

The Dynamics Of Indian Society Around The Event Of Partition 1947: A Take On Home As Sketched In Rahi Masoom Reza's Aadha Gaon

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Abstract

*Aadha Gaon*¹ published in 1966 is widely known as Rahi Masoom Reza's magnum-opus. Reza's absolutely intricate narration captures the essence of Indian society and how the social praxis changed post India's Partition in 1947. Reza unveils that communal harmony was an element of Indian society even when at the surface level certain political parties were advocating the formation of Pakistan. The society co-existed and though there were minor disagreements among people, there was resilience and acceptance for each other regardless of religious differences. This paper broadly studies the dynamics of the Indian society represented by Reza and also grapples with the idea of 'Home' proposed by him in his works. Is home just a physical entity or is there more to it? How does the collective feeling of the co-existing society add up to his idea of 'Home.'

Keywords- *Aadha Gaon*, Partition of India 1947, Communal Harmony, Home, Indian Society

INTRODUCTION

The masterpiece *Aadha Gaon* is a story of the village Gangauli and its people who lived together in their small world with their basic concerns of daily life, little joys of daily gossips, festive celebrations and extramarital affairs. It is the story of *uttar patti*², *dakhin patti*³, *neela godaam*⁴, *talab*⁵, *Samadhi*⁶, and *karbala*⁷ because these places are as much a part of the story as any other character in the novel. From the very beginning Reza familiarizes his readers with his village with such elaborate description and he forms such vivid imagery, that one can see the village emerging out of the pages 'brick by brick' (as Paul says in *Sleepwalkers*) like *dewaane* (mad) Maulvi Sahab's⁸ Lucknow emerged out of his memories and 'unfolded in front of him' when he shifted to Lahore after Partition. The labyrinthine narration by Reza is par excellence and is so delicately and carefully woven that the readers undeniably get lost in the paths of Gangauli and might even find it difficult to return.

The narrative techniques used by Reza makes his intentions pretty clear about what he wants to convey from the very beginning. The novel undoubtedly portrays the wholeness and collective consciousness of the village people and how they co-existed and lived in harmony irrespective of each other's religion and this can also be traced in his techniques. First and foremost the story does not revolve around a single character. Each and every character of the village is given

¹ **Note-** (A note on the original Hindi title and the translated version) *A village divided* is the English title of the translated version of this work. However, that connotes the possibility of an internally driven division within the village. The self reflexive transitivity of 'divided' is not adequate to the concern of the story. *Aadha Gaon* is more a reference to an externally applied force which divided it, not even necessarily into two proportionate halves. In many Indian languages including Hindi and Urdu *Aadha*/half can mean partial. What Reza manages to show through *Aadha Gaon* is this sense of partial brokenness of people and culture of the sub-continent, post- Partition

² Northern stretch

³ Southern Stretch

⁴ a deserted workshop now used by lovers for secret meetings

⁵ a pond

⁶ tomb of Nooruddin who won Gangouli from its king Gang

⁷ a copy of Imam Hussain's tomb

⁸ a character in Joginder Paul's *Khwabrao/Sleepwalkers*. He was called *deewane* because he denied believing that he has shifted to Lahore; he believed that he was still living in Lucknow.

an equal space in the narrative and each of their stories is narrated with equal rigor and devotion. The narrative goes from Gori dadi to Hammad, Jhinguriya, Kunwarpal Singh, Funnan-da and Thakur Harnarayan Prasad respectively in a matter of few lines.

