically speaking, every individual is to be viewed in this background. Therefore, both the masculine and feminine tendencies operate within one and the same individual being. To emphasize upon these tendencies is not to overlook the difference between male and female biological organism. Rather, the "purpose is to keep oneself constantly aware of the subtle distinctions that affect entire mode of ones living. Such awareness is essential to affect the transcendence of loneliness and achieve unison or *vasal* that comes into being as a result of melting masculine and feminine tendencies in to each other.

If we look at man and woman, from a distance, due to difference in their biological organism, man appears to be a man and woman a woman. But if we get closer and listen with the subtle ear of mind we shall find that in every male organism female is breathing. and likewise, in female organism a male. This only shows, that individual is, simultaneously, both a masculine and feminine being. Man has suppressed feminine within and masculine in woman has surrendered himself. The politics originates within. The fundamental thing about man and woman is not equality. (The equality before law is a different matter). The notion of equality breeds confrontation. Deeper thing is being complementary to each other. To displace complementary character and introduce notion of equality is to play politics that suits only a few. The people must fight against each other, under one pretext or the other. And, you very well know, whom does it suit.

We are of the view, that man and woman, both are complementary to each other and it is this fact that leads to unison or *Vasal*. Woman dwelling in the fictional world of Ajit Kaur is fully aware of her suffering from loneliness. In the absence of awareness of suffering, of whatsoever nature it might be, it is hardly possible to work out its cessation. Woman, under discussion, is aware of her loneliness, but, what she is searching for? Śānti (*Mā Putra*) desires for a companionship of her youthful son, Lalit. In the story, *Sūli Ute Laṭke Pal*, wife

after having lost the company of her husband is curious for the company of her children. Mañjari (*Hot water Bottle*), Māsi (*Māsi*) Mrs. Chaudhry (*But Śikan*), and Tārā Dīdī (*Ik Portait*) all these women got husbands alright, but remained deprived of their loving companionship. In *Panj Rupe Wāla Kāmm*, woman prefers husband to a lover, She is searching for home. Woman in the story *Ik Mariā Hoiā Pal* longs to be a beloved and nothing more. Woman of *Kamra Number Aṭha* needs a lover just to do away with loneliness Faridā, Monikā, Geetā and Juhi all these woman need just a company of a *gentleman*. Woman created by Ajit Kaur, excepting Gulbāno, longs for protection (or security) of one kind or the other. And, security hardly leads to realize the fact of existence of complementary counterparts to each other. As a result of her illconceived goal of life, woman gets astray that must manifest in one way or the other. This is a perpetual process. There are indications in the case of Gulbāno, that she realized the extential reality of being complementary to each other. When we are told that :

“There was a Gulbāno
Who was miles away from Channan
But was close to heart.”²⁷

Gulbāno never thought to *become* a beloved; she *was*. So, it is not a question of becoming, it is a fact of being. Becoming, somehow, suggests an attempt to be made.

Being is discovered, it is not made. We ought to search for that being which ultimately dissolves in unison or *vasal* and the clouds of loneliness just disappear. As already mentioned every individual is a composite being. In every man dwells a woman and likewise woman in every man. When a woman gets a man akin to one that is latent in her inner being, unison or *vasal* takes place. This is the celebration ! Man without can be helpful as a catylytic agent and hence a blessing. Man

without has to evoke man that is within. When, both man and woman, latent in the innermost being, are awakened, (there is hardly any scope for coming face to face to each other), they meet and melt. This *unison* does not *make* them one, it only discovers oneness that *is* already *there*. Here, one is not lonely but Alone. There *is* none. The colour of this phenomenon of being Alone is not 'brownish', 'black' or 'that of yellow leaves'. In the beginning, it is sky-blue, and gradually turns into deep-sea. Its taste is not bitter, but soft sweet *halkā mīṭhā* that is intoxicating. And, individual-self disappears into the vast sky of Existence.

This is the state of Free-Being.

Notes and References

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2. Uppal, Swinder Singh, *Panjābi Khānikār*, pp. 322, 325.
3. Singh, Sādhū, *Ajit Kaur Dā Kathā-Jagat*, p. 98.
4. Ibid. p. 99.
5. Sobti, Harcharan Singh, *Prasidhī Panjābi Novel* p. 110.
6. Singh, Prem, *Bandhan-Mukat Istri Dī Seemā*, p. 2.
7. Ibid. pp. 10-11.
8. *Gu'bāno*, p. 90.
9. Ibid. p. 91.
10. Ibid. p. 2.
11. *Hot water Bottle* p. 151.
12. *Māsi* p. 175.
13. *Butt-Shikan* p. 155.
14. *Mā-Puttar* p. 191.
15. *Ik Portrait* p. 205.
16. *Mā-Puttar* pp. 182, 186.

17. *Sūli Ute Laṭke Pal* p. 169.
18. *Fāltū Aurat* pp. 76-77.
19. *Khope Di Thūṭhi* p. 104.
20. *Deor-Bhābiān* p. 142.
21. *Mehak Di Maut* p. 142.
22. *Kamrā Number Aṭha* p. 127.
23. *Ikal Dā Rang* p. 199.
24. *Śiva-paurāṇa : Śatarudrasaṃhitā* Chapter III.
cf. Rao, Gopi Nath T. A. *Elements of Hindu Iconography*
Vol. II, part I pp. 321-331. For statues of *aradhanārīśvara*
See plates no. 95, 96, 97 and 98.
25. *Ādi Granth* p. 879.
26. Strachey, James, (Gen. Ed.) *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. VII page 220.
27. *Gulbāno* p. 92.

GIĀNI KESAR SINGH :

A TALE OF WOE OF A PATRIOT

Who doesn't love freedom ! And, you can't beg for freedom. Beggars even don't deserve it. None but the brave long for it and it suits them. Bābā Usmān also, at one time, longed for freedom—freedom of country. Alongwith his co-patriots, he joined the struggle for freedom.

Our country got freedom. But, after the freedom Bābā discovered that he was alien in his own motherland.¹ Bābā once again longed for revolution. Inqlāb Zindabad!²

...

