

The Novel, Describing the Complex and Critical Aspects of Love, Friendship, Religion, Society, Scriptures and System

Abstract

In this materialistic world, superstition plays a vital role. Every religion and scriptures are the basic guidelines of the human beings. Due to the fear of religion, superstition came in society and it made narrow to the concept of religion. In India, the impact of superstition is on a very large scale. Superstition is prevalent not only in Hinduism but in all other religions also. Critically, the Religion is the method of living which anyone can adopt according to his own will and comfort. And superstition, discrimination, racism and untouchability are only narrow- mindedness of human beings. It is common human tendency that we correlate the negative consequences in negative form instead of improving one's own way and method of living life.

Keywords: Materialistic World, Superstition, Religion, Discrimination, Racism, Narrow- Mindedness

Study Duration: 49 Days

Introduction

The novel, 49 Days of Amrita Pritam critically explores the bonding between two religions, bonding of love within social measurements, the actual meaning of heaven and hell, the wandering human beings around the concept of heaven and hell, the corrupted system of the country because of the leaders who are only sucking the blood of "Bharat Ma". Apart from this, the novel also encourages and inspires that we must not lose the ray of hope in worst condition and with the power of dedication and determination, everything is vincible. Amrita Pritam is unmistakably unafraid in portraying desires as unfettered and fantasies real. NirupamaDutt calls her "a feminist before feminists". Pritam captures the illusive impulse that is feminism- of love, for others and oneself, held in the acknowledgement that we are, and can be, more than the beings that patriarchy imagines for us. Her unfazed resistance is the revolt of love against the compulsoriness of certain futures.

Objective of the Study

The present paper is a deep study about the complexities of love, friendship, religion and society. Amrita Pritam not only project the social issues but also the personal inner conflicts of human beings and she also presents the ways to overcome with these situations. She raises the issues with pen and halts the core of society.

Review of Literature

1. The most of the problems and complexities of human beings are created by social rigid measurements inscribed by some leisurely minded persons as the book of law Manav-Dharmasastra. (from the article "Dalit Literature, Dalits and the Women with Special Reference of Manav- Dharmasastra" by Shweta Maurya -2018)
2. This mortal and materialistic world is both the Heaven and Hell. Neither the Heaven is the home of happiness nor the Hell is the burning furnace. Heaven and Hell both are on this earth created by mortal human beings according to their own positive and negative activity, capacity and conscious. (from Shadows of Words by Amrita Pritam-2001)
3. Love does not know the boundaries of creed, caste, colour and class. It can bloom everywhere in any condition. (from the article "Love in the Perspective of Amrita Pritam with Special Reference of The Revenue Stamp and Shadows of Words" by Shweta Maurya- 2018)
4. Human beings must not lose the ray of hope even in worst condition. Because the possibilities have infinite dimensions. (from the article "Partition of India and Pakistan in the Context of the Women and the



Shweta Maurya

Research Scholar
Deptt.of English and Modern
European Languages
University of Allahabad,
Allahabad

Social Phenomena with Special Reference of The Skeleton” by Shweta Maurya-2018) (Because of the unavailability of other relevant reviews about the novel 49 Days, I have given my reviews written in the above articles)

“Sanjay’s entire life had shrunk into one line: the line on his forehead of a faint consciousness.” (Page no.5, Lines 1-2, 49 Days) Sanjay, the protagonist of the novel is on sickbed because of his beloved Meeta’s death. Sanjay’s incoherent mental wanderings in a Fantasia Land, where a bygone beloved, Meeta, comes to the restless soul wrapped seductively in a blue aura. Sanjay has lost his whole consciousness and senses. Karim Kadir, the closest friend of Sanjay, is piling ice but these blocks of ice seems like salt to Sanjay in his faint consciousness. He says to Karim, “...Friend... Karim... As with the ancient Egyptians for centuries, you would not be having to mummify me. Remember- the body’s made of four elements: fire, water, earth and air. To the same elements must it be consigned. See that that is done. Will you?” (Page no.5, Lines 22-26, 49 Days) The author seems to take great inspiration from Bhagavad Gita. The importance of work and the ‘Panchbhoot’ concept is stressed in the above statement. ‘Bhagavad’ means ‘God’ and ‘Gita’ means ‘Song’. Bhagavad Gita, therefore, can be translated as “The Song of Lord”. Our scriptures point out that the universe is made of five elements: Space(Akash), Air(Vayu), Fire(Agni), Water(Jalam), Earth(Prithvi). After death, the human body dilute in these five elements but soul is immortal and ageless according to the scriptures.

Death is a mystery and the fear of losing life, uncertainty prevailing over what is next, expectation of heaven and fear of hell. Death haunts many of us in different forms. Losing our relatives and friends bring first shiver of fear in us. Superstitions play a major role to console this fear. The fear of death is also used to force the people to live in accordance with the principles laid by religions. There is a believe in many areas of India that once a person is dead, the soul will have to remain 49 days in the sky before re-entering into the earth. In this interval, person may visit the heaven or hell. The Jnanpith awardee Amrita Pritam tries to remove this superstition from human mind and calls to create the heaven or hell in this world with our deeds.