It is designed in such a manner that each character's story is incomplete if not intertwined with some other character. And one cannot deny that's how the society functions, each person or a character has a role to play in the life of the other person in a close community or neighbourhood. It has been observed that social and emotional interdependence and unity in the villages are an important theme of the structure of Indian Society. 'People are born into groups—families, clans, sub-castes, castes, and religious communities—and feel a deep sense of inseparability from these groups. People are deeply involved with others, and for many, the greatest fear is the possibility of being left alone, without social support'.⁹ It is evident that a society does not exist in its singleness but in a continuum where the life of a person flows and mixes with the life and stories of other person of the society and that's how it survives. Taking an example from the text- Thakur Harnarayan wants to arrest Funnan anyhow because of his disrespectful behaviour towards all police officers. Thakur Harnarayan's assistant sergeant Samiuddin's son Muinuddin is going to marry Gulam Hussain's daughter. Gulam's sister-in-law was taken away by Funnan because he started liking her from the very first meeting. Gulam's brother tried a lot but couldn't get his wife back even after many *panchayats*¹⁰ and meetings; so with the help of his employer he gets Funnan arrested years after for some crime he hasn't committed. And that's how the whole spiral of inter-relatedness completes and yet starts again infinitely.

Another noticeable element about this work is a larger part of the novel is written to establish the closeness and intimacy of the families of Gangauli rather than to show how Partition 1947 impacted them and how they faced changing power equations of the society. The interconnected houses and *dalaans*¹¹ and *khilvats*¹² were always open for passersby in such a manner that one could move across the houses to reach the destination even without using the main street. At the beginning of the novel, we find the little narrator prancing across Gori dadi's courtyard to Naema dadi's *khilvat* to escape a beating from his mother. We can often see characters like Saifuniya and Migdad moving from one courtyard to another to spend some time alone together. And towards the end of the novel we also see Tannu who thinking about his love for Saida roams around from one house to another.

The blurred boundaries of private spaces clearly convey the sense of community the people in the village carried. When Abbu's wife informed Rabban bi that Tannu doesn't want to marry her granddaughter Salma, the conversation turned into an argument and both started fighting. The conclusion was that the window connecting both the houses was closed as a sign of disagreement for days. Reza as an observant narrator comments 'the windows connecting the houses would usually shut down twice or thrice in a year for one argument or another but they would re-open again without much ado'.¹³

Further, gossips have also been given a considerable amount of space in the work. Quoting Gluckman's work *Gossip and Scandal*, Estevez (2021) confirms (Gluckman's thesis asserts) that gossip plays a key function in the cohesion of any social group by maintaining its unity, morals, identity, and values. Based on a study of natural conversations among villagers in Zinacantan (Mexico), Haviland (1977b) argues that gossip plays an essential role in creating cultural norms. Specifically, gossip enables the learning of cultural rules at a distance — by vicarious experience... Building on an ethnographic study in Winston Parva (the English Midlands), Elias and Scotson (1994) posit that "village" gossip helps preserve the purity and integrity of the group by defining the boundaries between those who belong to the group and those who do not. In his study among cattle ranchers in Shasta County (California), Ellickson (1991) claims that gossip allow groups to self-organize without the aid of a central authority. Not only is gossip functional for the enforcement of norms and the settlement of disputes, but individuals seemed conscious of the role of gossip in social control, using it intentionally (Ellickson, 1991, p. 57).¹⁴

There are several instances in *Aadha Gaon* where women would leave their work at hand and rush towards the house of an acquaintance just to relay the information of a new occurring. When Sulaiman's daughter Bachaniya elopes with Fussy's house help Safirva the news travelled faster than light. Women gathered in Fussy's house and started cursing both and lamenting the misfortune of Sulaiman who had a daughter like Bachaniya. One thing led to another and it was concluded that Bachniya must be expecting and that's why both had to elope (making their own conclusions). In the latter half of the novel as well we find Rabban bi writing an elaborate letter to Akbari about the newly ignited love affair of Magfiye and Chikuriya (it was not true but just gossip. She once saw Magfiye laughing on Chikuriya's joke so she felt something was going on between the two). One can see the importance of gossip as people are taking time to write

⁹ Jacobson, 'Indian Society and Ways of Living', *Asia Society*, (2004). [<https://asiasociety.org/education/indian-society-and-ways-living> , accessed 31 Dec. 2021]

¹⁰ It is a small judicial local gathering with five elected representatives from the village. They sit together to solve issues and provide justice.

