**Toba** **Tek Singh by- Saadat Hassan Manto**

1. **When was the short story “Toba Tek Shingh” got published?**

Ans. In the year 1955

1. What is the setting for Toba Tek Singh?

Ans. An insane asylum in Lahore in Pakistan.

1. Who was Toba Tek Singh?

Ans. Toba Tek Singh was a Sikh who had been admitted in asylum in Lahore for 15 years. His real name is Bishan Singh. But he was called Toba Tek Singh after the name of his hometown.

1. In which Pakistani city was the lunatic asylum situated?

Lahore.

1. What sentence/slogan did Toba Tek Singh mutter?

Ans. “Opad di gud gud di moong did al di laltain”.

1. Who was Roop Kaur?

Ans. Daughter of Toba Tek Singh.

1. Why did one of the lunatics climb up a tree?

Ans. He was disoriented by the confusion created out of Hindustan and Pakistan. He wanted to live neither in Hindustan nor in Pakistan.

1. Who is Qaid-e-Azam?

Ans. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was known as Quid-e-Azam.

1. What were the concern of the Anglo-European in the European ward?

Ans. They thought the European ward be abolished, whether they would get measly chapattis instead of bread in the morning.

1. Who declared himself to be Quid-e Azam, Mohammed Ali Jinnah?

Ans. A lunatics from shinot whose name was Mohammed Ali declared himself to be Quid-e Azam. He was a active member of Muslim League.

1. Name the friends who was Bishan Singh’s friend came to meet in the asylum.

Ans. Fazal Uddin.

1. What did Fazal Uddin give Bishan Singh in the asylum?

Ans. Murunde.

1. Why did the hindu lawyer in the asylum go mad?

Ans. He loved agirl. When partition came, Amritsar, where his beloved was, belonged in India, and he was in Lahore in Pakistan.

1. What is the theme of Toba Tek Singh?

Ans. In Toba Tek Singh by Saadat Hasan Manto, we have the theme of confusion, identity, separation, change, control and ignorance

1. Where did Bishan Singh die?

Ans. In the no man’s land.

1. ***Do you think Toba Tek Shing as a story of resistance of partition? Give well reasoned answer.***

***Or,***

***Discuss Saadat Hassan Manto’s Tota Tek Shing is the story of lunatics, resistance, and partition***

***Or,***

***Discuss the major themes of Saadat Hassan Manto’s Tota Tek Shing***

**Ans.** Saadat Hassan Manto, one of the greatest short story writers of all time was born in Samrala, a city in the district of Ludhiana, Punjab. 'Toba Tek Singh' is one of his most famous and tragic stories about Partition. The story of the novel deals with the migration of Hindu and Sikh mental asylum patients in Lahore and India after partition. It raised profound questions on the definition of sanity and the thinning of boundaries between the 'mad' and the sane world.

We in India know of Toba Tek Singh through the legendary storyteller Saadat Hassan Manto. ‘Toba Tek Singh’ is one of his most famous and tragic stories about Partition. Toba Tek Singh was the place where the protagonist was from. Bishan Singh wanted to remain in Toba Tek Singh but when he found out that he is being sent to India because of his Sikh identity, he finds it difficult to overcome the trauma and dies in the no man’s land, between India and Pakistan. The story is disturbing for any ‘sane’ person.

While the story and the characters were fictional, Toba Tek Singh, the place, still exists. Toba Tek Singh is a city and tehsil(district) in Pakistan’s Punjab province. The history of Toba Tek Singh is traced to a person named Tek Singh who used to help travelers and passersby who frequented the area, given that it was situated at at a point where many routes met. Tek Singh used to serve them water from a pond in a garhapot – called tobain Urdu. With time, this became the identity of the place and it was named Toba Tek Singh.

