

FROM SLAVERY TO SALVATION: A STUDY ON ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S PARADISE

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ABSTRACT

The paper "From Slavery to Salvation: A Study on Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise*" describes the challenges and difficulties Yusuf has come through to attain his salvation from the state of slavery in his life. He turns his struggles a tool to reach his salvation. Though he gives important to education, personal relationship, and self-discovery, this paper concentrates the salvation of Yusuf, which makes him aware his purpose of life and mould himself a bold enough person to take his own decision. He believes that, salvation is not possible without struggles it ultimately allows Yusuf to find peace.

Keywords: Struggles, Education, Self-Discovery, Salvation

The word "changing" comes from the Old English word "change," which meant to swap or exchange. It changed into "change" to mean to change or alter over time. A shift is another word for change. Since change is the only thing that cannot be changed, it will never end. In people's lives, change is very important. People's personalities change when things change in their lives. Lifestyles naturally change over time, just like people do as they age. People who are born as children then go through childhood and finally become adults. Changes may happen both physically and mentally. The person's fate, good or bad, depends on how their mind changes. Change that happens in a human's life is unplanned; it comes like a mistake. So, some people changed as good, and some of them changed as bad. Change fills everywhere like air.

Change is a basic part of life; change has various facets such as personal growth, social development, and organisational transformation. It is defined by changes in action, attitude, opinion, and situation. Changes put in the natural order of life, like the continuous changes of the seasons and the adaption of species. Just as an organism has to adapt to survive in a changing world, people are also ready to accept the changes that happen in their lives in order to survive. Sometimes it will change the person or society.

Changes occur in an individual's way of thinking and feeling about some situations, and the change happens to replace its state from one form to another. A successful change can make the culture better. So only the change is called the rebirth of making something new or different from the current one. Changes play an important part in day-to-day life and for the survival of human beings. Change is not a permanent one. There is a vast amount of reason for an individual to trap themselves in bad change. Few individuals choose the wrong path. A risky or worst-case situation can lead an individual to choose the wrong road. Negative situations may lead to heightened worry, mistrust, withdrawal, and pain. When upbeat thoughts and vibes treat an individual, it paves the way for positive change. This scenario pushes an individual to reach high and inspires them to fly more and more. Obviously, this

drive can bring about change quickly. Positive events may lead to greater confidence, openness, happiness, joy, and success in life.

Changes depend on character, but it has the strength to affect those who surround us. So the fact is that changes are important for every shift. The emerging world chooses change over time. Throughout our journey, uniqueness has been recognised from all sides. As our world is rotating around vast changes, it expects to accept the changes. So change is important in everyone's life. These changes lead the person to face development. The stage of development makes a person into a fighter and achiever.

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (*English Standard Version*, Genesis: 45.5-8)

Every person has to face a transition in their life, and some behind-the-scenes reasons are also there to face changes. In the Biblical Old Testament, Joseph also alters the changes in his life. God's plan is also behind his transformed life. Joseph was sold by his own brothers; this is the plan of his brothers. In truth, the brothers did not create this plan; rather, God did. He plans for Joseph to save the people's lives. God made Joseph the king's top official, in charge of the whole country, and the master of all of Egypt. In his past life, he faced battles and abuse, even though he did not end his fighting nature and hope in God. He takes his changing point as a hopeful note. So, he reaches the stage of rescue.

Jesus Christ is a great example of saving. He came for people's sins. He was born as a person, and he faced the struggles of a human being. He takes over all the sins on his shoulders for the rescue of his people. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (*New King James Version*, Luke: 23. 34). But the people put the cross on him and made him carry it. The mad people mocked Jesus, beat him, split his clothes among themselves, and said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save Yourself.' The whole crowd cried out to kill him. He cried for the forgiveness of the same people's sin. When he carries the cross and gives the word 'Father, forgive them,' the whole world gets peace from the evil. This is the hope behind Jesus crucified.

In old past, India, also needed rescue. The British people came and ran our country as their own. They changed Indian people into their slaves and workers. Under the rule of the British government, India faced so many problems, and these struggles led our country down the road of rescue until we did not reach the changes. Due to the pain, only a few leaders came forward and started some groups. After the protest, only India got independence, and British rule came to an end.