¹¹ Courtyards

¹² A private separate space.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

¹⁴ Estevez, *Antecedents and Consequences of Gossip: A Social Network Approach*, Sweden; Ph.D. Thesis, Linköping University, p. 5.

letters specially to inform about the new occurring which might not even be true. Later, when Tannu returned from the war after six-years the first thing Rabban bi did was to update him with all the information he missed in his absence. The mobility of the gossips was mind bogglingly quick in the case when Salma bumped into Tannu mistakenly and Rehman-bo saw them from her window. Without wasting a minute she rushed to her husband and told that Tannu and Salma were standing arms in arms and they must be meeting secretly.

Gangaouli can undoubtedly be seen as the microcosm of the Indian Society. Set in the rustic village life this inner world sustains itself unaware of the 'outer world' where words like 'Pakistan' and 'Partition' were the reality. It's worth observing that numerous times these words were mentioned in conversations by characters with passing references but not once taken seriously. It is only towards the end of the novel that these events surface but before that not once it is shown that people were worried about it, or there was fear among the people, ironically conveying that the common people never cared less. These words were seen with the least importance when Sitara heard them for the first time from Abbas who was very passionately talking about the importance of Pakistan. 'Sitara was not interested in the formation of Pakistan' she didn't even know what it stood for but she was interested in Abbas so she secretly started praying for its formation.¹⁵ And when asked about voting Muslim League, Kulsum unaware of what voting was or what Muslim League was excitedly said that she would like to vote Mumtaz (her dead son). When asked where Pakistan will be she retorted that she doesn't know where the '*matimilla*' (dead and buried) Pakistan is.¹⁶

This was the truth of the society at that point of time. Khan (2007) in one of her works describes the tour of a retired Indian Civil Servant Malcolm Darling who in the end of 1946 decided to travel the northern part of India on horseback and record the view point of the peasants about "*azadi*" or freedom. He found that in some villages of Punjab the followers of Muslim League did not even know the objective of the party itself saying '*saanu kuch ni pata*'¹⁷ and some were misinformed as evidently the next peasant said, 'If there were no league the Hindus would get the government and take away our lands'.¹⁸ In the later part of the novel we see Funnan's four years son shouting slogans '*leke rahenge Pakistan!!*'¹⁹ (We will take Pakistan anyhow) followed by '*Inquilab Zindabad*' (long live the revolution) which he picked on his way from school. (Both slogans were used by two different interest groups and the child not knowing the difference between the two was naively shouting both at the peak of his voice along with both, his Muslim and Hindu friends).²⁰

Further, when two young men came from Aligarh for the campaigning of Muslim League and ensure majority of votes, they found it really difficult to convince the Muslim population of Gangaouli that the Hindus will turn against them. First they met Kammo who was teaching children in his Madarsa.

One of the guy among the two boys started giving a whole speech and Kammo couldn't find any of the arguments in his speech as reasonable and rational because he has not seen any of those mentioned things happen in Gangaouli. Kammo replied, 'I can never believe that after the independence of India Gaya ahir, Chikuriya, Hariya and Lakhan Chamar will become our enemy without any reason. Do you study all this in your big city?

...a reply came, 'you will see, they will tie cows in our mosques!!'

Kammo replied, 'when all the Muslims will be going to Pakistan as you said then how does it matter if they tie cows or horses in the empty mosques'.

One of them replied in anger, 'fine, don't believe us but don't come complaining when Hindus will drag your mother and sisters out of your houses in front of you'.

Kammo (in anger) stopped a Hindu passing in the street and said, 'these people have specially come from Aligarh to tell me that after Independence you people will drag my mother and sisters and take them away with you'.

The Hindu said, 'Ram Ram, when we are here who will dare to do such an act'.

