

**TRAIN TO PAKISTAN – IN THE EYES OF LITERATURE
AND NATIONALISM**

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Abstract

Khushwant Singh was an Indian novelist, lawyer, journalist and politician. He was born in February 1915 and died on 20th March 2014. He studied law at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and King's college in London. He served as the editor of several literary and news magazines, as well as two newspapers. He got Padma Vidhushan in 2007. He also served in politics. He has contributed his literary works of art to the world of literature such as the short stories "The Mark of Vishnu, The Voice of God, The Portrait of a Lady, Success Mantra" and the novels such as "The History of Sikhs, I shall Not Hear the Nightingale, Train to Pakistan" and many more.

Keywords:- journalist, magazines, newspapers.....

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Tracing back to the history, the British government subjugated the country on the basis of religion to rule over us for a very longer period and which later resulted in the partition of India and Pakistan where it is that over two crores of people migrated to the new nation and vice versa. This partition caused the largest migration in human history. The outcome of this was negative and shattered the lives of common people. Politics played a pre – dominant role in creating such a scenario. The two major & rival political parties were struggling hard to gain the power to rule but its disastrous side effects were seen throughout India. The negative effects of partition such as the loss of humanity, brutality, cruelty, bloodshed were thriving. In the undivided Bengal and Punjab provinces and many other places also the two religions were counter attacking each other which led to a series of riots.

In reaction to this the author expressed his views to the happenings of those days in one of his 'Guest of Hour Talks'. "The beliefs that I had cherished all my life have ever shattered. I had believed in the innate goodness of the common man. The division of India

had been accompanied by the most savage massacres known in the history of the country..... I had believed that we Indians were peace loving and non violent that we were more concerned with the matters of the spirit..... After the experiences of the autumn of 1947, I could no longer subscribe to these views. I became an angry middle - aged man, who wanted to shout his disenchantment with the world. I decided to try my hand at writing. (Singh, *Guest of Hour Talk* 1964)

In this novel Khushwant Singh creates, a fictional village called “Mano Majra” situated near the banks of river Sutlej where the Sikh and Muslim community lived in harmony. He describes the routine life of villages in contrast with the changes that were taking place during the partition of the country.

He draws out many characters of different types in his novel. For example one of the characters representing the common man who is an uneducated and thinks,

“Freedom is for the educated people who fought for it. We were the slaves of English, now we will be the slaves of the educated Indians or the Pakistanis” (Page No : 52)

Ironically, what the uneducated thought was not true in case of an educated. As the character of Iqbal is depicted, though he is an educated and a social reformer he was arrested by the police and was imprisoned. This also highlights the failure of the institutions in punishing the innocent people. Khushwant Singh also shows the irrational behaviour of politicians as they divided the country on the basis of religion.

The partition between India and Pakistan resulted in the large scale migration, violence, brutality, cruelty and bloodshed. People were forcibly uprooted from their motherland. The communal harmony in the pre - partitioned India was depicted in a fictional village Mano Majra where Sikh and Muslim lived in harmony. But after the partition Muslims were advised to evacuate India and were invited to Pakistan. The politicians failed to understand that these people spent many generations in their homeland where they were emotionally tied but were advised to migrate to the new land

which was artificially created as a new nation on the basis of religion. This gave a disastrous result where many innocent souls lost their lives and lakhs of families were destroyed. Through the eyes of the magistrate Hukum Chand, Kushwant Singh picturizes this in his novel, the horrible destruction and bloodshed that took place in those days. The scenes witnessed by Hukum Chand are as follows.....

“The man holding his intestines, with an expression in his eyes which said ‘Look what I have got!’ There were women and children huddled in a corner, their eyes dilated with horror, their mouths still open as if their shrieks and just voiceless..... And all the nauseating smell of flesh, faeces and urine..... The most vivid picture was that of an old peasant with a long white beard; he did not look dead at all. He sat jammed between rolls of bedding on the upper rack meant for luggage, looking pensively at the scene below him.....”

In this way the loss of life stretched for a longer time. He even traces out the changes or disturbances in villagers routine life. When the Muslim community was called to vacate the place, Imam Baksh, the old-aged priest belonging to Muslim community convened a group and asked the opinion of the villagers. The villagers considering the latter's security suggested with great grief and sorrow to migrate to the newly born nation. They embraced their brothers and said good bye. The very next day the migrants were shifted to a refugee camp. A band of goons arrived in the village and sowed the seeds of revenge in the villagers mind. A few people supported the goons to kill the ongoing migrants until now whom they called their brothers and sisters.

At last, fortunately, the ongoing migrants were saved by Juggat Singh, a dacoit, who sacrifices his life to save his beloved Nooran who was also a member of the migrants and whose journey was through a train to Pakistan.

To conclude, Khushwant Singh has given the most disastrous picture of partition of the country but he failed to provide the political reasons. But his main motto of writing is

that to show the love has no limits of religion or the boundaries of the nation. Here Khushwant Singh shows the love of Juggat is beyond religion and nationality.

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