Fyoder Dostoevsky's book *Crime and Punishment* explores the journey of the character Raskolnikov and depicts the search for escape in the middle of moral unrest and spiritual

crises. “The darker the night, the brighter the stars, the deeper the grief, the closer is God!” (Dostoevsky 383). This quote shows his inner battles as he tries to beat his guilt and find forgiveness after his crime. Through the journey of Roskolnikov, Dostoevsky explores the transforming power of repentance, God’s forgiveness, and the chance of saving even in the depths of despair.

Tony Morrison’s *Song of Solomon’s* core character, Milkman Death, is closely linked to escape through his journey of self-discovery and freedom from the responsibilities of his past. “You wanna fly; you got to give up the shit that weighs you down” (Morrison 179). This quote outlines Milkman’s view that real freedom and happiness can only be achieved by removing society changes and family history. Throughout Milkman’s changing journey, the memory and familial inheritance of African American experience and the search for personal redemption.

Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace’s* search for escape happens through the figure of Pierre Bezukhov. “Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself” (Tolstoy 1089). This quote shows Pierre’s understanding that true change starts within himself. He fights with the core problems of meaning and morals. Through Pierre’s spiritual journey, Tolstoy explores the changing power of moral thought and self-improvement, offering insights into the complexity of human nature and the search of inner peace.

John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*, the character Cal Trask faces the shift to rescue. This book is defined by a battle to balance his flow and fears with the demands of society and his family. “And now that you don’t have to be perfect, you can be good” (Steinbeck 301). This quote sums up Cal Trask’s understanding that true goodness comes not from perfection but from acceptance and self-acceptance. Through the journey of Cal Trask’s self-discovery, Steinbeck explores the peace he can reach through acceptance.

The Strangers work by Albert Camus’s character Meursault’s search for escape is defined by his philosophical distance and search for meaning in a world without underlying purpose. “In the depths of the winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer” (Camus 115). This quote represents Meursault’s understanding that, despite the nonsense and meaninglessness of existence, he has an internal reserve of strength and energy that allows him to face the difficulties of life with faithful acceptance. His journey has taken the path of self-awareness, which is called change.

Cinematic artists also faced changes in their lives. *Rajinikanth: A Life* by Vasanthi Sundaram, in this book, the attention is on the changes that happen in the life of Rajinikanth and how he gets his escape. Sundaram explores Rajinikanth’s poor roots, growing up in poverty in Bangalore. The story looks into the difficulties he faced along the way, both professionally and emotionally, and how he defeated them to achieve great success. A man was born Shivaji Rao Gaekwad on December 12, 1950, in a Marathi Hindu home in Bangalore, Karnataka state.

He works as a coolie and a bus driver in Bangalore and is now basically a god in Tamil Nadu. No one has had total power for as long as he has in the world of Indian film. With over 150 films under his belt, many of them blockbusters, he still plays the hero at his seventy. K. Balachander describes Rajinikanth in “Rajinikanth claims that I am his school. But I must admit that this wasn’t the Rajinikanth I introduced. He has grown on his own talent and

power. I gave him a chance and revealed him to the world. He went and won it". He hails the saving spirit of Rajinikanth.

Abdulrazak Gurnah also explores the idea of rescue through the figure Yusuf in heaven. It experiences a difficult transformation. Firstly, peace is found by personal goals and dreams of a better life. Gurnah explores in detail how the characters manage their own ways to escape in the framework of political and social change. At first, Yusuf was born into a poor family. Due to the debt his father owed, Yusuf sold for a rich businessman.

After his trips with traders, he started to mix with different people and get experience of good as well as bad. At this point, he stands as innocent. But after the return of the merchant house, he totally loses his innocence, and he gets a fire about rescue. After he saw Khalil's sister, he wanted to save Amina's life at the hands of Uncle Aziz. At last, he follows the German column. This is the first time he has made his own choice in his life. This is the rescue that happened in the entire life of Yusuf.

Yusuf's path to freedom deals with various challenges and problems, and each event changes his journey in different ways. He seeks his rescue through schooling, cultural displacement, personal connections, and political battles. At first, Yusuf gets redemption through schooling. Before going to the Koran school, he knows to read the first three easy suras. But Hamid pushed him to read the Koran; he was very firm and said, 'I didn't say that.' But after starting school, he totally changed himself. He ignored all his responsibilities and started to go to school. "Yusuf neglected his duties at home and in the shop to go to school and the mosque, and late into the evening he pored over the books that the imam had given him" (101). After he learns the English letters, he sits on old tyres and writes in Rumi. He forms his life through schooling, and this is also one of the reasons Yusuf gets the fire of redemption.

