

PARTITION LITERATURE

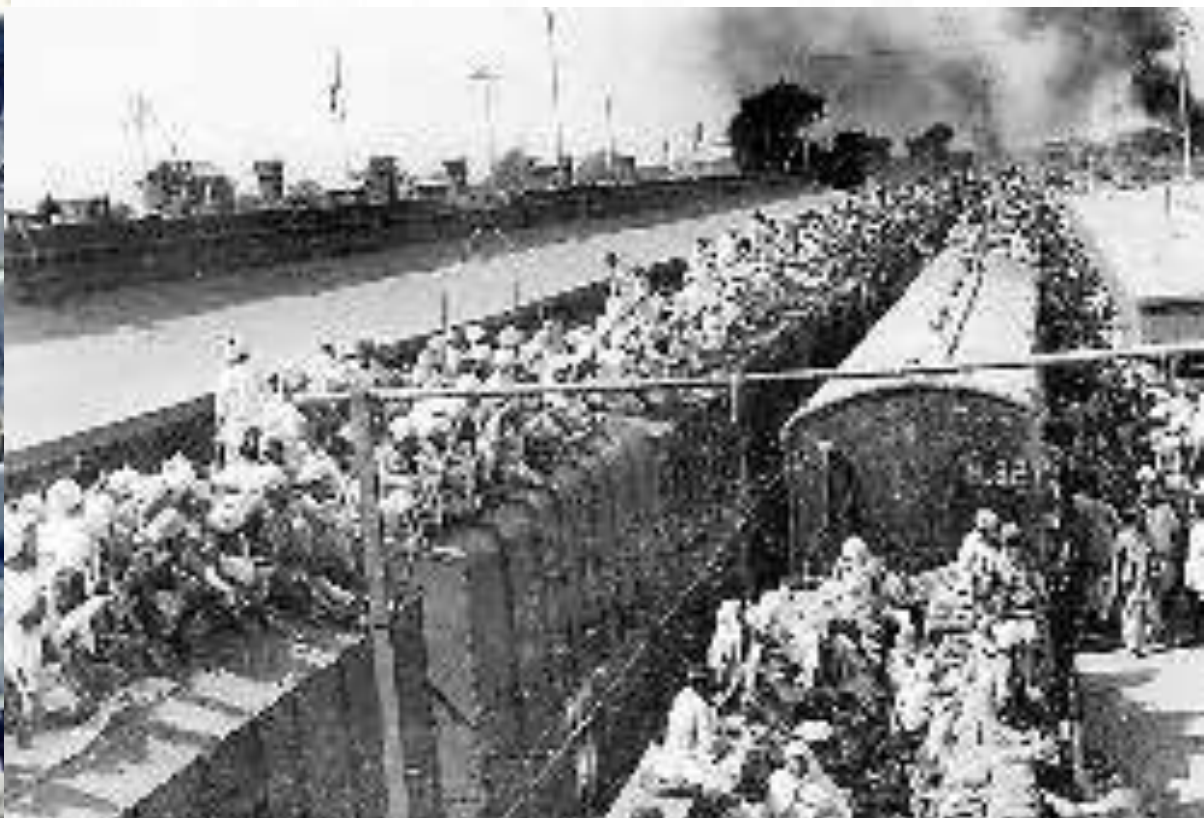
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The Partition of India

Times Of Violence





HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

- YEAR 1600 – EAST INDIA COMPANY (EIC) CAME TO INDIA AS TRADERS WITH AN EXCLUSIVE LICENSE (CHARTER), GIVING THEM MONOPOLY IN TRADE.
- INDIA WAS KNOWN AS “SONE KI CHIDIYA” AND EIC BECAME RICH; GOT POLITICAL AND MILITARY MUSCLE.
- 1757 – BATTLE OF PLASSEY FOUGHT BETWEEN EIC FORCES LED BY ROBERT CLIVE AND BENGAL NAWAB SIRAJ-UD-DAULAH. THIS WIN SOLIDIFIED COMPANY RULE.
- 1764 – BATTLE OF BUXAR FOUGHT BETWEEN ENGLISH FORCES VERSUS JOINT FORCES OF NAWAB OF OUDH, NAWAB OF BENGAL AND MUGHAL EMPEROR. ENDED WITH THE ENGLISH FORCES WINNING AND THE TREATY OF ALLAHABAD.
- 1765 – AS AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE, DIWANI RIGHTS (CIVIL REVENUE, TAX COLLECTION RIGHTS) OF BENGAL, BIHAR AND ORISSA WAS GIVEN TO EIC.

