



## “*Inqilab*”: Adaptation and Acculturation in Course of Gandhian Nationalism

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### Abstract:

The freedom movement in India was not simply a political struggle, but an all-pervasive emotional experience. The Indian writers were so much emotionally attached with the movement for freedom even after independence too. Most of the Indian writers in English recollected it in tranquility and depicted this national experience in their personal narrative directly or indirectly. The French Revolution, the American Civil War and the subsequent reorganization of the country have provided novelist with prosperous fictional material. Indian English novelists have not been exceptional too it, their novels also depicts national experiences in one or the other way. They were also greatly influenced by teachings of Gandhiji. Since Gandhi dominated the political scene from 1920 to 1947, the novels of post-independence period also derived theme from Gandhian movement. Socialist nature of author paints the contemporary socio-economic life of the Indians in the most pathetic manner, irrespective of community and creed.

### Key words: freedom, nationalism, partition, communalism, Gandhi,

K. A. Abbas is shaped directly by the forces of History. The novel was written between 1942 and 1949 during tumultuous phase of freedom movement and partly after freedom. Events of national importance are presented through the point of view of a young boy who grows up and comes to maturity in the third decade of the century. Therefore it starts from depiction of Rowlatt-bill, Martial Law, Congress, Hartal. It is the story of Anwar's development which is determined largely by national history. In *Inqilab*, K.A. Abbas presents Gandhi as a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity with his unflinching faith in the oneness of religion and as an apostle of non-violence. His baptism into Gandhism takes place at the early age of eight. He was baffled by efficacy of Satyagraha as a political weapon. He is eager to know why the Britishers follow injustice with Indians and why the native have been denied their rights to live in freedom. Usually, Anwar sits besides his father and pay attention to the elders talking about Rowlatt Act, Martial Law, Hartal, Congress, Muslim League, Gandhi's 'satyagraha' and 'non-violence'. “Anwar could not understand all the implications, but two things instinctively appealed to him: not to obey the unjust laws of the Government and not to kill anyone” (Abbas 8).

Anwar is inclined to Gandhi even before he meets him. His latent virtues like sympathy, love, tolerance makes him true apostle of Gandhiji. His virtuous being leads him to know about Gandhiji more, as Abbas has described Anwar:

He was always revolted by the idea of killing a living thing and once he could not eat for two days after seeing Gulabo killing a mouse in the kitchen. How

much more horrible to kill a man! Anwar decided to know about this man called Gandhi (12).

Anwar meets the Mahatma when one day he was taken to Dr. Ansari. He sees Gandhi at doctor's place:

A thin spindly legged man in coarse dhoti and kurta playing a charkha. He had a white cloth thrown over his head and from a distance Anwar had taken him to be a woman. But as they passed by the charkha stopped for a moment and a small face with big round spectacles came out of the cloth and gave Anwar a friendly smile (56).

Anwar learns from his father the meaning of Swaraj and why Gandhi spins on the charkha. He also learns why everyone needs to wear khaddar. This way Anwar learns Gandhian economic ideology. He is pleased to hear that his father likes Mahatma Gandhi. He proudly tells his father: 'I also like Mahatma Gandhi' (Abbas 57). Anwar did not like the idea of obeying the unjust laws of the Government. He hated the idea of killing anyone. So Gandhiji's ideology appealed to him. Akbar Ali had taught his son the significance of the moral values:

For a true Muslim it was a sin to compromise with injustice. In their own family - history there was the case of Akbar Ali's father who had been a poet at the Court of the last King of Delhi but who had lost his official position because once he had dared to criticize the luxurious life of the King and his courtiers in one of his poems and had refused to apologise for it (12).

Anwar observes Gandhi's success in awakening the consciousness of the people to the fact that the non-violent struggle for freedom will succeed only if Hindu- Muslim and all Indians fight shoulder to shoulder against the enemy. He remembers what Gandhi frequently tells people about religion. 'Gandhi declares My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God, but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality' (180). Here K.A. Abbas, a socialist succeeds in conveying his socialist's message to the reader through the protagonist of the novel. O.P. Bhatnagar views him:

Anwar came of a traditional but highly cultured Muslim family of Akbar Ali, impervious of cracks between the sensibilities of persons belonging to the two religious denominations (45).

Anwar is happy and passionate by knowing people appear to have understood the meaning of Gandhi's words: These were exciting and memorable days! Seldom before had Hindus and Muslims fraternized so openly, so enthusiastically (72).

Anwar is overjoyed to see people taking interest in Gandhism and responding to Gandhi's call and taking part in the freedom struggle. 'Boycott' is the word that is heard on all sides and people awakened to boycott the Government service, courts, schools and colleges together with the use of foreign cloth. Akbar Ali is Anwar's father, arrested along with many others for propagandizing wrong message that they should wage a nonviolent struggle as taught by Gandhi. Anwar come to know that violence at Chauri Chaura incident forces Gandhi to withdraw the civil disobedience movement. But naive heart Anwar does not understand why Gandhi should be arrested even though he has called off the movement. Anwar also witness the

massacre of Jallianwala Bagh which instilled into him courage to resist all the forces of oppression.