It's only yesterday, that Indians went abroad either for livelihood or for higher education. Some of them joined in Canadian Pacific Railway as labourers. Others got employment in mines and mills. White workers had all contempt for Indian workers, because the latter were more acceptable to the employers. "Canadian employers were eager to engage Punjabis" writes Khushwant Singh, "who were not only willing to work for less and not being members of trade unions were also willing to work for longer hours. The Punjabis were harder than the Chinese, the Japanese or even the So-called caucasian races."³ This is how the economic interests of white workers were adversely affected. The conflict between white and Indian workers was but natural. At times, they clashed with each other. It added further bitterness for each other. Once, the leader of white workers told Indian workers that, "If we go on strike you must also join us."⁴ Hari Singh reacted very sharply and told him, that,

"We do the same job as you do. But, you get more wages being white ones and we are given lesser than what you get. Why don't you get wages at par with us ? Or have you ever told the employers to par us as much as you are paid ? First, you put a demand before the employers to raise our wages, then, we shall also join you in strike."⁵

Besides exchanges of bitter words clashes between the white workers and Indian workers were now very frequent. One Sunday, Indian workers were relaxing at their resting place then, "Suddenly someone pushed the door and it got opened. A crowd of white people was there on the threshold. Indians were four and white people happened to be ten to twelve in number. There was no escape. Badhowālīā [Hari Singh] advanced towards them and asked, "what do you want ?"⁶ What happened then, that "five or six of them instantly jumped upon Bodhawālīā.....Pyaroo poured a pot full of boiling tea over two of them Sandhū caught hold one of themSursinghiā jumped on one of them.The white ones ran away.....Bodhowālīā was bleeding....."⁷

White workers were equally hostile towards the Chinese and the Japanese workers. Kesar Singh has also described, with full sympathy, the onslaught of the white workers over the Chinese and the Japanese workers, thus :

"The Chinese were working at a distance of about one furlong, from Indian workers, towards the east. At about the same distance from the Chinese the Japanese workers were doing their job....."⁸ Suddenly, they heard some crying voices from the side where the Chinese were working.....They saw some Chinese running towards them, the head of one of them was injured and his face was stained

with blood Then, there was a firing. The Japanese also ran away.”⁹

Kesar Singh has also referred to setting the houses of the Chinese on fire.¹⁰

In addition to riots the white workers also continued to make use of apartheid as a weapon. The hatred against Asian workers was also spread among the school going children. It was a common practice for boys and girls to call any Chinese, Japanese or Indian, ‘an oriental bastard,’ by way of passing remarks.¹¹ And, the white would surround any solitary Indian, in Victoria or Vancouver, in broad daylight, give him beating, snatch money from him and pull down his turban.¹² To denigrate Indian workers the white people started talking ill of the style of living of Indians, openly, saying that :

“The turbans and the beards of Indians stink. As much as twenty persons live in one room and sleep on the floor. they eat while sitting on the floor. (They) don’t know English don’t accept Western culture. Neither they have faith in Christ nor they visit Church. (They) build up Church in their very homes. Their way of life is utterly deplorable.”¹³

In this very context the white workers continued to campaign against the influx of Asians in to their countries. On account of apartheid the Canadian government, through legislation, imposed restrictions on Indians entering Canada. An episode of *Kāmā Gātā Mārū* reminds us of the same measure adopted by the Canadian government.

Indian workers, in order to apprise of their plight to Canadian people, arranged a public meeting in Dominion Hall. Hundreds of Canadians were also present among audience. One Canadian from the audience asked for permission to speak and he said, that

“First thing I want to ask my Canadian brothers, is that all of you are Christians. You have faith in Christ. You tell me whether Christ was black or white ? brown or yellow ? Did he got himself nailed on the Cross only for white people ? On one side you want to remain Christian and on the other you practice apartheid, then you have no place in the realm of humanity. You can continue to be so called Christians, but not as a (true) human beings. You will be deceiving none but yourself and it won't be a surprise, at all that you may, once again, nail the Christ on the Cross.”¹⁴

Good ! Still there are some people who feel concerned about human values.

Indian workers by virtue of ill-treatment of white workers and the policies of the government directed against them, learnt one lesson—Freedom of Country. At every step of their life, now, they realized that there is only one way out and that is—Freedom of Country. This point is worked out in the novel in a very appropriate manner, and we quote :

*“.....So far the English is ruling over our country, you may try very hard, your plight is not going to be decreased in any way, rather, would increase. The only way out is that we get freedom. Only then we shall be treated as equal.”¹⁵

*“.....Hari Singh Usmān ! the only way out is,” tells Lālā Hardyal, “that we have home-rule.

But, how to get it ? We shall have to render sacrifices, kiss the hangman's halter, and cultivate the field of freedom with our blood..... And teach a lesson to government's pubs and stooges.”¹⁶

*“.....Indians who infact come to [earn dollars, now, had developed a new psychology that country's slavery is the root cause of all sufferings and they must prefer to gaining freedom from slavery, to any thing else.”¹⁷

They had found a remedy of all ills. It only needed to be given a practical shape. The programmes were made to acquaint Indians with the remedy and also to organise them for fruitful results. An institution of Sikh Gurdwara, in this context, played a very significant role. Of all the things, in this novel, it is the constructive image of the institution of Sikh Gurdwara that dominates over the entire scene of struggle for the freedom of country. This institution not only provided opportunities to Indians to sit together and make plans, but also helped them to seek inspiration from the history of the Sikh Gurūs that kept them up during the struggle. It appears that one of the purpose of the novelist is to highlight the constructive role of the Sikh Gurdwaras played in fighting for freedom on the foreign soil. Some of the references from the novel are as following :

*“Indians living in Canada, in one of the meetings organized in Gurdwara at Vancouver, raised a voice of protest against the riots. The Sikh Gurdwara belonged to the Sikhs alright but it was a meeting place for all Indians. There was no discrimination on the grounds of caste or religion. The Gurdwara, in fact, was the real meeting place for workers.”¹⁸

* Hasan Rahīm while giving a lecture in Gurdwara at Vancouver, said :