- CORRUPTION OF EIC OFFICERS LED TO THE COMPANY GOING INTO DEBT OF 1 MILLION POUNDS APPROXIMATELY.
- EIC WENT TO BRITISH GOVT FOR HELP. BRITISH GOVT PASSED THE REGULATING ACT/EIC ACT/CHARTER ACT TO REGULATE THE AFFAIRS OF THE COMPANY IN INDIA. THIS CHARTER WAS AN EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO TRADE WITH PROVISION FOR REVISION IN EVERY 20 YEARS.
- TOTAL ACTS – 1773, 1793, 1813, 1833, 1853

REGULATING ACT OF 1773:

- APPOINTMENT OF COURT OF DIRECTOR (FOR ANSWERABILITY),
- 3 ZONES OF POWER (BOMBAY, MADRAS, BENGAL),
- LEGISLATIVE POWERS OF GOVERNORS OF BOMBAY AND MADRAS GIVEN TO GOVERNOR OF BENGAL (CENTRALIZATION OF GOVT IN INDIA),
- WARREN HASTINGS (1ST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF BENGAL),
- SUPREME COURT ESTABLISHED AT CALCUTTA (1774),
- SEPARATION ACT OF 1781 (SEPARATION OF JUDICIARY FROM EXECUTIVE) TO EXEMPT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL AND COUNCIL FROM SUPREME COURT SUPERVISION

REGULATING ACT OF 1793

- CONTINUATION OF TRADE MONOPOLY FOR NEXT 20 YEARS
- DIVIDENDS RAISED BY 10%
- GOVERNOR GENERAL EMPOWERED TO OVERRIDE COUNCIL'S DECISIONS AT TIMES
- RS 5 LAKH REVENUE PAID TO BRITISH GOVT ANNUALLY
- SEPERATED REVENUE ADMINISTRATION AND JUDICIARY FUNCTION OF THE COMPANY –
DISAPPEARANCE OF MAAL ADALAT (REVENUE COURTS)

REGULATING ACT OF 1813

- CONTINUATION OF ANOTHER 20 YEARS OF MONOPOLY
- DIVIDEND RAISED – 10.5%
- GRANTED PERMISSION FOR MISSIONARIES TO COME TO INDIA AND ENGAGE IN RELIGIOUS PROSELYTIZATION
- APPOINTMENT OF BISHOP FOR BRITISH INDIA
- FINANCIAL GRANT TOWARDS REVIVAL OF INDIAN LITERATURE AND THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE
- GREATER ROLE OF COMPANY TO EDUCATE INDIANS – GRANT OF RS 1 LAKH FOR THIS PURPOSE.

REGULATING ACT OF 1833

- GOVERNOR GENERAL OF BENGAL BECOMES GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA (FINAL STEP OF CENTRALIZATION)
- LORD WILLIAM BENTICK – 1ST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA
- REGULATIONS WERE GIVEN LEGISLATIVE SANCTIONS – CALLED ACTS
- EAST INDIA COMPANY (EIC) BECAME A PURELY ADMINISTRATIVE BODY, HOLDING ALL TERRITORIES ON BEHALF OF BRITISH GOVT.

REGULATING ACT OF 1853 (LAST CHARTER ACT)

- OPEN EXAMINATION FOR COVENATED CIVIL SERVICES
- SEPARATE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL – INDIA CENTRAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (CONSTITUTED OF COUNCILLORS ALMOST LIKE A MINI PARLIAMENT)
- AFTER SLASHING OTHER POWERS, GOVT GAVE INDEFINITE EXTENSION TO EIC FOR LICENSE TO TRADE.
- NO FURTHER REGULATION WAS SEEN NECESSARY AND THEREFORE THIS BECAME THE LAST CHARTER ACT.

SEPOY MUTINY / FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

- IMMEDIATE REASON – ENFIELD RIFLE THAT HAD A CARTRIDGE WHICH HAD TO BE BITTEN OFF BEFORE LOADING INTO THE GUN. THE CARTRIDGE WAS GREASED WITH COW AND PIG FAT WHICH WAS AGAINST HINDU AND MUSLIM SENTIMENTS. THIS WAS THE LAST STRAW OF OPPRESSIONS THAT RESULTED IN THE BREAK OF REVOLT.
- OTHER REASONS – RACIAL DISCRIMINATION OF INDIANS, INTERFERENCE OF WHITES IN RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL PRACTICES, OPPRESSION AND TORTURE OF INDIANS, LOSS OF POWER OF ZAMINDARS AND NAWABS DUE TO BRITISH EXPANSION, UNFAIR TRADE POLICIES, MISGOVERNANCE AND HIGH TAXATION.
- THE SEPOYS FAILED DUE TO LACK OF ONE CENTRAL LEADER AND COHERENT PLAN
- THIS REVOLT SHOOK THE EIC AND DISCLOSED THE INEFFICIENCY OF HANDLING INDIA TO THE BRITISH GOVT. BRITISH GOVT TOOK CONTROL, ABOLISHING THE COMPANY RAJ AND THUS BEGAN THE BRITISH RAJ IN COLONIAL INDIA.

