

Review Article

Critical Review of Khushwant Singh's "A Train to Pakistan"

Seema Chaddha

Research Scholar, Singhania University, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT:- *Khushwant Singh's Train To Pakistan pictures the brutal, realistic story of political hatred, and of mass passions during the tragic days that preceded and followed the partition of India. It distorted the political judgments. Worst of all, it deranged the understanding of the moral rightness of the people.*

PARTITION – A BLOODY GAME OF POLITICS

It was indeed one of the bloodiest upheavals of history that claimed numerable innocent lives and loss of property. The traumatic experience made Khushwant Singh restive and in order to give vent to his feelings, he took to writing and hence *Train To Pakistan*, "The Partition theme", writes Khushwant Singh, "was born out of a sense of guilt that I had done nothing to save the lives of innocent people and behaved like a coward." The novel is indeed about the sense of guilt weighting heavily on the conscience of the community as well as of the individuals. Reviewing the book in *The New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, R.H.Glauber says: "Individuals redeem themselves, but the weight of guilt remains in the community."

Partition was, and has remained a decisive event in India's social and political life, the reasons being its volume and scope with regard to India. *Train To Pakistan* portrays the life of the frontier between India and Pakistan that had become the scene of rioting and bloodshed, Death – the result of man's cruelty – overpowered the trains, the disturbed the age – old harmony of the Muslims and Sikhs even in the peaceful villages. The novel relates to the story of one such village, Mano Majra, where the traditional bond of friendship and goodwill was ruptured by horrible events. The village became a battlefield of conflicting loyalties. The Magistrate and the Police failed to stem the rising tide of violence. If Kanthapura was the microcosm of the national upsurge in the country in the twenties, Mano Majra became the microcosm of vivisected India.

The story shows the religious and social differences between the Sikhs and the Muslims in an effective way. It severely criticizes the attitude of the Hindu and Muslim political leaders that led to this tragic blood-bath. Nehru's attitude towards the partition is severely attacked. The novel displays remarkable impartiality towards the warring communities. Khushwant Singh's treatment of brutal atrocities committed on either side of the border is characterized by artistic objectivity and detachment. He exaggerates nothing, he leaves nothing. The novel begins with a reference to the summer of 1947 which was noted for its scorching heat and aimlessness and marked for hot and dusty atmosphere:

The summer of 1947 was not like other Indian summers. Even the weather had a different feel in India that year. It was hotter than usual, and drier and dustier. And the summer was longer . . . People began to say that God was punishing them for their sins. (*Train to Pakistan* 1).²

At the very beginning of the novel he sets the tone for his dispassionate account of the concrete details of the holocaust:

Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and raped. (1)

The action of the novel spans a few weeks of the fateful days of August and September in 1947 in Mano Majra, a border village, with a river fringing in and a railway bridge spanning the river. But 1947 was not like other times, it was different in character. The situation of the country

deteriorated miserably in the wake of the partition. There were killings and rapes. Evil dominated the scene. Khushwant Singh vividly describes the tragic scene:

By the summer of 1947, when the creation of the new state of Pakistan was formally announced, ten million people – Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs – were in flight. By the time the monsoon broke, almost a million of them were dead, and all of northern India was in arms, in terror or in hiding. (2)

The merciless killing of the Sikhs did not remain unconcerned. Rather, it invited bloodshed and violence. From Calcutta the riots had spread north and east and west. In Noakhali in East Bengal Muslims massacred Hindus and in Bihar, Hindus massacred Muslims. Mullahs were reported to have roamed the Punjab and the Frontier Provinces with bones of human skulls said to be those of Muslims killed in Bihar. The Hindus and Sikhs who had lived for centuries on the North-West Frontier were made to abandon their homes and flee towards the Sikhs and Hindu communities in the east. They had to travel on foot, in bullock carts, cram into lorries, cling to the sides and roofs of trains:

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Mano Majra is the place of action in the novel. In fact the novel was originally titled as Mano Majra. It is tiny village situated on the Indian border, half a mile away from the River Sutlej. The Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims lived in perfect harmony in this village and here was a time when no one in the village knew that the British had left the country and the country was divided into Pakistan and Hindustan. The only thing that made an impact on them was the arrival and departure of trains. But soon things became to change. Partition began to take its toll in this tiny village also:

Partition touched Mano Majrans at both levels – at the community level and at the individual level. At the community level, it affects very badly the Hindus the Muslims and the Sikhs. The dark clouds of suspicion and fear among the Sikhs and Muslims, who have lived together for centuries. Yet feelings of brotherliness have not disappeared and they meet for consultations in a scene that is both intensely humane and touching. (Manaver : 1998:31)³

There were only about seventy families in Mano Majra, and Lala Ram Lal's was the only Hindu family. The others were Sikhs or Muslims who were about equal in number. The railway station occupied an important position and a small colony of shopkeepers and hawkers grew up around it to supply travellers with food, betel leaves, cigarettes, tea, biscuits and sweet meats.

