

Terror, Terrorism, and the Terrorist: Exploring Human Relationships in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown*

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Abstract: Terrorism has become a global menace in the contemporary era; terrorism marks the violence not only against society or communities but also against humanity at large. The contemporary world has witnessed several terrorist attacks in different parts of the world. Governments across the globe are battling against such terror attacks which come unwarned. Unlike the older concept of war where nation fought with each other, terrorists target innocent civilian for their own hidden agenda. The threat created a state of panic for civilians all over the world as there was no certainty about the next terrorist attack.

Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) is based on the notion of changing human relationships of two distinct communities; Hindu and Muslim particularly located in the valley of Kashmir. The end of the age-old brotherhood and the process of making of terrorist are minutely depicted in the novel. The communal hatred that started with the interference of outsider swallowed the love and brotherhood that the two communities shared for several years.

Key Words: Terrorist, Terrorism, Brotherhood, Communal Violence, Human Relationships

1. Introduction

Terrorism has become the major problem of the twenty first century. Though the concept of terrorism has always existed; the wake of twenty first century witnessed the havoc caused by terrorism. The increase of terrorist attacks has created chaos, confusion and a sense of insecurity among people. The security of public became one of the major issues in the twenty first century with the rise of terrorism that has risen to the different level with the development of various weapons. There are various established terrorist organizations which have caused global threat, creating the situation of fear and panic all around the world.

The threat for civilian created the state of panic for civilian all over the world as there was no certainty about the next terrorist attack. This killing of innocence also became a threat to the humanity. In the book, *Explaining Terrorism: Causes, process and consequences* (2011) by Martha Crenshaw; terrorism is explained as; In 2004, the U.N. secretary-General's High-level Panel Report defined terrorism as:

any action... that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or noncombatants, when the purpose of such act by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act. (2)

Terrorism has become a major challenge for the global security. The international terrorism is spreading rapidly resulting in various terrorist attacks globally. Various terrorist organizations like ISIS, Taliban, Al- Queda and others have become the global threat. The security of every nation is at stake because of such terrorist organizations which are active globally. Fathali M. Moghaddam writes in *From the Terrorists' Point of View: What they Experience and Why they come to Destroy* (2006) "From the terrorists' point of view, it is rest of the world that is immoral and in need of reform, not terrorist group" (2)

Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), deals with the problem of terrorism and terrorist in the Kashmir Valley. People who lived in harmony and who loved their neighbours and respected each other's religion were doomed with the communal hatred that was instigated by the outsider's ideas of divide and rule. The emanation of terrorism not only terrorized the common people but it also changed them from within. The terrorist corrupted the minds of common people with negative ethos related to community, religion and social differences either with coercion or with manipulation turning them against each other.

2. Violence, Terror and Changes in Human Relationships

In *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) by Salman Rushdie, when Noman Sher Noman also known as Shalimar the clown in the novel joined a terrorist organization he had only one thing in his mind and that was revenge against those who wronged him. It was the terrorist organization which he joined that taught him hatred towards the other religion and to kill the ones who were termed as 'infidels'. The organization turned Shalimar the clown to the killing machine that worked on the order of his senior/ superior and killed people remorselessly. When the personal reason gets mixed with the political issue it becomes a dangerous combination. In order to take revenge he joined terrorist organization. In the case of Shalimar the clown same thing happened, his personal enmity was manipulated by the terrorist organization and they used him for their benefit.

Terrorism in Kashmir started communal disharmony and violence. It turned neighbour against each other. In the name of separate nation many people from other community were asked to leave their homeland. Terrorist and insurgent made people from other communities as their target. Many Hindu-Brahmins fled from Kashmir to different part of the country. People did not find themselves safe in Kashmir any more. Kashmir which was once valley of peace and also called Paradise by the people became the valley of chaos. The communal violence made people hate each other and the terrorist activities worsen it further. The novel *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) tells the story of the change that came in the relationships of people in Kashmir.

