



**READING THE CHANGING EMOTIONS DURING THE 1857
REVOLT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NIGHTRUNNERS
OF BENGAL AND SHADOW OF THE MOON**

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ABSTRACT

The revolt of 1857 is also known by many other names like sepoy mutiny, first war of Independence etc. which had left a very deep impression on both the histories; British history and Indian history. The revolt caused many unfortunate deaths of women and children it has not spared anyone whether one was British or Indian. Though the revolt was the reaction to the British suppression of Indian natives which they were experiencing for a long at some point they could not accept such laws of British authorities which were only made to suppress the common natives, on the other hand, the British interfered in the religious matters of the natives by making the law of forbidding sati custom and child marriage also British had introduced the new cartridges in the garrison which were greased with the cow and pig fat and they also introduced the missionaries in India which made indignant to the natives because cow and pig fat was an offensive product for both Hindus and Muslims, whereas, a cow is considered as a mother in Hinduism, the pig is an offensive animal for Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Hindus and Muslims both could not bite the pig and cow fat for the new cartridges. Moreover, missionaries were preaching the gospels from the Bible which natives understood that the British wanted to pollute the religion and castes of the natives by forcing them to use the new cartridges so that they could convert them to Christianity or British wanted to convert all the natives into Christianity which had spread the hate against British rule in India. Natives wanted to kill all the British because now they were interfering in their

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religion. Religion was everything for Indians because whatever they learnt maximum concepts were sourced from their religion in other words, the soul of the natives was closely governed by their religions; the concept of religion was thoroughly different for British rulers which they could not understand properly and imposed such laws which were not acceptable for the natives. Mangal Pandey, a sepoy of BNI, first of all, retaliated against the orders of his British officer Henry Baugh and killed him, later he punished to be hanged, along with him many other sepoys denied to obey the command of their British officers, which was to use the new cartridges greased with pig and cow fat.

The 1857 revolt changed the relationship between Europeans and Indians. Rodney and Winter both became the victim of the revolt, also they both loved India and its people but later they both experienced the horror of mutiny which changed them. Rodney even killed his very dear friend Prithvi Chand an Indian fellow who admired Rodney and remained faithful to him Rodney killed because he could not trust any Indian because he had to save his infant son from the mutineers, therefore, Rodney started doubting every Indian. On the other hand, Winter who was born in India also lived her childhood here in Gulaab Mahal with her relatives who loved her very much, later they changed and their emotions changed for Winter because now she was not their relative but a European after the rebellion. There were many incidents were being experienced by Rodney and Winter in India that they never imagined, Rodney lost her wife during the massacre and Winter also experienced the horror of mutiny as many people were killed in front of her. Hibbert states in *The Great Mutiny: India 1857*,

There were, of course, many Englishmen and women still to be found who loved India, admired the Indians, endeavoured to understand them and to learn about their history, art, language and customs. But there were many other unwilling residents who disliked the place from the beginning, and who, resentful of having to live there, embittered and unhappy, grew to hate it. (38)

Nightrunners of Bengal is a very celebrated novel by Masters including continued the Savage family through the character of Rodney who is the protagonist of the novel. He is a very reputed British officer for the native sepoys who lost his wife in the massacre and his infant son Robin who was still alive, Rodney's only efforts to save his infant during the massacre throughout the novel go on. The rebellion completely changed Rodney as he could not trust his very dear and good friend Prithvi Chand with whom he used to share everything even though they discussed together Sumitra, the Queen of Kishanpur, had romantic feelings for Rodney. When Prithvi Chand came to convince Rodney about his safety he did not believe his words and killed him without any second thought he only considered Prithvi Chand that he was an Indian and Indians had destroyed his family, and now he was escaping just because of the native Indians. When Prithvi Chand met Rodney he told him about his intentions as an Indian,

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Now his voice steadied and took on an awkward dignity. "I'm on the side of India. I want my country to be a country one day, and be free. But this mutiny is not the way to do it. We should learn from you, laugh at you as we laugh at forward children, treat you as guests in our country even though you did invite yourselves. That is the true India. We could be friends that way, one day. Perhaps you would all go away, perhaps we would ask some of you to stay. (Masters 275)

Though he trusted some Indians too while standing at Chalisgao because they gave them shelter and food. The Queen of Kishanpur, Sumitra and Dewan had negative shades in their characters. The Indian natives do not want the rule of Indian Kings and Queens instead they were happy with the British rule because, in their view, Indian rulers were cunning and corrupt and do not care for their public. The Queen killed her husband old King for his power and position. Moreover, Dewan was also presented as a cunning character who was after Rodney and wanted to kill him because he was a big conspirator in the massacre in which many innocents died.

Masters describes the deaths of the British people and how the innocent British women and children were brutally killed by the mutineers which was pathetic. *Shadow of the Moon* is also a story of a British girl Winter who came to India to meet his Indian relatives who used to love her, but now the time had changed, the love and affection which she received in Gulab Mahal in her childhood had been changed into anger and hate towards British people for Indians. The novel depicts the siege of Avadh which changed the lives of native Indians, earlier, there were good relationships between the British and Indians even though they had matrimonial relationships too. Winter's father Marcos's sister Juanita married an Indian Muslim family who lived in Gulab Mahal, after the death of Sabrina, her daughter Winter was sent to Gulab Mahal where she received so much love and affection everybody took very good care of her unless she moved to England where she was never loved and cared like Gulab Mahal which she missed throughout her life. She was so much excited about going to India, all her memories were recalled lost in nostalgia.

'One day', Aziza Begum had said, taking tender farewell of the weeping child, 'you will come back to the Gulab Mahal and we shall all be happy again.' Zobeida too longer for her homeland, and kept it alive in Winter's memory, re-telling the tales that Aziza Begum had been wont to tell of an evening seated on the flat roof-top of the zenana quarters and looking out across the beautiful, garish city of Lucknow. (Kaye 54)

She came to India after a long time then the political situation of India was not in favour of the relationship between Indians and the British. The rebellion of 1857 had been started which parted them the harmonious relationships turned into hatred. Indians were thirsty for



British blood. In *Shadow of the Moon*, many British women and children were killed in a massacre. In *Nightrunners of Bengal*, many women and children were killed during the massacre, also many British women, children and men were captured in a cell which was very small as the people who were kept in it were suffocating and unable to breathe. British hid in the forests during the revolt to save themselves from mutineers because, in villages and cities, they were brutally killing the British people. In *Shadow of the Moon* Winter and Alex did the same they hide in a forest and they used to cook food in the afternoon so that they could not catch the mutineers because after cooking they left the place and moved to another place.

Rodney's peace of mind was lost he became what he was not earlier, now the situation was changed which was not in his favour now he could not trust any Indian whether the Indian was trustworthy or not. He was mad about his son and his only motive was to save his infant son Robin and to reach a safe place. In *Shadow of the Moon*, when Amira and Winter met after a long time in India they both could not control their emotions they both had the same feelings for each other, but the political upheaval did not allow them to live together like before. Amira told Winter that she was not safe in Avadh therefore she should go back to England because natives were killing British people continuously and she could not keep her with them in Gulab Mahal because of all the misfortune they were experiencing, led by the British rulers, and they couldn't bear any British near them even the family of Juanita was against of British people they lost their lives and possession. Many Indians were killed too during the massacre British were killing Indians and Indians were killing the British. This has proven a very tough phase for both, the British and Indian many innocent lives were lost which was one of the pathetic parts of the revolt of 1857.

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