

CHAPTER - IV

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Anand won the Sahitya Akademi award for his novel, Morning Face which was published in 1968. Krishan narrates his story in the first person narrative. Being an autobiographical novel, the novel suggests a number of parallels in the author's personal life. Paul verghese a wrote to Anand,

The portrait of Krishan in Morning Face resembles the portrait of the novelist in his adolescence.¹

Anand told P.K. Rajan,

The autobiographical novels become very important as sources indicative of energies let loose in my young life.²

Like the young Anand, his hero also perceives the inconsistencies of the contemporary world. The religious disposition of Krishan's mother, the compromising nature of his father, Krishan's bad schooling, the death of Krishnan's cousin, resemble a experiences in Anand's young life.

Krishan moves from place to place, from Nowshera to Amritsar, then to his elder brother's house in Ludhiana, goes and stays in cantonment at Zhelum, pays visits to villages like Alampur in Kangra valley and his grandmother's village Baska for purely domestic reasons. His stay in these places

and his educational career give him a set of adolescent companions like his brothers- Ganesh and Shiv, his cousin Kaushalya who dies a premature death, his cousins Dev Raj and Sushila, the sweeper boy Gughu, Dhan Singh, Buddhu and a number of school-mates. But the centre of action and the centre of interest is Krishan. Krishan is an active participant in the action of the novel:

Krishan is a boy of seven years, when the action of the novel begins and he completes his twelfth year at the close of the novel. In the course of action, we see him getting high fever on many occasions. He is delicate in health. He is subject to frequent illnesses. He has small frame with big ego. Master Bishan Singh in the P.B.N. High School calls him, " Choochia."³

He is fair in complexion. But he is aware of his diminutive physical frame. His eyes are bold and searching. Ganesh and other boys in the school call him,
 " Weepy, Biju faced."⁴

Though small in appearance, Krishan plays hockey with his friends and is sensitive to the happenings around him.

Krishan formal and informal education does shape his personality. Krishan and his elder brother, Ganesh join the

fifth primary class in Pandit Baij Nath High school, Amritsar. His days at this P.B.N High School are not happy. The demonic teachers in the school tortured these boys. Boys are owls, donkeys and buffaloes for the drill master, Havildar Lehna Singh. The teachers try to drive sense into children with the cane. Krishan completes his high school education in the Government high school, Ludhiana and in cantonment school at Jhelum. This education at three places in different schools offers him a set of bad teachers like, Bishan Singh, Budh Singh who makes homosexual advances to Krishan. Some good teachers like Master Shah Nawaz whose class is like heaven for Krishan, Raja Fazal Muhammad, Master Hari Chand, Lala Amarnath help Krishan in his education. Krishan passes his examinations in spite of his physical weakness due to frequent illnesses. Krishan prefers stories and the school in which one can grow on one's own. Krishan is fluent in reading English texts. The informal education and the experiences teach him a lot about life. The Arya Samajist uncle Dev Dutt; the young graduate Lala Kedar Nath, Dr. Chuni Lal and his wife enlighten and instruct Krishan about our freedom movement and meaningless rituals. They tell Krishan about the role of D.A.V. College in educating the young rebels and how the British were trying to suppress the freedom movement. The brutal attacks of the police on people

in Amritsar and Jhelum make him a strong opponent of the British Govt. He hates his father for supporting the British. In his father's small library and with the help of the books given to him by Dev Dutt and Dr. Chunilal, he is able to read the books like Manmohan's History of India, M.K. Gandhi's Hind Swaraj, Maxim Gorky's Mother and a number of such good books. Nourished on this formal and informal education Krishan becomes a bitter critic of the British government. As a result, he joins the procession which is organized to welcome Lala Lajpat Rai. His father's influence and the intervention of an Irish Officer save him from the expulsion from the school.

Because of this education, Krishan aspires for the modern life. Bakha, Munoo and Lalu accept British ways of life as modern ways. They try to imitate the British masters. But Krishan comprehends the significance of this evil power in India. His love of modern life takes an interesting turn. He is not interested in British caps and cigarettes. Krishan is good at his expression in English. He hates rituals. He prefers American ways of life, to British ways, Krishan says,

" And I was so excited by the passion of hatred against the Angrezi sarkar which uncle Dev Dutt had infused into his words that I certainly did not any more want to be a sahib of British variety but of the American kind, when I grew up, to go to America, rather than to England."5

Krishan thinks that American straw hat on his head will present him as Abraham Lincoln. He likes the Americans for their anti-British ways. His comprehension of the evil effects of British power in India is his attraction for modern life in India. He expresses his sympathy to those who want to destroy British power and make our country free.

