

INNER VOICE OF THE INSURGENT WOMEN IN PATRIARCHAL ETHNICITY

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This paper tells about two exceptional novels '*Blasphemy*' and '*My Feudal Lord*' written by Tehmina Durrani. As women we were intensely stirred by the factual incidents that are discussed in the novels and we dare to present our admiration to this heroic woman to persuade our inner spirit. She has elucidated the existent incidents in Pakistan and tried to wake up the world by disclosing the horrible realities. In '*Blasphemy*', Tehmina Durrani has written the anguish of naïve women in the shackles of religion and 'holy-men' and in '*My Feudal Lord*' she has presented the domination of Muslim Patriarchal Society and Feudal rule. The miseries and problems of women are rampant and very common in her society, but she has goaded and strived hard to pluck the evils from its root level.

Tehmina Durrani who stood in the forefront to save the humanity from the fetter of the bestiality was born into a reputed and socially well-off family. She presented the sensitive feelings as smooth as flowers, views as sharp as diamonds and rebellious opinions against injustice and violence. She has brought out the crimes, violence, atrocities and debauchery which were deep-rooted in the societies in general and in Pakistan and Bangladesh in particular. She is not against Islam or its holy principles; she is against the people who are doing oafish deeds under the guise of Islam and Allah.

In '*Blasphemy*' the protagonist Heer, a beautiful girl of fifteen years, faced horrific, torturous and brutal experiences after her marriage with 36 years old holy-man Pir Sain, started telling the real nature of powerful religious people and their vindictiveness. This paper notifies how the protagonist Heer faced the severe conflict between her body and soul. While her body obeys the cruel commands of her husband Pirsain, her soul rebels against the heinous and brutal

actions of her husband. Throughout her life Heer tried hard to reveal the real nature and deeds of these holy-men and clergy people, the evils they were doing in the name of “Allah”.

My Feudal Lord has dealt with autobiographical elements and torturous and malicious life of Durrani and portrayed the socio-political conditions in Pakistan. This book is divided into three parts named as Lion of Punjab, Law of the Jungle and Lioness which reveal the tangential behavior of aristocratic society under the guise of ‘everything is good’ and realistic nature of elite in the society. In this book many political issues like the rule of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his death, the authority of feudal lords like Gurmanis and Khars are discussed. This book reveals the awful life of divorced women and how Islam society believes ‘A broken marriage is a reflection of woman’s failure’ and how the women are treated as ‘weaker section or frail category’ and how women bear the torments silently. This paper analyzes the socio-political conditions in Pakistan, voice of the underprivileged class, and the status of women in illiterate and elite societies.

Durrani brought forward the problems of women, minority and illiterates caused by Pirs, Mullahs, Moulas and the clergy. *Blasphemy* is not a fictitious or incredible story. It is a real story and the writer was inspired by the factual tale. The story started with the death of Pir Sain, who was boorish, murderous, spiteful and tyrannical in his inner side and pious, intellectual and generous in the outer side. The protagonist of the story, Heer, was his third wife and his first two wives died on their nuptial day as they couldn’t bear his brutal and beastly behavior. At the age of fifteen Heer married 36 years old Pir Sain by the force of her mother and followed him just like a scapegoat. When she was thirty three, she became a grandmother and mother of six children, three sons and three daughters.

When Pir Sain died, all the people showed pity and slobbered over Heer and said, “May Allah give you patience to live a long life without a husband” (13). They also cried out “what doom, what doom”. Heer thought whether it was a terrible fate for Pir Sain or for all of them. The people were howling loudly as if they had lost Allah. When people distributed the water which drained of Pir’s dead body as sacrosanct water, Heer felt sorry for their blind beliefs. They would use that water as a sacred balm. She recollected the nightmares she had after her marriage with Pir Sain. She had spent a bubbly and cheerful life in her childhood. But after the death of her father, her mother was depressed and went paranoid and made Heer’s life miserable by married off her to Pir Sain.

