



The Achievers Journal

Volume 2, Issue 3

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 July-September, 2016

Mockery at Religion as an Indicator of Postmodern Society in Rohinton Mistry's *Such A Long Journey*

**Miss Upasna
Research Scholar (M. Phil).
Department of English,
Lovely Professional University, Phagwara.
Reg. no. 11512116**

Abstract

In the novel Such a Long Journey, Rohinton Mistry aims at finding mockery elements and the reason for the misuse of religious symbols and ideologies through postmodern perspective and seeks to explore the elements of religious mockery present in the postmodern society. The novel not only delineates the dilemma of marginalization, social segregation of Parsi community but also their declining faith towards religion. The novel also presents a postmodern critique to the traditional rituals like Lizard tail omen, the sacred painted wall and superstitions. The realistic force transforms a simple middle class story into an apt religious mockery without any sacrilege. The present study will be meticulous examination of religious issues and cause for their downfall in religion

Keywords: Unbelief, Irrationality, Misery, Expressionism, Burlesque, Atheism.

Rohinton Mistry was born on July 3, 1952 at Bombay, (now Mumbai) India. He is an Indian born - Canadian writer whose works –in turns stark and humorous, explores the everyday lives of Indian Parsis (descendants of Persian Zoroastrians). He began writing short stories and won the university's literary competition two years in a row. His collections of short stories, *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, was warmly greeted by critics and general readers alike for its insights into complex lives of the Parsi inhabitants of Firozsha Baag, an apparent building in Mumbai. His debut novel, *Such A Long Journey* (1991; film version, 1998), is an intricate tale of fate and disasters of Parsis and their declining faith through the Protagonist Gustad Noble and his friends. The book received the Gervase of Merit Award, the W.H. Smith/Books in Canada First Novel Award and Commonwealth writers' prize for best book. His major novels include *A Fine Balance*, *Family Matters* which also describes about Parsi culture and their religion.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 2, Issue 3

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 July-September, 2016

It is the description of the declining faith towards religion in Parsi's. *Such A Long Journey* reclaims the downtrodden people who are involved in endless troubles and miseries in this world. It represents the reason for Parsi's lack of faith towards God, earlier whom were considered as the most religious in Ancient period. It shows the vision of transformed community in postmodern era, who avoids the existence of divine power, the religion, their feelings of rootlessness and many other moral pitfalls. They are so deeply embedded that they think that they are taken for granted and no one will question them for their mockery or evil deeds. It demonstrates how people were forced to lose faith in God under the influence of political, socio-economic problems. Therefore, persistence of such problems will continue to have these adverse effects. Stacey Gibson says that a fiction writer describes the world, and the world is what he or she perceives with the five senses.

The novel deals with the life, sufferings, religious and political effects of partition of India and describes the situation of our country in 1970s through the characters of Khodabad building in the novel. Major Bilimoria was manipulated by Prime Minister Mrs. Indra Gandhi, in her money scandals. It depicts the sufferings of the protagonist Gustad Noble and people who had left their homeland and migrated to other country. Dilnivaz, wife of Gustad Noble was ready to take the life of Tehmud Langra to save her daughter's life through superstitious practices. Their faith in superstition was later on proved correct on the ill health of Roshan-daughter of Gustad. The superstitious attitude is perched in opposition to the sense of reasoning. The wall of Khodabad building which was used for urination purpose was painted by Gustad with images of different Gods and Goddesses. Due to this Gustad Noble, his friends and family suffer various problems of alienation, rootlessness, poverty, cultural and religious conflicts in his life. Parsis were deployed in low profile jobs and it was death propel for Parsi community. The story mainly shows the deep affect on the lives of characters by local corruption. Throughout the novel religion is being depicted in Parsi culture and rituals and how it is being mocked through Gustad and Parsis various rituals.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 2, Issue 3

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 July-September, 2016

Now coming to religion what actually is the meaning of religion and mockery at religion?