While Manto is touted to be a partition writer, he was a writer who laid bare the reality of the society around him. His raw and accurate descriptions of the world he saw through his eyes earned him several callings to the court. Some of his most famous stories were Toba Tek Singh, Khol Do, and Thanda Gosht. The horrors of partition are present in the background of all these stories. Manto’s characters are akin to the common folk but are also the most alienated members of society. In Toba Tek Singh, Manto handles the topic of mental disorders. He takes us through the journey of Bishan Singh who is supposed to be a lunatic. While the story revolves around the behavior of the inmates at the Lahore Asylum, Manto’s brilliant story-writing mind draws a parallel between the institution and the partition. The inmates of the asylum had problems similar to that of the people who were caught in the events of partition. They experienced similar terror and fear. Bishan Singh like most people could not fathom the idea of dividing a nation and had a million questions about them. The real question then was whether Bishan Singh was really a lunatic or did the partition brought around traumatizing forces that affected every citizen in the country. Bishan Singh was on the quest to find his native land “Toba Tek Singh” as he called it and thus began his journey where he was taken to the border so that he could be handed over to the Indian Government in return for Muslim lunatics. Bishan Singh dies at the end of the story, and his exhausted body collapses on a piece of unclaimed land. Manto refers to Bishan Singh as “Toba Tek Singh” equating him to the land that he was in search of. Although the story discusses mental disorders, the main purpose was to equate the fear and terror people lived with during the partition.

The beautiful history of Toba Tek Singh, which is a source of pride for city residents, is not just what they have inherited but is what they are struggling to preserve. Their struggle is a source of hope. We cannot undo the past, the trauma of Partition continues to survive in several forms, but we can definitely make up for it by sowing seeds of peace and harmony.

The whole story is centered around the insane lot of Hindu and Muslim people from the then India and Pakistan who are been send to their Places the Paces where their religion belongs to.“These people being the victims of partition have showed very reasonably and intelligently the resistance to the partition when the news reached to them. The questions asked by the lunatics repeatedly carry an ambiguity which needs to be justified and answered. Though for people living a rational and saner life these people are mere commodities which need to be exchanged based on their religion but for Manto these people are more rational and saner who possess the unconditional love and harmony among each other.

One of the best examples of resistance can be seen through a lunatic who gets so exhausted by the whole India and Pakistan partition that he climbs up a tree and says “ I do not want to live in India and Pakistan, I am going to make my home right here on this tree”. Thus we can see how he wants a land of his own where cartographic mapping which leads to a sense of alienation does not exist. He just wants a spot which would give him a sense of belongingness and from where no one would force him to leave.

One more instance from the work shows how the warm feeling of love is also put at stake by political mapping because of partition. The Hindu lawyer turned lunatic is not able to take the fact that his beloved has become an Indian and he a Pakistani because of the political cartography of the lands. His love gets torn apart which makes his sense of belongingness here his beloved alienated. In this entire hullabaloo there is a man constantly talked about who is Bishan Singh. He is actually addressed to as Toba Tek Singh. Probably because firstly he was the resident of that place and secondly because the land Toba Tek Singh and the fate 0ishan Singh encountered was similar i.e. identity crisis. Toba Tek Singh the land lost its existence similarly partition made Bishan Singh lose his existence. Bishan Singh can be seen standing throughout the play.

To conclude Manto made the insane people his mouthpiece to show his resistance to partition. The lunatics resist partition in many ways. They act or show what they feel which probably a sane human would have failed to. They try to somehow make space for themselves by refusing to 'fit in' in this newly created cartographical land. Thus infusing madness with identity crisis gave Manto a perfect blend of resistance which was what he probably wanted to express through his work.

1. ***Discuss Manto’s Toba Tek Singh as a political satire.***

**Ans.**  Manto’s “Toba Tek Singh” is regarded his magnum opus which tells the story of partition and its aftermath. It delineates very realistically the picture of partition and its immediate effects upon the human psyche. The story is about how after partition people were forced to migrate and leave their ancestral place unwillingly and unlawfully; and how they were divided in the name of religion spreading the religious hatred among people especially the Hindus and the Muslims. Therefore the story is a powerful political satire in which the author criticizes the political system of both India and Pakistan that is responsible for this division of people in the name of religion. It’s a powerful satire, and also a bitter indictment of the political process and behavior patterns that produced Partition. The story depicts the partition of the subcontinent and its aftermath. Manto reflects how after partition the political system of both countries India and Pakistan forces the common people to leave their native places on the basis of religion.

The story depicts the partition of the subcontinent and its aftermath. Manto reflects how after partition the political system of both countries India and Pakistan forces the common people to leave their native places on the basis of religion. Therefore, the decision of the higher authorities of both India and Pakistan that Muslims should live in Pakistan and non-Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, should go to India, divided people on the basis of religion and forced them to leave their ancestral home against their will. As a result, people experienced the sense of alienation leaving a deep and profound effect upon their psyche. Thus, in the story, Manto portrays very patently the woes of the affected families, the sad plight and tormenting experiences of the people who were displaced forcibly from their ancestral home in the name of religion.