“On this day Gurū Gobind Singh organized the sufferers and inspired them to face up to the cruel. On this day Gurū Gobind Singh laid down a

foundation for converting Personal Rule in to *Panchayti Rāj*.....On this day we were taught to earn, honestly, our livelihood and share it with others.”¹⁹

* On the day of *Baisākhi*.....Gurdwara at Vencouer.....huge gathering of Hindūs, Sikhs and Muslims... ..Hasan Rahīm, here, condemned caste-distinctions.....criticized the communal conflicts, advised them all to unite and explained the existing relation between the workers and the employers. ‘The worker may be black, or white, brown or yellow, he *is* worker.”²⁰

The need of unity of the workers was talked about even outside the Gurdwaras. On enquiring by Pyāroo that, ‘we are (ourselves) slave. Ours is a slave country. Then, how can we help Irish, Maxicans, and the Chinese,’ Bābā Hari Singh Usmān clarifying his doubts tells him/us, that :

“Since all the rulers constitute one class, similarly, all the slaves must organize themselves into one class. All the landlords, owners of the lands on one side and all the *muzāre* on the other side. All the factory owners on one side and all the workers on the other side.”²¹

An inspiration was sought from the ‘Redflag’—a symbol of the unity of the workers, as well. The ‘Redflag’ was hoisting on the stage of the meeting organized by Indian workers at Dominion Hall, in Canada. At this meeting, Hasan Rahīm, pointing towards the ‘Redflag’ and with full vigour, said :

“This flag belongs to the people of the whole world
.....not to one race, one religion, one nation.....
Let all the workers join under the banner of this

flag. While discarding apartheid and religious fanaticism, let us fight for the welfare of all beingsThe peasants and workers alone are the backbone of the people of the world.”²²

... ..

A number of institutions were established to organize Indian workers. Khalsa Diwan Society was established at Vancouver in the year 1907. In the year 1907 itself the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society came into existence. Hind Pacific Association was formed in the year 1913. It was this association that laid down the foundation of Ghadar Party. The first president of this party was Sardar Sohan Singh Bhakna and Lala Hardyal was elected as its first general secretary. On first November 1913 the party published the first issue of *Ghadar*, its spokesman, from its head office the Ugāntar Ashram, Sanfrancisco, under the supervision of Sardar Kartār Singh Sarābhā and Shri Raghuvir Dyal. Later on Sarābhā was the life-force of this newspaper. This paper used to be published in Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu and in other Indian languages and despatched to Indians. The above mentioned institutions provided ample opportunities to Indian workers and students to meet and exchange their views. Giani Kesar Singh in his novel, *Bābā Hari Singh Usmān* has described the struggle carried on by Ghadar Party and Azad Hind Army for the freedom of the country.

The manifesto of the party when abridged was as under :
 “This Ghadar Party is a national party. Any Indian irrespective of religion can join it.....Ghadar Party is a revolutionary party.....This party is a stark enemy of the rule of the Britishers.....This national party is a party of rural peasants and workers.....This is not the party of *Rājās* and *Mahārājās*, *Rai Bhādurs*, *Saradars*, *Rais* and *Khān Sāhibs*.....This is a democratic party.”²³

It was need of the hour to remove misunderstandings cropped up, in the course of time, as regard to the mission of the Ghadar Party. The manifesto of the Ghadar Party reproduced above was in the form of a letter of Lālā Hardyal that was read out in one of the meetings. The purpose of the letter was to instil mutual trust among all shades of Indians. It was in this very meeting that one of the *Paṭhān* expressed his views as following.

“.....We were of the view that one time the Britishers had robbed the Sikhs of their kingdom and now the Sikhs are trying to get back their kingdom. But, after going through *Ghadar* and attending some of the meetings we are convinced about the common cause. We are *Paṭhāns* and shall always be with you (in the present struggle)”²¹

It is the fear that invariably comes in the way of struggle for the freedom of the country. This is why that the fearlessness was emphasized as an integral part of the manifesto of the Ghadar Party. Lālā Hardyal in one of his address, openly, worked out the anatomy of fear and stated, that :

“Fear and slavery are akin to each other. It is fear that has made us dumb, deaf and lifeless.....It is the fear that rules over India.....the Pandit..... religious preachers,.....the Journalists,..... Leaders, Poets,.....Intellectuals,.....all are frightened Souls,the fear of government is fatal.....In order to be alive within and integrated, the foremost requisite condition is to throw off the fear of government..... Then one feels awakened.....”²⁵.

Kartār Singh Sarābhā, the prestige of Ghadar Movement, was the embodiment of fearlessness.

Bābā Harī Singh Usmān firstly joined Ghadar Movement

and fought for the freedom of the country, beyond his capacity. Later on, taking his sons alongwith him, he joined Azād Hind Army.

At last, that time also came. India was divided in to two parts. Bābā Hari Singh Usmān returned to his country after forty years of his exile. He was carrying in his bag the copy of *Heer Warish Shahi* and a note book the poems from *Ghadar Goonj* written on it. Bābā Usmān was telling his co-patriots Pyaroo and Meero, that "he met number of leaders. He made an assesment of the general condition of the people. He formed an opinion that unless the worker and labourer is able to decide about his future course of action himself and implement the decisions taken in the interest of working class, his fruits of labour would go to the parasites. Unless and untill the working class does not throw off the yoke of parasites there won't be peace in the world."²⁶ On hearing Bābā Usmān, Pyaroo too had an urge to express his feelings and told that, "to me this country seems to be a foreign land. Neither we have our home, nor place to live."²⁷ Pyaroo, it appears, has lost sense of belonging to the country. Again, Bābā Usmān expressed himself, saying "Pyaroo ! listen ! we were born in this land. We went abroad and visited many countries, firstly to earn our livelihood and then fighting for the freedom of our country. And, now, no body recognizes us, no body takes our notice..... I am occupied with only one feeling that my mother-country seems to be some foreign land and I am an alien in my own country"..... "I am trying to understand the modes of exploitation of the workers engineered by the organized capitalist sector and planning to, once again, jump in to the struggle for freedom."²⁸

Kesar Singh's writing here comes to an end. And, it is for Babā Usmān the beginning for a new movement.