GOVT OF INDIA ACT 1858 (BRITISH RAJ BEGINS, COMPANY RULE OVER)

- VICEROY REPLACES GOVERNOR GENERAL – DIRECT REPRESENTATION OF THE CROWN
- GOOD GOVT IN INDIA – 15 MEMBER COUNCIL OF INDIA IN PARLIAMENT (ADVISORY BODY)
HEADED BY SECRETARY OF STATE OF INDIA AND A CABINET MINISTER
- ALLAHABAD 1858 – QUEEN VICTORIA PROCLAIMED EMPRESS OF INDIA
- INDIAN COUNCIL ACTS – 1861, 1892, 1909

INDIAN COUNCIL ACT OF 1861

- INDIANS NOMINATED BY VICEROY SAT IN THE EXTENDED LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AS NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS (RAJA OF BENARAS, MAHARAJA OF PATIALA, SIR DINKAR RAO)
- BEGINNING OF DECENTRALIZATION – LORD CANNING BEGAN RETURNING POWERS; DECLARED PORTFOLIO SYSTEM.
- VICEROY EMPOWERED TO ISSUE ORDINANCES IN CASE OF EMERGENCY FOR 6 MONTHS.

INDIAN COUNCIL ACT OF 1892

- STRONGER LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS – QUESTIONS WERE PUT IN BUDGET SESSIONS
- RECOMMENDATION OF PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS AND BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CONSIDERED BY VICEROY FOR NOMINATION INTO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.
- PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS OF ZAMINDARS, TRADE UNIONS, UNIVERSITIES ETC. (TYPE OF INDIRECT ELECTION)
- MOST IMPROVISIONS HAPPENED DUE TO THE PRESSURE OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

INDIAN COUNCIL ACT 1909

- KNOWN AS MORLEY MINTO REFORM
- PARTITION OF BENGAL (1905) – DIVIDED THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS WITH A MUSLIM MAJORITY IN THE EAST AND HINDU MAJORITY IN THE WEST. LATER REUNITED IN 1911 AS RESPONSE TO SWADESHI MOVEMENTS.
- INTRODUCTION OF A SYSTEM OF COMMUNAL REPRESENTATION FOR MUSLIMS UNDER THE CONCEPT OF SEPARATE ELECTORATE. THIS WAS DONE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNAL DIFFERENCES.
- ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE EMERGED; ESTABLISHED IN 1906.

GOVT OF INDIA ACT, 1919

- POST WORLD WAR I (1914-1918)
- ALSO KNOWN AS MONTAGUE-CHELMSFORD REFORMS
- THERE WAS A STRUGGLE FOR PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY; DEMAND FOR RETURN OF POWERS TAKEN AWAY. FOR THIS DEMAND WAS FOR DIVISION OF POWER AND BICAMERALISM
- THIS ACT GAVE: DYARCHY

FEDERAL LIST – CENTRAL GOVT CONTROL

RESERVED LIST – WITHOUT NEED FOR CONSENT OF MINISTER

TRANSFERRED LIST – WITH ADVICE OF MINISTERS

- BICAMERALISM– INDIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL HAVE COUNCIL OF STATES (NOW KNOWN AS RAJYA SABHA) AND HOUSE OF PEOPLE (LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY)
- BUT THIS WAS A TRICK. IMPORTANT POWERS WERE KEPT IN FEDERAL LIST (CENTRAL GOVT CONTROL). NEXT IMPORTANT POWERS IN RESERVED LIST OF PROVINCIAL LIST WHERE CONSENT WAS UNIMPORTANT. THIS WAS FALSE DIVISION OF POWER.
- IN BICAMERALISM, COUNCIL OF STATES HAD AN ADVISORY BODY AND AS SUCH WAS NOT AUTONOMOUS LIKE PRESENT DAY RAJYA SABHA.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

- THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY ROWLATT ACT PASSED BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN MARCH 1919. THESE ACTS ALLOWED CERTAIN POLITICAL CASES TO BE TRIED WITHOUT JURIES AND PERMITTED INTERNMENT OF SUSPECTS WITHOUT TRIAL. THIS WAS A RESULT OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SEDITION COMMITTEE CALLED ROWLATT COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY BRITISH INDIAN GOVT TO EVALUATE THE LINKS BETWEEN POLITICAL TERRORISM IN INDIA.
- PROTESTS BEGAN AGAINST IT NATION WIDE. GANDHIJI CALLED THE ROWLATT SATYAGRAHA ON 6TH APRIL 1919.
- RIOTS AND PROTESTS GREW ALARMINGLY. BRITISH AUTHORITY GREW SCARED. THIS CULMINATED IN OPPRESSIVE PRACTICES, LEADING TO JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE ON 13TH APRIL 1919 WHERE GENERAL DYER OPENED FIRE AT AN UNARMED CROWD.
- FINALLY GANDHIJI LAUNCHED THE NON COOPERATION MOVEMENT IN 1920

