



CHAUVINISM AND REALISM: A STUDY OF CHAMANNAHAL'S *THE SALT OF LIFE*

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ABSTRACT

ChamanNahal is well-known novelist and short story writer and he wrote eight novels. In his eight novels, *Azadi* holds an important place and it won Sahitya Academy Award. Nahal's fictions include *My True Faces* (1973), *Azadi* (1975), *Into Another Dawn* (1977), *The English Queens* (1979), *The Crown and Loincloth* (1981), *Sunrise in Fiji* (1988), *The Salt of Life* (1991) and *The Triumph of the Tricolour* (1993), and the short-story collection *The weird Dance* (1965). His critical works include D.H.Lawrence: *An Eastern View* (1970), *The Narrative Pattern in Ernest Hemingway's Fiction* (1971), and *The New Literatures in English* (1985). The purpose of writing this article is to bring out the Chauvinism and Realism in ChamanNahal's *The Salt of Life*.

Gandhi is one of the prominent characters in this novel. He is struggling against the British Crown through the way of non-violent struggle so Gandhi is charmed by every one of India. He is not only struggling for freedom movement but also he is struggling to stop liquor shops and emancipation of women. ChamanNahal clearly portrayed every ugly event of British Government and how Gandhi's non-violence struggle versus British anarchy.

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ChamanNahal, born in 1927 in Sialkot, India (now in Pakistan) and educated at Delhi University (M.A., 1948) and the University of Nottingham, England (Ph.D., 1961), was a professor of English at the Institute of Postgraduate Studies, Delhi University, and at Long Island University, New York, USA (from 1968-70). Between 1966 and 1973 he wrote a literary column for *The Indian Express*.

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In 1922, Gandhi was arrested by the British police and prisoned six years up to 1928. In that six years, India was silent and the people were turning to use the foreign goods simultaneously, the caste Hindus treat the untouchables badly. Sunil, who was revolutionary and he died while tries to save Prince of Wales according to the words of Gandhi. Sunil's wife Kusum and their son Vikram are staying in Sabarmati Ashram with Gandhi. In the salt Satyagraha, Vikram becomes a famous one by

indulging in mass struggle with Gandhi, who still remembers Sunil's letter was written to Gandhi when he was on Simla Hills. In that letter, he wrote that the caste Hindus ill-treated the untouchables. Now it makes more agony to Gandhi.

Why then this slip about Sunil? well, Sunil it was who had once written to him about the evil that was Hinduism. What year was it? Way back. He had written to him in the context of the untouchables and how badly they were treated by the caste Hindus in Simla Hills. Gandhi couldn't remember what reply he had sent to him but he vividly remembered Sunil's letter. Full of agony. Full of disgust. Gandhi felt the same agony and disgust for Hinduism today. The caste Hindus not only ill-treated the untouchables, they ill-treated all created life. If there were saviours and redeemers, Hindus were the great deniers, the great extinguishers of life- the great smotherers. (14)

The passage obviously expresses the untouchable's history of India and how for Gandhi felt and tried to make untouchable as equal to high caste Hindus. In 1929, Gandhi is overcome by a sense of defeat because people are still using foreign goods. Most of the Hindus and Muslims are considering each other enemies and untouchability.

Gandhi always struggles against the British Government. Liquor shops are occupying the human mind both men and women, which pushes them wrong way, so Gandhi needs to launch non-violent struggle against Liquor shops, and the first strike starts in Ahmadabad and Bombay against the Liquor shops. Gandhi writes a letter to viceroy and warns him that the Liquor shops should be closed or else he will be agitated. Gandhi thinks that drinking is morally wrong and money is wasted for alcohol. ChamanNahal obviously reflects his aspires to stop the Liquor shops through the character Gandhi.