The routine life of Mano Majra was disturbed one evening in August 1947. The village moneylender's house was raided by dreaded dacoits:

On the roof of the house, the money lender was beaten with butts of guns and spear handles and kicked and punched. He sat on his haunches, crying and spitting blood. Two of his teeth were smashed. But he would not hand over the keys of his safe. In sheer exasperation, one of the dacoits lunged at the crouching figure with his spear. He collapsed on the floor uttering a loud yell and with blood spurting from his belly (19).

The dacoity has its evil effect on Juggut Singh who was a resident of the village. The dacoits dropped bangles in his house and later he was arrested as the suspect of murder and dacoity. He was in love with Nooran which in a sense cut across religious barriers. After his release from Police custody he came to know that Nooran has visited his mother before leaving for the refugee camp carrying his child in his womb. Nooran was a Muslim weaver's daughter. Juggut Singh, meanwhile, had a dubious distinction of being 'a budmash number ten'. His father and grandfather were also dacoits and were hanged for murder. But they were reported not to have robbed their own village folks. According to Meet Singh, Juggut had disgraced his family through his acts.

Hukum Chand, the Magistrate and Deputy Commissioner, plays an important role in the novel:

Mr. Hukum Chand magistrate and deputy commissioner, for all his tastes for skin-lotion, perfumed talc and young girls hired from venal guardians, his administrative cunning and corrupted conscience, yet surprises us with an authentic basic human kindness even a sort of innocence (Walsh: 1990:99).⁴

Through his portrayal of Hukum Chand, Khushwant Singh shows how the much maligned Indian bureaucracy was itself caught between the hatred of a people and the bungling of politicians. (Cawasjee; 1982:24)⁵

Hukum Chand considered Hindu women to be unlike other women. When it was reported that the Muslim mobs had tried to molest Hindu women, they had killed their own

children and jumped into wells that filled to brim with corpses, Hukum Chand's reaction was as follows:

Our Hindu women are like that: so pure that they would rather commit suicide than let a stranger touch them. We Hindus never raise our hands to strike women, but these Muslims have no respect for the weaker sex. (31-32).

It is interesting to hear from Hukum Chand more about how he looked at partition and its impact. He was for getting the Muslims to go out peacefully if possible. He was of the view that bloodshed would not benefit anyone. According to him bad characters would get all the loot and the Government would blame people like him for killing. For the same reason he was against killing or destruction of property. But at the same time he gave instructions to the inspector to be careful not to allow the Muslims to take too much with them.

Hindus from Pakistan were stripped of all their belongings before they were allowed to leave. Pakistani Magistrates have become millionaires overnight. Some on our side have not done too badly either. Only where there was killing or burning, the Government suspended or transferred them. There must be no killing. Just peaceful evacuation. (32).

There is a wide gap between what he preaches and what he practices is clear from the fact that he is revealed as a womanizer. Women were brought to him and he paid for their services generously:

He brought the girl's face nearer to his own and began kissing her on the back of her neck and on her ears. He could not hear the goods train anymore. It had left the countryside in utter solitude. Hukum Chand could hear his breathing quicken. He undid the strap of the girl's bodice (40).

He never hesitated in filling official records with half truths. Even before he received the full details of Iqbal, instruction was given to the inspector to enter against his name that he was the son of 'Mohammed something-or-other' or just father unknown'.

Iqbal was one who created a mild sensation in the village. He approached Bhai Meet Singh with a request for shelter and he took it for granted that he was Iqbal Singh. In fact, he did not have to say what Iqbal he was. "He could be a Muslim, Iqbal Mohammad. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh. It was one of the few names common to three communities"(55).

