SALVATION THROUGH LOVE, SIN, AND SUFFERING IN MALAMUD’S ‘THE ASSISTANT’

DR. JAGDISH JANBANDHU
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR & HEAD, DEPT. OF ENGLISH
SHRI MATHURADAS MOHOTA COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, UMRER ROAD,
NAGPUR – 440 009 MAHARASHTRA.

ABSTRACT

Jewish American Fiction depicts harsh realities of quotidian existence of the Jews in America. Bernard Malamud (1914-86), the eminent Jewish novelist forms a trio with Saul Bellow and Philip Roth. Concentrating chiefly on the Jewish immigrant life, Malamud makes parables out of the unending confrontation the hyphenated Americans had to undergo in the post-war society. He chronicles the life and tsuris (troubles) of a Jewish protagonist in his second novel The Assistant (1957) who bemoans the expiation of his bestiality, misdeeds, sins, and sufferings that have long been rooted into contorted past. Craving for the heightened morality and salvation of his alter ego, Frank Alpine confronts the issues of choices, chances and decisions amid the prison like grocery store. The present paper attempts to explore, elucidate and highlight salvation through love, sin, and suffering in Malamud’s novel The Assistant. Often bathed into the garb of Yiddishkeit or Jewishness, Morris, a master-saint undergoes ceaseless sufferings for his assistant. Working as an apprentice in the grocery store, a gentile Frank’s salvation comes up with a coda as he becomes a Jew through “inspirational” pain of circumcision.

KEYWORDS: sin, suffering, salvation, jewishness, love, morality, responsibility.

REFERENCES & WORKS CITED


