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## Taslina Nasrin's *Lajja*: A Shame on Religion and Politics

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All over this cosmos, most of the people believe that there is an invisible supreme power that is the creator and the runner of this world. Human being is supposed to be the most intelligent and loved creation by that power and that is being searched by human beings in different ways into different things. As a result people reveal His assumed form as per their own perceptions and beliefs. It has given birth to different religions and people are divided on the name of religion viz. Hindu, Muslim, Sikhs, Christian etc. People do not stop at this. They debate the superiority of one over the other and fight to establish their views. Shrewd people like politicians oppose and support them at their own convenience to divide them and control them. It has intensified to the extent that even parents of a new born baby teach it about religious differences and recommend their own religion superior to that of others and let the child learn to hate other people just because of religion. Jonathan Swift, an eighteenth century novelist, observes that we have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

The word 'religion' does not have a derogatory meaning - A literal meaning of religion is 'A personal or institutionalized system grounded in belief in a God or Gods and the activities connected with this'. At its basic level, 'religion is just a set of teachings that tells people how to lead a good life'. It has never been the purpose of religion to divide people into groups of isolated followers that cannot live in harmony together. No religion claims to teach intolerance or even instructs its believers to segregate a certain religious group or even take the fundamental rights of an individual solely based on their religious choices. It is also said that '*Majhab nhi sikhata aaps mai bair krna*'. But this very *majhab* or religion takes a very heinous form when it is misused by the shrewd politicians and the fanatics e.g. in Ayodhya on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1992 some right wing political parties and communal organizations incited the Hindus to demolish the 16<sup>th</sup> century Babri Masjid in the name of religion to polarize Hindus votes. Muslim fanatics in Bangladesh retaliated and destroyed a number of temples, assassinated innocent Hindus and raped Hindu girls who had nothing to do with the demolition of Babri Masjid. This very inhuman act has been presented by Taslima Nasrin, a Bangladeshi Doctor-cum-Writer in her controversial novel '*Lajja*' (1993) in which, she seems to utilize fiction's mass emotional appeal, rather than its potential for nuance and universality.

Written in mere seven days, *Lajja* sold over 60,000 copies in the five months before it courted religious controversy and a fatwa was issued against Taslima Nasrin's life as the crooked politicians and the fanatics in Bangladesh found the book to be a living proof against their persecution of innocent Hindus. Her work was called an assault on Islam and she found herself at the receiving end of the wrath of the society. The book, however, does not seem to contain anything against any religion. Rather it was read and appreciated all over the world and subsequently, it was translated from Bangali into many languages including French, Dutch, German, English, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, Icelandic, Persian, Arabic, Assamese, Kannada, Hindi, Oriya, Urdu, Marathi, Telugu, Punjabi, Nepali and Malayalam.

*Lajja*, which spans over a period of thirteen days in the year 1992, is a mirror on the anti-Hindu riots that broke out in Bangladesh in retaliation to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in India. Bangladesh witnessed a massive massacre of Hindus by Muslims. Its intent is to warn the

people of Bangladesh that communalism is on the rise, that the Hindu minority is badly mistreated and that the secularism they once fought for is in grave danger. In the 'Preface' to the novel, Nasrin herself states the reason of writing the book:

I detest fundamentalism and communalism. This was the reason I wrote *Lajja* soon after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6 December, 1992. The book which took me seven days to write, deals with the persecution of Hindus, a religious minority in Bangladesh, by the Muslims who are in the majority. It is disgraceful that the Hindus in my country were haunted by the Muslims after the destruction of the Babri Masjid. All of us, who love Bangladesh, should feel ashamed that such a terrible thing could happen in our beautiful country. ...*Lajja* is a document of our collective defeat. (1994: ix)

The novel opens with a helpless Hindu family comprising of four members - the father is a doctor named Sudhamoy Dutta, who has a patient and strong willed wife Kironmoyee, an educated but unemployed son Suranjan and a bright diligent girl Maya. The narrative is fast paced with numerous newspaper reports, infiltrating into the story which involves the Dutta household from 1947 to 1992. Nasrin takes the pain of keeping a record of numerous newspaper articles related to persecution of Hindus by Muslim in 1947, 1952, 1964, 1971, 1978, 1988, 1990 and 1992, incorporating them within the narrative to show the shame on religion and politics. It was not only a matter of communal violence that drove the Hindus out of their homes in Bangladesh; it was also a serious breach in the faith one person can have on the other. *Lajja* addresses the dark realities of the violence which is not a spontaneous outburst against a community, but has, along with it, the ulterior motives of gratifying the greedy desires of property, money, and women. Nasrin talks about the essence of riots through the words of Sudhamoy where he says:

Riots are not like floods that you can simply be rescued and given some muri to survive on temporarily. Nor are they like fires that can be quenched to bring about relief. When a riot is in progress, human beings keep their humanity in check. Riots are not natural calamities, nor disasters, so to speak. They are simply a perversion of humanity... (165)

The story of the Duttas - Sudhamoy, Kironmoyee, and their children, Suranjan and Maya - is more interesting. For generations they have been land owners, possessing coconut and betel nut plantations, yards and yards of rich paddy fields, a house that stands on over two bighas of land near Myemsingh, what is now in Bangladesh. After the partition of India in 1947, when most of the Hindus left for India, a secular country, Jinnah, the Governor-General of Pakistan, assured Hindus security and equal rights in Pakistan. He, for the sake of his vote and power, declared that a man was Punjabi or Bengali before he was Hindu or Muslim. They shared a common language, culture, and economy. Yet, by drawing up nationalism against religious fundamentalism, the novelist emphasizes the not so ancient or organic borders that separate West Bengal from Bangladesh and in effect says:

“Let’s forget about our historical connection to India; in Bangladesh we must remain faithful to the secular ideals we have fought for. From this day onwards, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists will not be identified by their respective religion, but by their identity as Pakistanis.” (87)

So Sukumar Dutta, the father of Sudhamoy believed in Jinnah’s words and refused to leave his motherland.

Sudhamoy, who was a medical student at the time, believed in his father's rationale and refused to leave Bangladesh for India. Being an atheist Hindu, he had seen many disputes and riots

in his lifetime. From the Partition of 1947, to the relatively recent Independence of Bangladesh in 1971, he had lived through and participated actively in every kind of struggle that his country had to endure. His fundamental ideology in life was, “Why should I leave my homeland and go somewhere else?... if I live it will be on this soil, and if I die it will be in this very same place.” (7) He stayed in Bangladesh, working as a physician.

Sudhamoy Dutta’s ideas were courageous and blatantly patriotic. His belief was that he was a Bengali first and a Hindu later. Unfortunately, the system in which he lived did not allow such ideals to flourish and repeatedly reminded him of his minority status in society, whether in the matters of career or personal life. His fight for survival, literally, put him on stake many times. He remembers his participation in the freedom movement when he was caught and thrown in the prison where he including other Hindus was humiliated inhumanly. They were not given food and water for a number of days. He felt so thirsty that it was impossible for him to live without water. The narrator points out:

When they begged for water, the sadistic guards would laugh at him. One day....they took off his blindfold and forced him to watch them urinate into a jug. When the jug was put to Sudhamoy’s lips, he had turned his head away in disgust, but one of them had forced his mouth open while the other poured the contents of the jug in.... salty liquid had tricked down his throat. Sudhamoy had felt at the time that he would rather have drunk poison! (65)

Moreover, in that very camp Hindus were tortured in different ways by the hooligans and the contemporary government in Bangladesh was doing nothing. It rather indirectly encouraged the Muslims to convert Hindus into Muslims. Police force was also seen with the marauders. The police had not made the slightest attempt to stop them. Even during the rule of Pakistan, Hindus were targeted. Even the Muslim mob was testifying by opening the *lungi* off. If the person was found to be Hindu, they beat him mercilessly and forced him to read the Kalma and announce that he had converted to Islam. This also happened with Sudhamoy but he refused it forcefully. For this he was tortured badly. When he refused finally, his tormentors, decided to make a Muslim out of him: “One day, after Sudhamoy had again thwarted their efforts, they jerked up his lungi and mutilated his penis.”(66) This resulted into the permanent impotency of Sudhamoy.