When the militant created communal divide in the village of Pachigam and Shrial, people tried to resist it. The age old harmony was not so easy to disrupt as both Hindu and Muslim lived in brotherhood. But the divide was to be made in order to inflict violence on the

community. The unity among people was to be destroyed so that they can inflict fear upon the community. The demand of separate nation was possible only if the people also demanded for the separation. The cunningly devised plan to turn one community against other was the basic strategy of the militant. The imposing of hatred among the community was a manipulated move of the terrorist. They imposed hatred in the community and tried to turn against each other. Shalimar the clown upon becoming the terrorist turned against the people he had known all his life. There was no human feeling in him; he was filled with hatred with killer motif. Bombur Yambarzal clearly mentions, “Tragedy has struck that man so hard it’s not surprising he looks like he would cut your throat if you snapped your fingers at the wrong time, eh Harud.” ... “The tragedy is a new wound, and you can see its pain, that’s for sure.” (314)

When Boonyi and Shalimar the clown fell in love they hardly knew that their love story will spark such hatred. The marriage between the Hindu girl and Muslim boy was tolerated in Pachigam only. The difference in faith was not seen as hindrance in love and their love was accepted by their parents and villagers. There was no communal hostility, there was no discrimination people accepted them and their marriage. Both the community lived in harmony and with the code of universal brotherhood. Their love for each other was celebratory. There was no Hindu-Muslim rivalry in Pachigam. They lived in happy company of each other. They never treated each other with hostility. They followed their own religion and respected others faith as well. So the love of Hindu-Muslim was not a great deal for those people who lived in harmony. It was not so difficult for villagers to accept the love match as they were no concept of communal hatred among each other. Abdullah Noman states,

So we have not only Kashmiriness to protect but Pachigaminess as well. We are all brothers and sisters here,” said Abdullah. “There is no Hindu-Muslim issue. Two Kashmiri – two Pachigami – youngsters wishes to marry, that’s all. A love match is acceptable to both families and so a marriage there will be, both Hindu and Muslim customs will be observed. (110)

But this love and harmony came to end with the rise of terrorism. The intervention of external force terrified Pachigam and the people. When Boonyi left her husband for American ambassador Maximillian Ophlus the peace in the valley of Paradise came to an end. Boonyi’s betrayal became the reason for the downfall for Shalimar the clown and also the village of Pachigam.

Terrorism destroyed the peace of the valley that prevailed for many years. In the name of liberation and separate nation civilians suffered a lot. The innocent people who had no business with the terrorist succumbed to death penalty. People who were innocent and had no part to play also got crushed in the battlefield. The relationships that are built in the basis of trust and mutual understanding also underwent the drastic change. The neighbours turned against each other and people were divided in the name of religion/ community. The divide not just separated the communities but it also disrupted the relationships. The intolerance and the hatred for one another changed everything that they used to share with each other. In order to get political attention civilians were harmed by the terrorist, in the name of community they were seeking sympathy from the people who belonged to their community. They also created divide among their community and the other communities. The hostility towards the other community started communal violence and the divide between the communities.

Terrorist also sparked the hatred among their instant neighbour which changed the relationships among them. They terrorize people and made them surrender to their will. They also planted doubt in the mind of people.

Religious fanaticism also played an important role in motivating people to rise against their own neighbour. In the name of religion people were brainwashed and they were made to join terrorist organization that was supported by the foreign country. The relationship between Hindu and Muslim worsened.

There was no trace of a Shirmal-Pachigam divide, no distinction between male and female opinion, only this deep communal rift. The Muslim majority eyed their Hindu pandit opponents with the sudden distrust that crept uncomfortably close to open hostility. Yet a few minutes earlier they had been smoking and gossiping together outside the tent. It was suddenly oppressive to be there in that ugly crowd. (147)

The rift between the two communities not only affected Kashmir but also whole country. The communal violence that was triggered after the independence engulfed whole country killing millions of people all over the country. People succumbed to the communal violence and the terrorism that was given birth by this mass killing still prevails in India even after more than seventy years of independence. The communal violence made civilians into terrorist. People chose to join the terrorist organization to escape from the humiliation. The anti-Islam and anti-Muslim thoughts also turned many people into terrorist in Kashmir.

