**2. The plot of the novel, ‘Train to Pakistan’**

The novel is based on the main character Mano Majra, the fictional village on the border of Pakistan and India and is known for its railway station. The novel introduces Bhai Meet Singh, who is fat, usually wears dirty underpants, the caretaker of the town Gurudwara. Hukum Chand, who is magistrate comes in his American car but later resigns due to heavy tensions of the town.

Juggut Singh, a Sikh thief, who is playing a bad character in the novel, is an uneducated local badmash, who visits police station once in a week, is 6 feet tall and strong. In this novel, Iqbal is a mysterious character, who is foreign educated, an atheist social worker from Britain and people gives him respect for that and calls him Babu Sahib. The mullah of the town is half blind Imam Baksh and her daughter Nooran is in love with Jugga and carries two months old baby of Jugga in her womb. The novel is about one man who is fighting against his own thoughts whether it is correct to stand in front of 50 armed men waiting to kill hundreds of their own species or to stop because what they are going to do is immoral.

The story begins with the robbery and murder of Lala Ram Lal, the only Hindu family in the town. The murderers were a gang of Malli. Jugga and Iqbal, they both were arrested for the one same murder they did not commit. When they released from the jail, they realized that a gang was planning to attack the train taking Mano Majora’s Muslim people to Pakistan and kill the passengers.

Sadly, Nooran, who is Jugga’s lover, is also on that train. Neither the magistrate nor the police is able to stem the rising tide of violence. They each had the intentions to save the train, though they were well aware of the fact that it may cost their lives. Iqbal was the person who fights with his own thoughts whether he should do something or not.

On the other hand, Jugga sacrifices his life to save the train. The train to Pakistan shows how themes of love and religion cause mankind to do unthinkable things that include heartbreaking actions. The people of the village were thrown into a system where the value of human life is based on caste systems, religious and political beliefs.

The bond between Sikh Jugga and Muslim shows that people can choose to be different, love exists in every religion, and love has no language but the language of love only. All of them could have prevented the tragedy, but it would have cost them their lives. Some avoid, some over thinks and only one does the right thing without thinking anything.

In the summer of 1947, ten million Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs run away from their homes on each side of the new border between Pakistan and India. Northern India is in turmoil, though the isolated village of Mano Majra remains, for now, at peace. A tiny place with only three brick buildings—a [gurdwara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/gurdwara), where [Meet Singh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/meet-singh) controls as its resident [bhai](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/bhai); a mosque led by the mullah and weaver [Imam Baksh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/imam-baksh); and the home of the Hindu moneylender, [Lala Ram Lal](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/lala-ram-lal)—Mano Majra becomes the site of a dishonorable [dacoity](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/dacoity), which results in Ram Lal’s murder. While fleeing Ram Lal’s house, the robbers pass by the home of former robber [Juggut Singh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/juggut-singh-jugga), known as the most dangerous man in Mano Majra and often called “Jugga.” One of the robbers throws stolen [bangles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/symbols/bangles) into Jugga’s courtyard to involve him in the crime. Jugga, meanwhile, is having a meeting with [Nooran](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters) when they hear the shots fired during the dacoity. While the couple lays in the dark, they see the five robbers pass on their way to the river. Jugga recognizes one as [Malli](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/malli)—the gang’s leader.

[Hukum Chand](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/hukum-chand), the magistrate and deputy commissioner, arrives to Mano Majra the morning before the dacoity. He asks the subinspector of police if there has been any trouble between the religious groups and the latter assures him that there have not been any “convoys of dead Sikhs” as there have been in a nearby town. Mano Majrans may not even know that the British have left or that India has been partitioned. Some know who Mahatma [Gandhi](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/mahatma-gandi) is, but the subinspector doubts that anyone knows of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. When Chand then asks if there are any bad characters in the area, the subinspector mentions Jugga, but says that Nooran keeps him out of trouble. Chand asks if arrangements have been made for him to have a prostitute that evening, and the subinspector assures Chand that he will have his entertainment before returning to the police station. That evening, an old woman and a young girl wearing a black, studded sari arrive at the rest house. The girl’s name is [Haseena](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/haseena). While Chand is alone with her, he hears one of the gunshots from the dacoity.