GOVT OF INDIA ACT 1935

- MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF MODERN CONSTITUTION
- INDIAN AID TO BRITAIN DURING WW 1, ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR GOVERNMENT IN INDIA.
- DIVIDED POWERS AMONG FEDERAL LIST (CENTRE), PROVINCIAL LIST (PROVINCES – PRESENT DAY STATES), CONCURRENT LIST (BOTH)
- GAVE AUTONOMY TO PROVINCES (DECENTRALIZATION), FULL FLEDGED BICAMERALISM, ESTABLISHMENT OF RBI
- PRINCELY STATES BECAME A HINDERANCE BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT DIRECTLY UNDER BRITISH RULE BUT RATHER RULED BY INDIAN RULERS SUBJECT TO SUZERAINTY WHO WERE RELUCTANT TO GIVE AWAY THEIR POWERS.

THE NEXT PHASE!

- AUGUST OFFER 1940 – VICEROY OF INDIA MADE THE OFFER TO RECOGNIZE INDIANS TO FRAME THEIR OWN CONSTITUTION (RIGHT TO DOMINION)
- THIS WAS MADE AS CONCESSION BECAUSE HE HAD DECLARED INDIA AT WAR WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT (WW2).
- JAPAN ATTACKED PARTS OF ASIA. PACIFIC WAR BEGAN ON DECEMBER 1941.
- FALL OF SINGAPORE, DEFEAT IN RANGOON. THAT'S WHY AUGUST OFFER WAS TO GAIN INDIAN SUPPORT.
- THE ALLIES DRAFTED A VISION OF THE FUTURE AFTER WW2. IT WAS TERMED AS ATLANTIC CHARTER THAT GAVE BIRTH TO NATO AND ALSO INDIA'S FREEDOM. CHURCHILL, PRESSURIZED BY ROOSEVELT SIGNED IT; THUS KICKSTARTING THE WITHDRAWAL OF COLONIAL RULE.

BEGINNING OF THE END

TWO NATION THEORY – SYED AHMED KHAN IS KNOWN AS THE FATHER OF THIS THEORY. AN EMPLOYEE OF EIC, HE SUPPORTED THEM DURING SEPOY MUTINY BUT ALSO BLAMED THEM FOR THE SITUATION. HE FEARED THAT THE BRITISHERS MIGHT SOLELY BLAME THE MUSLIMS FOR THE MUTINY AS THE REBELLION WAS FOUGHT UNDER THE NAME OF THE MUGHAL EMPEROR. THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE HE FOUGHT FOR EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN LEGISLATIVE OFFICES AND BUREAUCRACY. FOR THIS HE LED THE STRUGGLE FOR RESERVATION TOO.

AT FIRST HE BELIEVED IN HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY. HE CALLED THEM “TWO EYES OF INDIA”. HOWEVER HIS BELIEVES SHOOK WHEN HINDI WAS SLOWLY IMPOSED AND BEGAN TO BE WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE LANGUAGE OF THE MASSES, SIDELINING THE OLDER URDU LANGUAGE. FRUSTRATED WITH THE UNFAIR SHIFT, HE BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT INDIA CANNOT HOST TWO ANTAGONISTIC FORCES TOGETHER. THUS HE GAVE THE FAMOUS THEORY THAT INDIAN MUSLIMS AND INDIAN HINDUS WERE TWO SEPARATE NATIONS, WITH THEIR OWN CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND RELIGION. CONSEQUENTLY AND MORALLY, MUSLIMS SHOULD THUS HAVE A SEPARATE HOMELAND WITHIN DECOLONIZED INDIA.

THIS THEORY WAS WIDELY CITED AND USED BY JINNAH IN HIS DEMAND FOR PAKISTAN.

EFFORTS!

- CRIPPS MISSION 1942 – CAME TO FORMALIZE THE ACCEPTANCE OF DOMINION BUT WITH A CONDITION THAT THE ACCEPTANCE HAS TO BE FROM BOTH CONGRESS (INC) AND MUSLIM LEAGUE. CONGRESS CALLED FOR UNDIVIDED INDIA; MUSLIM LEAGUE DEMANDED PAKISTAN. THIS MISSION FAILED.
- GANDHIJI IN RETALIATION LAUNCHED THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT. THIS HIT THE BRITISHERS FINANCIALLY. THE VIOLENCE RESULTED IN THE MOVEMENT BEING CALLED OFF BUT MADE THE BRITISHERS REALIZE THAT INDIA WAS UNGOVERNABLE.
- SECOND CABINET MISSION 1946 – CAME TO DISCUSS THE TRANSFER OF POWER. CABINET MADE MUSLIM LEAGUE AGREE FOR ELECTIONS OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (FOR DRAFTING CONSTITUTION). CONGRESS WON 308 SEATS, MUSLIM LEAGUE 73.
- THIS RESULTED IN JINNAH AND MUSLIM LEAGUE BOYCOTTING THE 1ST DAY OF THE SESSION ON 9TH DEC 1946. AMBEDKAR BECAME THE CHAIRMAN OF DRAFTING COMMITTEE.
- THIS CABINET PROPOSED A 3-TIER ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR INDIA WHERE GROUP PF PROVINCES WILL BE CONTROLLED BY MUSLIM DOMINATED POPULATION. THIS ALMOST SATISFIED JINNAH.