... ..

It is a problem of freedom. At one time, it was the problem of freedom of the country. The people belonging to slave country had no reason to command any respect. An equal treatment was a far cry. Due labour, Oh no ! There was hardly anything else available to them except humiliation. The freedom of the country was, now, must. There was no alternative other than turning the Britishers out of the country. The Britishers, no doubt, left our country and we got free from their yokes. Now, it is our home-rule. What is wrong, now Why do we ask for revolution ? Have our own people betrayed us ? Have they cheated us ? Yes ! the rulers have only changed their names. The rule is still in the hands of 'others'. Well ! who are these others ? Where from have they come ? The 'others' have not come from out side. They were there at home itself and pretending as Sufferers. After all, what is their identity ? Who else ? The same junk of capitalists !, organized capitalists !

Hardly few days ago the country had got freedom. And, now, every thing was clear. The capitalist was there like a *Jin* or *devil* to ask for his right. It appeared that from every nook and corner of the country, there were voices recommending for him, his share from the *booty*. The result was the same. 'No shelter, no home'. But, one thing. Had we not desired for freedom from the Britishers ? Yes, we only wanted that much, and willingly suffered for that. The Britishers left India. We got what we wanted. Now, what is this anxiety ? Did we ask wrongly ? No, we had asked for freedom from the Britishers. But, along with that we had also dreamed of some thing more. Those dreams are not likely to be materialised. There is hardly anything like our own rule, hardly any sign of that. Nothing is our own. Even our own dear Bhārat looks like a foreign

land. What is this freedom ? When there is no likelihood of our dreams to be materialised. This is why there is gloominess. We feel like aliens. Aliens are always anxious to return to their home land. But, brother ! we have already returned to homeland. No, still we have to return to our country. We have to build up our country— Our India—with our own hands. The rest of the life has to be spent to fulfill this dream. One round of talk with Bābā Usmān is over.

We began with talking about dreams linked up with freedom of the country. Who made us to dream like that ? The maltreatment of the Britishers was the sole cause for the *Ghadarites* to dream like that. But, this was only a stage. It is not by virtue of *Ghadarites* alone, that we got freedom. The movement of freedom took a shape at very high level. You were in a foreign country. The movement of freedom was in fact in the hands of national bourgeoisie. This much only we know that national bourgeoisie continued to preach only one thing that the Britishers alone were responsible for all our plight. The only way out, they talked about, was to get rid of the British Masters. Brother Usmān ! You tell me that why the national bourgeoisie should have told us the truth? This was not in their interest. And, at the same time, the national bourgeoisie was to take over the charge of the country. You know, that exactly it happened. To get the people rid of from humiliation, within the frame work of prevailing system, would only remain a dream never to be materialised. I have seen all that and what you say is true. I have talked to the leaders (of the people). But, I fail to understand about the 'design' of the national bourgeoisie. Now listen ! It is very peculiar in our political structure that our ruling class is not the ruling party. How ? Bharati bourgeoisie is the ruling class that was known at one time as Indian national bourgeoisie. What is

this distinction between Bhārti and Indian national bourgeoisie ? There is a distinction. When India was divided into two, Indian bourgeoisie was also cut in to two—Bhārti and Pakistani. Perhaps, you don't know that the first article of Indian constitution reads : 'India, that is Bhārat, shall be a union of states'.

Let me, here make one thing more clear to you. Didn't you fight against the Britishers for the freedom of the country, jointly with Muslims ? There is hardly any doubt about it. It is quite true. Have you ever given thought to it that why India was divided ? It happened like that. Indian bourgeoisie has developed on communal lines. The British Master was the master of Indian cultural heritage. He discovered from his study of Indian culture that Indians could be kept segregated when made to fight against one another on communal grounds. The Britisher successfully availed of his knowledge of Indian heritage. So, in brief, the division of the country was in the interest of bourgeois prompted by communal considerations.

Bhā ! [Brother !] we were talking about the ruling party. Yes ! since the times of Nehru, Bhāratī bourgeoisie has been the ruling class, but it never joined the ruling party, directly. What is the use of it ? His 'stooges' are doing that job. Moreover, bourgeois is not interested in holding power, temporarily, which continues to cause anxiety of losing it. They are quite consistent in their attitude towards life and they only long for power that consists permanently. This is only possible if the social system continues to be as it is. In other words if *status quo* is maintained, endlessly. When someone looks at the system with eyes full of anger and hatred, they would try to bring him round or tempt him paying as much as required and, dissuade him from his designs of destroying their 'empire'. If this fails to work they would try to get him eliminated through

his own people. They are very cruel. My friend ! politics is their past-time. Leaders play their games. Money and more money is their only ambition.

Right ! money and more money is the goal of life of bourgeoisie. The white and Indian workers came into conflict with each other because of economic interests. The unions of labourers in independent India, also operate prompted by economic considerations. The policies of unions of labourers in India are based exclusively to serve their economic interests. Usmān, my brother! your analysis is absolutely faultless. I think, that disease and remedy both lie at one and the same place. How ? We need to transform the motivations of the unions of the labourers. Need to transform the motivations ? I don't understand. Alright, let me explain it to you. If you recall, once you had to face the white workers and at the demand of leader of the white workers, you strongly reacted and told him that, "First, you put a demand before the employers to raise our wages, then we shall also join you in strike."²⁹ Yes, it comes to my mind. But, Bhā ! who told you about that? None else but Giani Kesar Singh. He has also told many more things about you. Be patient ! and listen carefully. The crux of the struggle is asking for the enhancement of the wages. What, after all you had asked for ? Only few more chips ! Look ! Bhā Sobti, you are being unfair to me. To ask for more wages is not a sin. Yes, apparently it is not a sin. But, if you go deeper it comes to the same thing. How do you define sin ? Slavery or bondage is another name of sin. Alright, I accept your definition of sin. What next ? It serves the interest of bourgeois, if, time and again, the workers put their demand for the increase of wages. So that, he continues to be on the wrong track. Wrong track, but how ? On the wrong track, my brother ! from the point of view of the bourgeoisie. It is the wish of the bourgeoisie that, let the worker involve himself in

the spider's web of demanding more and more wages. This is why the worker happens to continue to be the cog in the machine that serves the interests of bourgeoisie. This way the innocent workers help in the longevity of the bourgeois culture.