Sanjay is sick after his beloved, Meeta’s death. He falls into a ‘psychic reality’. He believes that he is dead and now wanders in the sky searching for Meeta’s soul. Karim is the closest friend of Sanjay. The friendship between Karim and Sanjay is not only the closest friendship between two persons but also it is unique and symbol of example to be given to all the people who are killing people just because of hared of other religion. It is very true to say that two pious hearts still connect. It does not matter what the narrow world thinks and does. Karim tries his best to bring back his friend from false hallucination. When Karim brings Sanjay to his home, he says to his wives, “He is like both friend and son to me. Nurse him back to health and I’ll be indebted to you for the rest of my

life.” (Page no. 8, Lines 35-37, 49 Days) The words of Karim touch the core of heart when he says that he will die if Sanjay’s life will be in danger. The honesty in feeling and open-heart utterance bring tears in eyes after reading the following lines told by Karim, “Honest to God, let me tell you, Barkatay- should something happen to this precious attachment I have. I’ll not long survive him!...” (Page no. 10, Lines 6-8, 49 Days)

Novel is the best saga of love. Love is eternal and immortal in this cosmos. Nothing can replace the sentiments of love. Where one side, Sanjay is in mental panic because his love Meeta has died and Sanjay himself wants to die to be with the soul of Meeta in heaven there other side Karim, who had loved to Mumtaz but due to belonging different sects (Shia and Sunni) of Islaam, Karim had to marry to Barkatay and Nehmatay. Karim had never forgotten the memories of Mumtaz and never wanted to give place of Mumtaz to anyone else. Karim never liked to listen the name of Mumtaz by his wives. But when the condition of Sanjay improved a little, Karim told to Nehmatay, “Well now, is that a question to be asked? Would Barkatay not be the ‘Elder Mumtaz’ and you the ‘Younger’?” (Page no. 18, Lines 34-36, 49Days)

Whole novel revolves around the ‘love’. Karim, being married man of two wives, regrets to not be with Mumtaz and in his life. Sanjay, being in love with Meeta, is counting the days to die because he thinks that after the death, he will be able to meet to Meeta. In his hallucination, he thinks in his faint conscious that he has died and his sol is wandering in the search of peace and after 49 days, when his soul will meet to Meeta in heaven then his soul will rest in peace. Love in the novel is projected in an unusual way. Amrita Pritam has portrayed the unusual condition of love because she wants to represent that despite of thousand impediments of caste, class, colour, creed and society, love emerges and blooms in the delicate hears without being fail in any condition. Sanjay was in love with Meeta, who was married already. According to the Indian society, it is very unusual even the Indian society never permits such unusual love. Indian society always objects and prohibits over such conditions and issues. Karim was in love with Mumtaz. Karim belonged to Shia community of Muslims while Mumtaz belonged to the Sunni. In Muslim society, it is strictly prohibited. Shirin, the elder daughter of Karim falls in love with Sanjay, who is the closest friend of Karim. First unusual thing is that it is “inter-religion” love and the second thing that it is “big age difference love”. In all the above condition, it will be more appropriate to tell that love is just sin in Indian society. How irrelevant to consider love as sin while each and every religion and scriptures of the world preach the gospels of love and consider the love as the medium to protect the whole humanity.

Amrita Pritam was very eminent and veteran writer and poet. Her each blow of pen paints the harsh picture of social reality and pain of heart. Projecting the unusual and unique dimensions, raising voice against the social issues, elaborating the real condition of women in society and picturing the different aspects of love, creating the art with the real

words of mourn and grieve of human beings were the great qualities of Amrita Pritam. When Karim recalls the memories of Mumtaz, "The lifelong hollow need never have been formed, had the Shia- Sunni distance between the two Muslim sects not cropped up. He might have had a home filled with the life and laughter he had sought." (Page no. 19, Lines 10-13, 49 Days)

According to Amrita Pritam, love also desires the physical need. The burning of heart needs the quench of love. Sanjay feels the thrust in his heart and says, "How can flesh and blood be transformed into traditional beliefs? And how did I go by traditional beliefs even when she was alive? Two souls met. Why did not two living bodies meet?" (Page no. 62, Lines 30-33, 49 Days) Describing the madness of love, Sanjay says, "...if someone one really wished to spend one's life with a dear departed wouldn't a madness afflict the sufferer with, what you might call, an indefinable malady?" The statement of Sanjay seems true somewhere. Amrita Pritam herself was in deep love with SahirLudhianvi. In her autobiography, she has mentioned an incident in which she was representing a conference and during the running session of conference, she had written the name "Sahir" on conference note book many times unconsciously or in faint conscious. It is told that true love connects soul to soul and thus soul becomes subdue to that person to whom we love. In such condition, the heart feels the presence of his or her still in absence.