- MUSLIM LEAGUE AGREED TO THE PROPOSAL ON 6TH JUNE, 1946; AGREEING THAT THEY WILL FORM INTERIM GOVT IF CONGRESS REFUSES THIS 3 TIER PLAN; FOR THIS GAVE THE CONTROL OF COMPLETE BENGAL AND PUNJAB TO JINNAH.
- NEHRU GAVE A SPEECH ON JULY 1946 SQUASHING THIS PLAN AND PROPOSAL. JINNAH INTERPRETED THIS AS TREACHERY AND CALLED FOR DIRECT ACTION.
- DIRECT ACTION DAY/ CALCUTTA KILLINGS: 16TH AUG, 1946 – SAW NATIONWIDE COMMUNAL RIOTS. AKHAND HINDUSTAN VS PAKISTAN. RESULTED IN 4000 DEATHS. FURTHER RIOTING FOLLOWED WHICH SET THE BACKDROP FOR PAKISTAN'S BLOODY BEGINNING.
- FEB 28TH 1947 – NEWLY ELECTED PM CLEMENT ATTLEY ANNOUNCED THAT BY JUNE, BRITISHERS WILL LEAVE INDIA. BUT INDIA WAS NOT READY. THERE WAS NO CONSTITUTION AND INSTEAD A CIVIL WAR LIKE SCENARIO DOMINATED. TO TACKLE THIS LORD MOUNTBATTEN WAS SENT.

LORD MOUNTBATTEN PLAN/3RD OF JUNE PLAN

- HE WAS THE LAST VICEROY OF INDIA; TASKED WITH FAST POWER TRANSFER.
- HE ACCEPTED JINNAH'S DEMAND FOR PAKISTAN.
- THE PLAN:

AUTONOMY AND SOVEREIGNTY TO BOTH NATIONS

PRINCELY STATES GIVEN A CHOICE TO JOIN EITHER OR BE INDEPENDENT

- THIS PLAN WAS PUT TO ACTION WITH THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT 1947 THAT RESULTED IN THE FORMATION OF TWO AUTONOMOUS DOMINION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

RADCLIFFE LINE

ON 17 AUGUST 1947, THE BORDERLINE THAT SEPARATED INDIA FROM PAKISTAN, KNOWN AS THE RADCLIFFE LINE WAS REVEALED. THE RADCLIFFE LINE IS SPREAD THROUGH THE RANN OF KUTCH IN GUJARAT TO THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER IN JAMMU IN JAMMU & KASHMIR, DIVIDING INDIA AND PAKISTAN INTO TWO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.



PRE- PARTITION INDIA UNDER BRITISH RAJ





INDIA – PAK TRAGEDY

- INDO-PAK WAR OF 1947/ FIRST KASHMIR WAR
- INDO-PAK WAR OF 1965/ 2ND KASHMIR WAR
- INDO-PAK WAR OF 1971 /BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR
- SIACHEN CONFLICT 1984
- INDO-PAK WAR OF 1999/ KARGILL WAR

TEXTS

NOVELS: SHADOW LINES, BASTI

SHORT STORY: ALAM'S OWN HOUSE, THE FINAL SOLUTION, TOBA TEK SINGH, A LEAF IN THE STORM

POETRY: FOR YOUR LANES MY COUNTRY, I SHALL RETURN TO THIS BENGAL, TOBA TEK SINGH

ALAM'S OWN HOUSE

ALAM AND RAKA'S FAMILY UNDERGO A MUTUAL TRANSFER OF PROPERTY, SOME YEARS AFTER THE PARTITION. ALAM'S FATHER FEELS THE RISING UNEASINESS OF BEING ALIENATED IN THE HINDU DOMINATED COMMUNITY OF WEST BENGAL AND ACCEPTS THE PROPOSAL OF A HINDU FAMILY FROM DHAKA WANTING TO SETTLE IN BENGAL. ALAM STAYS BEHIND TO CONTINUE HIS EDUCATION AND HAS A SMALL ROMANCE WITH RAKA. AFTER COMPLETING HIS EDUCATION, HE GOES TO DHAKA AND RETURNS TO BENGAL AFTER THREE YEARS.