Krishan grows up from the state of innocence to the state of experience. His quest for identity in the ritual-ridden society leads to his gradual loss of innocence. His family, education, religion face a severe test at the hands of this sensitive boy. He wonders at the material plans, of his parents. They are after material gains. His father takes bribes. His parents force his aunt Devaki, to adopt their son, Ganesh in order to retain the family property of dead uncle, Pratap. Krishan is not happy with his parents love for money. His mother is a religious woman. Krishan is named after the Hindu God-Krishna. Krishan's father joins and leaves Arya Samaj in order to continue his service to the British Government. Krishan hates this compromising attitude of his father. His mother's devotion to Gods and spirits is under constant scrutiny of this sensitive boy. Krishan observes the rituals performed by his mother. His mother

believes in ghosts and spirits. She thinks that the ghost of Sain Lok haunts her family. Being a young boy, Krishan is afraid of these evil spirits. But he is dead against the rituals and all powerful Gods. His anger against God bursts out these words,

" Who are you above the vast sky, that you gaze down on us, but never care about our troubles... Tyrant, Torturer, Strike me dead for my bad deeds now, if you have the power, To court your wrath- I spit on your face."⁶

This is Krishan's open revolt against Almighty God. Krishan's innocence tries to clear his confusions in these words,

" No shutting my eyes even to the hypocrisy of my family. Perhaps, if I faced ugly things like caste, my father's compromises, and the superstitions of the priests, I may discover expressiveness and strength in words- provided I could keep my heart open and pure and innocent."⁷

Krishan hates his coppersmith profession. He dislikes the rituals performed by Mahant Nardgir. To begin with he is nicknamed Bully, but later on he disapproves of this title. He wants others to treat him not as a child but as grown-up boy. He terms the white sahibs as ' the murderers '. He hates the world of lies, violence and hypocrisy. His moral panic troubles him. He wants to communicate his ghaon-manoon (state of confusion) to others.

Krishan tries to clear his confusion. This attempt to clear his confusions is nothing but to establish his identity. His answer to his confusions is two-fold; 1 He tries to join the Indian freedom movement. This is his political action. 2 He tries to write poems and books. Krishan takes a sacred vow under the supervision of Dr. Chuni Lal that he will work hard in order to free our country. Krishan's mentors like Dr. Chuni Lal and uncle Dev Dutt instruct him about the historical events like Rowlatt act, Gaddhar party, Home Rule act, Gandhi's attempt to practise non-violence and so many other things related to the freedom movement. These happenings transformed Krishan's mental make-up. Krishan receives seven stripes on his back for breaking the curfew order. His father considers him as a spoilt child because of his anti-government activities. Like Anand's other young boys, Krishan also loves poetry. He reads British and Urdu poetry. He memorises the poems about the adventures of Raja Rasalu. He listens intently to the recitation from Waris Shah's Hir Ranjeh by Master Shah Nawaz. He looks to the poetry as a solace to dreary life. He loves words. He wants to be a real poet. He composes his first poem in praise of his aunt Devaki. After the composition of this poem, Krishan remarks,

" I secretly nourished the ambition to learn to put my thoughts and feelings on paper in the worship of the twin ideals of love and beauty."8

In the end of the novel, he wants to be a God speaking inspired words with superhuman strength. Thus he wants to answer his problems with the help of poetry.

The gradual loss of innocence in Krishan makes him aware that Amritsar, the ocean of nectar, has turned out to be city of dreadful nights. Krishan moans over the loss of his innocence,

" The innocence of my childhood was being drowned in the knowledge of ugly, evil things forced on me by the bad grown up talk of Amritsar."⁹

Krishan bears the pain of growing up in the hard world. He wants to live in the world of romance. Finally, he does so by being a poet. The deaths of his close relatives like Kaushalya, Uncle Pratap make him question the mystery of life. His anger against senior generation is clear in his remark,

" All you grown up people, you all seem to know what is good for young people.. I don't care what you think about what I must do and must not do."¹⁰

Krishan's growing in age makes him aware of the sexual impulses in him. To begin with, he is content with the smell of a woman body. He is happy with the motia and molsari smell of aunt Devaki's body. He listens to gossip

and thus tastes the forbidden fruits of knowledge. He is happy in the company of women. Krishan admits,

" I certainly felt more comfortable in the presence of females... Any how, I had in me the yearning to sit with women, talk to them and be fondled by them."¹¹