He was a social worker. He had come to that village as he knew that something should be done to stop the bloodshed going on as a result of partition. His party had sent him there, since this place was a vital point for refugee movements. He had a strong feeling that trouble would be disastrous. He belonged to district Jhelum and had been in foreign countries a long time. He had his own views on morality and a host of other things:

Morality . . . is a matter of money. Poor people cannot afford to have morals. So they have religion. Our first problem is to get people more food, clothing, comfort, that can only be done by stopping exploitation by the rich, and abolishing landlords. And that can only be done by changing the Government (56-57).

The police system, he felt, instead of safeguarding the citizen, maltreated him and lived on corruption and bribery. He saw that the police were to eat up all chickens and the inspector would make money in bribes.

The adverse effect of partition and the suffering that people were made to experience is beautifully conveyed through the description of a train journey. Iqbal had spent a night sitting on his bedroll in a crowded third class compartment:

Every time he had dozed off, the train had come to halt at some wayside station and the door was forced open and more peasants pound in with their wives, bedding and tin trunks. Some child sleeping in its mother's lap would start howling till its wails were smothered by a breast thrust into its mouth. The shouting and clamour would continue until along after the train had left the station. The same thing was repeated again and again, till the compartment meant for fifty had almost two hundred people in it, sitting on the floor, on seats, on luggage racks, on trunks, on bedrolls and on each other, or standing in the corners. There were dozens outside perched precariously on footboards, holding on to the door handles. There were several people on the roof. The heat and smell was oppressive (59).

Every now and then an argument would start because someone had spread himself out too much or had trod on another's foot on his way to lavatory. The novel helps us in large way to know about the attitude of the Punjabis to different issues. Iqbal was puzzled by his countrymen's morals and the Punjabi's code, he felt, was more baffling.

"For them truth, honour, financial integrity were 'all right'. But these were placed lower down the scales of values that being true to one's salt, to one's friend and fellow villagers"(61).

But he was well aware that criminals were not born and were made by hunger, want and justice. He always thought that if the fear of the gallows or the cell had stopped people from killing or stealing, there would be no murder or theft. Even though a man was hanged every day, ten get murdered every twenty four hours in the particular province he was in. The population explosion also was causing great concern to Iqbal:

The whole country was like an overcrowded room. What could you expect when the population went up by every minute – five million every year! It made all planning in Industry or agriculture a mockery. Why not spend the same amount of effort in checking the increase in population? (65)

It might appear strange that independence meant little or nothing to the people in Mano Majra. They never realized that it was a step forward and that what they needed to do was to take the next step and turn 'the make-believe political freedom' into a real economic one. They were not quite sure why the English had left them. Iqbal tried to enlighten them as to what it all meant:

They left because they had to. We had hundreds of thousands of young men trained to fight in war. This time they had the arms too . . . the English were frightened. They did not shoot any of the Indians who joined National Army as the whole country would turn against them (69).

But as far as the villagers were concerned, views differed. There were some among them who liked English soldiers. Meet Singh told Iqbal that his brother who was havildar was of the view that all sepoys were happier with English offers than with Indian. Iqbal in turn asked whether he would like to continue to remain slaves all their lives. But Meet Singh had his own arguments. "Freedom must be a good thing. But what will get out of it? Educated people like you, Babu Sahib, will get the jobs the English had. Shall we get more land or more buffaloes? (69)

Freedom was for educated people who fought for it. He was sure that people like him were going to be slaves of educated Indian or the Pakistani's. The labour was of the view that the only ones who enjoyed freedom were thieves, robbers and cut-throats.

Iqbal found himself in a predicament and was not in a position to do anything to save the situation:

Could he stop the killing? Obviously not. Everyone – Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Congressite, Leaguer, Akali or Communist – was deep in it. It was fatuous to suggest that

the bourgeois revolution could be turned into a proletarian one (74).

In an unexpected move, the police arrested Iqbal. It was extremely a foolish act for the police to have done that and they knew that they had made a mistake or rather, two mistakes as they had arrested Juggat Singh also.

Arresting the social worker was a blunder and a likely source of trouble. His belligerent attitude confirmed this innocence. Some sort of case could have to be made up against him. That was always a trick thing to do to educated people (83).

Iqbal's pride had been injured. He was under assent in connection with the murder of Ram Lal. Everyone knew that he had come to Mano Majra after the murder. He had taken the same train that the policemen had taken and they could be witness of his alibi. The situation was ludicrous but Punjabi policemen were not the sort who admitted making mistakes; He tried to convince Juggat Singh who was arrested along with him that he was not a villager and had come from Delhi and was sent to organize peasants.

