

TRAITOR BY NAKUL MALLIK
(FROM THE ORIGINAL BENGALI DALIT DRAMA *PRABANCHAK* BY NAKUL MALLIK)

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Characters:

Nagen,	Madam,
Wife of Nagen,	Prasanta,
Traveller,	A Little girl.
Bilasbabu,	

Scene-1

Nagen Mandal's home, made of tiles, almost broken, dilapidated; furniture as old as the civilization itself. At one corner, Nagen's wife, wearing an unclean sari, baking bread on a woven. Nagen enters, wearing a shirt and a dirty dusky colour full-pant, arranging books, magazines, photos and laminated speeches of Ambedkar from the broken almirah, looks at calendar folds two hands and taking his bag on his shoulder is about to leave.

Wife: For what are you leaving right now? I suppose for sacrificing yourself to the welfare of the entire world. Right?

Nagen: (*stunned*). No not at all. I am going to pay the debts of the society. Babasaheb Ambedkar always talked about the pay back theory. He used to say that your prime duty is to pay the debts of society.

Wife: Then who will take the responsibility of your own family? Then who will do the all household activities? Who will go for ration? Who will then stand in a queue in kerosene shop? Do you remember today is Sunday? Don't you know how many works have to be done today? Have you any concern for our son? Have you the knowledge that he has been suffering from fever for last few days?

Nagen: Has not his fever cured yet?

Wife: how can you expect that his fever will be cured without any medicine?

Nagen: Ok. Then take him to Haren Doctor immediately. Take this five rupee note. (*He gives her a five rupee note*)

Wife: Visiting doctor by five rupee! Are you mad?

Nagen: Homeopathy doctor doesn't take any fee. It's enough for the medicine.

Wife: Then according to you such a serious fever will be cured by Homeopathy! Wonderful.

Nagen: What do you know about Homeopathy? The disease once cured by it will never occur throughout the life.

Wife: (*Sarcastically*) Then Can you please tell me the time of your return?

Nagen: I will be back very soon. I have to collect my dues. These big persons are hardly available except Sunday.

Wife: There is no flour at home. Bring a little while returning.

Nagen: (*Stop and instructs*) Oh! I forget to tell you. If Bhajagopal Babu comes give him the book on Dr.Ambedkar's life.

Wife: Bring five hundred gram salt also.

Nagen: If Sudhir Mistri comes tell him to wait for me.

Wife: Do you remember what I said?

Nagen: Yes, yes I will remember everything you said. Don't worry. (*He leaves with a bag full of books on his shoulder, some laminated speeches of Ambedkar hanging around his neck, some magazines on hands*)

Scene: 2

(*Nagen's bag containing books has been ripped out due to the heavy load of the books; magazines at hands, speeches of Ambedkar are hanging around the neck; in a broad road beside some buildings*)

Nagen (*Enters and knocks at the door of one house, nobody replies; one traveller arrives, carries a marketing bag in his pocket; Nagen is very jubilant to see him*) addresses him Joyveem (*Takes out one magazine and places towards him*)

Traveller: Pardon Mandalbabu, please don't give such stuff to me anymore. I don't get time to read all these things. I am a little bit busy now a days. Don't mistake me please.

Nagen: (*politely*) If you don't get time to read then give these books to younger ones. There are a lot of good articles in it.

Traveller: No Mandalbabu, now a days the youngsters are also not interested to read all these things. They are becoming modern. Most of the spare times they are engage in discussing about sports and cinema.

Nagen: Have they become modern from their mother's womb? They have become modern after being born.

Traveller: (*Shocked*) what do you mean?

Nagen: They have become modern in front of you. Why have you not stopped them of becoming so, then?

Traveller: (*with a slight anger*) what do you want to say exactly?

Nagen: Do you want me to accept all these that the youngsters will not be acquainted with their own society, will not be aware of the struggle for the existence, and will not even know about Babasaheb Ambedkar?

Traveller: Please go my dear friend. Better do your work and let me do mine. And don't disturb me by such rubbish talking. (*Exit*)

Nagen: (*Pointing to the Traveller*) How long will you go my friend? The day is not far away when we will all dismantle your fake status?

Nagen : (*knocking at the door of one house from the left*) Rathikantababu? Rathikantababu are you at home?

Girl's voice: (*From inside*) No my father is not at home. (*Nagen rounded up the magazine and throws it into the house; at the right side he knocks at another door*)

Nagen: Bilasbabu? Are you at home?

Bilasbabu: (*coming in front the door*) what do you want? For what have you come here?

Nagen: Joyveem. Not so serious. I have come here only to collect the dues of your last month.

Bilasbabu: But I cannot give you the dues of the last month right now.

Nagen: What are you talking Bilasbabu? It's too little an amount for you.

Bilasbabu: (*with Concern*) it's better not to talk about that matter. What a mess I have entered into. More than twenty thousand I am under debt at the cement shop; the hardware supplier will get more than ten thousand, more or less ten thousand has to be given to the furniture shop...I have become completely bankrupt to construct this house, my friend.

Nagen: (*with a slight smile*) Then you should have not built such an enormous house my friend? Then your condition would have been far better.