But, we have been always fighting against mill-owners. How could we be helpful in their longevity ? The bourgeoisie is afraid of only one thing that workers might not change their standpoint. I fail to understand, what you say, Let me make you understand. But, tell me one thing. Ask ? Can you defeat the designs of the bourgeoisie while operating at economic level ? Why not, have we not defeated the bourgeoisie ? Who can be equal to us in making the mill-owners miserable ? We can keep the milles closed if we so desire. Oh my misguided friend ! you are very innocent !! When the mills stop to function whose loss it would be ? Any how, let us come to our own point. There is a way to defeat the designs of the bourgeoisie. That way is to bring about change in the standpoint of the labourers. I have already told you that bourgeoisie is scared of only one thing that the labourers might not switch over to the standpoint leading to freedom. The bourgeoisie is too willing to meet any demand of the workers other than the demand for freedom. It is this demand alone, of the workers that can prove last nail in the coffin of bourgeoisie.

Freedom means to refuse to become the means of material production and to be the centre of life. Man claims to be the proud achievement of the universe, but behaves contrarily to its status in the scheme of the universe. How is it brother Usmān ! that there is a sudden appeprance of grace and glory on your face ? A little earlier you were looking very sad and gloomy, complaining, that "here no body takes our noticealways occupied with certain problemMother country looking like a foreign land...feeling an alien in

one's own country.....''³⁰ No, Sobti bhā ! one thing more. I have also been trying to understand the designs of the organized capitatists to exploit the workers and planning to, once again, jump in to the struggle for freedom. Now, I understand the evil designs of the capitalists. There is a change in my outlook. What you have told seems to be absolutely correct, but let us see its results when put in to practice.

Let there be no illusion about it, any more. If you think that this fight is going to come to an end so soon and you are going to be victorious, then, my friend ! you are under illusion. The foremost important task is to put, the workers of the whole world, on right track. The immediate need is to bring about a change in their ideological outlook. This is not so simple. In the absence of overhauling of the mental make-up of the workers the struggle is very likely to prove to be futile and fatal. If the change in ideological outlook is effected, then you can be sure of victory. Earlier also you people sacrificed your personal interests. This is another matter that those sacrifices, ultimatly, served the interests of the bourgeoisie. Now, it is time to make, your own 'future', May I ask you one thing ? Why have you been carrying *Heer Waris Shah* in your bag, after you returned from forty years of exile, to your country ? You are right. When, Heer, in the style of *Khyāl Pātsaahi Das*, was condemning living with *khairā* in preference to (Rānjhā), the *yaar*, she was only prefering 'way of life' to 'status in life.' That 'way of life' which has *Ishq* as its fulcrum. There is no emancipation except through *Ishq*. When man's mind, words and actions are guided by *Ishq* then man ceases to be humble or non-entity. He becomes competent enough to fight against any relation hostile to *Ishq*. He moves on the Path of Freedom.

Sobti bhā ! tell me one thing, would you give your support in this struggle for just cause? Bābā Usmān's eyes were wet with tears.

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NIRANJAN TASNEEM :
COMMUNAL PREJUDICE—A CASE STUDY

Niranjan Tasneem begins his novel, *Jadon Saver Hoi* (1977), introducing the Sikh-Family. Let me begin with analysing the anguish of the Muslim-Family. The Muslim-Family comprises of Salmā's old mother, her brothers Sadeeq and Jamāl and Salmā's sister-in law. But, I am tempted to give it a name as Salmā's Family, for the simple reason, that the sense of pride, we shall be talking about, at length is so dear to Salmā that, one day, when Bīri washed his face, while at Salmā's home, itself, with their towel, Salmā told her sarcastically that :

“Now, go and wash it too.....”

“But, why ?”.....

“Because.....you (people) just throw away a thing when touched by us, then, why should we use a thing touched by you (people) ?”

“But, I.....”

“You are also like one of them.”

“I am not at all, like one of them, Salmā !”

“Alright, would you take tea (prepared by us) ?”

“Tea.....Teano. I don't take tea.”

“Alright. if not tea, take something else. Should I serve you with *Satū* ?”

“No, tea will do, but very little.”¹

Biri, while describing this incident, adds that there were drops of perspiration on his forehead.²

Biri describes number of incidents which underline the dominant of prejudice against the Muslims. While

referring to workers, working at his father's shop, dealing in *Silmā-Sitārā*, Biri tells, that :

"These workers were, mostly, Sikhs and Muslims. There used to be a *surahi* or pitcher and a *loṭā* or tumbler, placed at one *khūnje* or corner, exclusively for the use of Muslims."³

Now, just look at the expressions, 'a *loṭā* was placed in one *khūnje*. How much contempt is there in the word *Khūnje* The reference is not simply to *loṭā*, rather, it hints at the (social) position of Muslims. Apart from described in words the prejudice also reflects in day to day living. *Salmā* is there at Biri's home. *Śikanjvi* or lemon-water is to be served to *Salmā*. Biri and his mother are discussing it as an issue :

"Why to use this glass" ? mother was little agitated.

"She says it is too much (in quantity)".

"Tell her, that take as much as you want, and leave the rest of it."

"Let me take half of it, because, she already says it is too much."

"But, mind it, you should n't take from the same glass."

"Can't he use that glass ?"

"That glass I have kept exclusively, for (the use of) these people."

"These people.....?"⁴

The important thing is not towel, taking tea or tumbler or glass, the under current is (communal) prejudice. This kind of prejudice, firstly, takes the form of *crack* then it is multiplied in to *cracks*. It is this prejudice prompted by *cracks* that leads to irrevocable *divisions*. The *divisions* my affect either the hearts or country. Biri's mother had kept a separate glass for those

whom she considered to be *outsiders*. The 'separate one' had their separate country.

