



## **Theme of Midnight's Children**

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**Abstract:** - The theme of the novel joins reality with the imagination of the novelist. Indeed the actual and the fancy move side by side. The events move around the exact time of independence of India and the protagonist also born at the same time. The theme of the novel is to exhibit the Indian society after independence and to focus on its various aspects. It is the story of the pain of the people. After independence there is a bloody partition of the country which makes people to kill each other mercilessly in the name of the religion. The protagonist of the novel, who is born along with India, considers himself to be the main centre of events. This novel is based on the memory of the protagonist who tries to remember some of the most important events of his life and then records them.

**Key Words** – Salman Rusdie, Midnight's children, theme, India, partition, novel, identity, religion, memory, history, Aadam Aziz, Kashmir.

### **Theme of Midnight's Children**

The theme of Midnight's children is the study of a character name Saleem Sinai and his various aspects – political, social, economical and spiritual ones discussed at length. The novel is written by an author who has undergone Diaspora and who is never at ease. When he makes connection with his native land for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time. This sense of displacement permeates through all the works of Rushdie but becomes clearly visible in Midnight's Children. India had faced division of land and people on the lines of religion and language and the bitterness of the partition can be felt everywhere. The novel creates a world based on facts and fiction. It is clear that the theme of the novel connects reality with the vision of the writer. The novel presents many events which happen almost at the same time. Infact the real and the unreal happens side-by-side. Saleem Sinai and independent India juxtapose each other. There is a continuous conflict in the life of the protagonist and he is torn within by the values of the society on one hand and the family on the other. The novel begins with the description of the birth of Saleem at the midnight of August 1947. Throughout his life he finds himself in one or the other situation. The novel is



beautiful portrayal of various currents that take birth in the minds of the characters. The novel describes the past of a country as seen by the writer who has left the country. The novel deals with the Indian society after independence, the relevance of independence for the common man and the life of Saleem Sinai. The novel describes three generations of a Kashmiri family. The world of Rushdie does not have any definition. In this world everybody is a victim of self-consciousness and Rushdie paints this picture in his novel.

The novel has three parts – the 1<sup>st</sup> part deals with the incidents happening from 1915 to 1947. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part describes the childhood of the protagonist and describes his journey from India to Pakistan where he is shown having been injured in a bomb explosion during the Indo-Pak war of 1965. The 3<sup>rd</sup> part portrays him as a man-dog used for trekking by the Pakistani army and ends on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1928. The main action revolves around the hour of independence of the India when the protagonist is born. In this way the protagonist becomes a metaphor for the Indian society after independence. Infact the novel draws its material equally from the memory and the fantasy of the writer but contains many incidents that are part of the Indian history. The writer knows that if politics is added to the subject matter, the reader will automatically be attracted to the theme of his work. The writer is seen taking sights of the downtrodden and oppressed sections of the society in order to get justice for these sections. *Midnight's Children* describes the Indian society that was carving for independence. It is another story that this concept of freedom turned out to be a myth because the happiness that is promised never actually happened. The nation was burning in communal fire. The theme of the novel is a portrayal of independent Indian society and focuses on the social-political and historical aspects of the society. It is a story of shattered dreams and lost hopes. The novel is also a search for the identity and individuality by the protagonist. He wonders why at all he came into this world?

The novel is a story of three generations of a Kashmiri family. The 1<sup>st</sup> generation is a very simple and unambitious type of man but the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations are progressively tougher and less contented. The ideological differences that exist between any two generations have been portrayed beautifully and convincingly. The Indian society under the British rule was a prosperous one if viewed superficially. They introduced many new things and modern amenities. The reason behind the introduction of social reforms in the society appears to be missionary rather than humanitarian. They succeeded in creating a false sense of pride in the new generation of educated people regarding their knowledge of English language and British manners. The Britishers married Indian women and produced children thereby giving birth to a hybrid, bastard culture. Even the protagonist is the son of a English father and Hindu mother. The novel is a story of the pains caused by transition. Independence brings along with it a bloody partition of the country, friends become foes; people kill each other mercilessly in the name of religion. In this way everybody had to experience this pain of transition. The protagonist comes into this world from the womb of a mother, passes children to become adolescent then to youth and then



adulthood. In the same way India takes birth in the midnight of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947 and through many stages.

The transition from one stage to the other both in the lives of the protagonist of the novel and India is a painful process. This pain is experienced by everyone concerned and this experience of pain is an unforgettable one. The writer tries to project a very striking reality of our life. He hints that people and events leak into each other. We are unable to trace the reasons of many motives of our actions. We fail to understand from where certain streaks of eccentricity leak into our being without our being aware of their arrival or presence. The novel contains episodes of such eccentric behaviour. The writer deals with the problem of identity in the novel. We are always conscious of it and our actions try to establish an identity of our own. The writer concludes that the concept of identity is a false notion and a person is at times bade by circumstances and external forces to mould or modify or kill his real identity. In spite of this fact the writer shows the presence of a strong urge in a man to retain his personal and national identity. Saleem Sinai the protagonist of the novel narrates the events of his life in 1<sup>st</sup> person. He is born along with India and whimsically considers himself to be the prime mover of things. It is only when he spent 30 years of his life that a painful reality dances upon him and it was not he who guided or decided the destiny of India by being the prime mover of things but it was he to whom things have been done.

A cursory reading of the novel may lead you to conclude that it is a novel based on memory which has a protagonist who strains his memory to remember some of the most important events of his life and then records them. Rushdie tries to cover some of the most important place from the Indian sub-continent. The action of the novel takes place in Srinagar, Amritsar, Agra, Delhi, Bombay and Karachi. A type of life that is led at these places is portrayed in detail. We find beautiful description of Kashmir valley with the Dal and Nageen lakes, Shikaras, Temples and Mosques. Aadam Aziz who studied medicine at Heidelberg for five years is unable to adjust himself with the life that is led in the Kashmir valley. One day he hurts his extraordinarily long nose while offering Nammaz and decides not to bow before any god or man from that day onwards. There is a boatman, a very dirty and foul smelling old man named Tai who takes his doctor to a female patient Naseem who would become the wife of the doctor in future for a medical check-up. Naseem and Dr. Aziz are poles apart the former is an orthodox daughter of orthodox parents and the later is an enlightened and free person. Aadam Aziz tries to convert this girl to his way of thinking but fails miserably. They reach Agra via Amritsar in the year 1919 where Naseem gives birth to three daughters namely Alia, Mumtaz, Emerald and a son Hanif. Mumtaz is a dark complexioned. There is a leader of Muslim league, called Humingbird, who is murdered by some unidentified assailants. His aide Nadir Khan who is present at the time of murder runs away from the scene and takes shelter in the underground cellar in the house of Dr. Adam Aziz.



The theme of *Midnight's Children* is the study of a character name Saleem Sinai and his various aspects. The theme of the novel connects reality with the vision of the writer. Infact the real and the unreal happens side-by-side. The main action revolves around the hour of independence of India when the protagonist is born. The theme of the novel is a portrayal of independent Indian society and focuses on the social-political and the historical aspects of the society. The novel is the story of the pains caused by transition. Independence brings along with it a bloody partition of the country, friends become foes; people kill each other mercilessly in the name of religion. The writer deals with the problem of identity in the novel. Saleem Sinai the protagonist of the novel narrates the events of his life in 1<sup>st</sup> person. He is born along with India and whimsically considers himself to be the prime mover of things. A cursory reading of the novel may lead you to conclude that it is a novel based on memory which has a protagonist who strains his memory to remember some of the most important events of his life and then records them.

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