THE ENTIRE STORY IS FOCUSED ON THE FEELING OF ALIENATION AND HOLLOWNESS, ALAM FEELS WHEN HE GAZES UPON THE BUILDING THAT WAS ONCE HIS HOME BUT NOW FEELS LIKE A STRANGE PLACE. THE PLOT IS WEAVED WITH THE DEEP SENSE OF NOSTALGIA AND THE LOSS OF A PAST THAT PROBABLY CAN NEVER BE RECOVERED.

FURTHERMORE, RAKA MAKES AN INTERESTING REVELATION THAT SHE NEVER WANTS TO RETURN TO DHAKA FOR SHE IS OF BENGAL NOW.

THE FINAL SOLUTION

REVOLVES AROUND THE LIFE OF A POOR FAMILY WHO MIGRATED TO WEST BENGAL AFTER PARTITION INTO A DESTITUTE, HOMELESS AND VAGABOND EXISTENCE. IT IS THE STORY OF A YOUNG MOTHER, MALLIKA WHO STRUGGLES TO SOMEHOW SURVIVE WITH HER FAMILY AND HER YOUNG BABY. IN A NARRATIVE OF INSANITY, DEGENERATION AND DEGRADING HUMAN VALUES, MALLIKA COMPROMISES HER SELF-ESTEEM AND INTEGRITY BY CHOOSING PROSTITUTION TO SAVE HER CHILD FROM STARVATION. AS SUCH SHE AGREES TO A DEAL WITH A PIMP NAMED PRAMATHA.

HOWEVER THE STORY TAKES A TWISTED TURN WHEN SHE REALIZES THAT PRAMATHA MEANS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER BEFORE HE SELLS HER OFF. FURIOUS AND ENRAGED, SHE STRANGLES HIM TO DEATH. THIS VENGEFUL ACTION GIVES HER A PATH TO THE FUTURE WHERE SHE DECIDES TO HUNT THE OPPRESSORS THEMSELVES BY FOREVER PLAYING THE EASY PREY IN THE TRAIN STATIONS TO BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF; FINALLY SLITTING THEIR THROATS IN THE END OF THE ROAD.

TOBA TEK SINGH BY MANTO

THE STORY IS SET IN THE BACKGROUND OF INDIA-PAKISTAN PARTITION OF 1947. IN THE AFTERMATH OF POLITICAL SEPARATION, MANY PEOPLE HAD TO RELOCATE AND UPROOT THEIR LIVES. THERE WERE CHAOS AND CONFUSION REGARDING WHAT ACTUALLY WAS INDIAN TERRITORY AND WHAT WAS THE NEWLY FORMED PAKISTAN. THE SITUATION GOT EVEN WORSE FOR PATIENTS AND ESPECIALLY THE ONES IN MENTAL INSTITUTIONS. ONCE THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD HELD TALKS REGARDING THE SITUATION OF MENTAL PATIENTS, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE MUSLIM PATIENTS WOULD STAY OR MOVE TO PAKISTAN WHEREAS THE HINDU AND SIKH COUNTERPARTS WILL MOVE TO INDIA. EVEN THOUGH INDIA'S MOVE WAS SLIGHTLY UNDECIDED, AUTHORITIES IN LAHORE STARTED THE PROCEEDINGS OF DEPORTATION OF HINDU AND SIKH PATIENTS TO INDIA THOROUGH WAGAH-ATTARI LAND BORDER. THE PATIENTS WERE A RIOTOUS BUNCH AND WERE EVEN MORE CONFUSED ABOUT PARTITION AS THERE WAS ANY COHERENT INFORMATION OR NEWS AVAILABLE AT THE ASYLUM. SOME PRETENDED TO CREATE THEIR OWN PIECE OF HOME IN THE ASYLUM AND DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE. SOME CLIMBED UP A TREE AND MADE IT THEIR DWELLING WHOLE. ONE PERSON CLAIMED HIMSELF TO BE GOD AND DECIDED THAT BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN BELONGED TO HIM.