Aunt Devaki and his elder brother Harish's extramarital relation, Mumtaz ~~are~~ are his objects of love. But this love moves on two planes : mother-son love and beloved-lover love. It remains an emotional level. Master Budh Singh tries to make homosexual advances to him. Krishan tries to play this game with his friend Buddhu in exchange of fine payment of one anna to him. Krishan tries to ride on a mare. At this juncture, he finds his pyjamas sudden. Aunt Devaki explains to him, " All that has hapoened to you is that you have become a man. Now you can no longer sleep with your arms around my neck... You will have to get a little wife of your own."¹²

This sexually matured Krishan longs for sexual intercourse with the woman. He wants to make love to the bandsman's daughter Helen.

Baros Cowasjee praises Anand for the creation of this character in these words :

" The development of Krishan's character is handled with great skill. The boy gradually sheds his innocence as he is initiated into the world of experience, he becomes increasingly aware of the short-comings of his parents and the society in which he is growing up. He struggles to reject their values and seek freedom and love. A sound common sense and the need to put everything to the test seem to be the dominating qualities of his mind. It is Anand's difficult task to show the heroic without making Krishan a hero."¹³

Confession of a lover (1976) is the third in Anand's proposed series of Seven Ages of Man. Anand originally entitled this

novel, The Lover. But the publisher changed it to Confession of a Lover. Anand wrote to Cowasjee,

" Confession of a Lover is about adolescence, poetry and love."¹⁴

Anand admits in his Apology,

" After a long tussle with my father during which I learnt to hate all the compromises which he had accepted, all his ideas of flourishing in the world, of obeying the government, of my marrying a girl of his choice and settling down like a respectable person... after realizing that I should die or disintegrate if I could not satisfy my curiosity for truth, I left India at last in the autumn of 1925."¹⁵

This tussle in Anand's actual life plays a dominant role in shaping his adolescent hero-Krishan | Chander Azad.

Like Anand's other adolescent heroes, Krishan is in the company of other adolescents like Noor Mahammad, Late Latif, Gyan Chand, Mubarak Ali, Phool Chand, Yasmin, Noor and Yasmin participate in his growth. The action of the novel is woven round the central character-Krishan. Krishan joins Khalsa college, Amritsar. On his first day to the college, he wears homespun cloth pyjamas and Sola topee on his head. Krishan is a small boy. Principal Walters admits him in his college with these words,

" You must eat more and grow to be as tall as a skih boy."¹⁶

Krishan's nick-names like Tadpole, Teddy and soark refer to his small physical frame. Professor Henry appreciates light in his eyes. Krishan regrets & his not having a beard. Krishan's father warns him, "

" Give up this childishness and grow up, son, you already have a moustache on your upper lip." 17

Munoo, Bakha and Lalu are the victims of exploitative caste and class system. Krishan chander is slightly better in his caste and class position. He belongs to the coopersmith brotherhood who want to return from Aga Khan faith to the folds of Hinduism. His father is an army man who is full of material plans for his son. He wants Krishan to receive Silver Wedding Fund scholarship. He hopes his son will join the Government service. But Krishan is not interested in material wealth. He tries to apply his wisdom of the heart to his personal experiences.

Teachers like Maulana Murtaza Hussain, Professor Henry, Lalla Jag Mohan, Bhai Vir-Singh, Prof. Dev Raj guide him about his philosophical quests and in his attempt to enjoy literature. Krishan reads so many books. Some of them are Tennyson's In Memorium, Palgrave's Golden Treasury, Mysteries of London, Bible, Gorky's Mother, Henderson's Supply and Demand, Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. He reads poems of Tagore.

He reads Urdu poems of poet Iqbal. Anand has not shown the effect of these books on Krishan. But the reading must have added to Krishan's intellectual and emotional makeup. The life outside the college educates Krishan. He has not shut his eyes to the socio-political context and the historical events of his country. Lalla Kedar Nath informs him about the plans of the extremists. He is in touch with Gandhi's non-violent non-co-operation movement. Krishan demonstrates his faith in Gandhian principles in 'strike' against the management of his college when they dismiss his favourite teachers because the teachers arranged Dr. Annie Beasant's lecture in the college. Lalla Kedar Nath kindles his political cravings. He faces brief imprisonment on account of his suspected participation in bomb-making. In fact, he is not a party to this conspiracy. The proceedings of the case are important for his political education. Krishan's maternal uncle, Mama Dayal Singh who turned mystic in the spiritual quest, gives some suggestions to Krishan in his spiritual excursions. His actual meeting with poet Iqbal makes him understand the meaning of poetic realism. This formal and informal education leads him to aspire for the modern life. But this love of modern life has deep roots. He is not interested in imitating the western people. Modernity is visible in his sensibility. He wants to defeat the old British power. He

wants to write poems and novel about Indian life. He wants to express the changing attitude of a sensitive, Indian boy to the white man and his world. His love for modern life forces him to criticise big city civilisation of Bombay. Krishan knows the history of American war of independence and Irish Freedom Movement.