K.A. Abbas is anti - colonial and anti – imperialist who opposed the Britishers' subjugation. So he indulges in a lot of social satire, the English who were bleeding India white by exploiting the manpower in terms of very low priced labour and draining the wealth of the country:

White faced and dressed in flimsy, revealing clothes, which mist surely is those other women of Chawri Bazaar. But no, his father explained, these were the wives or daughters of the Sahiblog, the English civil and military officials, who were walking up and down the platforms, puffing cigarettes and blowing clouds of smoke just like the railway engines (8).

During the pre - independence era there was a lot of social and cultural inequality. The English were privileged in all Government sectors. The Government was very unjust towards the natives. Abbas highlights this plight of Indians through social inequality. Anwar is highly agitated to see that the train's first and second class compartments had gleaming golden handle bars and all sorts of luxurious facilities and were exclusively engaged by the Englishmen and women. Rich Indians also sat in these compartments but they were not allowed to sit with the white people. Anwar witnessed an Indian being forced out of the luxury compartment, by white occupants though he had a train ticket:

Get out; black men cannot travel in here. The Indians had taken out his tickets which entitled him to travel by Second Class and even summoned the aid of an Indian ticket collector but it was of no use. He had to get into an already crowded Second Class compartment which was occupied only by Indians. Anwar was surprised because he had heard that under English rule all were equal. Then he wondered why couldn't the Indian gentleman travel in the same compartment as the Englishman? This was another puzzle - like water out of the same tap assuming two different religions and being sold as 'Hindu Pani' and 'Muslim Pani! (20).

Abbas has presented here same experience of Gandhiji which occurred in South Africa and recalled Gandhian event it. When Gandhiji was traveling by train to Pretoria, he experienced his first taste of racial discrimination. In spite of having first class ticket, he was indiscriminately thrown out of the train by the authorities on the instigation of the Britishers.

Bakha in *Untouchable*, Sriram in *Waiting for the Mahatma* Lalu Singh in *The Sword and the Sickle*, Vanchi in *Chronicles of Kedaram* have not understood Gandhi and his ideology at all. Bakha listens to Gandhi in rapt attention but is unable to understand his message fully. Sriram likes to be with Gandhi so he can live near Bharati. Lalu also fails to comprehend why Gandhi is asking him not to follow way of violence even against capitalistic exploitation of the poor peasants. Vanchi's selfish ends make him consider Gandhi a vote catcher. But Anwar in the *Inquilab*, though young, has immense trust in Gandhi and appears to have understood him well. Gandhi remains the peace-maker to Anwar, in spite of his father's hatred he decides to meet Gandhi.

Anwar with great conviction went to meet Gandhi; Gandhi greets Anwar with a smile and asks him to sit. Anwar does not know how to express his grief to the Mahatma. He bursts into tears. He says:

The Charkha stopped creaking and the Mahatma without saying a word, moved towards the boy and put a hand over his head, taking off the fez cap and gently stroking Anwar's short hair. There is such tenderness in his touch that Anwar felt even more helpless and sobbed violently. 'Oh Mahatmaji', he cried out between the sobs, 'please do something about these Hindu-Muslim riots. Please! Please! Only you can save us all (127-128).

These words of Anwar show his love for Community unity and nation. After saying these words he looks at Gandhi's face with great admiration and feels relieved:

Now he knew why they called him Mahatma, a Great Soul. On his face was look of such suffering, kindness and pity, as if he personally felt the misery of every single human being (128).

Anwar's whimpering resolved by Mahatma Gandhi. He makes him understand. He says: 'Yes, Son', said the gentle voice as the eyes looked far away. I too have felt as you feel. If God shows me the way, I am going to do something' (128).

He was much pained with Civil-disobedience movement. It leads Hindu-Muslim violence and spreads anarchy in the country. Anwar dares to meet Gandhij to control the violence and bring peace in the sub continent. His inner voice shows the way and he undertakes fast for twenty one days rigorously. As a result the riot immediately stops and instilled confidence both in the Hindus and the Muslims. Anwar remains a dedicated Gandhian apostle even when he enters the hostile and communal atmosphere of Aligarh University. This shows Anwar's esteem for Gandhism. He realizes that Gandhi never do compromises on his principle of non-violence and truth, when he refuses of the bomb-throwing by Bhagat Singh and Butkeswar Dutt. When he comes to know about cavalry charge on congress it shocks him. He decides to join congress as an ordinary man though his father antagonizes him.

Representation of Gandhiji by Abbas is objective. He presents icon of Gandhi both by his admirers and by people who differ from him. Nehru differs with Gandhian ideology of trusteeship. Some are annoyed with Gandhi for assisting the Railway labourers and they call Gandhi bania-seller of flour and pulses 'and insults him.