AMONG THESE, THERE WAS A SIKH NAMED BISHAN SINGH. HE ONCE HAD A HUGE PROPERTY IN TOBA TEK SINGH (PLACE IN PAKISTAN). HE HAD BEEN IN THE ASYLUM FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES AND NEVER SPOKE TO ANYONE SAVE SOME JUMBLED MUMBLINGS. HE WAS OFTEN VISITED BY HIS FAMILY AND HIS DAUGHTER WHO GREW UP TO BECOME A YOUNG WOMAN WHILE HE REMAINED LOCKED INSIDE. HOWEVER, SINCE THE VIOLENCE POST-PARTITION, THEY HAD NOT COME. BISHAN SINGH KEPT ASKING EVERYONE AT THE ASYLUM AS TO WHICH COUNTRY GAINED TOBA TEK SINGH BUT NO ONE HAD ANY CLEAR ANSWER. ONE DAY, HE WAS VISITED BY HIS OLD MUSLIM FRIEND FROM TOBA TEK SINGH. HE INFORMED HIM THAT BISHAN'S FAMILY WAS SAFE IN INDIA AND THEY WERE WAITING FOR HIM TO ARRIVE IN INDIA. HE ALSO REASSURED HIM THAT TOBA TEK SINGH WAS STILL IN PAKISTAN. THE DAY OF THE EXCHANGE CAME AND THE PATIENTS WERE TAKEN TO THE BORDER. THERE WAS A LOT OF CLAMOR AND NOISE. WHEN IT CAME TO BISHAN SINGH'S TURN, POPULARLY CALLED AS TOBA TEK SINGH, HE DID NOT MOVE BEYOND THE BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN THE TWO BORDERS.

NO GUARD COULD PUSH HIM AND SEEING HIS DESPERATION THEY LET HIM FREE FOR A LITTLE WHILE AND MOVED TO OTHER PATIENTS. HOWEVER, THE MAN'S LEGS SOON GAVE WAY AND HE FELL TO THE GROUND. AT THAT MOMENT THE NARRATOR REALIZED THAT TOBA TEK SINGH (PLACE AND PERSON) STOOD EXACTLY NOWHERE, IN BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN.

A LEAF IN THE STORM

STORY REVOLVES AROUND AN ACCOUNT OF A PREGNANT RAPE SURVIVOR —THE STORY DESCRIBES ABUSE, SURVIVAL AND RECOVERY. JYOTI, THE CENTRAL CHARACTER HAS BEEN ABDUCTED AND RAPED WHILE CROSSING THE NEWLY LAID BORDERS, “FROM ONE JAIL TO ANOTHER?”, AND HAS FOUND HERSELF IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS. HER CONDITION PUTS HER IN CONTRARY THOUGHTS TO KEEP THE BABY. HOWEVER, AFTER THE DELIVERY, THERE IS A SUDDEN CHANGE OF MIND, MOTHERHOOD OVERWHELMS HER, DECIDING AGAINST THROWING THE BABY. IT IS A NARRATIVE—OF ABUSE AND EMOTIONAL TURMOIL THAT IS SITUATED ON THE LAND AND TIME WHEN BLOOD FLEW IN THE RIVERS. IT TELLS TALES OF HOW WOMEN WERE KIDNAPPED AND DEPORTED ONTO THE OTHER SIDE, FORCED TO BE ACCEPTED AS MOTHERS, SISTERS OR WIVES, IT WAS UP TO THE MEN TO DECIDE THEIR DESTINY.

THERE IS A SUBTLE REMINDER OF THE UNENDING VIOLENCE, THE TACTICS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO BUILD THE SENSE OF NATION AND THE GENDERED NARRATIVE OF A PREGNANT, RAPED SURVIVOR. HOWEVER, JYOTI’S GENDER TAKES CHARGE OF THE STORY TOWARDS THE END, AGAIN. THE LEAF REFERS TO THE BABY BORN AND THE STORM TO THE TURMOIL THAT THE SUBCONTINENTS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN UNDERWENT. JYOTI WHO ONCE CALLED THE BABY “THE SEED OF DAMNATION” IS WON OVER BY ITS INNOCENCE OF THE ‘LEAF IN THE STORM’. HER DELIVERY IS DESCRIBED GLORIOUSLY. SHE IS REFERRED TO AS A MOTHER, WITH “HER BLOOD FLOWING FREELY AS FRESH MILK.” THE STARS BEAMED AS SHE WALKED TOWARDS THE CAMP WITH THE BABY IN HER ARMS. THE WRITER SEEMS TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE VIOLENCE, THE NARRATIVE HAS SHIFTED, THE COMPASSION OF THE MOTHER HAS DILUTED THE HATRED.

THIS IS A STORY OF VIOLENCE, SURVIVAL AND RECOVERY, THROUGH DISPLACEMENT, MULTIPLE RAPES, REFUGEE CAMP, AND IMPREGNATION, THE PROTAGONIST IS NOT UNAWARE OF HER SURROUNDING—MANAGES TO SURVIVE THE TRAUMA. I BELIEVE THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS IN JYOTI’S NARRATIVE, MERELY A SENSE OF SYMPATHY FOR THE HELPLESS LIFE THAT MIGHT BE A FURTHER VICTIM OF VIOLENCE.