Kammo turned to the boys and said, 'even our chamar is better than you educated people'.²¹

They got a similar response from their listeners in the Mosque when they were trying to ignite enmity in them and gain their support. They got an earful from Tannu who recently returned from the war and was aware that nothing good can come out of hatred. He said, 'a monument whose foundation is laid on hatred and fear can never stand tall'.²² On the other hand when a city teacher tried to fuel Chikuriya against Muslims, he denied accepting that the latter have

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁷ We don't know anything

¹⁸ Khan, *The Great Partition* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2008), p. 29.

¹⁹ When questioned from whom you will take Pakistan, the kid said, 'from Aligarh', which is ironic because Aligarh was just a small city near his village but definitely a symbol of a far away land where people migrate to earn a living or to study.

²⁰ Reza, *Aadha Gaon*, p. 246.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 251.

'downtrodden the great Indian name'.²³ Disappointed with the views of the teacher Chikuriya gives away his dream of teaching his children in a school because he didn't want his children to learn such things.

Reza's Gangauli is nothing like what these voting campaigners were talking about. His Gangauli has *Uttar Patti* and *Dakhin Patti* who always fights for an upper hand over each other but still have a cordial relationship. Here, if a father has to impress the family of the groom so that the latter accept his daughter, the whole village tries to help the father in every way. When Gulam Husain (part of northern stretch) saw Samiuddin's son for the first time he selected him for his daughter Badrun. From that very day he would frequently visit Samiuddin's house with variety of delicious food he would proudly claim as made by Badrun. But in reality he would get the *chana dal halwa*²⁴ prepared by Rabban bi and *Dahi Bade*²⁵ from his estranged sister-in-law (both belonged to rival group of southern stretch). 'When it is the matter of a daughter we should forget *pattidari* or this division between the two stretches... so the whole Gangauli happily contributed in every way it can to impress Badrun's to be father-in-law'.²⁶ Later when the family learnt that the groom has a wooden leg on the day of the wedding the whole village stood against Samiuddin for keeping it a secret till then. Even Hindus of the village were cursing the groom's family and argued that we will not give them our girl.²⁷

A pattern of Hindu-Muslim friendship can be seen in many novels written by Reza. For example- in *Oss ki Boond*- Wazir Hasan and Deendayal, in *Topi Shukla*- Iffan and Topi and in *Aadha Gaon*- Funnan and Kunwarpal Singh. In all the three novels we see friends crying and pining for their childhood mate and frequently re-living the happy memories of the time they spent together. In *Aadha Gaon*, Thakur Kunwarpal was a disciple of Funnan's father and used to learn wrestling from him. Both became close friends from then only. Funnan cried a lot when he killed him in a duel and became completely aloof after the incident. He really missed his friend. He even supported Kunwarpal's son Prithvipal in a land dispute going against his whole Shiite community which also led to his social expulsion from the village. The extremity was when nobody came for Funnan's daughter Razia's funeral from the Shiite community and only Prithvipal, Funnan's Hindu companion Jhiguriya and Raki Arunawal Hasan helped giving shoulder to his daughter on her last journey.²⁸ And when Funnan went to jail it was his friend Jhikuriya's son Chikuriya who would regularly visit his home and sit in front of their door for hours so that Funnan's family do not feel alone and unsafe.²⁹ Towards the end of the novel it can be seen that it was the Hindus from the surrounding villages of Gangauli that formed a Union to save the Muslims of the villages.

A larger part of the Muslims of Gangauli decided to stay back in India rather than shifting to Pakistan because it was difficult for them to leave the land of their ancestors. Gangauli was their Home and not once they considered it unsafe. Their only argument to the people who decided to leave was '*Baap-dada ki chokhat ni chori jaati*'.³⁰ Tannu irked by the arguments of the two students who came for voting campaign confesses his village means everything to him. He declares that he is a Muslim and he loves his village. He said, '...because I myself am this village, I love its *neel ka godaam*, the *talaab*, the muddy lanes of this village because these are an inseparable part of me and my identity'.³¹ He asserts that during the war when he had a close encounter with the enemies he used to remember Gangauli and not Mecca. He indicated that Gangauli itself is Mecca for him.