The Communist in *Lajja* have been described as the follower of the secularism or humanity, as Suranjan tells that he could not remember having ever prayed in his life. Nor had he ever visited a temple, nor believed in religion. On the demolition of the Babri Masjid, he clenched his fists in disgust at the Hindu fanatics. If he had the strength, he would line up all the fanatics from every corner of the world and shoot them. The communists of Bangladesh had announced that the Indian government was responsible for the demolition of the Babri Masjid... and for this fault of the Indian government; the Hindus in Bangladesh should not be held responsible. But he had heard the leftist leaders swearing: the Hindus were referred to ‘Bloody swine’! Even Hindus in the communist party were bowing to the current mood. Krishna Binod Roy was now Kabir Bhai and Barin Dutta, has had his name changed to Abdus Salaam. That is why Ms. Amrita Mazumdar says, “the secondary theme of this political novel (*Lajja*) is the failure if Marxism in Bengal.” (SPIEL, 99)

When Muslim communists bowed completely to the wishes of Islamic fanatics, their surrender was full and final. It was a bitter irony that Muslims of Bangladesh now supports that Islamic communalist who opposed the independence of Bangladesh. These fanatics who were now the masters of their destiny did nothing for the country. These people wanted to destroy everything which was related to either India or Hindus:

They kept abusing ...Bloody low caste Hindu... we'll kill you, you bastard. You think you'll get away with breaking our masjid? We'll see to it that the whole of you are chucked out of this country. (74) ...28,000 houses, 2700 commercial establishment and 3600 temples have been damaged (188)...Terrorists from the Jamaat Shibeer Youth Command have done all this. They burnt the party office, the bookshop and the Indian Airlines Office.....(28-29)

The novel shows how these fanatics got tremendous support in the country. The administration was made inactive so that the communalist could get free hand to fulfill their nefarious designs. It is worthy to note that communalists are always on the look out for an 'enemy' for their own business. Such fanatics were determined to clean the Bangladesh off its enemy, the Hindus. They were so sure about the coward and inactive nature of the government of India that, 'They intend to walk up to India and rebuild the Babri Masjid.' In their mind there was no fear and respect for India. Even the most liberal leader of Bangladesh, Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, was free to speak about the safety of the Muslim in India and rebuild the Babri Masjid, but the leaders and government of India has no courage to speak about the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh and the temples in Bangladesh. Nasrin blames the selfish and coward nature of Hindus and the safe and diplomatic stance of the Government of India for the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh.

The novelist reminds the people of India and Bangladesh of Nehru – Liaquat Pact' (1947), under which in both the countries, the minorities will be allowed to enjoy equal rights and there will not be any discrimination on the basis of religion. But in practice while in India, Muslim became very powerful due to the vote Bank policies of Nehru, in Pakistan the condition of Hindus worsened. And Pt. Nehru could not dare to ask the then government of Pakistan to honor this Pact; fearing, losing his secular level and subsequently Muslim votes. Nehru was an internationalist. Such issue like 'pogrom of Hindus in Pakistan' was a non issue to him. As a result of the callous attitude of Pt. Nehru towards Hindus, they lost heavily in every field. Hence role of subsequent government in India have come under mild criticism from Taslima Nasrin. Right from Nehru till 1992, none of the Indian governments dared to open their mouth on the mayhem of Hindus in Bangladesh. On the other hand due to democracy and over dose of secularism, Muslims have become so powerful in India that the Muslim minorities have the right to retaliate that too in a much crueler manner but in Bangladesh, "Hindus don't have the right to touch Muslims"(187). This is the hollowness of Indian democracy and secularism.

The novelist goes back to the day of partition to point out that immediately after the partition, the contemporary government of East Pakistan started acquiring the property of Hindus:

The law Ministry of the Awami League moved in the parliament, the much hated 'Enemy Property Act' of Ayub Khan under a different name, 'The Acquired Property Act'. Under the previous regime, the property of Hindus who had left the country was declared 'Enemy Property'. (123-124)

Even the justice system was made biased and communal. Sudhamoy's uncle, Tarapada Ghoshal lived in the Akur Takur area in Tangail and a Muslim neighbour called Jamir Munshi had claimed a yard of his land. The matter was taken to the court. Five years later, the suit was decided in favour of the neighbour and Tarapada was compelled to leave Bangladesh and migrate to India.

Taslima Nasrin has given ample evidence about the communal and sadistic approach of the government administration and the justice system towards Hindus. During the Bangladeshi War of liberation, the people of Bangladesh, irrespective of the Hindus and the Muslims fought together against the oppressive rule of Pakistan. Independence was the fruit of their united efforts and the view of a new society was an egalitarian one, where narrow non-secular outlook would not be



encouraged. But it was proved an illusion when the Jammatis, who were against the freedom, persecuted Hindus, robbed them of their money, demolished a number of temples, abducted Hindus' women and even raped them before their family. Since most of the people in general assembly were Muslim, they brought change after change in the constitution of Bangladesh for their own benefits. Hindus were ignored every time:

In 1978, the commencement of the constitution of 1972 was changed to '*Bismillahir Rahmanair Rahim*' ... the 12<sup>th</sup> clause read as follow: *Secularism and freedom of religion*....the word '*Secularism*' was removed and clause 25(2) now read, 'the state shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity.'" (183).... After the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1988, the constitution of Bangladesh acquired the following insertion: 'The State religion of the Republic is Islam, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in Republic.' Why were the words 'may be' used? Why not 'shall be'? (181)

The novelist tries to bring home the fact that biased amendment in the constitution provided the hidden authority to the fanatic Muslims to catch the Hindus and kill them or convert them to Islam. The narrative goes: "Let us catch a Hindu or two, eat them in the morning and evening too..." (17) Hindus became the second class citizens or have no citizenship except to vote the Muslims in order to make them their masters who in return did not provide them any facility to have a peaceful life and equality in the society. Suranjan told his father that being the members of the second class Hindu minority, it was foolish to try and see themselves as equal to the Muslims who were the first class citizens of this country. At every level, they were harassed and haunted. Their system blindly favoured the Muslims and Islamic communalism. It was almost impossible for the Hindus to get jobs or admissions in educational institutions. If they were appointed, they were harassed at all levels and then their due promotions were also denied to them

In Dhaka, Sudhamoy had applied for a senior government job, one that would be a promotion on the official position he had in Mymensingh.... But he had discovered that officers junior to him had got their promotion. In his very presence, Sudhamoy had seen his file being slipped under those of Dr. Karimuddin and Dr. Yaqub Molla... he had finally retired as an Assistant Professor... Sudhamoy realized that he was not made Associate Professor simply because he was a Hindu called Sudhamoy Dutta. Had he been Muhammad Ali or Salimullah Chowdhury there would hardly have been any obstacles in his way. (20-22)

Not to speak of the promotion, Hindus were not selected in any government job. The ministers, the officers, the clerks all showed religious bias, incited by the contemporary politics indirectly. Suranjan, the protagonist in the novel, is a brilliant person having Master's Degree in Physics. Though he had been one of the sharpest students in the university yet the students whom he helped in their studies, got more marks than him in the final examination. The same thing happened when after, completing his college education, he went looking for job. The Muslim candidates, who had scored less than him, got good job as teachers but he was not selected even for clerk. He did his best in the interviews yet he was not selected. He was surprised enough to find that those candidates who had clicked their tongues in disappointment at not having fared well would be the first to get appointment letters. His outbursts:

It was a fact that those who said *Assalaam Aleikum* incessantly and made a great show of respect towards their examiners were the first....thought to be well-

mannered and it was those who passed the interviews... It was because he was a Hindu, but there were no jobs forthcoming with the government. (52-53)

Nasrin has given a vivid and authentic description of how many Hindus are in Government services which are supposed to be the sole right of Muslim in Bangladesh. She writes:

It is a fact that there are no Hindus of the rank of Brigadier or Major General. Out of seventy colonels there is only one Hindu, there are eight lieutenant colonels out of 450, forty majors out of 1000, eight captains out of 1300, three second lieutenants out of 900, only five hundred *sipahis* out of 80,000. And there are only 300 Hindus out of 40,000 BDRs. There is only one Joint Secretary out of a hundred and thirty-four. (137)

The novel reveals that minority in Bangladesh suffered not only deprivation but also operation and subjugation. Hindu students were forced to attend the Islamic classes. If any complaint was lodged by Hindu students, no attention was paid to it: "Indeed she (Maya) was so taken with religious instructions, even when she played alone; she could be heard chanting 'Alhamdo Lillahe Rabbil Aalemin...(12) When Maya was a little student, some girls of her class teased her, "Hindu, Hindu ...Hindus eats cow's head ... I don't want to be a Hindu anymore. They tease me for being one." (122) One day Maya was teaching the students, among them a girl named Minati was muttering "Alhamdo Lillahe Rabbil Aalemin...Ar Rahmanir Rahim..." (98). Maya was very much surprised and shocked to find that it was the prayer in the most famous school of the capital named Bhikarunessa School. The students of all the religions had to recite the *Kalma* after the national anthem. After the demolition of Babri Masjid in India, the Muslim fanatics declared not to have any connection with the Hindus who were supposed to be the responsible for the same. Even the young children were filled with the hatred for Hindus; they strictly refused to play with Hindus' children. Suranjan found Poluk's six years old son crying and lying on the floor. On asking the reason Pulok told him:

...the children next door, who used to play with Alok every day, have refused to play with him today. It seemed the Hujur asked them not to mix with Hindu children.'