When the truth was revealed, the sub-inspector was irritated. When the fellow policemen told him that Iqbal was a stranger staying at the Sikh temple, he burst out:

I do not suppose you have any brains of your own! I leave a little job to you and you go and made a fool of yourself. You should have seen him before arresting him. Isn't he the same man who got off the train with us yesterday? (86)

The police were doubly wrong as Jugga was out of his house on the night of the dacoity. Even Hukum Chand was angry and was surprised to see the police arresting people without finding out their names, parentage or caste. Police who were always known for their quality, asked Iqbal to remove his dress:

Iqbal loosened the knot in the cord. The Pajamas fell in a heap around his ankles. He was naked save for the hand cuffs on his wrists. He stepped out of the Pajamas to let policemen examine them (89).

The inspector thus ensured that he was a Muslim. When he said that he was sent by the People's Party of India, the inspector asked him whether he was sure it was not the Muslim league.

Mob attacks were a common phenomenon in those days and when they attacked they never waited to find out whether the persons concerned were Hindus or Muslims:

The other day for Sikh Sardars in a jeep drove alongside a mile-long column of Muslim refugees walking on the road. Without warning, they opened fire with their stenguns. Four Sten Guns! God alone knew how many they killed (93).

A lot of women were abducted and sold cheap. Police stations were concentrations camps and third degree methods were adopted to extricate 'truth' from those who were caught:

Hands and feet pinned under legs of charpoys with half a dozen policemen sitting on them. Testicles twisted and squeezed till one becomes senseless with pain. Powdered red chilies thrust up the rectum by rough hands, and the sensation of having the tail on fire for several days. All this, and no food or water, or hot spicy food with a bowl of shimmering cool water put outside the cell just beyond one's reach (100-101).

Some succumbed to hunger and others to the inconvenience of having to defecate in front of the policemen.

The arrival of the ghost train is another important event in the novel which makes the reader flabbergasted. The arrival of the train in broad daylight created commotion in Mano Majra. People stood on their roofs to see what was happening and all they could see was the black top of the train stretching from one end of the platform to the other. Later the villagers were asked to get all the wood there was in their house and all the kerosene oil they could spare. They were asked to bring them to the motor trucks on the station side for which they would be paid. The villagers soon smelt something wrong:

The Northern horizon, which had turned bluish grey, showed orange again. The orange turned into copper and then into luminous russet. Red tongues of flames leaped into the black sky. A soft breeze began to blow towards the village. It brought the smell of burning kerosene, then of wood. And then faint acrid smells of searing flesh (127).

There was deathly silence in the village. The Train has come from Pakistan and everybody knew what had happened. Even Hukum Chand felt feverish to see a thousand charred corpses sizzling and smoking while the rain put out the fire. The inspector told him that there were more than a thousand:

The Sikh officer said there were more than a thousand. I think he just calculated how many people could get into a bogie and multiplied it by the number of bogies. He said

that another four or five hundred must have been killed on the roofs on the footboards and between buffers (141).

In fact, fifteen hundred innocent people getting killed was only part of the story. Similar things were happening at other places also.

Muslims of some villages have started leaving for the refugee camp. Chandunnugger has been partly evaluated. Pakistan army lorries with soldiers had been picking them up whenever information has been brought. Hukum Chand believed that an individual's conscious effort should be directed to immediate ends like saving life when endangered, preserving the social structure and honouring its conventions. His immediate problem was to save Muslim lives. Meanwhile, rumours of atrocities committed by Sikhs on Muslims in Patiala, Ambala and Kapurthala began to spread.

They have heard of gentlewomen having their veil taken off, being stripped and marched down crowded streets to be raped in the market place. Many had eluded their would ravishers by killing themselves. They had heard of Mosques being desecrated by the slaughter of pigs on the premises, and of copies of the holy Koran being torn up by infidels (178).

The Sikhs were angry and announced that Muslims would never be trusted. The last guru has warned that Muslims have no loyalties. All through the Muslim period of the Indian history, sons have imprisoned or killed their own fathers and brothers, have blinded brothers to get the throne. They had executed two of the Sikh Gurus, assassinated another and butchered his children:

And Muslims were never ones to respect women. Sikh refugees had told of women jumping into wells and burning themselves rather than fall in the hands of Muslims. Those who did not commit suicide were paraded naked in the streets, raped into public places and then murdered (178).