This very prejudice against the Muslims, in course of time ceases to be a personal prejudice and gradually takes the form of prejudice against community, highly irritating for the Muslims. Salmā is taught by Madam Sheerin, her English teacher at College, that Hindus and Sikhs enjoy their life at the cost of the Muslims.³ Once, Salmā expressed her similar feelings to Bīri to which the latter did not respond favourably and told her, that :

"The Muslims too enjoy life."

"Very few, as many as Hindus and Sikhs work."

"Why do you always think like that ?"

"Then, how should I.....?"

"Some persons exploit some other persons, and not that Hindus are exploiting the Muslims".

"It means the same thing. Those who are (actually) exploited are Muslims."

"Not always....."

"Always"⁵

When Bīri was refuting the charge of Salmā that exploited ones are not always only Muslims, may be, that he was anticipating his own fateful tomorrow. Since, the likelihood of being discriminated against is linked up with belonging to a minority. The fact of belonging to a minority is a constant source of disturbance for Salmā. She asks Bīri :

"What for are you fighting ?"

"For freedom."

"Whose freedom ? Hindu's freedom or Muslim's freedom. ?"

“For all, for whole of India.”

“When, out of one hundred, eighty or eighty five belong to one community then, how this freedom means freedom for all ?”

“No, no Salmā why don’t you realize that we are one. *Hindustani*.....One land, one language and one culture.”

“But, your God is different from that of ours.”⁶

Biri is trying hard to convince Salmā of their common cause. Any how, Salmā this time did not use the expression Sikh alongwith the word Hindu. She only asked, whose freedom? for Hindus or for Muslims. May be, that Salmā asked this question taking Hindus and Sikhs as one nation. Or perhaps, Tasneem the novelist, wanted her to hint at some other (future) possibility. The discussion between Biri and Salmā is taking place at Amritsar. The city of Amritsar, that formed the part of Panjab before 1947, continues to be in Panjab after 1947 and on this day, as well, is part of Panjab. Not only that there is mere a reference to a common cultural heritage, rather, it is being put forth as an argument in favour of national unity. And, one who is pleading for that is none else but ‘our own’ Biri. How much, after all, is there an affinity between Salma’s Family and Indian culture ? Let us not discuss this point, at the moment. But, who can deny that not only the Hindus and the Sikhs worship one and the same God, but till this day, there continues to be intermarrying and interdinning between the two. Despite the fact, Salmā’s psyche injured at the instance of communal prejudice, seems to have slipped, unfortunately, like a thorn, into the Sikh-psyche.

We talk of humanity. We just talk and it hardly costs. But the hard fact is that many people have only their mouths and it is the tongue of the ruler that speaks through them. To be humane is not that simple an affair. It is difficult task.

Every person as individual is simple and therefore human, too. But, when he behaves as a part of crowd he is absolutely a different being. He thinks and lives under the dictates of collective consciousness. Even when he falls in love he keeps the community/sect in mind. This is how Salmā analyses the love-relation and shares her views with Biri. She asks Biri :

“Can you love Rajni ?” [Usually a name of Hindu girl].

“Why not, why one can not love Rajni ?”

“One can, but how a Sikh can fall in love with a Hindu girl ?”

“What are you talking, Salmā ? Love is a great thing and it does not confine itself to a certain religion or community.”

“Love, what is love, after all tell me ?”

“Salmā ! you know I don't love any Rajni, I love you only.”

“Alright, then don't come here. Keep your love unto yourself, keep intact for same Rajni, no, for some Raminder or Surinder”.⁷

If we subscribe to Salma's view then Biri can fall in love with only Raminder or Surinder, meaning thereby some Sikh girl, alone. The important thing is not that of falling in love, rather, it is an indicator of Salmā's state of mind. And, our state of mind is not altogether different from that of her. So, Biri can only dream of some Raminder or Surinder and not of any Rajni. This is not the law of nature; it is our decision. Who are we ? We are ! Actually, it is only 'we' that are. 'We' means heritage, whose roots are in the remote past. And, consequent upon that, that they are deep down (in our unconscious). Let us not forget, that depth is the result of length of period. This is why we can not help in determining Biri's

dream of love. One thing is repeatedly said in favour of India, that none other than this sub-continent, ever *produced* as many as twenty four *tirthankāras*, twenty four Buddhas, ten Gurūs of the Sikhs and host of Seers, Saints, and *Sūfi fakirs*. But why ? for the simple reason that there is so much *poison* in its soil that we need equal amount of efforts to do away with it. Again, *poison* too is not of one or two varieties that we may successfully fight against it. In producing *poison* and spreading it, its soil and the people have no equal in the entire civilized world. And, we also know, that whenever 'good people' were in trouble some great soul appeared on the face of Indian sub-continent. Let us see and wait for the Great Being. May be, that he comes in the form of *avātāra* or a revolutionary or two in one.

When people feel miserable, and they do feel like that. Actually, when they deeply realize that they are miserable and utterly helpless, only then they take up a task to fighting for their freedom. During the British regime, all Indians, comprising of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, jointly fought for freedom against British Imperialism. Later on, Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinhā realised that this way they would get rid of only kind of domination. An idea of getting rid of two kinds of slavery or domination, came to him, rather, very timely. Mr. Jinhā followed a different path. He outrightly rejected One-Nation-Theory and took alongwith him the people of his community to give a practical shape to his Two-Nation-Theory. You can not succeed without taking people in to confidence. We, very well know, the fate of Ghadar Movement of 1914-15. Salmā, in order to put Mr. Jinhā's Two-Nation-Theory, in to practice held the flag of Pakistan in her hands and then one hears a slogan. "Qaid-e-Āzādī.....Zindābad ... We must have Pakistan.....(you) shall have to give (us) Pakistan."

Salmā not only held a flag in her hands, she also took a solemn pledge. Her pledge bore a fruit. And, it is always result of a struggle. Indians offered their heads in the struggle for freedom of the country. When, those demanding for Pakistan fought, got Pākistan. The rest of Indians, as a result, got Bharat. The people sacrificed their lives, with a hope that their kith and kin, atleast, would live in their 'own homeland'. One's growth is possible only, when one lives in one's own homeland.