Durrani dared to bring out the unbelievable treacherous deeds done by the holy people in the garb of priesthood. Not only in Pakistan, in many countries we find this type of felonies, but she exposed the offenses which were reached to the extreme. Most of the people in these societies are illiterates and that’s why they are easily deceived. When ordinary people read that novel, they would be shocked by the truths that discussed in the novel. Durrani took several miserable tasks like child abuse, incest, debauchery, prostitution, sadism, pornography, pedophilia etc. and expressed her agony through the characters like Heer, mother of Heer, Kaali, Tara, Cheel, and Bhai. Many women particularly the protagonist of the novel Heer lost their dignity, freedom, virginity and even their humanity under the horrific torturous treatment.

Another important character in this novel is Sakhi bibi.

She belonged to one of the wealthiest families in that village and attended the functions at the shrine. She attended the ceremony when Heer got a son and advised Heer “read the translations of the Quran. Understand it yourself. The Holy Book will explain the meaning of our religion to you”. (92) She is the only woman who neither believed the shrine nor the Pir Sain. When her son was attacked with a disease and his health was deteriorated day by day, no doctor

was able to cure his disease; she didn't visit Pir Sain or the shrine. Many people advised her to pray Pir Sain and must get his blessings. At that time she said, "I have faith only in Allah". (106) But when her son was very near to death, she went to Pir and pleaded him to save her son's life. But Pir Sain proclaimed that it was too late and it was the will of Allah to take away her son's life. She went mad and begged the God to save her son. She trusted that only Allah could save his life not the people like Pir Sain. Sakhi baba rebuked his wife for going to the shrine. Both the husband and wife believed Allah and on the fourth day the child moved and on the fifth day he opened his eyes. (107)

From this instance we can understand that these women are not against their religion or Allah. But they are against the spurious stratagem practiced by the clergy. They are not blasphemous or sacrilegious. They are supporters of good and peaceful accomplishments. Tehmina Durrani is not an atheist. She has faith in God not in the false clergy people. She has exposed her views by the words of Sakhi bibi. Sakhi bibi and Sakhi baba are wife and husband. Sakhi bibi was childless for a long time. Everyone tried to persuade her to visit Pir and said that Pir could cure infertility by his prayers. But she said, "I prefer to remain childless rather than have faith in the faithless". (93) We want to mention Leonard Peikoff's outlook in this incident. He said, "*Faith* designated blind acceptance of a certain ideational content, acceptance induced by feeling in the absence of evidence or proof". (Ayn Rand Lexicon.OP,48; pb54)

When the readers come to the end of the novel *Blasphemy*, they may be satisfied with the conclusion. But we feel pity about the women characters. In order to reveal the brutal acts of the Pirs, Heer took prostitution as a weapon. In my opinion it is not the correct solution. At last Heer didn't disclose the wicked system of Haveli. That is a great dissatisfaction to the readers. Any way both the ladies were succeeded revealing the facts to the world.

It is indisputably proved that Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh and Tehmina Durrani are widely admired by the people in the world as they are considered the bravest women who has disclosed the atrocities done by feudal lords and political leaders in their countries to the world.

While other writers are taking hilarious themes like imagination, power, politics, romance, inventions, detections, suspense, horror etc., these two ladies have taken the real stories and incidents in order to bring some awareness and change in the status of women and minority people. These two ladies are exceptional and inimitable from others. Even they are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of women and they are facing scores of threats from the individuals, from the government and from the ardent fundamentalists.

The Russian born American writer Ayn Rand, who was a famous objectivist, in her first novel "*We the Living*" exposed the criminal deeds done by the Communists and the sufferings of aristocrats and business people to the world. As she belonged to aristocratic family, she told her own problems and troubles they faced and attracted the attention of the non-communists throughout the world. In the same way many African and American writers wrote their own society's or country's problems.