Gandhi wrote to the government on the same lines. Look, Viceroy, I'm about to hold a picketing against the liquor shops all over the country. I believe drinking is morally wrong and in a poor country like ours it also imposes economic hardships; the much

needed money is wasted away on alcohol. Men as well women will take part in the picketing. They will see the liquor stores do not open; or that no one can buy anything, if they do manage to raise their shutters. These men and women will be willing to court arrest, if necessary, in the pursuit of their aim. There might be lathi charges which the police would be forced to resort to, to maintain peace. My men and women won't break law and order,' but the situation might so develop because of the miscreants who are at each place to add fuel to the fire. There might be thus much suffering, which my followers will willingly go through. But if you can write to me and convince me that it is a wrong step to take, this picketing of liquor stores, and that drinking is morally defensible habit, than I will call off the agitation.(19)

From the passage, one could clearly understand that the British Government gave more important for liquor shops to maintain the Indians as slaves therefore like Gandhi and his followers not only struggled for freedom but also such pity problems.

In 1928 of April, Gandhi's son Maganlal Gandhi died when he was on the visit in Bihar due to heavy fever. It greatly breaks the heart of Gandhi but he does not display his grievance and indulge the freedom movement. If any one's son died, he would not concentrate in any other works, as Gandhi is a patriotic person, he fixes himself that he has to show his personal grievance after getting the freedom only. ChamanNahal obviously displays the Gandhi's psyche and faith on nation.

My be that grief was at the back of his mind when he fainted. Gandhi had not much time for personal grief; the struggle he was waging against the British demanded all his attention. And he had, as he thought, put Maganlal in the safe deposit of his memory which would be opened only after India had become free and Gandhi had the time to sit back and be nostalgic. And yet, when one evening after the prayers he got up to leave the prayer ground, he tottered and fell unconscious. (33)

The passage obviously displays Gandhi's mind that he did not give much time to his personal grievance though his son died at the time of freedom movement.

Gandhi murmurs that British what had done to India for last ten years and also Simon Commission what do to India. Most of the congress leaders are indulging the non-violence struggle against Simon commission according to the words of Gandhi so British police launch lathi charge on Indian strugglers consequence of it LalaLajpatRai dies by the lathi blows. British police beat with lathi blows the congress leaders like JawarharlalNehru, Pandit Pant and the people of Congress party with lathi blows. It hurts Gandhi, who expresses his inability to hold up his balance before British and its anarchy against the congress leaders.

And that's why he had failed with the British. What had the British done during the last ten years in spite of all his noises? Sent out a mission now and then, which repeated the old clichés in the report it submitted? What had the Simon Commission done for India, which was here two years ago? So far as he was concerned, Simon had only brought pain to those who were dear to hi,. Jawaharlal was hit with lathi blows in the demonstration against this Commission. PanditPant had been his with fathis. LalaLajpatRai had been hit with lathis and had later died because of those blows. And what of the common run of people, whose names, whose addresses, whose identities were not even known to him? They had been trampled upon in the most brutal manner, their bodies mutilated, their spirits crushed yet again. No, he had altogether failed to soften the British in their attitude to India. Or soften the white men in general. Yes, white men and women came to him and listened to him and were moved.(44)

The passage obviously shows that the Congress leaders how far faced the problems to attain the freedom and lost their soul for freedom of the country.

In 1930-40, most of the people of India were in the congress party and there was no village without the membership of congress party because Gandhi's non-violent struggle were attracts by Indian people and they followed Gandhi's principle. ChamanNahal brings out the clear idea about Gandhi's congress in India. In India, during the freedom struggle, there was no new flag than Congress Tricolor and there was no national anthem than VandeMataram. It clearly display the effectiveness of congress during the freedom struggle.

In the India of 1930-40, Gandhi was one such choice – the major choice in terms of the numbers he attracted to his non-violent movements and the awakening he brought about amongst the masses against British imperialism. There was not a village in the whole if India in which the Congress did not operate, and its membership, from a mere half million at varying levels of its struggle, had by the end of 1939 risen to be a full five million. For most villagers there was no other national flag but the Congress Tricolour, no other national anthem than the VandeMataram. (375)

It clearly displays that while the freedom movement of India, Indian people were the inspiration to the national spirit to attain the freedom and no one indulged in the other party than Congress, and no one sings the other song than national anthem.

In *The Salt of Life*, ChamanNahal succeeds exceedingly well in his attempt to show how Gandhi achieves resounding success in Salt Satyagraha by the dint of his steadfast discipline, hard work, and, above all, his unparalleled capacity to carry the masses with him, thereby revealing how Gandhi's second mass movement has contributed greatly to the social emancipation of Indian women.

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