

Analysing the Crisis of Faith through SANA

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Abstract

Sana is the latest English novel authored by Professor Vikas Sharma. The novel is set to focus on Sana's materialistic achievements. We find hidden games of adultery at various levels ranging from the family structure to the corporate world. Men and women live in a virtual and illusory world, leading to false pride and immoral relationships. The proposed topic aims to analyze the crisis of faith in cultural values, social codes, familial pleasure, conjugal bliss, religious conduct, spiritual dignity, and self-realization. Indian civilization rests upon the divine assets of self-restraint, charity, purity of the mind(sattva), honest behavior, modesty, compassion for living beings, truthfulness, etc. All attempts have been made to analyze the novel under the assets above. As Professor Vikas Sharma's novels are pretty popular among young scholars, a careful study has been done to bring out the scholarly essence of the novel by analyzing the crisis of faith through the characters that are excessively attached to the labyrinth of virtual and glamorous aspects of life.

Key-Words: Divine, Assets, Sattva, Faith, Yoga.

Introduction

The era of ours is facing the complexity of disintegrated personality, leading to many kinds of psychological diseases. It is difficult to assess a person's personality when he is divided into several fragments by his mind, deeds, and words. Such a difficulty arises from the social values for which the person lives and attempts

to establish his false identity. We dare not show our innermost individualities to the outer world because of some faith or values thrust upon us in some ways. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to mention that our entire life has become a kind of social show, quite far from the truth. In order to behave differently, we often use masks, which is only hypocrisy, dividing us into many persons within the same person. In other words, a human being appears different from what he is not. Thus, he keeps observing the same track repeatedly. At a point, he starts believing that whatever he does is right under the spells of hypnotism brought up by hypocritical behaviors. A crisis of faith because of false notions leads to losing an integrated personality. Despite our rich divine glory, we suffer from the strange fever of luxurious craze, which is undesirable for us. Faith in our ancestors' spiritual heritage shows a way to live blissfully, as A.P.J. Abdul Kalam speculates:

Indians are well versed in the higher self, or perhaps the highest self is preferable. For generations, our ancestors lived their lives according to this concept. However, this idea sounds lofty and spiritual for many today, rooted perhaps too profoundly in the material world. For me, it has been a cornerstone of the way to live. (Kalam 39; ch. 4)

Sana, a novel by Vikas Sharma, explores the symbolic analysis of the crisis of faith in twenty-first-century India's social, familial, and individual life. Most of the

characters in the play suffer from the crisis of faith in some way. In the beginning, Brij Vrat, the husband of Sana, seems to have complete faith in the functioning of the "Divine system, Fate and Nature; he had no grudges and led a married life in Faridabad" (Sana 11). However, Sana does not enjoy her husband's company satisfactorily and establishes extramarital affairs with Revati Prasad, her husband's friend, and later with Mohan Akshay, the principal of her school. She lacks faith in self-restraint and the value of married status. Revati Prasad cheats his close friend as well as his profession since he holds a religious job of getting worship and rituals performed. Naveen Nischal, Sana's father, flirted with his maidservant, sister-in-law, and employee. Silky appears to surrender herself to Naveen and one of her Chinese friends willingly or unwillingly to enjoy privileges. Katty becomes the prey of the lustful eye of her employer, and despite her poor knowledge of chemical compounds, she enjoys the latter's favor. Vinayaka and Kalpi, who are the yoga instructors, "lost their virginity on pistol point" (Sana 111). The boys and girls of Sana's school make fun and frolic and whatever not by hosting parties in the hostel in every way they want without any intervention. They do not care for their warden's order. Tiya, the warden, flirts with Mohan Akshay, the school's principal. Brij Vrat faces trouble when he knows these activities as "he was not the product of such open society" (Sana 115).

Discussion

The novel opens up in the Divine Court presided by Lord Shiva in the presence of the other Gods for hearing the appellants' cases from the earth. A few people are waiting for the solution to the grudges they have suffered since their previous births. The appellants from A to

Z are reminded that "Nobody can escape from the results of bad deeds of his previous lives" (Sana 6). It clearly states, "As you show, so shall you reap." Chitrugupta shows his sympathy towards human beings for their sufferings on the earth and attempts to make them realize that "One's real self is entirely different" from "what one feels" (10).

In the second chapter, we are introduced to Pt—Brij Vrat, aged 35, who got married to Sana, aged 28, ten years ago. Since Brij Vrat is the product of a religious family, he has unshakable faith in 'the ways of God to men' and is living a satisfactory married life. On the other hand, his wife Sana is unhappy in the simple house constructed in an interior area with few inhabitants. She has been restless since she lived in the big house of her wealthy parents. It is true that if one has no rest, either he/she will make others restless or he/she will be restless in himself/herself. Being alone in her house makes her uncomfortable because she has no child so far. In the absence of Brij Vrat, Revati Prasad visits Sana, who is easily prepared and pleased to make love with him. Without considering the fine thread of faith between her and her husband, she exchanges such words with Revati Prasad, "I feel myself incomplete without you" (Sana 17).