Home is an important theme in *Aadha Gaon* and many other works written by Reza for example- *Topi Sukla*, *Oss ki Boond*, *Katra bi Aarzo*. Though all the novels are set in different time zones one thing which is noticeable is that all the protagonists in the different novels are either searching or struggling or fighting for their Home. In the text *Oss ki Boond*, the character Wazir Hasan, though shown as a resolute supporter of Muslim League, found it really difficult to leave his homeland and shift to Pakistan. The place was a proof of his family history and the burial ground of his forefathers. His family has been in Ghazipur since decades when they were Hindus until one of them converted to Islam. Wazir still owned the old *haveli* having a temple in its centre. Pre- Independence Hasan was fighting for the formation of Pakistan and post Partition he was fighting to keep his family legacy, his home, his temple. Riots began and he was shot dead by the police as he blew the conch shell in his temple. He was trying to prove the point that though he was a Muslim but he had no issue with the prayers and rituals of a temple after all he had paid for its maintenance for years. The next day newspapers informed that a Muslim was trying to destroy the cast of the Hindu deities and thus died.³²

In the text *Topi Shukla*, Reza tries to portray the character Topi in a quest of familial love and belonging which his own family failed to provide. He finally made a friend Iffan (Muslim) who loved him dearly and never left his side. They used to play together regularly and soon he started seeing him and his family as his own. Separated for some time both

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-174.

²⁴ A sweet dish made with powdered split chickpea and butter

²⁵ A snack made with curd and boiled *chana dal* balls with tamarind sauce

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 282 and 294.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

³² Reza, *Oss ki Boond*, pp. 45-51.

reunited in Aligarh Muslim University where Topi took admission as a student and Iffan was a Professor of History and used to live at the college campus with his wife and little kid Shabnam. One thing led to another and Topi found back his 'family'. He loved Shabnam like his own daughter, became a good friend to Sakina (Iffan's wife) and finally found a 'Home' to which he belonged. His frequent visits to their home raised rumours about Topi and Sakina and after much ado Iffan decided to move to Jammu and take the new job offered to him. He never doubted Topi but the whole rumour of Topi and Sakina's affair even led to a fight and later riots. So to ease down the tension he decided to shift. Topi lost his only family and was found dead in the empty home Iffan's family left behind.³³

In *Katra bi Aarzo*, the two protagonists Desh and Billo had a shared dream of having a home of their own where they can get married and have children and live happily ever after. They worked incessantly till the day they were finally able to build their own home. Unfortunately a minister declared to lay down a road on his father's name and Billo's home was to be removed for the completion of the project. A piece of land was allotted to Billo and Desh where they can shift after they hand over their home. It was nothing compared to the heavenly home she built for herself. The day the municipality bulldozer was coming to demolish her home she buried a photograph of her and Desh in her courtyard ironically portraying that demolition of her Home is equivalent to destruction of her family itself. She tried to leave but couldn't and thus decided to die there in her own home. She stood in front of the Bulldozer with her little toddler in her hands and got buried in the rubble of her home.

HOME

Numerous scholars from different research fields in sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and Literature have tried to define and grapple with the aesthetics of Home as a space and the concepts and feelings which are usually attached to it. Foucault (1986) sees it as a closed or semi-closed space designed to rest.³⁴ It is evident that it is not just for rest as there is a prominent desire in everyone to own a space, a physical dwelling where they can have shelter, a territory where they can feel safe and express freely. Douglas (1991) asserts that 'home starts by bringing some space under control'³⁵ even if it is a wagon. O'Mahony (2006) quotes Dovey while defining Home asserting that it is more like '...a sacred place, a secure place, a place of certainty.... Home is a demarcated territory with both physical and symbolic boundaries that ensure that dwellers can control access and behaviour within'.³⁶