We have referred to kith and kin i.e, future generation. When we think about generations our imagination is instantly switched over to Bīri's grand-father whom he calls *Bhāiyā Ji*. *Bhāiyā Ji* being a grand-father, naturally belongs to old generation. Which old one? Old from that generation which was fighting for the freedom of the country. *Bhāiyā Ji* could never imagine that *Angrez* one day must leave India. *Bhāiyā Ji* in fact, was one of those people who were afraid of living as a free-beings. These people feel secure while living as slaves. In other words, they develop a taste for slavery. Besides that *Bhāiyā Ji* belonged to that group of species who would lick the soles of ruler of the time. Again, *Bhāiyā Ji* had also known from the people that the *Angrez* were ruling over India by the virtue of blessings of the Sikh Gurūs. Therefore, how could it be possible to sack them out from *Hindustan*. It was *Angrez* who had concocted the stories of 'blessings of the Sikh Gurus'. But this fact continued to remain a secret for innocent people like *Bhāiyā Ji*. And, we all know that the ruler was uprooted. It happened against the wishes of men like *Bhāiyā Ji*. But, it was in accordance with the wishes of Salmā. And, it did happen and also did not, as Bīri had desired. Bīri fought for the freedom of *Hindustan* as defined at that time. One thing certainly happened that *Angrez* left India. You may only say that, yes, *Angrez* left. We had also thought that 'many other

things' would also leave alongwith them. But, 'all that' is intact till this day. Rather, all that was lying hidden under the dust of times, has come up.

Then, Pakistan, geographically came into existence. Apart from the fact that both the *Shairs* and *Kavis* read their progressive poems, with full voice, at poetic symposiums organized at Lahore and Amritsar.⁹ Just singing of songs of (harmony) won't do. Yes, it does help sometimes. Bābā Nānak realized God through singing and Sang in his praise, for the rest of his life. We have yet to learn to sing like Bābā Nānak. We can not, till we are communal, inside. Communalism may be that of majority or of minority, it is after all communalism. One thing is clear that it is *by the grace of* majority communalism alone that minority communalism takes its own course.

Salmā's-Family, somehow, after undergoing host of miseries, arrived at Lahore. It was only country that was partitioned. Links of Salma's-Family with that of Bīri's-Family were still in intact. Affinity of hearts continued to exist. Despite the partitioning of the country, some people on both sides continued to have warmth for each other. This is what, exactly, Tasneem the novelist, wants to bring in to light. The affinity lies in common cultural heritage, which includes. at least the language. We the Panjabis, today, have abused the affinity of language. May be, that we did so at the instance of 'others'. But, history has indicated us, alone, of such a grave *misconduct*, never thought of likely to be committed by the Sons of the Soil, themselves.

... ..

Biri took his *Bhāiyā Ji* alongwith him to meet Salmā's-Family at the *Vāghā-border*. Salmā, her old mother and her brother Jamāl, came from the other side of the border. Both the

families meet at the border. *Bhāiyā Ji* hands over the *trunk* of Buddhan—Salmā's mother—to her. And, at that very moment, *Bhāiyā Ji* saying, "take these [as a gift] for the marriage of Salmā", gave her a pair of golden ear-rings wrapped in red kite-paper. And Salmā was asking Biri :

"When are you coming ?"

"Where?"

"To (meet) us, to see our *des*".

"your *des* (country) ? Salmā !"

"Yes. Biri....."¹⁰

Tasneem tells us, that, Salmā, cleaned the drop of blood very carefully (that came out of Biri's finger, when Salmā's glass bangle broke and it pierced in to Biri's finger), as if she was cleaning a very deep wound, and said :

"Yes, Our *des*."¹¹

Tasneem only *seems* to conclude his novel, here.

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INDEX

A

- Ajit Kaur, 69, 70, 74, 76
 Akbar the Great 75
 Alienation 33
 Amritsar 2, 99, 103
Angrez 102
 'An Oriental bastard', 82
 Apartheid, 82, 83, 86
Arđhanārīśvara 74
 Aristotle 29
 Asian 82
 Aurangzeb, Emperor 5, 6
Avatara 101
 Azad Hind Army 86, 88

B

- Bhārat* 80, 91, 102
Bijay Singh 1
 Bisexuality 75
 'Blessings of British Regime'. 7
Brahmā 74, 75
 British Army Commission 5
 British Crown 1, 4, 6, 7
 British Govt 4
 Britishers 86, 87, 89-91
 British Imperialism 101
 British Masters 8, 90-91
 'British Present' 5
 British regime 5, 7, 101
 British Rule 5, 7, 8
 Bourgeois culture 35, 54, 93
 Bourgeois relations 24, 46, 52
 Bourgeoisie 91-94

- Bourgeoisie, *Bhāratī* 90-91
 Bourgeoisie, Indian 91
 Bourgeoisie, Indian National
 90, 91
 Bourgeoisie, nail in the Coffin
 of 93
 Bourgeoisie, National 90
 Buddhas, twenty-four 101

C

- Canadian Pacific Railways 24
 80
 Capitalists 89, 94
 Caste 64, 67, 68;—distinction
 64, 66; Caste-System 49,
 50
 Chinese 80, 81, 85
 Christ 82, 83
 Christians 83, 101
 Christ on the Cross 83
 Class-Character 30, Class-
 Consciousness 22, 49, Class-
 Society 18, 49
 Collective Consciousness 100
 Communal Considerations 91;
 Communal grounds 91,
 Communal prejudice 96-99
 Communalism majority/
 minority 103
 Counterpoise of natives against
 natives 5
 Cultural heritage 1

