

# The trauma of partition in Azadi by ChamanNahal

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## Abstract

In 1947, when India gained independence from the British Empire, the Partition of India was the process of dividing the subcontinent along ethnic lines. It resulted in the formation of Pakistan, a Muslim-dominated liberal state, and the Republic of India, a Hindu-dominated southern state. Partition, on the other hand, destroyed mutually India and Pakistan because it averted countless lives from riots, looting, rapes, and murders but it also forced roughly 15 million people to flee their homes. Both nations began their independence with failing economies and areas that lacked a well-established, effective administration. Azadi by Chaman Nahal is a recent classic that hides an all-encompassing revelation of existence, symbolising the havoc that partition wreaked on the country's inhabitants on both a societal and interpersonal level. Through literary viewpoint, it shows the realistic historical evidence of the awful clashes created by the split. Chaman Nahal writes with remarkable depth and reality since he was a migrant himself. As a result, via the figure of Lala Kanshi Ram and his child Arun, he has described his own experience. The story depicts the peaceful atmosphere that existed prior to the proclamation of Partition, the terrible occurrences that occurred as a result of the division, and the dreadful conditions that the deracinated refugees faced following the partition. In this paper, I'd want to look at how Azadi depicts historical pain in its depiction of Partition.

**Key Words: Partition, Refugee, Azadi, Trauma.**

## Background

ChamanNahal's greatest work is *Azadi*, one of the Gandhi Chorus novels. Nahal was inspired to create this storey as a result of his own experience of living in Sialkot during Partition. He admits that *Azadi* is personal, describing it as "...a ode to one's homeland, rather than a realistic novel of the Partition." (Nahal, n.d.) The novel is political, historic, and, most importantly, a masterpiece of literature. Nahal has created a realistic depiction of the Partition's interval. When we hear about the killings, massacres,looting, rapes, burnings, and the plight of uprooted immigrants as a result of the division, we are shocked.K R. SrinivasaIyengar adds, "In this respect, K R. SrinivasaIyengar says: "*Azadi* is a film about India's partition, which engulfed the subcontinent in a nightmare of terror for months and left a trail of incredible bitterness and agony in its wake. Even after all these years, the scars bleed again as recollection prods them ". As we all know, ChamanNahal was a victim of partition and a migrant, and he through many hardships on his trek over the border. As a result, via the figure of Lala Kashiram and his son Arun, he has portrayed his own experience.

### Protagonist (Lala Kanshi Ram) Binary Ideology

The novel *Azadi* begins in Sialkot, Pakistan, which is now part of Pakistan. According to the author, before partition, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs coexisted happily in Sialkot, where Muslims constitute the majority. When Lord Mountbatten confirmed the establishment of India and Pakistan, however, it became worried. Fear, resentment, and animosity grew among the inhabitants of Sialkot, and a riot erupted for the first time. Lala Kanshi Ram also expresses his views on division and British rule via his character in *Azadi* Chaman Nahal. Lala Kanshi Ram is conflicted about the British. He appreciates them for their virtues while criticising them for their flaws. He cherished the British Raj's security and embraced it affectionately.The British had delivered some sort of calm to his torn-apart country. He declares: "He believed they were a country that could not be easily defeated. For nearly two centuries, a small group of them has held us under their control, and now Hitler has suffered the same end." Lala Kanshi Ram also appreciated the British rulers' and police forces' authority. He put a lot of trust in General Ress, for example. However, just as he is about to leave his residence, Lala Kanshi Ram accuses the British of failing to safeguard the refugee. He also criticises the British for their mistakes.It's not because of Gandhi or the uprising of the masses that the British were

going to loose India; it's because of a tactical blunder they complete in distribution out an unattractive Viceroy in the vital days of their Raj.