Sana's lack of self-restraint over her lust leads her to assume a false face to face her husband. She appears before her husband, looking like an innocent fairy just descended from the fairyland to embrace her loving husband. Brij Vrat gets excited and exclaims, "Really, beauty is a pleasure, delight, satisfaction in itself. You are not a woman; you are a divine figure that came from Indralok for poor pandit like me. Come closure further" (Sana 19). In order to please her husband, she expresses cleverly, without a trace of her latest

lovemaking, "Who can replace your love and romance? None on earth" (19). How she starts to disintegrate herself into fragments due to a lack of true faith in her loving husband, with whom she does not dare to share frankly what she needs and feels but does not hesitate in taking immoral steps. Cheerful living certainly goes side by side with religious faith and the proper understanding of religious elements, as our former president A.P.J. Abdul Kalam says in his book Ignited Minds: Unleashing the Power within India:

For the society to prosper, there are two critical needs. They are prosperous through wealth generation and cherishing people's value system. The combination of the two will make the Nation truly strong and prosperous. (Kalam 32; ch. 4)

However, modern thinking and doing often do not care for such considerations. Without any rest and limit, material hoarding has become life's dominant purpose, leading to complicated and contradictory behavior in different situations. Neither constitutional provisions nor religious prescriptions are sufficient to check individual behavior and immoral deeds, but by observing both, a sound society can be set up. It is from the fear of punishment, here and hereafter, which binds us to abide by the provisions and prescriptions.

Karma Yoga (The yoga of action) recommends performing the work without any attachment to its fruit. Physical needs must be fulfilled, but the needs of our mind are to be controlled and pruned:

Prajahati yada kaman sarvan parth manogatan,

Atmnyevatmana tushtah, tasya prajna pratishthita. (Gita 3:55)

The main problem with the youth of today's world is that they prefer doing worship and rituals to gain, chiefly, material achievements, neglecting the expansion of self-consciousness beyond the corporeal self. Since they are used to for bodily comfort and pleasure, they do not spare time to feel the everlasting pleasure and peace born out of divine virtues: sanctity of conduct, truthfulness, honesty, and true love. After starting C.B.S.E. and I.B. schools, with the investment of her wealthy father, Sana secures a prestigious designation and the job of managing the two institutions. Her husband, Brij Vrat, who has been earning irregular money due to his religious learning, feels excited and hopes to be the boss of the two schools. "Spending nothing and getting a lot. What a Chance! He thought" (Sana 24). Hanging between the traditional and modern ways of living, Brij Vrat does not make up his mind to pay regular visits to the schools and finally "finds his future in the study room of the bungalow" (74). He does not think to show his interest in his wife's personal life. Sana continues flourishing in her convent schools as planned but cannot control her passion for momentary fun and frolic. She develops another physical relationship with her school's principal, Mohan Akshay, on account of her unquenched thirst for lust. Thus, a sudden outburst of passion leads her to win a temporary partner, losing their pristine faith in the conjugal life. She forgets the long-lasting bliss born of faith in married life and chooses the shortcut way for nine days of wonder. Under the pressure of an illusory world, she assumes disintegrated individuality, neglecting the purity of heart and mind. How dual and artificial states of her mind may appear when she seeks faith in her temporary love partner, Mohan Akshay. She wins Mohan Akshay's

heart and asks him, 'Will you be faithful to me and the school?' 'Of course, you will never find me ready to serve you and the school.' (Sana 76).

What an abnormal situation it is! Such uncertain love demands certainty of faith, breaking the beauty of love into the ugliness of lust. An often-cited lovely verse in Kalidas's *Abhijnanashakuntalam* shows the finest example of faith between the couple: "A doe that the buck's horn rubs her eyes" (Kalidas 73; Act VI, Scene II). King Dushyanta wants to draw the portrait of a doe who rubs her eyes with the sharp, pointed antler of a buck who is her male partner. The doe has such deep faith in the buck that she does not think of any harm to her tender eyes. She is convinced that the buck will not move until she finishes rubbing her eyes. Such mutual faith is the essence of love for conjugal bliss. If the faith falters, the love is lost, leaving only the knot of formal union behind. The light of healthy joy escapes into the darkness of artificial fun, ahead of which only unending distress follows.