Bilasbabu: How can it be possible? I have a large family to maintain. So many members are there in it. I needed such a big house like that only.

Nagen: I suppose your grandfather had more members in his family to maintain. Still he had not felt the urgency of building such a big house. He had the credit of bringing up dozens of children in a light shaded home covered by tin.

Bilasbabu: You are talking about the primitive era my friend. Now the society has undergone a tremendous change. The children are all studying. They are all mingling with the sophisticated society.

Nagen: Truly speaking Bilasbabu you have become rich. That is the actual reason.

Bilasbabu : (*Furiously*) What the rubbish are you talking about?

Nagen: (*Fearlessly*) what I have said is correct. It would have not been possible for you to build such a big house made of marbles if you are not wealthy enough.

Bilasbabu: Then what for I have educated myself if I don't earn money by doing a decent service?

Nagen: Do you think that you have got this service as a deserving candidate? Do you know for whom have you got this service?

Bilasbabu: What the nonsense are you speaking?

Nagen: Do you know many educated students like you are still unemployed or are doing service in grocery shop to appease their hunger?

Bilasbabu: (*Furiously*) What are you try to mean exactly? Have I got this service by bribing?

Nagen: Learn to accept the actual truth. Try to accept for whom you have got the job. For whom you have become the owner of such enormous wealth. You never would have got this job competing with the general candidates. Your identity would have been under serious threat without the reservation policy.

Bilasbabu: *Dhut!* Don't give advice. And you should better go. I am not bound to take advice from a bus contractor. (*Exit*)(*Enter one madam*)

Nagen: *Joyveem* Madam (*Taking out some of the books and magazines from his bags he shows her*) I have brought some books for you madam.

Madam: Look I have enough books right now at my home. I don't need any.

Nagen: How many books have you madam?

Madam: I have a lot. I have the collection of all the famous writers like Bankim, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Marx, Lenin and even the writings of Mao-Tse-Tung.

Nagen: (*with a ridiculing laughter*) Then you don't have the real collection itself.

Madam: what do you mean?

Nagen: Have you any book of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar?

Madam: (*surprisingly*) Is there any book authored by Dr.Ambedkar himself?

Nagen: (*With laughter*) This shows your knowledge! Hats off to you.

Madam: (*Furiously*) Behave yourself .Talk like a gentleman. Is it necessary to know each and every writer of the universe?

Nagen: But madam is it acceptable from an educated woman that she will be totally unaware of the name of the individual who anchored the education for women?

Madam: You should better leave and spare me from your nonsense.

Nagen: (*slight laughter*) Look I have such books. You can take madam. Ambedkar's *The Annihilation of Caste, The Biography of Joyotiba Phule*, The collection of speeches of Ambedkar. I have another books like- *Republican, Bahujan Nayak, Dalit Voice, Alteration of Right*, and *Nikhil Bharat*.

Madam: No, never. I don't have a single rupee to spend for buying such stuffs.

Nagen: Do you think that buying books is rubbish stuffs?

Madam: (*with anger*) can you please leave me for god's sake. Please. (*Exits*)

Scene: 3

In balcony Nagen is writing a poster on a paper-board. A young man enters.

Young Man: Nagen da what is going on? What are you writing?

Nagen: A poster. Check it whether it's good or not.

Young Man: (watching the festoon he reads it out)

"To get right, struggle is must,
And to struggle you must read"

Nagen: You know Gopal, Babasaheb Ambedkar said, "educate, organize and agitate". These are the primary criteria of for the upliftment of the society. However what's about you?
(*Nagen's wife cast a suspicious look at them while cutting the vegetables*)

Young man: Yes, Nagenda, I have come here to tell you that there will be a celebration of Babasaheb Ambedkar's anniversary in Hridaypur Ambedkar Mission for three days. Verities of festivals, literary discussion, songs and theatrical performances will be there. Naganda if you set one stall there, it will be excellent.

Nagen: Great idea! Most of the people of that region are literate. I can expect a good sale there. You do one thing. Go there immediately taking a bag full of books and magazines. I will go later taking other books, magazines and festoons. (*Nagen helps the young man to take the bag full of books on his shoulder; the young man leaves. Then Nagen becomes engage with the festoon*).

Nagen's wife: The fever has not been still cured by Haren Doctor's medicine. Do you know it?

Nagen: Please keep patience in you dear. Homeopathy always takes time to work. Don't be so impatience.

Wife: Is there not enough reason to be impatience? Do you know that we have missed the ration of this week?

Nagen: Then why have you missed it?

Wife: How can I? Tell me. Not a single penny is there at home. Do you have any concern for that?

Nagen: (*Rapt in thought*) Nobody has cleared his debt. But if I fail to pay my debt for the books I have taken last time, I will not get any books again.

Wife: What kind of profit are you getting by selling books from *para* to *para*?

Nagen: You don't know my dear. Dr Ambedkar proclaimed that education is the most powerful weapon for the liberation of the people.

Wife: You are not a teacher to educate all these things.

Nagen: Yes you are right. But think carefully if I can circulate these books they will learn a lot after reading these books.