### **Violence & Rampant Homicide**

Nahal's dissatisfaction with India's partition, as well as his pain and rage, are clearly depicted in the novel Azadi. His goal in writing this book is to give the most complete description of the Partition. Lala Kanshi Ram is aware that on the night of June 3, 1947, the Viceroy would make an important pronouncement over the radio, putting an end to all conjecture. "If the English promise to give Pakistan to Jinnah," he says, he looks anxious and fears the worst. (27) Lala Kanshi Ram is concerned about the country's divide. He regards it as a clever British strategy. He is aware of Britain's policy of facilitating partition. His confidence in Gandhi's oath of non-acceptance of Partition seemed to have shattered. Partition disrupts people's placid and complacent lives, and the writer analyses this disruption with deep sympathy and exposes the inhumane atrocities committed against the innocent. The birth of Pakistan has destroyed Kanshi Ram's universe, and he stands as a shattered man, his beloved ideals and principles unable to support him. According to M.K.Naik, his tale of his family's relocation to India "...is certainly one of the most thorough fictional descriptions of Partition genocide in Indian English Literature." (Naik, 232) This demonstrates that the author was dissatisfied with India's division, and he painfully articulated his sentiments of grief and rage over it in Azadi, a largely political book in which the protagonist, Lala Kanshi Ram, is opposed to the split. "Yes, they (the British) are the true culprits," he says, "they had let the nation down, they had just let him down, he who had put such confidence in them."

Different groups feel about the fact of the partition in different ways. The news has enraged Muslims. Firecrackers are set off to commemorate the occasion. The boom and brightness from these crackers annoys Hindus and Sikhs, causing them to lose their appetite. Earthen lamps are lighted in Muslim households and on roof tops, so more and further lights are turned on as if the ground had rapidly burst in a volcanic eruption, ripping so numerous holes in the city's external. They demonstrate their excitement by dancing, pretend fighting, and singing, as well as forcing the parade complete the Hindu Mohalla, where Lala Kanshi Ram and his pals reside. The Police Superintendent and Deputy Commissioner did everything they could to keep the

situation under control. Hindus and Muslims began to despise and tear one other apart.

### **Muslims-Hindus Prior to & Subsequent to Partition**

Everyone understands that India is recognised for its democracy, in which various cultures and religions co-exist together. This has been moulded in the foundations of Indian civilization, where no faith assaults another. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others are all free to conduct their lives according to their own set of norms. Before the Partition, there existed a Hindu-Muslim harmony and peaceful living, according to Chaman Nahal's novel "Azadi." Sialkot was a mostly Muslim city. Despite this, people of all castes were together. Between Muslims and Hindus, there was almost never any rivalry. This is demonstrated through Chaudhari Barkat Ali's and Lala Kanshi Ram friendship, as well as Arun and Nur's love. Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhri Barkat Ali, who were present at Gandhi's Ramatalai address in 1929. Gandhi's views on Hindu-Muslim harmony, home industry, nationalism, Purna Swaraj, nonviolence, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice have strongly impacted both of them, and they have promised to be life-long friends, never thinking of the sectarian barrier between them. Chaudhri Barkat Ali leads the Munir-Nur family, which is wonderful. They are devout Muslims who trust in the interconnectedness of all religions. The sense of nationalism pervades Chaudhri Barkat Ali. He is a devoted Muslim who holds Hindus in high regard. He does not discriminate between man and man and lives a life of relationship and love. "And the Hindu next door was his brother as much as, if not more than, an unknown Muslim living overseas." As a result, Chaudhri Barkat Ali is a vocal opponent of religious fundamentalism. He's the perfect man for the job, with the correct ideas. His neighbourhood, Mohalla Mianapura, is known for its peace. Munir inherits his father's kindness.

Abdul Ghani, the hookahmaker, depicts the illogical and fanatical Muslims, whereas Chaudhri Barkat Ali depicts the reasonable and humanistic Muslims. Abdul Ghani is pleased when the government declares Partition and immediately begins to detest and oppose all Hindus, particularly Lala Kanshi Ram. He inquires about Lala Kanshi Ram's departure from Pakistan. As a result of the communal hate exacerbated by the county's split, even the closest of friends start to drift apart. The traditional peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Hindus is shattered suddenly by Partition. The declaration of Partition by Mountbatten disrupted the villagers of Sialkot's tranquil lives and their Hindu-Muslim harmony. On the 24th of June, the first riot occurred in Sialkot, a day after the Punjab Legislative Assembly officially decided in Lahore to opt

for the province's partition. Nahal describes the community fire that swept over the land.: "...Many cities of the Punjab had been aflame for months; In Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujarat, Sargodha, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Rawalpindi, Ambala, Ludhiana and Multan there were large-scale massacres and lootings." (104) In their ecstasy, Muslims in Sialkot slaughter several Hindus on June 24th, and it became a regular practise after that. Nahal describes the act's savagery in this way:

The victim was never permitted to survive the attack and disclose what had occurred to him; he was stabbed to death. The killing was always done with a knife, and the weapon, with its big blade thrust clean through the victim's corpse, was frequently left in the victim's body. The guy was frequently stabbed in the heart and abdomen after surviving the first blow. The killers had a sadistic fixation with tearing open stomachs, yet their faces were not damaged. In each scenario, the man's intestines would have flowed out of his

body and be laying next to him in a pool of blood.(105)

During the night, fires are ignited in various parts of the city. "...the way these flames were spread out, it appeared as though some design had gone into them, for the fire engines were tormented to the limit in racing from north to south and east to west," it says. But no, the arson was only sporadic at this point." (106) Sialkot devolves into a riot-plagued urban, with Hindu Mohallas being burned down one by one.