In her first novel '*My Feudal Lord*' Tehmina Durrani has not only told the problems of Muslim women but the attitude of feudal lords also. As the sixth wife of a feudal lord cum politician Mr. Gulam Mustafa Khar, she experienced the brutal acts done by Mustafa Khar. In the first part '*Lion of the Punjab*', she portrayed the picture Muslim society and Feudal system in an absorbing way. She openly revealed how Muslims give importance to color complexion. In India also we observe most of the Muslims are very fair but they never give too much importance to color complexion. But in Pakistan many families give too much credit to fair complexion like Tehmina's mother and grandmother and show partiality even among the

siblings. As Tehmina was born with a dark skin she faced many negative comments from her own mother. These negative comments made her feel inferior and with that low opinion about herself as a not-very-beautiful-girl, she was impressed by her first husband Anees' adoration towards her.

When she was under the magic spell of Mustafa Khar, she was afraid to think about her affair with Khar and scared to ask divorce from Anees. In her words, "A broken marriage in Muslim society was a reflection of a woman's failure" (29) and "A Divorcee in Pakistani society is always a prime target for malicious gossip"(85). Anees was very innocent, young and good-looking person who really loved Tehmina and waited for a long time for the approval of Tehmina's mother. But Tehmina felt her married life as vapid, monotonous and routine without any excitement and sensitivity. When she met Mustafa Khar, she was excited and felt sensuous feelings in her. Then she has started getting knowledge about feudal system and feudal lords.

When Pakistan was divided from India, Indians believed democracy and India became a democratic country. It started and maintained democracy immaculately. But in Pakistan, in Tehmina's words, "In Pakistan, although lip-service was paid to democratic principles, feudal lords remained in control. It was they who decided who would sit in the National Assembly and who would reside in the prime minister's house". (41) In many areas feudal lords are treated as 'envoys of Allah' and he was the absolute ruler who could justify any action. But Mustafa Khar has never believed the policies of feudal system and he said many times that he had tried to do away with the feudal system that impeded progress in Pakistan – even though he was part of it himself. Tehmina was attracted by his socialistic thoughts and was impressed by his words like "The people who should have power are the rickshaw drivers, the peasants, the factory workers". (57) Mustafa supported trade unions and other proletariat forces to control the capitalists. To her, he was a perfect leader and a paragon of good proliferation.

Mustafa's fifth wife, a beautiful woman Shahrazad (Sherry) noticed the illegal affair between her husband and Tehmina and warned her not to believe Mustafa and get away from their life. She unveiled the cruel deeds of Mustafa, how he beat her brutally for simple reasons like forget to tell the servants to switch on the hot water, misplace something, forget to press his clothes etc. She said, "He's no good for you. He'll ruin your life as he's ruined mine". (76) But Tehmina in his magic charm hasn't got faith in Sherry's words. To pay deaf ears to Sherry's advice, Tehmina gave divorce to her husband Anees and married Mustafa. After marriage Tehmina at once understood how vicious this person by observing his wicked actions on his wife Sherry when she took his multivitamin tablets as she was a pregnant and his spiteful treatment on his first son Abdur Rehman when he was recognized smoking cigarettes in his bathroom. When one stick has been broken on his body, Mustafa has used another one and it has been broken he has asked for the third one and hasn't shown any pity on his miserable son. Meanwhile Sherry delivered a baby boy but unfortunately that boy died of pneumonia. The people, press, media and Sherry's parents came to a strong opinion that Mustafa was the reason for his son's death. Mustafa has given divorce to Sherry by telling 'talak' three times. This is the unreasonable culture we find in Muslim society. Uttering a simple word three times how a man leaves his wife and spoils her entire future is totally unfathomable.

