

Psychological Trauma in Shiv K. Kumar's *A River with Three Banks*

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Partition

In our recent history, the partition of India is one of the most traumatic experiences which disturbed the Indian soil and its social fabric as well. A terrible change was brought by the partition in the lives of the major religious communities, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. They had lived together very happily and also dreamed for the freedom but after the announcement of partition by Lord Mountbatten on 3rd of June 1947, the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs became enemies of each other and resulted in a sharp end to a long and communal shared history.

Keynotes

Partition, Psychological trauma, Turmoil, Butcheries and communal-discord.

Shiv K. Kumar was born in Lahore, Punjab, on 16th of August 1921. Shiv K. Kumar completed his B.A from Forman Christian College Punjab University Lahore, and also completed his M.A from the same University. Kumar joined D.A.V College

Lahore as a lecturer in 1943. But during partition of the Indian sub-continent into India and Pakistan, Kumar moved to Delhi. For Kumar, Partition is an experience that he lived and felt as he himself migrated from Lahore to Delhi in August 1947. Thus, in *A River with Three Banks* he looks back at the event after a gap of fifty years.

A scar or an injury that is caused in the body can be mended at some point or another; however what existed in the heart can never be cured. A man's psychological anguish will dependably wait once more as long as the individual is alive. Partition went with physical butcheries, enthusiastic turmoil, material misfortune and religious mistreatments. Individuals may have overlooked the physical and the material misfortune; even the religious monstrosities may have been wiped far from their recollections. In any case, the scar that was embedded in their souls is new even today. R. K. Agnihotri in his article "*On a Pre-Partition Partition: The Question of Hindu-Urdu*" sees, "Never in the history of

mankind had such a large-scale migration taken place in such a short time. What is worse is that this nightmarish experience of partition left such deep scars on the minds of Hindus and Muslims that they are nowhere close to healing even after 50 years” (29).

The novelist depicts a fine love story between Gautam Mehta and Haseena amidst the stressed days of partition. Shiv K. Kumar movingly recounts the sufferings faced by people due to the communal discord which erupted due to partition. Abdul Rahim’s pathetic hunt for his misplaced daughter and his coldhearted slaughter, Haseena’s ragged life in the prostitution, the affliction of innocent kidnapped girls, blameless people’s aching troubles, the evacuated life of Haseena’s mother and sister and the enormous immigration of the miserable Muslims to Pakistan are vividly presented in this novel. However Shiv K. Kumar’s *A River with Three Banks* is set in Delhi, Allahabad and its neighboring it reports the aching and disorder accomplished by the Muslims, at the same time the novelist presents some passing references to offences devoted by Muslim gang against the guiltless Hindus.

Abdul Rahim was an innocent Muslim of Allahabad. His daughter Haseena was abducted to Delhi by some pimps. He came to Delhi in search of his daughter. In Delhi he went through a lot of affliction. He frequently hides himself from the penetrating eyes of the Hindu extremists. The description of a Muslim storekeeper regarding the kidnapped girls traumatized and frightened Abdul Rahim. In *A River with Three Banks*, Shiv K. Kumar presents the content of the letter written by Abdul Rahim to his wife Sultana Begum:

This morning I talked to a Muslim shopkeeper in Urdu Bazaar, near Jama Masjid. I was shocked to learn that most of the girls abducted from Allahabad, Lucknow and Patna have been brought to Delhi, where they are forced into prostitution. O Allah! And, in this nefarious business, both Hindus and Muslims are operating as close accomplices. I shudder to think of our dear child (10).

Abdul Rahim’s letter undoubtedly illustrates the mental anguish he observed due to his daughter’s seizure. As a father, it was painful for him to know that his daughter was enforced into harlotry. He did

not understand how to protect his daughter from the abductors. He freighted to go out with beard, as it discovered his Muslim personality. Although a Muslim storekeeper assured to assist him to save his daughter through a huge sum of money, Abdul Rahim was not confident about his daughter being alive. While he was frantically wandering to locate his daughter, a frenzied gang trapped him in front of a church and unkindly killed him.

The pain through which Haseena undergo was many folded. She was a college student. When she went to college, she was kidnapped by a pimp from Allahabad to Delhi and she was enforced into harlotry. She endured terribly, each time when a man touched her in the bordello. She was psychologically broken for two causes-the first was her dishonorable life in the bordello; and the second was the slaughter of her adored father. Shiv K. Kumar's *A River with Three Banks* remarks her terrific thoughts shared to Gautam regarding her life in the bordello: "You took the trouble of writing to my mother. That was very gracious of you. The news would shatter her, I know, but still...And here I am in Delhi-abused, humiliated-and now so

brazened to any sense of shame" (79). Gautam with big complexity saved her from the bordello and securely left her in her house in Allahabad. Their life gradually bloomed into love. Haseena really loved Gautam; she frequently regretted that she could not come to Gautam as a virgin.

Women were the worst sufferers of partition catastrophe. They were physically distressed and mentally mortified. *A River with Three Banks* presents a few actions which detail the tortures suffered by women. A boy and a girl, who were going away to perceive their sick mother were trapped by a Muslim mob. They undressed the girl and publicly uncovered her nakedness. The well-timed advent of the police saved her from any additional mistreatment and mortification.

The mortification faced by young guiltless girls in a prostitution house near hotel Neel Kamal was heart-wrecking. A huge number of adolescent girls, who were kidnapped in India and Pakistan were carried to Delhi and were enforced into prostitution. Those who declined were physically abused with blaze and thrashings. Based on the information given by Gautam, The police searched the brothel. The police

killed Suleiman Ghani, the head of the brothel and released all the girls from the death cells. The exhilaration of the rescued girls was beyond words. Shiv K. Kumar in *A River with Three Banks* depicts like this, “Flock of caged birds, suddenly set free, they fluttered about the courtyard, happy and excited” (180). William Thornton, the police officer who saved them assured that they all would be taken securely to their homes almost immediately.

Haseena’s family had horrible reminiscences of the partition. Her family was nearly distressed and evacuated devoid of any identity. The first bang to the family came in the form of Haseena’s abduction and her being forced into prostitution. The next waft came in the form of her father’s brutal slaughter. The third distress was the miserable going away of Haseena’s Mother Sultana Begum and her sister Salma to an unidentified objective in Pakistan. They determined to depart Allahabad, as they were frightened that Salma may be kidnapped similar to Haseena. They believed that their life was safe in Pakistan than in India. Although, Haseena was safe under the care of Gautam, she misplaced all her roots. Haseena and Gautam

accompanied, Sultana begum and Salma to the international boundary to bid goodbye to them. Shiv K. Kumar’s *A River with Three Banks* presents Sultana Begum’s tear-filled separation, she expresses: “God willing, we’ll meet again” (213).

The railway stations were full of immigrants and there were numerous volunteers to assist them. Those volunteers were capable to take care of only their physical injuries but not their psychosomatic sufferings and miseries. As Gautam and Haseena rest watching the disappearance figures of Sultana Begum and Salma, they observed a huge number of people pouring into Pakistan. They were all exhausted and upset; every face had an agonizing woe to recount. Their only possessions were either a handbag or a suitcase. Tears rolled down from their eyes when they left their last foot impression from the country where they were born and grew up.

Conclusion

Shiv K. Kumar in his novel *A River with Three Banks* gives the psychological agony faced by a Muslim family. Abdul Rahim of Allahabad goes in search of his

abducted daughter Haseena. He and his family undergo a great mental agony. He is killed by a group of Hindu fanatics while he was searching for his daughter. This leaves the family to further ruin. Haseena too undergoes psychological torture when she is forced to become a prostitute

References

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