Wife: (*Very Pathetically*) But you cannot do all these nonsense benevolent things in the expense of your own family. In our own family we are under dire poverty. In addition to it I cannot brook your baseless and impractical stuff like this any longer.

Nagen: (*Consoling her*) you don't know. It's called pay back theory. Look I don't have enough intelligence and wealth, but I can do something for the society by my hard work and time. It's also a kind of social service.

Wife: How can a man think about social service whose own family is under dire poverty?

Nagen: So what? How can I change my own attitude for my poverty? (*She enters into the room leaving the vegetables half cut searches this and that and continues her conversation with her husband*)

Wife: Do you know that no one likes you only for your nonsense stuff. Everyone chastises you like anything.

Nagen: So what? Dr.Ambedkar... (*Nagen's wife flares into enrage before he finishes his words*)

Wife: Only Ambedkar and Ambedkar day and night. Why? Is he your god father? (*She takes the books from upper portion of almirah and throws them on the balcony; books become disorganized; the laminated photo of Dr.Ambedkar breaks into pieces with a bang. Nagen jumps on the bag takes the broken framed picture with a sea of sorrows and cries.*)

Nagen: Dear what have you done? Instead beat me but don't throw my god father like that. (*Looking at his wife with a tear full of eyes*) Ambedkar is my father, your father; he is the father of all the deprived and depressed of the society (*breaks into tears*)

Scene: 4

The mansion like building of an income tax officer Prasanta Biswas. (*Nagen enters with a bag full of books and magazines hanging on his shoulder*)

Nagen: sir?

Prasanta : (*coming out from the room to the outer balcony*) who? Nagen I suppose.

Nagen: Joyveem.

Prasanta: What is the matter? For what are you here so early in the morning?

Nagen: Sir, I have come here to collect my dues.

Prasana: (*ordering her daughter from the first floor itself*) My sweet Mathu, dear please pay Nagen's dues. (*To Nagen*) look Nagen; don't bring these magazines to me hereafter.

Nagen: (*Looking up to the first floor*) why sir! What happened?

Prasanta: The fact you know Nagen, in these days these types of sectarian view is obsolete.

Nagen: What are you saying sir?

Prasanta: What I mean to say is that such type of communal thinking is out of date.

Nagen: Once it was, when we had been crushed by the upper caste when they treated us nothing better than any dog and donkey. And when we had to sit on the floor at *pathsala*.

Prasanta: look Nagen keep your knowledge with you for your own benefit. Don't try to impose it on me.

Nagen: Who am I to teach you? I am not wise enough to teach you. Ambedkar emphasized education. So I have a legal obligation of educating the uneducated.

Prasanta: How dare you!

Nagen: Do you know for whom have you got all these things-education, service, promotion and such mansion?

Prasanta: (*furiously*) I am not bound to answer it to an uneducated like you. Get out from here immediately I say. (*He faces Nagen coming down from the upstairs*) Leave, I say, immediately.

Nagen: Definitely I will but before that you have to contributing something for celebrating Ambedkar's Anniversary.

Prasanta: How many times will I contribute? Whoever will come and demand money. Is it a joke?

Nagen: Have you ever calculated your earning from society and contributing for the welfare of the society?

Prasanta: So what. The useless fellows will celebrate Ambedkar's Anniversary from *para* to *para* and you are saying that I have to contribute. Do you think I am a fool?

Nagen: But my dear friend you never deny to contribute those who are worship Goddess Durga, Kali and Saraswati? Rather you are ready to contribute them. Again you always remain the first person to donate your much coveted wealth for the party fund.

Prasanta: (*Furious*) You are crossing your limit. I say get out. Get out right now.

Nagen: I will go but not without taking the money.

Prasanta: Never, I will not give you a single rupee. I have already given twenty rupees ten rupees each to two organizers. I will not give a single rupee anymore.

Nagen: You earn at least twenty thousand per month; you have also been serving for more than twenty five years. This two storied building of yours will cost around twenty lakh rupees. Still, according to you have done an exceptional deed by giving twenty rupees for Ambedkar. So nice of you! Have you any shame at all?

Prasanta: How dare you? Stupid, nonsense, rascal. Get out from here.

Nagen: (*with raising his voice*) You are showing too much temper. Do you know to whom this house belongs?

Prasanta: To your father, stupid, scoundrel, rascal...

Nagen: (*Raising his voice*) yes its mine father's only. If my godfather Ambedkar would have been not there even your father failed to build such house. I have also the share of this house. You have build this building taking the help of reservation policy.

Prasanta: Don't chatter. Don't show your wisdom to me.

Nagen: The wheel of history has changed. Dalit people will take out each and every brick of your building.

Prasanta: (*Angrily*) Then see (*He slaps him on his chick with a bang*)

Nagen: Ah...ah...ah... (*He falls down on the ground with terrible sound and everything from his bag scatters*)

A little Girl: (*She rushes to Nagen and gently rubs his head*) Father blood! (*She arranges all the scattered books and magazines lying on the soil and reads out the speeches of Ambedkar very loudly*)-this... (*From the background we can hear Ambedkar's voice that completes the rest part of the sentence*) Educated society has cheated me the most.