Watching his beastly acts Tehmina felt "I had fallen into the classic trap of the Pakistani woman. The goal is marriage and once achieved, the future is a life of total subordination. I had no power, no rights, no will of my own. (100) She experienced his rage in the holy month of Ramdan as a pregnant woman for the first time. He thumped her severely by pulling her hair, by slapping her face, by twisting her hands and throwing her against the wall. While beating her

horribly, Tehmina's urinary bladder leaked and she begged him several times to allow her to go to bathroom. Her teeth were shattered, her lips were drenching with blood, the right side of her nose was dislocated and left side of her scalp was tangled with blood.

After this savage act, Mustafa knelt down on his knees and started begging her to forgive him. Meanwhile Bhutto's independent foreign policy and his preparation for testing nuclear power irritated the U.S. and it initiated the opposition to rebel against the government. At this time Bhutto must get confidence from the people and he has to win back the allegiance of the Punjab. So he requested Mustafa to accompany him to Islamabad and Punjab. Mustafa must follow Bhutto to Islamabad the next day and Tehmina's bruises were visible and she needed medical treatment. If anyone observed the brutal assault on her, his political career would be damaged and at the same time Tehmina also might lose her dignity and respect from the Muslim society. So Tehmina suggested him that she would stay in her room till his return and he must make everyone believe that with Tehmina, he would be attending the meeting. Dai Ayesha smuggled food and other ailments to her. After this horrible incident, Mustafa continued to use her first marriage as a weapon and mentally tortured her and named her as adulteress and a slut. He insisted her not to read any news paper and if he found her reading, battered her savagely. To the outer world, he is a socialist, anti-feudalist and aspirant of great social reforms. But in his house he is a traitor, a dictator, a sadist and a true feudalist and follows feudal principles. "According to feudal tradition a wife was honor-bound to live her life according to her husband's whims. A woman was like a man's land – 'The Koran says so', he said. This was a revealing simile. A feudal lord loves his land only in functional terms. He encloses it and protects it. If it is barren, he neglects it. Land is power, prestige, and property." (107) But Tehmina's opinion is different. To her a land should be tilled with care and cultivated. Then only it gives a huge result. But she has never dared to tell her views to Mustafa.

At this time General Zia-ul-Haq, the Army Chief of staff presumed power by telling his people that he would conduct election within ninety days and kept the politicians in prison. After two day he released Bhutto and other political leaders. While Mustafa Khar has been in these political disturbances, Tehmina has given birth to a baby-girl Naseeba. So far Tehmina had a hope that their children could change the attitude of Mustafa. To her dismay, her small daughter became another sufferer along with her. The atrocities he has done on her and her baby were horrible and we never think that a human being can do this type of savage acts.

The second part 'Law of Jungle' is aptly titled because in this part many people tortured other people with their beastly acts and there were no rules and regulations to their judgments. Bhutto after his release started his campaigning against General Zia and passed shrewd comments on him. Though Mustafa warned him several times not to comment Zia as he had a great hold on military forces and he might arrest them at any time, Bhutto paid a deaf year. When Mustafa got the information about the arrests, he suggested Bhutto to leave Pakistan for some days. But as a true patriot Bhutto rejected his advice. Mustafa, with the help of some leaders escaped from his country with his wife Tehmina and without his daughter Naseeba. This part described Mustafa's Machiavellian thoughts, his coaching to Bhutto's sons Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Bhutto's sentence, Benazir's arrival into politics, Mustafa Khar's illegal contact with Tehmina's youngest sister Adila and Zia-ul-haq's ill-treatment and vengeance towards Bhutto.

In the beginning of the second part, Mustafa along with Tehmina reached England and wanted to do his political activities clandestinely. There Tehmina met her family, her mother, father and her sisters Zarmina, Minoos and Adila. Her father tried very hard to get Naseeba and at

last succeeded in his attempt. Dai Ayesha came to England from Pakistan with Naseeba and the three young aunts started taking care of the child. When Mustafa was at home, Zarmina and Minoo behaved in a dignified way, but Adila wanted to get his attention. Soon after some days, Mustafa has entrapped the 13year old Adila and started enjoying his illicit relationship with her. At first no one noticed their affair. Adila has relentlessly attempted to degrade Tehmina in the books of Mustafa. One day, unable to bear the humiliation from her husband, Tehmina attempted suicide. But Mustafa admitted her at once in the hospital and she was saved from the death but not from the iniquitous hands of Mustafa. She faced a severe punishment from Mustafa, as she was treated by male doctors.