The next morning, the railway station is crowded. When the train from Delhi to Lahore arrives, twelve armed policemen and the subinspector disembark. From the other end of the train, a young man steps out. The police party scrutinize him. His manners suggest that he does not belong in the village.

The young man goes to the gurdwara and asks [Meet Singh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/meet-singh) if he can stay for a few days. The priest obliges and asks the young man for his name, which is [Iqbal](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/iqbal-singh). Meet Singh assumes that Iqbal is a Sikh and identifies him as “Iqbal Singh.” Meet Singh learns that the police have sent for Jugga to be arrested for the dacoity, and says that they have found some of the stolen money and the broken bangles in Jugga’s courtyard. Jugga has run away, he says, which makes it obvious that the [budmash](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/budmash) has committed the crime. The priest is perturbed not by the murder, but by Jugga robbing his own village.

Later at the gurdwara, Iqbal meets [Banta Singh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/banta-singh) (the village [lambardar](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/lambardar)) and a Muslim man (implied to be Imam Baksh). The visitors talk favorably about the British and ask why they have left India, which annoys Iqbal, who resents the British and asks the men if they want to be free. Imam Baksh says that freedom is for the educated. The peasants will merely go from being the slaves of the English to the slaves of educated Indians or Pakistanis.

After the men leave, Iqbal is skeptical that he can do much in a land in which people’s heads seem full of “cobwebs.” He doubts himself as a leader and thinks that he should make a grand gesture—going on a hunger strike or getting himself arrested—to prove himself. The next morning, he is arrested. Ten constables also arrest Jugga, surrounding his house with rifles.

Jugga and Iqbal are led away. The policemen, however, suspect that the men are innocent. The subinspector asks the [head constable](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/the-head-constable) about Iqbal, recognizing him as the same man who got off the train with them the day before. The subinspector then goes to see Hukum Chand and tells him about the arrests. Later, he has Iqbal stripped and sees that Iqbal is circumcised, a sign of being Muslim. This leads him to conclude that Iqbal is a member of [the Muslim League](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/the-muslim-league). Chand instructs the officers to file Iqbal on the arrest warrant as “Mohammed Iqbal.” He then directs the subinspector to get the names of the dacoits out of Jugga and raises no objections to the subinspector’s suggestion of torture.

In early September, the train schedule goes awry. A train from Pakistan arrives one morning, but no one gets off. It is a ghost train, it seems. Officers then ask the villagers for all of the wood and kerosene they can spare in exchange for money, and they oblige. Around sunset, a breeze blows in, carrying the smell of burning kerosene, wood, and charred flesh. Hukum Chand spends the day watching the corpses of men, women, and children get dragged out of the train and burned. He tries not to think about them. He asks his servant for whisky and invites the same entertainers back to the rest house. Chand keeps Haseena overnight for comfort, but they do not have sex.

The next morning, the subinspector visits the rest house. He tells Chand that forty or fifty Sikhs have entered town. Chand asks about the investigation into Ram Lal’s murder. Jugga has identified members of his former gang, including Malli, but was not with them. Chand asks if Malli and his companions are Sikh or Muslim. They are Sikh, but Chand wishes they were Muslim. This, along with the belief that Iqbal is a Muslim Leaguer, would persuade the village’s Sikhs to send away their Muslims. Chand orders the subinspector to free Malli and his gang, and then to ask the Muslim refugee camp commander for trucks to evacuate the Mano Majra Muslims.

After a week alone in jail, Iqbal shares his cell with Jugga, whose own cell is now occupied by Malli and his gang. Iqbal asks Jugga if he killed Ram Lal and Jugga says that he did not; the [banian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/banian) gave him money to pay lawyers when his father, [Alam Singh](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters), was in jail. Iqbal thinks that the police will free Jugga, but Jugga knows that the police do what they please.

By mid-morning, the subinspector drives to the police station at Chundunnugger. He tells the head constable that he wants him to release Malli’s men in front of the villagers. The subinspector then asks if anyone has seen Sultana and his gang. The head constable says that they are in Pakistan and that everyone knows this. The subinspector tells the head constable to pretend not to know. Next, he directs the head constable to ask the villagers if anyone knows what “the Muslim Leaguer Iqbal” was doing in Mano Majra. The head constable is confused and says that Iqbal is a Sikh who cut his hair in England. The subinspector strongly suggests that the head constable go with the story of Iqbal being a Muslim Leaguer named “Mohammed Iqbal.”