Terrorism that created chaos in the valley of Kashmir also brought some rules along with them. Women were asked to veil their face and follow the dress code of Islam. Women who lived in respect without covering the face were forced to live under the veil. They took strict action that did not follow the order. Women who lived freely without covering face and considered equal to men were made to bend their knee. This coercion reached Shirmal and Pachigam too. Terrorist were not just creating fear in the mind of people but they were also changing the way of living of the people in Kashmir. They were meddling with the tradition and culture.

...the Lashkar-e-Pak or the Army of the Pure. The LeP had moral as well as political aim... Lep posters had appeared in the village ordering all the Muslim women to don the burqa and adhere to the dress and behavioural principles laid down by the Taliban in Afghanistan. (277)

The religious code was imposed on the people of Kashmir by the terrorist organization. People were made to follow the law and order made by them. In the name of religion they were to do all the things told by the terrorist organization.

The village which accepted the marriage between Hindu and Muslims were told to keep distance with each other. The rift was created among the neighbours that lived many years in harmony.

Women teachers were doused with acid for failing to adhere to the Islamic dress code. Threats were made and deadlines issued and many Kashmiri women put on, for the first time, the shroud their mother and grandmothers had always

profoundly refused. Then, in the summer of 1987, the LeP poster appeared in Shirmal. Men and women were not to sit together and watch television any more. That was a licentious and obscene practice. Hindu were not to sit among Muslims. And of course all women must instantly put on the veil. (227)

This marked the end of harmony between the two communities and also the freedom of choice. People were no longer master of their own body and women lost their identity as an individual as under the veil no one recognizes who they were. Such hostility with other community and coercion with the women ended the peace. Chaos slowly took its grip in the valley of Paradise. People were forced to follow the code of Islam that was made by the terrorist organizations.

Pachigam a village where people lived in brotherhood and harmony without any conflict became the battlefield. People of Pachigam did not bow in front of terrorist or any external force. They did not obey the madness of terrorist and did not trust Indian army too. They lived with pride with the code of universal brotherhood. They loved each other despite the difference in religion. They protected each other from danger. Unlike other villages Pachigam did not showed hostility towards Hindu or they did not ask them to go away. They had courage to stand in front of the terrorist with the pride. But this did not help them. When the chaos came, it engulfed Pachigam in such a way that there was no longer Pachigam. The counter attack of army in order to fight terrorist destroyed the whole village. The destruction of Pachigam is not just the chaotic situation as the result of terrorism but it also shows the brutality and the madness of human being.

Who lit the fire? Who burned the orchard? Who shot those brothers who laughed their whole lives long? Who killed the sarpanch? Who broke his hands? Who broke his arms? ...Who burned the library? Who burned the saffron field? Who slaughtered the animals? Who burned the beehives? Who poisoned the paddies? Who killed the children? Who whipped the parents? Who raped the lazy-eyed woman? Who raped the grey-haired lazy-eyed woman as she screamed about the snake vengeance? Who raped the woman again? Who raped that woman again? Who raped that woman again? Who raped the dead woman? Who raped the dead woman again? (308)

In the battle between Indian army and the terrorist whole village of Pachigam was sacrificed. The spark of hatred burned the whole village. The damage brought by terrorism is hard to recover. Many people suffer from such damages. While fighting with terrorist many civilians lost their lives. The terrorist attack and the counter attack by the army or special force often affect civilians. The destruction of property and also loss of human life are in immense in such attacks.

3. Conclusion

Human relationship is a fragile thing that changes over small issues. Doubt in relationships creates the great rift. And this rift pushes away people from one another. The relationships which are based on love and loyalty cannot survive when the sharp divide is made on the basis of community. Religion has always been a sensitive issue and people are more fragile when it comes for religion. This fragility of religion is used by many people use as manipulation. Many terrorist takes the religious sympathy from the people of same faith and manipulates

them to turn against those from the other religion. This communal divide made it way for the rise of terrorism. The support from the common people for the terrorist activity added fuel to the communal hatred. The division on the basis of community played an important part in politics as well. The political leader uses the communal sensitivity in order to win votes from particular community and the spread of terrorism further made rift among the rival communities. The rift among the communities has changed the face of the country. The fire that was ignited many years ago still burns in the mind of the people. The communal rivalry is so strong that it has power to break years of love and good relationships in a few second. People take community and their faith so seriously that they are ready to kill each other without second thought.



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