Subhan while expressing doubts over the success of Salt Satyagraha writes:

It is here, in the mills and factories of the new industrial India that the proletariat will make the revolution and not in an ashram where a saint is preparing to frighten the British lion by placing a pinch of home-made salt on its tail (282).

In the novel Robert Mills, the American reporter, draws a parallel between Gandhi's instructions to his followers on the Dandi March and the directions administered by Jesus Christ to his disciples. Gandhi is greatly touched by the Biblical parallel. But he modestly requests the American not to mention it as it would be 'presumptuous and even sacrilegious to compare him with a prophet like Jesus'.

Anwar has so much respect for Gandhi, even though he does not agree with certain actions. During the Dandi March, Anwar sees the villagers eager to touch the feet of Gandhi or at least to carry away the dust which had been consecrated by his

bare feet'. Anwar wonders why Gandhi does not dissuade them from doing that. As a result: 'Anwar found his earlier feeling of exultation considerably chilled by the religious aspect of the Mahatma's Satyagraha' (286). As Easwaran aptly quotes Gandhian thought:

We have to make truth and non-violence not matters for mere individual practice but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That at any rate is my dream. I shall live and die in trying to realize it. My faith helps me to discover new truths every day (152).

Anwar in the selected novel with great love and admiration for Gandhiji follows his footprints. The communalism was planted by the Britishers to separate the Indian masses into sections. Abbas, a humanist opposes communal thoughts in all his writings. The scene at the railway platform shocked little Anwar badly:

"HINDU PANI", "MUSLIM PANI"! Hindu Water!, Muslim Water!

The dispenser of 'Muslim water' had a beard and carried goatskin slung across his shoulders; his Hindu counterpart balanced a pail of water in either hand. Anwar wondered if there was any difference in the water. But the next moment he saw both water - carriers going to the common tap in the centre of the platform and refilling their respective receptacles with the same water (266).

Abbas, a great patriot, feels great pride in India's own heritage and Culture. He believes strongly in the great oriental culture and civilization. As Akbar Ali told his son, showing him a road that ran endlessly along the railway track:

The famous Sarak-e-Azam, the Grand Trunk Road, that runs from Calcutta to Peshawar via Delhi-nearly 1,500 miles from the east to the north - west of India. "Did the English build this road?" asked Anwar. "No", replied his father. "It was an Indian King, Sher Shah Suri, who built it, so that in this vast country it would be easy to travel from place to place (12).

Once again there is an allusion to the greatness of Indian heritage when Akbar Ali pointing to a very wide plain told Anwar: "This is where the great battles of Panipat were fought, and much earlier, this is the place where the great conflict of the Mahabharata was decided." (26)

Abbas has also depicted Indian culture philosophy for woman as describes in Artharv Veda 'यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः'। widowed and childless women are generally insulted in Indian society- a baneful trend in the society which has been reformed by K.A. Abbas in the novel. Women occupy an important place in the novel right from the commencement of the novel. Abbas, a socialist reformer, makes Anwar hold his widowed and childless Phooopi Amme with respect. Anwar esteemed Gulabo a servant in the house by calling her Buwa. Anwar was brought up by Phooopi Amma and Gulabo as Akbar Ali's wife was dead. This scene of the story catches reader's attention to Gandhian ideology for women.

Abbas quoted example of Indians working in the British administrative system, for a great deal of material advantage. Elder brother of Akbar Ali, Tehsildar Amjad Ali, had a number of pensioned servants, working for him. As Raof was pampered constantly, he grew up to be a headstrong young man with a faulty value system. Raof passed jokes at the poor peasantry's language. Raof told in profligate

manner to Anwar and Bilquees that in the village his father is like a king and he as a prince whom everyone had to salute. Raof never enjoyed reading books. Akbar Ali always encouraged Anwar to read books. Anwar hated the extravagant life in his uncle's house. Abbas says:

In the house of the Government Official the children had all their needs attended to by servants and Anwar found it strange and incredible that someone else should make his bed and polish his shoes (20).

Here Abbas has portrayed Anwar with deep conviction of Gandhian ideology. Anwar's uncle family is boastful and never indulges in progressive activities. As present shloka explicates 'काव्यशास्त्रविनोदेन कालो गच्छति धीमताम् । व्यसनेन च मूर्खाणां निद्रया कलहेन वा' ॥

This shloka depicts the extravagant demeanour of Anwar's uncle Family of the shloka conveys the message that wise man invests his time in activities to learn something new; in art or science productive activity rather that of the foolish indulges in troubles, sleep or quarrel.

*Inqilab*, depicts Gandhian political, social, economic, religion, moral and cultural ideology which is precisely knotted with historical description and Gandhian events. Abbas has portrayed Gandhian events significantly with Anwar's character which creates reminiscences of Mahatmaji. Readers who are not witnessed of freedom movements can avail picturesque image of all events.

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