FOR YOUR LANES MY COUNTRY

FOR YOUR LANES, MY COUNTRY,
I CAN SACRIFICE ALL I HAVE
BUT THE CUSTOM THESE DAYS IS
NO ONE WALKS WITH HEAD HELD HIGH.
THE LOVERS LOOKING FOR EACH OTHER MUST SNEAK OUT
AFRAID OF LIFE AND LIMB, AND
FOR THEM, A NEW ORDER OF THE DAY NOW:
THE BRICKS AND STONES ARE IMPRISONED
AND THE STRAY DOGS FREE TO ROAM.
FOR THE MANY APOLOGISTS OF TYRANNY.
IT'S ENOUGH THAT A FEW OF YOUR DEAR FRIENDS
HAVE TURNED INTO POWER-SEEKERS, JUDGES AND PLAINTIFFS.
WHO CAN YOU ASK TO REPRESENT YOU,
WHO CAN YOU ASK JUSTICE FROM?
BUT PEOPLE DO SURVIVE, AWAY FROM YOU,
WORRY ABOUT YOU, DAY AND NIGHT BUT MANAGE SOMEHOW.
WHEN THE PRISON GRATINGS DARKEN,
MY HEART SEES STARS SPRINKLED IN YOUR HAIR,
WHEN I SEE LIGHT THROUGH THESE GRATINGS
I KNOW YOUR FACE WOULD BE BATHED IN DAWN.

In any case,
I live in imagined days and nights,
I exist in the shadow of the prison walls.
This is how people fight oppression,
their ritual isn't new, nor are my ways new.
This is how we always grew flowers in fire,
their defeat isn't new, our victory isn't new.
That's why I don't complain to the Heaven,
or make myself sad thinking about you.
We are apart today, but tomorrow
we'll be together;
separation for one night isn't much,
What if my rivals are riding high today
their reign of a few days isn't much.
Those who remain true to you
understand what the daily turmoil really means:

I SHALL RETURN TO THIS BENGAL

I SHALL RETURN TO THIS BENGAL, TO THE DHANSIRI'S BANK

PERHAPS NOT AS A MAN, BUT MAYNA OR FISHING-KITE;

OR DAWN CROW, FLOATING ON THE MIST'S BOSOM TO ALIGHT

IN THE SHADE OF THIS JACKFRUIT TREE, IN THIS AUTUMN HARVEST-LAND.

OR MAY BE A DUCK- A YOUNG GIRL'S BELLS ON MY RED FEET,

DRIFTING ON KALMI-SCENTED WATERS ALL THE DAY:

FOR LOVE OF BENGAL'S RIVERS, FIELDS, CROPS, I'LL COME THIS WAY

TO THIS GREEN SHORE OF BENGAL, DRENCHED BY JALANGI'S WAVES

PERHAPS YOU'LL SEE A GLASS-FLY RIDE THE EVENING BREEZE,

OR HEAR A BARN OWL CALL FROM THE SILK-COTTON TREE;

A LITTLE CHILD TOSS RICE-GRAINS ON THE COURTYARD GRASS,

OR A BOY ON THE RUPSA'S TURGID STREAM STEER A DINGHY

WITH TORN WHITE SAIL – WHITE EGRETS SWIMMING THROUGH RED CLOUDS

TO THEIR HOME IN THE DARK. YOU WILL FIND ME AMONG THEIR CROWD

TOBA TEK SINGH BY GULZAR

I'VE TO GO AND MEET TOBA TEK SINGH'S BISHAN AT WAGAH

I'M TOLD HE STILL STANDS ON HIS SWOLLEN FEET

WHERE MANTO HAD LEFT HIM,

HE STILL MUTTERS:

“OPAD DI GUD GUD DI MOONG DI DAL DI LALTAIN”

I'VE TO LOCATE THAT MAD FELLOW

WHO USED TO SPEAK UP FROM A BRANCH HIGH ABOVE:

“HE'S GOD

HE ALONE HAS TO DECIDE – WHOSE VILLAGE TO WHOSE SIDE.”

WHEN WILL HE MOVE DOWN THAT BRANCH

HE IS TO BE TOLD:

“THERE ARE SOME MORE – LEFT STILL

WHO ARE BEING DIVIDED, MADE INTO PIECES –

THERE ARE SOME MORE PARTITIONS TO BE DONE

THAT PARTITION WAS ONLY THE FIRST ONE.”

I've to go and meet Toba Tek Singh's Bishan at Wagah,

His friend Afzal has to be informed –

Lahna Singh, Wadhwa Singh, Bheen Amrit

Had arrived here butchered –

Their heads were looted with the luggage on the way behind.

Slay that “Bhuri”, none will come to claim her now.

That girl who grew one finger every twelve months,

Now shortens one phalanx each year.

It's to be told that all the mad ones haven't yet reached their destinations

There are many on that side

And many on this.

Toba Tek Singh's Bishan beckons me often to say:

“Opad di gud gud di moong di dal di laltain di Hindustan te Pakistan di dur fitey munh.”