A train load of Sikhs massacred by Muslims has been cremated in Mano Majra. Hindus and Sikhs were fleeing from their homes in Pakistan and having to find shelter in Mano Majra. The villagers ultimately decided to be angry with the Muslims.

Soon the Muslims began to come out of their homes, driving their cattle and their bullock carts loaded with charpoys, rolls of beddings, tin trunks, kerosene oil tins, earthen pitchers and brass utensils:

There was no time even to say good bye. Truck engines were started. Pathan soldiers rounded up the Muslims,

drove them back to the carts for a brief minute or two and then to the trucks (196).

To sum up, partition had a tremendous effect on the people of Mano Majra. It adversely affected the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The communities which lived in amity for centuries became enemies overnight. There was mutual suspicion among them and hatred and that was the order of the day. However, it cannot be said that feelings of brotherhood was completely missing when Imam Bhaksh, the mullah of the local mosque came to the Lambardar to ask for his comments on continuing their stay in the village, his reply was that it was as much his village as it was theirs. "If anyone speaks rudely to you, your wives or your children, it will be us first and our wives and children before a single hair of your head is touched" (184).

But he has his own problems. They were few and the strangers coming from Pakistan were coming in thousands. Who will be responsible for what they do was the most question as far as he was concerned. Thus they were asked to lock their houses with their belongings and move to refugee camps. Eventually, Sikh and Muslim villagers fell into each other's arms and began to weep like children. The Muslims who were made to stay in refugee camps were later transported to Pakistan by train. We are also told about the arrival of the Sikh fanatics at the village to take revenge on the Muslim population. They hatch out a plan to fire at the train of refugees going to Pakistan. 'There was a volley of shots. The man shivered and collapsed. The rope snapped in the centre as he fell. The train went over him, and went on to Pakistan' (263).

The novel thus becomes an unforgettable experience. It teaches us the lesson that senseless killing, looting and raping will not take us anywhere and the ideal thing is to live in perfect amity irrespective of the caste and creed to which we belong.

Mano Majra is the name of a place which is centre of action in the sequence of events leading to that final catastrophe. The change in the title is not a matter of mere chance of choice, it indicates static to the dynamic. Mano Majra, the name of a village, is a mixed point in the space, whereas the train is a symbol of movement. The 'train' also denotes groups of people heading for different destinations on the eve of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, millions of people from either side of the dividing boundary were on the way seeking refuge and security. Millions of non-Muslims from Pakistan longed for a passage to India, a land of hope and peace. Millions of Muslims from India sought the road to Pakistan, the land of Islamic faith and promise. Thus the train signifies the movement of vast communities torn from their roots. The train runs between

Mano Majra, a village on the Indian side in the Punjab and Lahore, the capital of the undivided Punjab before partition. The following passage gives the details:

One morning a train from Pakistan halted at Mano Majra railway station. At first glance, it had the look of the trains in the days of peace. No one sat on the roof. No one clung between the bogies. No one was balanced on the footboards. But somehow it was different. There was something uneasy about it. It had a ghostly quality. As soon as it pulled up to the platform the guard emerged from the tail end of the train and went to the station master's office. Then the two went to the soldier's tents and spoke to the officer in-charge. The soldiers were called out and the villagers loitering about were ordered to back to Mano Majra. One man was sent off on a motor cycle to Chandan Nagar. Anyhow, later, the sub inspector with about fifty armed policemen turned up at the Station. Immediately after them, Mr. Hukum Chand drove up in his American car.

The arrival of the ghost train in broad day light created a commotion in Mano Majra. People stood on their roofs to see what was happening at the station.¹(TP-P1)

The dark clouds of suspicion and fear arise among the Sikhs and Muslims who have lived together for centuries. Yet feelings of brotherhood have not disappeared. They meet for taking view of the scene that is both intensely human and touching. Madness has engulfed Mano Majra. Muslims are evacuated to a refugee camp at Chandan Nagar. They are expected to be transported to Pakistan. Nooran, who is with Jugga's child, visits his mother but she is compelled to go to the refugee camp. Hindu fanatics vow revenge upon Muslims for what Muslims have done to Hindus in Pakistan. Hukum Chand is informed that Haseena would be also on the train which carries Muslims refugees from Chandan Nagar camp to Pakistan. Jugga and Iqbal are released at this crucial stage. Juggat Singh goes to Mano Majra only to find that Nooran has been taken to the refugee camp and that she would be travelling on the train to Pakistan. He also comes to know that plot of the Hindu fanatics to blow up the train with dynamite as it passed the raid-road bridge to Mano Majra. Jugga climbs the steep spans of the bridge and begins to cut off the rope connecting the explosive material with a sharp instrument. The Hindu leader fires at him. Jugga clings it to the rope with his hands and finally cuts it to pieces. The engine of the incoming train was almost on him. Thus the train went over him and went to Pakistan.