At the other side Mustafa with Mir Bhutto started to meet world leaders and requested them to pressurize Zia to release Bhutto from the prison and death sentence. Many leaders helped them with financial support. They received campaign funds from Colonel Gaddafi, Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Sultan of Abu Dhabi. Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization has planned to attack Rawalpindi goal, pick up Bhutto from the prison and send him to a foreign country safely. Though Mustafa prepared his sons to receive their father, in his inner heart he felt angry. He revealed the plan of Yasser Arafat to Benazir Bhutto through telephone intentionally as he knew his phone was bugged by intelligent forces. The plan became a fiasco without attempting any step. On 3 April 1979, Benazir was taken to see her father and informed that it would be her last visit to her father. The next day Bhutto was hanged.

Tehmina received some silent calls on the telephone and couldn't understand who has given those calls. When she mentioned these calls to Mustafa, he told a story about his relation with Zeenath Aman, a popular Hindi star from India and created a tale that Zeenath Aman has been forcing him to marry her. At first Tehmina had believed his words but later she noticed his relationship with her youngest sister Adila. She was shocked when she heard that from her 13th year onwards, Adila had affair with Mustafa. She was stunned and upset when she understood that her little sister was also entrapped by Mustafa. She got a severe hatred towards her husband and surprised how he ensnared such a small girl. When she asked about his nasty behavior and rejected to give her body to him, he battered her savagely and admitted her in the hospital when the blood flowing was not stopped. She desired to leave him but dropped her opinion as she was not granted to take her children. Mustafa knew that she loves her children very much.

At this time Mustafa has been planning to go back to Pakistan with the help of other country leaders. He met Indira Gandhi and they discussed the enmity between the two countries and decided that it was the army that was creating tension between the two countries. Indira Gandhi said, "We will have to crush and humiliate your army. Only then can our two countries live in harmony. Only then can you hope to restore the rule of civil law." (174) But people of Pakistan couldn't understand his policy of friendship with India as they treat India their first enemy. He sent an article to '*The Economist*' in which he expressed his wish that he would re-enter Pakistan on Indian tanks, if necessary.

Meanwhile Tehmina has given birth to Nisha another baby girl and become pregnant again. When Mustafa accepted his illegal affair with Adila, Tehmina's family censured her and cut their relation with her. Tehmina asked him to marry Adila and give her divorce. But apologized for his behavior and told 'Tehmina, you are a complete woman, you are exceptional. You have suffered in silence. You have protected my reputation. You have been a wonderful mother. I have broken this home so often, and you have always reconstructed it. How can you even imagine that I would give you up for that little slut?' (220). From this opinion of his Tehmina started maintaining silence and spent most of her time praying Allah.

Because of her silent prayers, she gave a safe birth to her son ‘Ali’. When Mustafa was told about this news he felt very happy that Tehmina at last has produced a son and heir. No one from her family except her brother Asim supported her in her delivery. In Pakistan Benazir Bhutto was released from imprisonment by Zia after so many requisitions from everyone and reached London to discuss with Pakistan political leaders. Among them was Mustafa, who received her from the airport. She wanted to establish democracy in her country which is a wild goose chase. Mustafa treated her as very young in politics and never gave too much importance to her actions.

All of a sudden Tehmina observed plenty of money with them and she asked Mustafa to buy a new house. She noticed Mustafa sending some boys to Pakistan and couldn’t understand his plan. Later she came to know that those ‘boys’ were captured by the army of Zia while they were making armament in some remote house. The parents of those boys called Mustafa many times but couldn’t get his response. The boys were sent to prison and tortured by the army severely. When Mustafa was informed about this issue, he didn’t react and took this incident lightly.