'Who is this Hujur?'

'Hujur is the Maulvi who comes to their house to teach the children Arabic.'(71)

In every field of life, Hindus suffer serious problems because of the communal attitude of the authorities. Almost all the political parties in Bangladesh supported an agenda of Islamicization. The notorious communal ideology uses the institution of parliamentary democracy to grow, often being dangerously successful in its efforts. But the kind of Islamic fascism not only poisoned the political realm but also the social one. Long before, the demolition of Ram Janambhoomi/ Babri Masjid, a hate campaign was going on against the Hindus in Bangladesh. Hindus were plotted to eat beef. Suranjan cannot forget the day of his great humiliation in the school where he studied in 7<sup>th</sup> standard:

...a friend called Faroukh had taken him aside during the lunch break and said, 'I have brought some thing delicious to eat, and I won't tell anyone about it; you and I will eat quietly upon the roof, okay?' It was not as though Suranjan was famished, but he had approved of Faroukh's proposal... To his surprise, once they had finished eating Faroukh had cheered aloud. Before Suranjan could react, he was bounding down the stairs, and before long he and the rest of the class were yelling with joy over the fact that Faroukh had made Suranjan eat beef. (62)

Suranjan felt isolation and the very first time he thought himself to be a Hindu not a Human being. His Muslim classmates were taking sadistic pleasure by demolishing his religion which worships the cow. He wept bitterly and told his father who knew the reality of his minority status and rights very well. He is an atheist, which is a very common fashion with Hindu Communist to boost their intellectualism and liberal attitude. In order to stay in Bangladesh, he always made a compromise with the situation. Now he advises his son not to weep and pretends that beef is a delicacy. He even encourages his family members to eat beef: “Kironmoyee had cooked the beef after a good deal of cajoling on Sudhamoy’s part who had explained to his wife, at great length the futility and illogicality of observing such customs.” (64)

The novel shows that in Bangladesh Islam was synonymous of human being. Only Muslims were considered as the only human being in the country. They were free to pray in the mosque, to do what they want for their religion, to wear Burkha, to have a beard, to wear a round cap on their head, to follow the rituals of their religion. But Hindu are like their slaves and every time they have to hide their identity. They cannot follow any religious rituals and use anything signifying their religion. Being afraid of Muslims, Sudhamoy asked his wife to hide their identity as Hindu: Kiranmoyee had stopped using *sindur* in the parting of her hair and *loha* and *sankha* on her wrist as was expected of every married Hindu woman....Sudhamoy, too, had given up his beloved *dhuti*... to have a set of pajamas stitched. (97)

Even the honour of Hindus was not safe. Abduction of Hindu girls was a common thing in Bangladesh. The Hooligans did not have any type of fear. Whenever they wished, they abducted a woman and raped her brutally. So, most of the Hindus sent their daughters to India for their education and security. Nasrin has mentioned in the text:

Manju Rani Seal, a student in the ninth standard....was abducted at 8 p.m., on the evening of 4 December 1988 by Abdur Rahim and his goons....there is no trace of Manju Rani....In Parkumaria village of Tala sub district in Satkhira, Rabindranath Ghosh’s young daughter, Chanda, a third standard student... her schoolteacher abducted her with the help of some hooligans. They took the terrified little girl to garden nearby and raped her....a case was filed but no one was arrested. (48-49)

While coming home from the school, Maya was also abducted, when she was only six years old. Nobody knew who the abductors were and what they did with her. She returned home herself two days later. For two months she behaved strangely and slept fitfully and would wake up abruptly in the middle of the night. They used to receive anonymous letters that threatened to kidnap Maya again when she grew a young girl of 19 years and the ominous day came on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1992 when a group of seven hooligans entered the house of Sudhamoy who had recently suffered paralysis, and began to break the goods of the house. They were all about twenty-one years old. Two of them wore caps, *pajamas* and *Kurtas*. One of them said, “You bastards! Did you think you could get away after destroying the Babri Masjid?” Sudhamoy and Kiranmoyee tried their best but they could do nothing against seven hooligans who very quickly took Maya away. Maya was crying for help but nobody came forward to help her because she was a Hindu girl and the abductors were Muslims. She only screamed to her mother for help ‘Ma ...please help me, Ma ...’ (148). This inhuman incident shattered all the hopes and dreams of Sudhamoy’s family. Being Communist, they did not believe in religion whether Hindu or Muslim; Humanity was the only religion for them. But now they broke into pieces and decided to leave for India. Suranjan tried his best but he could not find Maya. In frustration he began to drink wine and abuse Muslims. He had a strong desire for the revenge on the hooligans.