You shall fear the LORD your GOD and serve him,
And shall take oaths in His name

You shall not go after other gods,
The gods of the peoples who are all around you
For the LORD your God is a jealous God among you,
Lest the anger of the LORD your God
Aroused against you and destroy you
from the face of the earth

Deuteronomy 6:13-15

God is a power. Religion is a power of human beings, give him any name; we cannot say he is a person who is being loved by human beings. God himself gives his devotion within us. He exists and he is in everyone, we are part and parcel of him and religion is the source He implants in us his devotion or his yearning or his longing for himself. If any human being disobeys the creator so ultimately he has to suffer as it is law of nature, one has to pay for his deeds on earth itself. Mankind should respect and fear in God with love and devotion. So, without religion there could be no existence of anything so what forced Parsis to mock at their own religion, as mockery is a disappointing action. How one can disappoint the creator or deity? Here, it will further illustrates the reason for declining their belief towards religion

Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest religion which was founded by Zoroaster who believes in One deity i.e. One God, Aura Mazda. In post modern society the number of Zoroastrians also known as Parsis, is decreasing because of troubles they had to face .Their struggled life declined their faith in the omnipresent who did not direct them to the right path which made them alienated from



The Achievers Journal

Volume 2, Issue 3

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 July-September, 2016

the whole world and from their deity .Earlier, Parsis believed in purity of God and not to destroy God's creation but in post modern society Parsis practiced various superstitions against Gods teaching , started mocking at religion and harming god's creation particularly ,human beings for their own selfish motive. Their disbelief and disrespect towards religion shows their miseries, pain and hardships they had to face in their life. Stacey Gibson an associate editor of university of Toronto magazine quotes mistri's saying:

“With my characters, I’m interested in what makes a human being,
And I don’t have any agenda that I start out with,
That this person shall illustrate greed and this person
Shall illustrate the spirit of generosity

It is apparent, whenever one is in great pain and facing religious and social conflicts at that time nobody comes to hold them not even their deity .People of post modern age being practical in their lives need direct help from God to fulfill their needs and demands or in case if it did not happen according to their will then they point out to God not to their evil deeds .Instead of Blaming themselves for the disgrace of God, inhabitants of today finds an easy way out for their solutions to their problems; they criticize religions, beliefs, and practices.

Be not deceived; god is not mocked; for whatsoever
A man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Galatians 6:7

The one who can give peace, we ignore him and blame him for our miseries .The thing is people have turned their back to him. That which makes people miserable-this creation, the love of this creation- for that inhabitant of today is hankering day and night. So how can one attain peace without grace of God and without giving respect to religion? Whatever a man sows, so shall he reap. If people will mock at religion then in due course, they have to suffer not God. In reality,



The Achievers Journal

Volume 2, Issue 3

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 July-September, 2016

nobody has real faith, devotion in the creator in the religion in postmodern world. Today, nobody believes in the creator from inside or on his teachings, forgetting the truth and actual concept of god and religion in their dejected and miserable life.

On the way, they pause at the wall outside Gustad's business,
Which a street artist has covered with depictions of the gods
And holy people, of all the religions of India.

Thus, in the novel superstitious nature, feeling of hatred, declining faith among Parsis is depicted through their bad deeds towards human beings who are the beings of one spiritual being. Their faith or religion is no more pure as now they are out of their way from the right religious path because of the Hardships and sufferings they have to face after leaving their own homeland .It is obvious that when a man loses touch with guiding principles of life, his personal faith on morality will no longer leads him to a purposeful and blissful life. However, one should not forget god, their religion even in their hard times. The main purpose of this life is to obtain that peace and happiness within ourselves. That is the purpose of every religion, of every society.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 2, Issue 3

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 July-September, 2016

Works Cited

"Deuteronomy." *The Hebrew Bible*. Lib of Congress, 28 Sept. 2007. Web.

<<http://www.loc.gov/thehebrewbible>.>

"Galatians". *Kings James Version KJV* 6:7-9.20 Oct.2008.Web.

Gibson, Stacey. *Such A Long Journey*. "University of Toronto Magazine". summer 2002. Web

Mistry, Rohinton. *Such A Long journey*. London: Faber & Faber,1995. Print

Puri, Arti .Chaudhary Kshmata. "Dichotomies of Political and Social

Consciousness: Such A Long Journey." *The Achievers Journal* 14 (2015). Web.