Before partition, people lived with harmony and love with one another irrespective of religion and culture. This is exemplified in the story when Bishen Singh’s old Muslim friend, Fazal Din comes to see him from Toba Tek Singh and tells him that soon he would be sent to India and he should remember him to “bhai Balbir Singh, bhai Vadhawa Singh and bahain Amrit Kaur. Tell Bhai Balbir Singh that Fazal Din is well by the grace of God. The two brown buffaloes he left behind are well too”. He also brings him a gift “a nice treat from home”. Bishen Singh receives the gift and gives it to one of the guards. Thus, Manto reflects how the love and respect people from different community used to share with one another before the boundaries were drawn in the name of religion by the decision makers. But once the boundaries were drawn, all these things came to an end, thereby promoting the religious hatred among the common people. These higher officials filled their minds with religious hatred and elements of communalism. People began to hate each other on the basis of religion.

It also tells the story of those who have lost their loved ones, their families, friends and their identities as a result of the geographical division of the country and forcible displacement of the people. The story very realistically portrays the emotional trauma of the partition. A Hindu lawyer from Lahore who is in love with a girl from Amritsar turns mad and experiences a sense of grief when Amritsar becomes a part of India.

Manto depicts the piercing pain of partition and its emotional trauma through an old man Bishen Singh who is the central character of the story. Bishen Singh, a “prosperous landlord” from Toba Tek Singh, lost his mental stability fifteen years back. Since then he had been living in a mental asylum in Lahore. His mind remains always occupied with the concern of his native land and whoever he comes in contact with, he asks him the same question ‘Where is Toba Tek Singh, in India or in Pakistan?’ One day he asked one of the inmates who declared himself God, “if Toba Tek Singh was in India or Pakistan. The man chuckled. ‘Neither in India nor in Pakistan, because, so far, we have issued no orders in this respect.” Bishen Singh begged him to issue the orders immediately so that his problem could be solved, but got disappointed after he knew that the ‘God’ was “preoccupied with more pressing matters”. He got angry and told him, “You don’t answer my prayers because you are a Muslim god. Had you been a Sikh god, you would have been more of a sport.”. Again, one day one of his Muslim friends from Toba Tek Singh came to see him after fifteen years and brought him news about his family, saying that his family was all well and was sent to India safely. He explained to him that he was supposed to come to bring him the news. Bishen Singh kept quiet and asked him the same question: “Where is Toba Tek Singh?, he asked. ‘Where? ‘In India or in Pakistan?” Even when he was asked for his name at the time of exchange, he repeated and asked the same question to the official, “Where is Toba Tek Singh? In India or Pakistan?” Towards the end, when Pakistani guards tried to push him towards India, he refused to move and told them “This is Toba Tek Singh”. In the end, he remained in “no man’s land” and the story ends on a tragic note with his death. This reflects his concern and love for his ancestral home and how partition and forcible displacement has a deep and profound effect upon the psyche of Bishen Singh. He sacrificed his life for the place and he himself becomes Toba Tek Singh that lays neither in Pakistan nor in India, but in between. It was the separation of his family and friends that drives Bishen Singh insane.

Manto depicts the impact of the decision, taken by the higher authorities, to divide people in the name of religion upon the psyche of the common people. Manto exposes the real face of the politics or politicians who are responsible for making the common people and harmless people, like Bishen Singh, suffer and who issue the orders to divide them and draw geographical boundaries without knowing their opinion.

Toba Tek Singh deals with the theme of partition and its aftermath. Manto reflects how the geographical division and the forcible displacing of the common people by the political process of both—India and Pakistan exert a deep and profound impact upon the lives and minds of these common people. Manto exposes how the decision makers, who are considered responsible people for they always bear in mind the welfare of the country, go opposite here and create chaos and confusion. The innocent and common people are forced to leave their places and are divided in the name of religion and the geographical boundaries are made, thereby spreading religious hatred among the people. Therefore, Manto debunks the meaninglessness and absurdity of the politics of the times. Though the country got freedom from the British rule, but Manto gives way to a sense of grief over the partition and its impact upon the common people.

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