### **Consequences of Partition & Reconciling the Wounds**

Murder, and rape were all too common in Punjab and Bengal. Hindus in Sialkot are terrified and perplexed because they are not receiving assistance from the police and their stores are being plundered. A Muslim bodyguard assassinates the Hindu Deputy Commissioner, who is in charge of the situation in Sialkot. On both sides of the border, there is violence. Hatred, contempt, death, rape, fire, and arson replace the environment of trust, love, and togetherness when violence becomes uncontrollable. The violent mob has set its sights on trains. Hindus' lives in Sialkot are becoming increasingly difficult as their stores and homes are

plundered, men are stabbed, and females are raped. They are quite doubtful. When his business is plundered by several Muslims late at night, Lala is very distressed. Many refugee camps have been established by the government to house Jews and Sikhs. Lala is hesitant to leave Sialkot to see the refugee camp since the phrases "refugee" and "refugee camp" are foreign and distasteful to him. He expresses his dissatisfaction with his situation as a landless, homeless, and rootless guy. He understands that Muslims would not stand the existence of Hindus and Sikhs, and that the Pakistani government will be powerless to defend them. Hindus' lives in Sialkot are becoming increasingly difficult. Hindus are compelled to suffer the agony of relocation and migration. Although their strong emotional commitment to their home and land, they are obliged to depart and seek permanent settlement elsewhere. More violence and assassinations occur as a result of independence. In one of the train killings, Lala's daughter Madhu and his husband Rajiv were massacred while on their method to Sialkot to see her parents. Nahal expresses his grief at the loss of his sister, Kartar Devi, through Partition via the figure of Madhu. Madhu's and my husband's deaths are centered on Nahal's personal knowledge. The book definitely implies that the rioters were depleted to the point of dishonouring Hindu ladies and subjecting them to barbarous horrors. In such cases, the administration does not intervene. The news of the Muslims' afternoon display of nude Hindu ladies in Narowal's bazaar stunned the Jews and Sikhs in the colony. "Azadi conveys clearly the horrors of the Partition, the massive bloodshed that still haunts the Indian psyche," K.K. Sharma and B.K. Johri wrote in response to Nahal's depiction of the horrifying images of incomprehensible violence. (89) Many years just after partition, the two nations are still struggling to mend the scars caused by this amputation of India's once-complete body. Several people are still searching for an identity and a history that have been buried behind an impenetrable wall. Both countries started with ruined economies and territories, as well as an absence of a well-established, experienced government. Many of its most ardent leaders were assassinated, including Gandhi, Allama Iqbal, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Pakistan and India have started a war twice since partition, and the issue of Kashmir ownership remains unanswered. The same boundaries and differences, and also Hindu and Muslim populations and conflicts, remain in Kashmir. Overall, Chaman Nahal's tale ends with a bereft family attempting to start a new life in Delhi. Other books depicting India's partition, including such Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan and Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges, have more sensationalism than

Azadi.Both sides' ruthlessness and tenderness are depicted in Nahal.

## Conclusion

As the preceding discussion indicates, the central issue of this storey is partition. It is a realistic depiction of the horrific events that occurred as a result of the division. It's on par with any tragic novel. It should also be noted that Chaman Nahal did not attempt to pit one faith against another in his story (Muslim against Hindu) Nahal not only objectifies human experience in this way, but he also provides an intentional pollution of the historic with didactic and contextual discursive aspects. He had cleared this truth almost to the finish of the work.He wrote: In Delhi, Lala Kanshi Ram and others were forced to see the Muslim kidnapped women's march, and they were distressed. They soon learned that a train carrying Muslim refugees had been assaulted, with many Muslims dead. Nahal's protagonist conveyed the message that he did not hate Muslims because of Indians did the same about Muslims in India as they did to Jews in Pakistan.

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