But is it really limited to the function of providing a space to rest, provide shelter, security and privacy to procreate or more than that. Many critics have argued that the 'house' or the physical dwelling is just one dimension of the multi-layered concept that is Home.³⁷ Famous author Bachelard (1958) gave a more profound insight on the meaning of Home. In his work *The Poetics of Space*, he tries to read and interpret the dynamics of intimate spaces with the help of various imaginative poetic renditions done by famous poets and authors in literature. He portrays how these geometric spaces are transcendental in its form and possess far more importance to its inhabitants than just a shelter. He emphasizes that Home is a cosmos; it is a personal world in itself and outside this Home 'spins worlds within worlds'.³⁸ Similar interpretation has been given by Brah (1996) who feels Home is like 'immersion of self in a locality.' 'The locality "intrudes" upon the self through the senses defining "what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers". Equally the self penetrates the boundaries'.³⁹ One can observe what a deeper bond a person shares with his home.

In *Oss ki Boond*, Reza also tries to define the importance of a Home in a person's life. He observes Home- this word is bigger and greater than any love or hatred. Love is a really tiny word as compared to 'home.' So tiny that it cannot even incorporate a small corner of the courtyard of a house. And the tragedy is that language doesn't have a greater word than love... Home embodies the age-old histories of a person's family. This word is even bigger than Religion and God. It is bigger than time, history, life and death. A person will become hollow if this word is taken out from the life.⁴⁰

There are evidences in Literature where Home is seen as Heaven as well by some people and this bond is seen as one of the greatest and most sacred one to an extent where loss of Home is seen as loss of identity itself. Tuan (2001) eloquently explains how such deeper bonds are formed with a particular space. He asserts that a space becomes a place when we get familiarized with it. Tuan explains that perceptions are formed with the help of sensory contacts with our

³³ Reza, *Topi Shukla* (New Delhi; Rajkamal Prakashan, 2016), pp. 96-98, 114.

³⁴ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (1986), p. 24. [https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf, accessed 31 Jan. 2022]

³⁵ Douglas, 'The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space', *Social Research*, Vol. 58, no. 1 (1991), p. 289.

³⁶ Dovey, 'Home and Homelessness'; as cited in O' Mahony, 'The Meaning of Home: from Theory to Practice', *International Journal of Law in the Built Environment*, Vol. 5, no. 2 (2013), p. 162.

³⁷ Mallet, 'Understanding Home: A Critical Review of Literature', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 52, no. 1 (2004), p. 68.

³⁸ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (USA: Beacon Press Books, 1994), vii-ix. [https://sites.evergreen.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/88/2015/05/Gaston-Bachelard-the-Poetics-of-Space.pdf, accessed 8 Feb. 2022]

³⁹ Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*; as cited in Mallet, 'Understanding Home: A Critical Review of Literature', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 52 no.1 (2004), p. 79.

⁴⁰ Reza, *Oss ki Boond*, pp. 20-21.

surroundings which induce emotions and these emotions further results in conception of a thought or perception about a specific place. Now due to the regular and continuous proximity with the objects (also the subjects) in that place attachments and a sense of belonging are formed between the dweller and the physical dwelling. Thus it is considered safe and secure.⁴¹

However, this sense of security is lost in the case of migration especially a forced one. The refugees feel displaced and it becomes hard for them to settle down in a foreign land. They see the loss of home, their native culture, language, lifestyles, as a loss of identity itself. Ahmad (1999) argues that for migrants and refugees, home is not necessarily 'a singular space or state of being rather it may be one's country, city or town, where one's family lives or comes from.'⁴² Why this understanding is formed can be easily traced down in a definition of Home given by Havel and Hollander (quoted by Tucker, 1994). They see Home as a centre of various concentric circles which include 'house, village, town, family, social environment, professional environment, the nation, civic society, the civilisation and the world' and the experience of these aspects form a larger part of the inhabitants experience and identity. 'All the circles of our home... are an inalienable part of us, and as an inseparable element of human identity. Deprived of all the aspects of his home, man would be deprived of himself, of his humanity'.⁴³ Finally, Mallet (2004) gave a more inclusive and wholesome understanding of Home asserting that The house or a dwelling accommodates home but home seemingly extend beyond its walls to the neighbourhood, even the suburbs, town or city. Home is a place but it is also a space where particular activities and relationships are lived. In my account home is a virtual space, a repository for memories of the lived spaces. It locates lived times and spaces, particularly intimate familial time and space'.⁴⁴