Sana's husband, Brij Vrat, is always conscious of the holy status of his married life. In every odd situation, he maintains self-restraint even when he is tempted to do so. When Shayli, whom he appoints to teach him English communication, surrenders herself to develop a relationship with him, he refutes frankly without any delay, "What is this nonsense, Shayli? Keep the distance between the teacher and the taught. I am a married man, and the lechery is not tolerable" (Sana 127). In order to perform Yajna, when he is away from Sana, he feels tempted towards the wife of the host but controls his lust since he is ever alert towards the 'purity of heart and soul matters a lot for him.' His religious upbringing is seen in his thoughts, conduct, and deeds. He is

impressed and trained in maintaining the sanctity of life values inherent in the Scriptures and Vedic teachings. However, he prefers to leave no least chances to enjoy with his dream wife, Sana. Tired from his irregular income, he found solace after establishing two convent schools in Sana. However, he cannot relish the unhealthy environment of the corporate world as it lacks the integrated faith in holy living. As per his interest, he needs help arranging yoga classes and setting up a Cultural Centre. He does not have any concept of hoarding money alone by selling herbal products, but he wishes chiefly "to change the concept of herbal products" (Sana 141).

Sana's father, Naveen, is addicted to having fun with the power of money and his position. He lacks faith in moral values and falls short of controlling his lust. Despite his loving wife and well-settled trade, he has ambitions to hoard money and enjoy wine and women. Loss of an honest approach to a transparent code of conduct compels him to establish several extramarital relationships with whosoever happens to be an easy target—ranging from his maidservant, Savvy, to his wife's sister, Silky, and his employee Katty. Naveen's non-stop affairs are the burning illustrations of a valueless lifestyle.

At times, unchartered personal freedom leads to the ditch of enjoying undue deeds, especially if someone has no parents to inculcate the values of a disciplined life governed by religious prescriptions. After losing their parents at the threshold of his youth, Naveen steps into married life. When he took the seven rounds of fire with Kavya, he thought, "he got what he had waited so far- the queen of his dreams" (Sana 44). His stars began to favor him, and he set up his chemical factory, which gave him lucrative profits within

a few years. A prosperous life brought a busy schedule to Naveen, who could not resist enjoying an extramarital relationship with his maidservant Savvy. Knowing her poverty, he tipped her to keep the affair secret. His sister-in-law Silky sought his help to pursue a B. Tech—degree on account of her poor financial condition. Naveen cheerfully accepted to do what was needed but made her agree to enjoy lovemaking. "She had to compromise as she believed that prudence lies in acceptance that comes your way. There was no hope from the side of her parents, and hence, she accepted Naveen's offer without any ifs and buts" (49).

Sana is gone after her father and does not care about conjugal sanctity. Holy living is not a priority but a thrust routine upon her. She remembers to offer daily worship to Lord Krishna, Radha, Lord Ram, and Sita. Despite her daily worship, she does not observe the underlying lesson of self-restraint and unshaken faith in married life. The institution of marriage is losing its charm, which was founded on the faith between the couple. It is being artificially manipulated to get a kind of societal license. The momentary fun replaces the concept of conjugal bliss and frolic, neglecting the everlasting impact of parental conduct on the next generation. Senior members of the family are being marginalized in the name of barrier-free space for the youth. Sometimes, they go to the extent of acting as per their whims, which is fatal to the entire society. The absence of faith and spiritual well-being gives birth to a hollow civilization. The dishonest approach to becoming a millionaire overnight transforms today's men into machines.

Conclusion

The novel brings forth the possibility of mending past mistakes through self-evaluation. Sana realizes the importance of

honest faith in the conjugal life and concentrates on her husband, Brij Vrat. Having been blessed with the birth of a child, they are committed to leading a decent married life. Silky has undergone the bitter experience of sexual exploitation in the corporate world in her country as well as in China during her training. However, she also realizes her weakness and finally adjusts herself with Varun, who is settled in New York as a chemical engineer. Forgetting her past situational affairs, Silky feels safe and secure with Varun, a Jain, pure vegetarian and teetotaler. She initiates taking an interest in the divine assets of proper knowledge and conduct. After the casual death of Kavya, Naveen makes a vain attempt to get married to his employee Katty, with whom he has already made fun. Finally, realizing the age gap between Katty and himself, he prefers to marry a widow named Asha Apurva. At the slope of life, Naveen accepts the futility of lustful life. The world of illusion is well explained by Swami Parmanand, who utters a naked truth in his speech to the audience.

"Our spiritual wisdom has been our strength" (Kalam 40; ch.4). But the current scenario, as we find through this novel, is not expected from Indians. Despite several religious institutions and preachers, we need to impart to our people the elemental understanding of religion that is meant to raise and support the spiritual well-being of an individual. It is crucially important to mention that the more religious institutions we have, the worse the confusion we face in holding faith in a value-based lifestyle. The question is how it happens in a country like India where highly educated persons are being caught in the grip of mean, illegal, and even inhumane deeds. Now, religious institutions are being transformed into

the corporate world, engaging more in assimilating money and power than imparting elemental understanding. We need to set up a robust system for bringing home the proper understanding of our spiritual glory at every stage of life.

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A Brief Bio Note of the Author

Dr. Shashi Kant Tripathi is presently working as an assistant professor and is in charge of the Department of English and Modern European Languages at Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyanga University, Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh. With teaching experience of fifteen

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