One day Adila called Tehmina on phone and told that Mustafa again asked her to come to him and he was ready to smash her marriage proposals. He told he loved Adila the most and he never loved Tehmina. Tehmina decided to give him divorce. Taking the help of a lawyer Tehmina sent divorce papers to Mustafa. But he was not ready to sign the papers instead he requested his friends to convince her to live with him. He acted as a changed person agreed to sign the papers which give assurance that she can give divorce whenever she wants and custody of their children. Mustafa started treating her like a queen and pamper their children. With this good relation he wanted another child from her. At first Tehmina was reluctant to get pregnancy but with his prolonged requests and insistence she once again got pregnancy. This time Mustafa arranged very good facilities to her and she gave birth to another son Hamza. Mustafa started his meeting with Indian government and the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to support their country against Zia’s army. When Tehmina wanted him to send her on pilgrimage to Ajmer, with great difficulty he sent her to India. When she came back to England, he asked her to give back his divorce agreement papers. Now she applied a divorce in the court. Their children were made Wards of Court and Mustafa was granted the right to take the three children out every Sunday morning and ordered to return them by evening. One day Mustafa has taken the three children and sent them to Islamabad and asked Tehmina if she really wanted her children she must come back to him. She put a case against Mustafa and all news papers in Britain published the news. The Britain Government and mediators tried to get the details of their children but in vain.

Then one day Naseeba on her birthday, called Tehmina and told that they were living in a hot, dirty area filled with flies and mosquitoes and begged her to take them away from that place. Listening to their sufferings, Tehmina dropped all her allegations and complaints against her husband and reached Mustafa back. Mustafa felt happy and asked her to go to Pakistan to meet their children. He knew that whenever they reached Pakistan, he would be arrested. So he asked Tehmina to promise him that she would take his role in politics and continue his policies like establishing democracy and equality in Pakistan. He also made her take a oath on Koran that she wouldn’t marry a person again when he was in prison. Once again Tehmina was trapped in his false socialistic views and believed that he was surely trying to get democracy in his country. When they reached Pakistan Mustafa was arrested.

In the last part ‘Lioness’ Tehmina told about her campaign for the release of her husband and his policies, the political scenario of Pakistan etc. She struggled very hard to assimilate the

democratic thoughts of Mustafa in the minds of the people and got a great reputation. When Zia died in a plane crash she felt very happy about his death and felt sorry about other innocent followers. Mustafa was released and Tehmina continued her campaign along with her husband.

When Mustafa won the election and about to take the authority, he once again proved by his attitude that he is a feudal lord. He wanted to exile Tehmina in his native place Kot Addu permanently. She rejected to go and asked for divorce. She lost her property, her children, and her family, everything to get divorce from him. But she stood like a lioness to face the hardships given by him and the society. He again married a twenty-two-years old divorcee as his seventh wife. When she was invited to his house for a party, he said, “Tehmina, you are nothing anymore. Once you were Begum Tehmina Mustafa Khar. Now you are just Tehmina Durrani. When you ring up people you have to introduce yourself as my ex-wife. You have no identity of your own.” (374) When Mustafa got a new son, Tehmina fought for her children and got back her children. She started doing social work and enlightened the women about their future and educating them. She tried very hard to give back a peaceful life to Fakra Younus who was suffering from acid attack by her first husband Bilal Khar, son of Mustafa Khar. As the Father, so the Son. Bilal Khar also got the feudalistic character and troubled his wife Younus with beatings and bitter words. Unable to bear his torture she got divorce from him and was living in Rome. There the attack happened. Tehmina took care of Younus and many doctors did plastic surgery with free of cost. But she committed suicide and died in 2012.

In an interview Tehmina told that her life was a success story and said, “I was sowing seeds that would sprout later. Everything did take time, but it was this consistency that made me acceptable.”

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