We can observe the traces of the above definitions in the description of Home- Gangauli, done by Reza in *Aadha Gaon*. It reveals how boundless and infinite his love is for his home and that his village and his neighbourhood are an 'inalienable' part of his identity (as defined by Havel (1991) above). He does not limit his idea of 'home' to the four walls of his house. To him his home is the unending streets of Gangauli, its people, their gossips, their joys and sorrows and everything else related to them. Towards the end of the novel he wrote a small *Bhumika* (a note) telling what Gangauli means to him. He says, My father was from Bijoli and my grandfather was from Azamgadh but I am from Ghazipur. I am from Gangauli. It is possible that my father's love and loyalty is divided between both Bijoli and Gangauli. But my love and loyalty is only towards Ghazipur. I belong to that *neel ka godam* (the old workshop) which was made by Gilchrist. I belong to the foundation on which Gangauli stands. I belong to the processions which are done on fifth and eight day of Muharram. I belong to those voices of the looms which could always be heard in the background day and night. I belong to Gaya ahir, Hariya and Komil. ... My bond with Gangauli is unbreakable. This is not just a village but my home. Home. And this word is the most beautiful and magnificent word in all the languages spoken around the world.⁴⁵

It is not the first time when the meaning of 'Home' coincided with the meaning of 'Homeland' and it can be traced in various works written against the backdrop of Partition of India 1947. People were forced to leave their homes and the 'dislocation was more than just a physical one.' The memories of their past haunted them and their next generations.⁴⁶ It was as if losing their identity itself. Works like *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home* is a great compilation of Literature which highlights such works and discusses at length the importance of the whole issue. Adding on to it are numerous recently written non-fictional autobiographical works like *Home, Uprooted; Remnants of a Separation*, and many more. While the former text tells the poignant tale of the author's family the latter text discusses about material memory. The author portrays how possessions of the migrants of Partition 1947 were as important as any other part of their history. She explores how an object has an ability 'to retain memory and act as stimulus for recollection'.⁴⁷ She discusses at length the objects which were brought by certain migrants with them during Partition and the memories attached to them.

Reza comments in one of his works that 'if you want to understand what it really means to lose home, you should ask the community of Jews'.⁴⁸ He indicates that a migrant or a refugee knows the true meaning of Home. And it's certainly true for any kind of Diaspora. In Lahiri's *Mrs. Sen*, the protagonist misses her homeland terribly and regrets the days when she is not able to find a particular kind of fish to cook her Indian cuisine.⁴⁹ Rushdie (1991) rightly comments that each migrant, voluntary or forced, carry an imaginary version of their homeland which no longer exist but it is to that

⁴¹ Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 136-139, 149-160. [https://www.academia.edu/19846369/Yi_Fu_Tuan_Space_and_Place, accessed 4 Jan. 2022]

⁴² Ahmad, 'Home and Away'; as cited in Mallet, 'Understanding Home: A Critical Review of Literature', p. 79.

⁴³ Tucker, 'In Search of Home'; as cited in Mallet, 'Understanding Home: A Critical Review of Literature', 2004, p. 83.

⁴⁴ Shelley Mallet, 'Understanding Home: A Critical Review of Literature', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 52, no. 1 (2004), p. 63.

⁴⁵ Reza, *Aadha Gaon*, p. 290.