Krishan grows into experience. His sensitive mind questions everything. He questions his parents, family, his education set up, his religion, various superstitions, consistencies and inconsistencies in Indian freedom movement, the existence of God. His attempt to answer these questions is an attempt to establish his identity. He dislikes material plans of his parents. He hates the rituals performed by his brother hood. His ghaoon-moon (a state of confusion) follows him every where. Krishan tells his teacher,

" I want to ask many questions: ' who am I ? what is all this about ? I am torn. I don't believe in the old, old, dead customs. I want to have a new faith of my own, away from ritual- even the good Sikhs like my mother have succumbed to ritual and every one believes in supernatural origin." 18

Krishan hates ritualistic religion. He doesn't believe in the dead religion. He wants to invest God in order to demolish God. He wants to write a letter to God that he does not exist any more. According to Krishan, Hindu prayers'

are just a way of drugging oneself with temple bells and ritualistic recitations. In the same fashion, he points out that many Muslims don't understand sermons in Arabic. He dislikes the religion which prevents him to dine with his Muslim friends. He rejects this convention along with his aunt, Devaki at Moor's house. Religion is the biggest obstacle in his love affair. Krishan explains his concept of religion,

" I could spit on the God on top of the sky and perhaps find the flame in the sun and moon and earth. I would write poems about them."¹⁹

Saros Cowasjee remarks,

The book's (Confession of A Lover) theme is Krishan's many loves; his love of political and social freedoms, his love of Gandhi, his love of poetry, his love for Yasmin."²⁰

In fact, Krishan's love of poetry and his love for Yasmin mingle with each other. Noor's sister-in-law is engaged to a railway guard. But instead of this engagement, Krishan falls in love with her at first sight. She also composes poems like Krishan. Poetry is Krishan's first love. He is proud of his being poet. He wants to reassure his identity as a poet. He reads poems of western poets as well as poems of Indian poets. He does close reading of Urdu poems. Dr. Mahamad Iqbal gives him a number of insights into the concept of good poetry. Krishan and Yasmin write love poems

to each other. Krishan writes a novel. The Absent one.

He himself comments on creative process;

" As a writer I would have to be like a god, looking on, detachedly to communicate the lover's suffering to free myself from my lower self." 21

Finally, Krishan fails in the fulfilment of his love because Yasmin's husband kills her and prevents her possible elopment with Krishan. The tragic effect of this event impersonalises the tragedy of his personal love and he concludes that catharsis should be the real aim of poetry. This young rebel is an active participant in political action. His love of poetry escillates between his beloved and his political action. He is a active satyagrahi who wants to reinstate his teachers who are guilty of inviting Annie Beasant to deliver a lecture in the college. The Police attack Krishan. But he shows ' non-violence ' in action.

Being an adolescent, Krishan shows his inclination to sexual impulses. The boys in the college tease him for his supposed homosexual relations with Noor, Krishan himself suggests this relation when he writes,

" I pressed him (Noor) hard. And I put my cheek upon his cheek. The sheer physical contact excited ~~me~~ in me the esstasy of physical desire... Our bodies were locked into each other." 22

Krishan longs for Helen's womanbody in Morning Face. But in this novella, he advances a step ahead. He fondles Yasmin's hand in the theatre. He kisses her. Finally he makes love to her. He is aggressive. He narrates his action,

" I tore the buttons of her tunic near the bosom and slobbered my way from the left nipple to the right, caressing the lovely warm, sweat-covered protuberances."²³

Like Munoc and Lalu, Krishan moves a lot from place to place. He goes to Lahore. He pays a visit to Bombay. He goes to Kashmir. These various places give a variety of experiences to young Krishan. Krishan shows his urge to live. The deaths of aunt Devaki and Yasmin trouble him a lot. He thinks of committing a suicide, but later on comes to the conclusion that he must face the life. According to Marlene Fisher, Krishan grows like a sensitive plant. Krishan advocates the wisdom of the heart.

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