Following orders, the head constable takes Malli and his men back to Mano Majra, releases them, and questions the crowd as the subinspector instructed. The villagers are surprised by the implication of Iqbal; “an urban [babu](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/babu-babuji)” has no reason to commit a dacoity. The ruse works, however, in arousing suspicion; Muslims no longer trust Sikhs, and Sikhs no longer trust Muslims. That night, a group of Sikhs gathers at Banta Singh’s house. The lambardar suggests that the Muslims go to the refugee camp until things settle down. The village will protect the Muslims’ belongings while they are gone.

Imam Baksh goes home and tells Nooran that they must leave. She does not want to go to Pakistan, but, if they do not leave willingly, they will be thrown out. Nooran goes to Jugga’s house and waits for [Juggut’s mother](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/characters/juggut-s-mother). The old woman is annoyed to see Nooran, until Nooran mentions that she is two-months pregnant. Juggut’s mother says that, when Jugga gets out of jail, she will ensure that he reunites with Nooran. Nooran is grateful and returns home.

Early in the morning, a convoy of trucks bound for Pakistan arrives. A Muslim officer orders the Muslims to leave their houses and board the trucks, taking only what they can carry. The Muslim officer hurries everyone into the trucks while a Sikh officer appoints Malli as custodian of the property the Muslims’ must leave behind. Malli, along with his gang and the Sikh refugees, ransack the Muslims’ houses.

Meanwhile, the Sutlej River is rising. Banta Singh and some villagers see the corpses of men, women, and children float by, marked by stab wounds. They realize that these are the victims of a massacre. That evening, the villagers go to the gurdwara for evening prayers. Sikh soldiers enter. One is a boy leader is in his teens who encourages the Sikh men to kill Muslims, baiting them by saying that their manliness depends on it. The Sikhs then conspire to massacre the Muslim refugees, who will leave on the train after sunset. The Sikhs will stretch a rope across the first span of the railwaybridge. When the train passes, everyone who is sitting on the roof will get swept off. Banta Singh alerts the police to the plan.

At the police station, Hukum Chand has grown exasperated with the growing pile of bodies. The subinspector tells him that all of Chundunnugger’s Muslims have been evacuated and will be on the train to Pakistan, causing Chand thinks of Haseena. When Chand angrily asks why the subinspector did not warn the refugee camp commander about the train plan, the subinspector says that, if the train does not leave, all of the camp’s refugees could be killed regardless. Chand arranges for Jugga and Iqbal’s release and, in the official papers, writes Iqbal’s name as “Iqbal Singh,” explaining that no political party would send an educated Muslim to a Sikh village to preach peace.

Upon his release, Jugga learns that all the Muslims have gone, that Malli is the custodian of their property, and that Malli’s gang has grown along with the thirst for Muslim blood. Iqbal, meanwhile, thinks about going back to Delhi and reporting his arrest in the context of an “Anglo-American capitalist conspiracy.” He imagines looking like a hero and wonders if he should say anything to the murderous mob. He decides that Indians are unworthy of the potential risk to his life. Instead, he drinks whisky and goes to sleep.

That night, Jugga goes to the gurdwara, where he asks Meet Singh to recite a prayer. On his way out, Jugga sees Iqbal sleeping and calls to him. He asks Meet Singh to say “[Sat Sri Akal](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/sat-sri-akal)” to Iqbal his behalf when Iqbal wakes up.

Hukum Chand agonizes over having allowed Haseena to return to Chundunnugger. If she were with him, he would not care what happened. He is less secure in his role as magistrate, and feels wretched upon thinking about all the colleagues he has lost to violence. He hears the train rumbling in the distance and prays.

A little after 11:00 p.m., men spread themselves out on both sides of the train tracks. They hear the train coming. “A big man” climbs the steel span of the bridge; it is Jugga, though no one recognizes him. The train gets closer and the leader yells for Jugga to come down. Jugga pulls out a small [kirpan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/train-to-pakistan/terms/kirpan) and slashes at the rope. Realizing what he is doing, the leader raises his rifle and shoots. The rope is in shreds, but a tough strand remains. Jugga snaps it with his teeth. A volley of shots then rings out, sending Jugga to the ground. The rope snaps and falls with him. The train goes over his body, toward Pakistan.