⁴⁶ Jasbir Jain, 'Lost Homes, Shifting Borders, and the Search for Belonging' in A. Singh, N. Iyer, R K Gairola (eds) *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan), pp. 21-34.

⁴⁷ Aanchal Malhotra, *Remnants of a Separation* (Noida: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), p. 05.

⁴⁸ Reza, *Oss ki Boond*, pp. 20-21.

⁴⁹ Jhumpa Lahiri, 'Mrs. Sen', in *Interpreter of Maladies*, (New York; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999) 123-124.

version that these migrants relate. It is the memory of their lost Home.⁵⁰ In *Sleepwalkers*, when *Deewane* Maulvi Sahab went to Lahore during Partition 1947, he never believed the fact that he shifted but remained living in his version of his homeland- Lucknow. He would remember dearly the Malihabadi mangoes and would try to find those in Pakistan. The memory of the bazaars of Ameenabad was so strongly rooted in his brain that his surroundings would look like as if he was standing in Ameenabad itself.⁵¹ Similarly, in Intizar Hussain's *Basti*, one can notice the protagonist Zakir and his mother pining for their home- their village Rupnagar. While Zakir constantly searches for *neem* trees as he had had back home in Rupnagar, his mother cried bitterly when she finally heard a *koel* sing on her window. It reminded her of her homeland.⁵²

What Reza added to the meaning of Home was the idea of community togetherness which he so distinctly portrayed in his work *Aadha Gaon*. He brought alive the times when each member of the community was treated as family. Reza's home was this village sitting tightly in the heart of the country and co-existed with love and trust for each other and felt safe in this co-existence. Years after Partition 1947, it is lamented that many were killed, many lost their homes but no one observed that the sense of togetherness and harmony died in the society as well. The social trust over each other was shaken; the base of collective consciousness on which a society used to stand was broken into pieces. The feeling of safe living and co-existing with people of different religions was lost forever. Reza in his initial pages of the novel observes how Gangauli, too, has changed. He comments

Here, from some days the population of 'people' of Gangauli is decreasing and the population of Shiite, Sunni and Hindus is increasing day by day. And that might be the reason why the tomb of Nooruddin Martyr doesn't have as bigger celebration as it used to be. Earlier the environment would get filled with the noises of '*bol Mohammad-ya Hussaini*' slogans but now no one is around and it's still standing there dejectedly thinking where my Gangauli and its people went. The roots of this tomb are buried in Gangauli so it cannot go anywhere else thus it's still standing all alone. Abul Kasim, Tannu, Tassan, Kaiser, Akhtar, and Gigge, all went to Pakistan. And this tomb of Nooruddin is still standing alone here in Gangauli.⁵³

While discussing what Home is, Douglas (1991) mentioned a term 'presentational thought' coined by philosopher Suzanne Langer for abstract analogies which is usually developed by bodily and emotional experience. She argues that 'kinaesthesia works by creating analogic structures from one experience to other.' For example music and art forms are produced in such a manner that either they can 'create their own dimensions of experience, or to set up analogically and in a limited frame the dimensions of other experience'.⁵⁴ She precisely indicates that feelings which are identical are registered automatically by our body due to which the audience feel more connected. One can say that similar is the case with Home and the feelings attached to it. When these feelings are registered automatically while one visits a place or touch an object or eat a specific dish or when one speak a certain dialect- one feels at Home. At the end of the novel, Reza depicts how this feeling has been lost because his Gangauli has changed forever. Its people have left it and those who remained behind are not the same as they used to be.

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⁵⁰ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, (London: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 10-11.

⁵¹ Joginder Paul, *Sleepwalkers*, (New Delhi: Katha Prespectives, 2002), pp. 7-8.

⁵² Intizar Hussain, *Basti*, trans. Frances W. Pritchett (New York; New York Review Books, 2007), p. 97.

⁵³ Reza, *Aadha Gaon*, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Suzanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*; as cited in Douglas, 'The Idea of Home: A Kind of Space', 290-291.

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