Novel also strikes over the caste system of India mentioned in Manav-Dharmasastra. Fateh, the uneducated character of novel, innocently asks to Sanjay, "Tell me now, had the Brahmin- Shudra, upper-and-lower caste-distinction always been there? Who could first have thought it up? And when precisely in the history of the country?" (Page no. 84, Lines 8-11, 49 Days) Amrita Pritam has mentioned the class and caste distinction very briefly but in two different ways. Firstly, she says that those who could exercise their minds, who were better than others in reading and writing- must obviously have been the ones to be classified as Brahmins; those who proved better warriors must as obviously have become Kshatriyas; and so those who stood out in business and trade, they got grouped as Vaishyas. And those who were physically industrious became Shudras. Secondly, she says in the words of Sanjay, "The one-and-the-same man begins at the lowest rung of ladder: the Shudra, and then through Vaishya and Kshatriya does he graduate to the Brahmin."

The first division of caste is based on service and physical and mental capability and second division is based on enlightenment of human beings. Amrita Pritam says each new-born is a Shudra. In the words of Sanjay, Amrita Pritam describes her division of enlightenment, "An infant naturally has to obey to do as he's told. After this Shudra stage, he learns the 3R's: reading, writing, and arithmetic. So, he becomes a Vaishya. When in adulthood, he fights for his country, how can you not call him a Kshatriya? And finally, when he knows all that is to be known about life, why must you not rate him as high as a

Brahmin?" (Page no. 84, Lines 39-40 and Page no. 85, Lines 1-5, 49 Days)Amrita Pritam says that enlightenment or learning has no relationship with the age of any man. Some remained stagnating at Shudraship or Vaishyaship throughout life. Amrita Pritam has always cheered and honoured the equality between man and woman. Even the women characters of her novels are never less than a male hero or protagonist. Pooro, Shirin, Alka, Benu are the heroes of the novels of Amrita Pritam. When Karim sees Shirin in his delightful mood, he says, "You've already graduated from the Shudra to the Brahmanic state, my girl!" (Page no. 90, Lines 36-37, 49 Days) The statement is also full of enlightenment. How beautiful it is to imagine in reality that a Muslim girl acquiring the knowledge becomes not only Hindu but Brahmanic Hindu, who becomes a scholar and God like according to Hinduism.

Amrita Pritam focuses that all the differences, discrimination, hatred, jealousy is only among the living beings. Death dissolves all these distinctions. Novel also deals with the concept of Heaven and Hell which is clarified by Sanjay in the last phase of novel. Sanjay says, "All's on this good earth: heaven and hell. So often does man who is born here, die here; so often does he who dies here, get reborn here itself." (Page no. 142, Lines 38-40 and Page no. 143, Line 1, 49 Days)

Conclusion

Thus, we can create a small heaven if we combine our efforts to that goal. These small efforts will be the basis for a big heaven. Despite of our religious faith, it is our deeds which matters. Shirin is the true representative of the 'change' we require. She brought life to the hope when it was about to die. She kept the eyes open and added knowledge to understand the surroundings better. She learned new skills to spread the message of love. Thus, difficulties faced by the writer are explained in the novel as well. The novel is an inspiration to the world. Love, marriage, relation etc are the things required to cook the "immature words". Parents are the real artist, what kind of law is that, which do not understand friendship? Which kind of politicians the country has today? Who are acting like 'son in laws' not like 'sons'. Each nation is losing its moral commitment to humanity and the administration is all engaged in distributing portfolios of distribution. 'Live and let live'- is there such a place in the world? These questions and complexities are brilliantly explored and described by the writer. Novel compels us to think over and search the solve of these questions and salvation of the humanity.

References

1. *A Shadows of Words: An Autobiography*. New Delhi: Macmillan India Limited, 2001. Print.
2. *The Revenue Stamp*. 1994. Roy. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1998. Print.
3. *49 Days*. Delhi: Dynamic Publications, 2015. Print.
4. *Chune Hue Upanyas*. New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 2011. Print.
5. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita
6. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amrita_Pritam

7. *"Dalit Literature, Dalits and the Women with Special Reference of Manav- Dharmasastra"- 2018, article written by Shweta Maurya in the upcoming issue of 'Vidyawarta'*
8. *"Love in the Perspective of Amrita Pritam with Special Reference of The Revenue Stamp and Shadows of Words"- 2018, article written by Shweta Maurya in the upcoming issue of 'Academic Social Research'*
9. *"Partition of India and Pakistan in the Context of the Women and the Social Phenomena with Special Reference of The Skeleton"- 2018, article written by Shweta Maurya in the upcoming issue of 'Krishi Sanskriti Publication'*