He would feel no guilt about his parents, he said to himself.

He would not. They had abandoned him years ago to win their own freedom; now he would leave them. If they got any comfort from his captivity, it would now end while he went to make a life for himself. While he was happily exploring the fields, he might even call in on them and thank them for giving him some tough lessons to set him up in life. (234)

Yusuf runs towards the shift. When he was a twelve-year-old boy, he parted from his mother, and several times he longs for the love of his parents. While he went with the trader, he changed to the house of Hamid as a helper, but the couple abused him. Their daughter has sexual pleasure with him; Yusuf is not interested in it. But the whole family punished him with their words and their deeds. Later, in the case of Mistress, Uncle Aziz misread him and pushed his life as a transfer. After all these problems, Yusuf chose to leave his family, and he planned to make a life for himself. Yusuf gets this change from the pain and relocation that happened in his life, and he chooses to lead his life in the light of hope.

Yusuf found freedom through self-discovery. He started to fight with himself. When Khalil tries to provoke Yusuf with Ma Ajuza, he is suddenly tempted and shouts. Yusuf answered, "What's it all about? I am not a child. What are you sitting up for me?" (200). He feels shame and gets fear about the nightmares after he comforts himself, and he tries to change his fear towards the dreams. At first, he worried about the easy things; after the hurdles, he found

himself. He began to protest; he changed his innocent character into bold. When Khalil teased him, called him a little brother, and reached to hold his chin to calm him, Yusuf suddenly hit him off. This action shows how Yusuf changes himself through self-discovery. Yusuf found his escape in himself.

If this is hell. then leave. And let me come with you. They've raised us to be shy and loyal, to respect them even as they abuse us. Leave, and let me come with you. We're both in the middle of nowhere. Where else can it be worse? There would be no walled garden there, wherever we go, with strong cypresses and lively bushes, fruit trees, and surprisingly bright flowers. Neither the sharp smell of orange sap in the day nor the deep hug of jasmine fragrance at night, nor the fragrance of pomegranate seeds or the sweet green grasses in the borders. Nor the music of the water in the pool or the channels. Nor the happiness of the date grove at the cruel height of the day. There would be no music to attack the senses. It would be like punishment, but how could it be worse than this? (233, 234)

Yusuf gets redemption through human bonds. Yusuf wants to protect Amina, showing his growing knowledge of salvation as linked with human relationships. "I am going to take her away from this place," Yusuf is always worried about Amina and tries to protect her from the hands of traders and lovers. Yusuf feels she also led her life like hell. He asks her to leave with him. In order to save her, he turned against the trader, but she did not answer anything and just smiled, touched his cheek with her hand, and called him a dreamer. Yusuf makes a strong decision to leave that place with Amina, but she does not accept it, so he chooses to lead his life as he wants. Because of the personal connection, he thinks about himself and drives himself to safety.

He saw his fear sparkling in its afterbirth in the moonlight and remembered how he had seen it breathing. That was the start of the first terror of his loss. That was the start of the terror of his departure. Now, as he watched the obviously degraded hunger of the dogs, he thought he knew what it would grow into. The moving formation was still visible when he heard a noise like the locking of doors behind him in the yard. He glanced around quickly and then ran after the column with smart eyes. (247)

Yusuf picked his trip by following the German group. En route to explore the Askaris camp, he felt his cowardice shine through the moonlight, and this action woke up Yusuf from his deep cowardice sleep. He feels the terror of his absence. When he saw the moving column, he heard the noise like shutting the doors behind him in the yard, but he did not stay there; he suddenly took a step forward to follow the German column, which means he was free from Hell and not under the control of anyone.

Yusuf gets forgiveness through his adventures and trials. He does not take his bad situation from the viewpoint of the negative. He started to see every event as a lesson. He started to fight for his survival, so only he comforted himself from the dreams and angrily faced the critics. As a traveller, he does not stop his way over the hurdles. He continued his journey, so only he could taste the fruit of freedom. In the world, all of them have a fear of battles. They stuck themselves in between the hurdles, but no one was ready to beat them like Yusuf. He takes it on a positive note, so it paves the way for salvation.

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