D

- Dealienation 36
 Dialectical relation 22, 23

Domestic bliss 12, 70

Duggal, Kartar Singh 39, 44

E

Elliot and Dawson 4, 5

Europeans 25

F

Fanaticism, religious 86

Feudal culture 54, Feudal lords

48, 49; Feudal mode of

living 46; Feudal relations

46, 52, 53; Feudal structure

49; Feudal System 48

Feudalism, Fall of 54

Folk-tradition, 11. 16-18

Four Sikh Students 2

Freedom 33-36, 57, 74, 80,

84, 88-90, 93, 94, 98, 99,

101

Freedom movement 20

Freedom of country 28, 80, 83,

84, 86-91, 102

Freedom of Woman 70

Freedom, Path of 94

Freud, Sigmund 75

G

Ghadar 20, 23-25, 27, 28, 30,

86, 87

Ghadar Goonj 24, 88

Ghadarites 26, 90

Ghadar Movement 87, 101

Ghadar Party 86, 87

God 43, 44, 56, 57, 62, 75,

99, 103

Gurdial Singh 46, 48

Gurdwara, Sikh 84, 85

Guru Gobind Singh 6, 84

Gurūs of the Sikhs, Ten 101

H

Hardyal, Lālā 25, 29, 83, 86,

87

Heer waris Shah 88, 94

Heritage, Cultural 99, 103

Hind Pacific Association 86

Hindu 2, 3, 98-101

Hindustan 102

Hindustani 99

Historical crisis 20, 21, historical

document 22, historical

epoch 20-22; historical

facts, 22, 26; historical

illusions 21, 22, historical

objectivity, 20; historical

picture 21, 22, 26;

historical process, 39,

historical movement 20-

23, 26, historical necessities,

21; historical novel,

20, 21, 23, 26, 29, 30,

historical realism 21, 29;

historical scene, 23, 25;

historical truth 23

Home-land 90, 102

Home-Rule 89

I

India 88, 89, 92, 99, 102

Indian 24, 25, 80-86, 91, 92,

101, 102

Indian Constitution, 91

Indian culture 99

Indian Cultural heritage 91

Indian heritage 91

Indian history 4

'Indian Past

Indian Sub-Continent 101

'Inq̣lab zindabad' 80

Ishq 13, 15, 17, 18, 37, 64, 67,
68, 94

J

Japanese 80-82

Jāt 54, 64, 65; *Jāṭki Shān* 64

Jeet, Gurmukh Singh 69

Jinhā, Muhammad Ali 101

K

Kāma gātā Marū 82

Kanwal, Jaswant Singh 64-67

Kesar Singh, Giāni 81, 82, 89,
92

Khalsa 6; Khalsa Diwan
Society, 86; Khalsa

Samāchār (weekly) 7

Khushwant Singh 80

Khyāl Pātshāhi Das 94

Krishna, Lord 75

L

Lahore 103

Laila-Majnu 18,

Loneliness 41, 71-74, 76, 77

Lorca, F. Gracia 62

Love tales 11, 16-18

Loyalty to British Crown 7

Loyalty to Govt. 6

M

Macauliffe, Max Arthur 5, 6

Mahtvera 75

Marx, Karl 33, 48, 49

Mimesis 29

Minority 98

Mirzā (Sahiban) 44

Missionary 1, 2

Mission High School, Amritsar

Studies in Panjabi Fiction

Missionary Zeal 2

Monogamy 57, 59, 60

Mother-Country 93

Muslim 4, 91, 96-99, 101

Muslim-Family 96

Muslim Ruler 4

N

Najmulghani, Muhammad 4

Nānak, Guru 6, 33, 75, 103

Nānak Singh 20, 23, 25-28,
30

National unity 99

Nehru, Jawhar Lal 91

Nizami, khaliq Ahmed 5

O

One-Nation-Theory 101

P

Pakistan 44, 101-103

Pakistan, flag of 101

Pakistan Zindabad 44

Panjab 46, 64 68, 99

Panjabis 103

Panchayati Raj 85

Partition of the Country 44

Pascific Coast khalsa Diwan
Society 86

Personal Rule 85

Philosophy of Love 10-15

Prajapatis 74

Prem Singh 70

PreetLaṛi, Gurbaksh Singh
10-12, 14-18

Pritam, Amrita 32, 37

Private ownership 57

Private property 57, 59

Productions, means of 29

Promiscuous relations 58

- Punn Dā Saak* (marriage without Consideration), 49, 50
Pyār 10, 13, 15
Pyār Qabzā Nahin Pehchān Hai 10
- R**
- Rādhā* 75
Raghuvir Dyal 86
Rānjhā 37, 58, 94
Ranjit Singh, Mahārājā 8
Red-flag 85
Revolution 1, 13, 62, 80, 89
Revolutionary 101; *Revolutionary Contents* 1: *Counter-Revolutionary* 30, *Revolutionary literature* 30
Revolutionary Party 86
Ruler 99
Ruler of the time 102
Ruling class 39, 49, 59, 90
Ruling Party 90, 91
- S**
- Sādhū Singh* 69
Sakhi-Sampradaya 75
Sandhawālīā, Thakur Singh 2
San Satāwan, 3
Sarābhā, Kartar Singh, 23, 25, 28 29, 86, 87
Satwant Kaur, 1
Sassi-Punnu, 14, 44
Sheerin Frahād 14, 18
Sikhs 2, 3, 87, 97-101
Sikh Gurūs, 5-7, 84; *Sikh Gurus, Blessings of the*, 84, 102
Sikh-Faith 2
Sikh-Psyche 99
- Sikh Religion* 5
Sūfi-fakirs 101
Swami Hari Dass (of Mathura), 75
Sikh Religion The 5
Sikh-Sentiments 2
Sikh-Society, 2, 8
Sikh-world 5
Sikh-writers 6
Singh Sabhā 7
Siris, (bonded labourers), 47, 50; *Siri-Family* 49, 52, 53
Siva 74; *Śivapurāna* 74
Sohan Singh Bhakna 86
Sohṇi-Mahiwal 16
'Sprit of time', 22, 29
Sundari 1, 2
Sundar Lal, Pandit 3
- T**
- Tarikh-e-Awadh* 4
Tānena 74
Tasneem, Niranjana 96, 99, 103, 104
Teg Bhadur, Gurū 5
Tirthankāras, twenty-four 101
Tiwāṇa, Daleep Kaur 56, 62
Tradition, Sentic 18
Turks 2
Two-Nation-Theory 101
- U**
- Ugantra ashram* 25, 86
Uppal S. S. 69
- V**
- Vasal or Unison* 74, 76-78
Vir Singh, Bhāi 1-3, 7
- W**
- Wajid Ali Shah, Nawob*, 3, 4
- Y**