The individual is more important for a novelist like Khushwant Singh because he is part of a vaster and greater reality of man and communities dominates the individual's fate. Man has his own self and his own free will

but for the time being he becomes part of the train and he is overrun by it. In ***Train to Pakistan*** the novelist exhibits a genuine faith in the humanistic ideal in depicting a real Jugga laying down his life for the woman he loves. It is novelist's deep and ethical humanism that governs his portrayal of the real and the actual.

Jugga is a different type of hero-villain. He rehabilitates himself in our eyes by his supreme self-sacrifice. Although he is compounded of good and evil, ultimately he becomes a power for good. He is neither satanic nor Machiavellian. He is truly an uncouth Indian rustic, who caught in the quicksands of evil, successfully struggles out of it and reaches the shores of spiritual reclamation. Juggat Singh plays a dual role of creator and destroyer. He destroys only to create again and thus symbolizes the triumph of good over evil within himself as well as the concept of renewal. The novelist gives a pen picture of Jugga's sacrifice in the following lines.

Come back, you fool ! At long last, the much-awaited train was on its way to the bridge. Meanwhile, a man, climbing the steel span of the bridge, tugged at the rope. He stretched himself on the rope near the point of the knot. The train was quickly approaching the bridge and its roof was occupied by men. The leader shouted at the man who was clinging to the rope, come off, you ass ! You will be killed. Come off at once! But the man began to slash at the rope with a small kirpan (a sharp dagger) and went on hacking it powerfully. The leader, in sheer desperation, fired at him and the man's leg was hurt and it began to dangle in the air. But he was still at work hacking the rope and the train seemed very close to the spot. Another shot was fired but the man clung to the rope and continued to attack it until it was cut in shreds. He finally cut the tough stand with his knife and teeth and the engine was almost on him. He body was subjected to a volley of shots and he collapsed and fell, but at last in the center. The train went over him, and went to Pakistan. (TP P. 181)

Thus the novelist paints Jugga's final act of sacrifice, the waves of feelings and expectations in his mind. Before his final act of sacrifice we see the sub-inspector carrying out the orders at once by releasing both Iqbal and Jugga. He purposefully informs Jugga that all Mano Majra Muslims were to be evacuated to Pakistan by train that night. They were also told of Malli's misdeeds in looting and killing Muslims. Iqbal and Jugga got into a tonga on their way to Mano Majra. On the way Iqbal dreams of being a hero consequent on his being in Jail. Jugga's main concern was the fate of Nooran and her welfare. He jumped off the moving tonga and disappeared in the darkness. His arrival at a late hour at the Gurudwara to seek the blessings of the Guru underscores to seek the duality in his character. He asked Meet Singh : "I want the Guru's word. Will you

read me a verse?" In compliance of his wishes, Meet Singh read the prayer that God, the Giver of Truth, honours the work of men who want to perform good actions.

For Meet Singh's indulgence in immoral practices could be overlooked if it was motivated by the desire to help and protect a friend. He was not horrified by the ugly act that Jugga was a professional robber or dacoit but he was shocked by his alleged action of murdering a fellow villager. Fellowship was more important than blind adherence to an abstract moral code:

What bothered Meet Singh, a priest was not that Jugga had committed murder but that his hands were soiled with the blood of a fellow villager. If Jugga had done the same thing in the neighbouring village, Meet Singh would gladly have appeared in his defense and sworn on the holy Granth that Jugga had been praying in the Gurudwara at the time of the murder. (TP P. 41)

Khushant Singh's ***Train to Pakistan*** pictures the brutal, realistic story of political hatred, and of mass passions during the tragic days that preceded and followed the partition of India. This political partition of India disturbed the Indian psyche and also its social fabric. It made the social sense of our nation coarse; generated a sense of vengeance and distorted the political judgments. Worst of all, it deranged the understanding of the more rightness of the people.

The novel thus becomes an unforgettable experience. It teaches us the lesson that senseless killing, looting and raping will not take us anywhere and the ideal thing is to live in perfect amity irrespective of the caste and creed to which we belong.

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