“Suranjan asked, ‘Debabrata, can’t we burn a mosque?’

‘Mosque? Are you crazy?’

‘Come, let’s go and set the Tara masjid on fire tonight!’

.... ‘There are twenty million Hindus in this country. If we had wanted to, we could even have burnt up Baitul Mokarram !’

‘... yes, I used to call myself a human being, and I believed in humanism. But these Muslims did not let me stay human. They made me a Hindu’. .... ‘Even if we don’t gain anything. We can at least prove that we too can destroy. Shouldn’t we make it known that we too are capable of being angry? ...the Babri Masjid was four hundred and fifty years old, but Chaitanyadeb’s house was five hundred year old monuments in this country too? I feel like tearing down the Sobhanbagh mosque. The mosque as Gulshan Part one was constructed by the Saudi Arabians. Why don’t we build a temple?’ (163)

Suranjan was full of anger and hatred for the Muslims. He, like the hooligans wanted to kill the Muslims and abduct their daughters for taking revenge. It was the eleventh day of riot in Bangladesh i.e. 16<sup>th</sup> December and the people were celebrating the victory day. Suranjan was abusing the system and his own incapability. Again and again he was thinking about Maya - what they were doing with her, whether they had tied up her legs and then raped her one by one; how she was tolerating the pain; whether she would be living or dead. He also thought of committing suicide but it would be the work of cowards. He thought something else and sitting in a rickshaw he went to Bar council where he met a whore named Shamima, the daughter of Abdul Jalil. But Suranjan did not take Shammima as a whore. For him she was a girl who belonged to the majority community. He was longing to rape one of them, in revenge for what they had done to his sister. He took the girl into his room and turned off the lights:

He threw the girl on the floor and stripped her of all he clothes. Suranjan took quick deep breath, as he dug his nails into the girl’s flesh. He bit her breasts, one part of his mind understanding that what he was doing was certainly not love. Relentlessly he pulled her hair; bit her on the cheek, neck and breasts. He scratched her waist, her stomach, her buttocks and her thighs with his sharp nails....the girl moaned with pain, screaming occasionally, ‘O my God! I am dying of pain...Suranjan laughed with savage satisfaction. (200-201)

That was an illusory victory day for Suranjan also because he had done inhumanity with a girl who had nothing to do with the demolition of the temples, usurpation of the Hindus property, persecution of the Hindus and the abduction of Maya; there was no difference between the Muslims hooligans and Suranjan who raped a Muslim girl very brutally. Ms. Amrita Mazumdar observes in this context: “The attempt of Suranjan, the Marxist, to revenge himself for his sister’s rape by raping a Muslim prostitute, is a shabby anticlimax as it is intended to be.” (SPIEL, 100)

But Suranjan having sympathy for humanity in his heart, felt his mistake and cursed himself for that. This was not the solution of his problems and the problems of millions Hindus in Bangladesh where all the political parties did not care for their rights and security for the sake of Muslim votes and religion. Nasrin through her novel wants to remind the politicians and the religious fanatics that the Hindus are also the Human beings, they also possess red blood in their veins, they also have dreams and aspirations, they also love their motherland, they are also the citizens of the country and they are also the creation of the same God Who created Muslims. The politicians should not discriminate human beings in the name of religion, belief, tradition and culture. They must not intensify the communal hatred among the people who are innocent. The

common people must not work as per the instruction of the politicians and the religious fanatics. She makes a universal appeal, 'Let another name of religion be humanism'. According to V. Pala Prasad Rao,

The dominated motif of the novel (*Lajja*) is the consequences of religious fundamentalism on the hopeless minorities. Nasrin strives to show how communal violence has been generated by the lunatic fringe in all communities, how innocent persons are duped into serving the ulterior purpose of communalists, how extremist elements in the communities infuse tension and hatred for their own ends at the cost of inter-communal harmony. (IJES, 93)

In broader sense the novel appeals to every majority community to respect their minority brothers and reminds every government of its duty to its citizens to be discharged without any fear or favour. The novelists, whose heart bleeds for the minority to which she herself does not belongs, is according to Ms. Amrita Mazumdar "a spiritual heir of Gandhi." (100)

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