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Realistic Approach of Life with Special Reference to Dalvir Singh Gahlawat's Poem "Self"

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Abstract

Dalvir Singh Gahlawat is one of the leading voices in Indian English poetry. He is the author of *Smile from the Veil: A Collection of Poems,* and a number of academic books. His poems deal with various issues of life and the ways for its betterment. He shares his sweet and sour experiences and underlines the contemporary situation of the society suggesting and fixing the accountability for the betterment of mass which is easily convincible by the so called contractors and reformers of the society. The difficulty he raises in his poetry is faced by everybody in his life from cradle to death.

"Self" is one of his important poems that vindicates difficulties, courage, vision and positivity towards life. It represents the common man's celebration of self who is recollecting the memories of birth and development of his self. The poet symbolizes man's self with a little sapling in dexterous manner. He puts up whole process of development of man's self and tiny sapling. What can be more realistic and more just to compare one's self other than a sapling? Self and sapling both are created by God; both come across hurdles of life; both suffer in adverse situations right from the start but they develop beautifully and secure a splendid as well respectable place in the world. Both are the symbols of truth, courage and confidence.

The paper is a comprehensive study of the poem "Self" in which the poet shows that self and sapling both celebrate their victory over negative situations but life is not so smooth so they are destined to put themselves in the troubles again and again. It is the very truth of life that one has to go and go towards the path of ambition without any malice in order to achieve one's goal.

Keywords: Difficulties, courage, vision, positivity, confidence, symbol, truth.

Introduction

Whether a winner swims with the current or swims against the current he/she is not out of the current. In the same way whether a poet or writer supports the establishment

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of his/her day or opposes it he/she is tied up to the dominant ideas of his/her day and so he/she is an inseparable part of his/her age. As far as the poet is concerned by and large he replicates the portrait of the contemporary society and shares his experiences through which he has undergone. He returns the society what he receives. Therefore before routing further in the direction of pragmatic study to the poem of Dalvir Singh Gahlawat, it is essential to have a glance on the circumstances he went through as he mentions in the very first paragraph of "Preface", "The idea of writing a book on poetry did not come suddenly into my mind but it has an environment and circumstances which compelled me to write poetry" (Gahlawat "Preface").

Of course, in the contour of poets Dalvir Singh Gahlawat may not be very ingenious yet one who goes through his artistic and poetic views can't help putting him in the genre of genius because his poems published in the reputed national and international journals, magazines, anthologies and *Smile From The Veil: A Collection of Poems*, have the quest for quantum of quality for the real life wherein he has shared his sweet and sour experiences and underlined the contemporary situation of the society suggesting and fixing the accountability for the betterment of mass which is easily convincible by the so called contractors and reformers of the society, for which he was internationally acclaimed and scholarly criticized as he further writes in his "Preface" of anthology:

> It is perspicacious to say that some of the poems are rational and having profound fathom of contemporary societal norms and have openness remedies of not only trivial butalso drastic maladies occur on quotidian basis in the life of each and every man who perceives the dark side of his life and who is addicted to boast and accustomed to beat about the bush and fails to distinguish between right and wrong and becomes the prey of disparagement. (Gahlawat "Preface")

Such a profound literary man had to cross a long way to achieve this profoundness as his life was not so simple and conditions were not so favourable to him. It is necessary to go through his life background to understand him. Gahlawat (b. 1961 in a small hamlet, Raipur, of District Jhajjar, Haryana) got graduation from M.D. University, Rohtak, Haryana and subsequently joined Delhi Police. In spite of uncongenial atmosphere in his department he got M.A. in Political Science, M.A. in English, M. Phil. in English and PhD in English. Having rural background he suffered more in his childhood but never lost heart. His Poem "Boat of Life" was selected one of the best poem in the International Poetry Fest. He has five books to his credit:*Turmoil and Turn: Women in Shashi Deshpande's Novels; Post Feminism in India: Myth or Reality; Psycho Socio Analysis of Indian Police System; Smile from the Veil (A Collection of Poems),* and *Feminine Consciousness:Glimpsing Indian Perspective*. The sixth book on police is under print.

The Poem "Self"

"Self" is the podium of a mixer of scholarly quest, intellectual spirituality and physical practicality which brings both earthly and heavenly abode together. The poem may be

difficult to understand in detail, but its general purpose is not so obscure. In this poem Gahlawat delineates his belief that the tougher we are on ourselves the easier life will be for us. The way he indicates the problems encompassing the life seems to be generalized. In spite of bearing all hurdles, the existence of self remains intact just like a building which remains standing in spite of heavy rains, storms and conflagration. Although they may hurt outwardly to some extent, yet their interior still remains intact. The self is indestructible which remains intact in all conditions therefore the poet suggests to remain firm on the podium of pursuit in all circumstances either it is propitious or inauspicious. After going through the poem "Self" it looks as if the poet has confronted the occurrences mentioned in the poem and wants to share all these with the readers with pragmatic suggestions. The most important impression made by Dalvir Singh Gahlawat in his poem "Self"is the difficulty faced by everybody in his life from cradle to death and the way of deals with the difficulties. In this way the poem is full of difficulties, courage, vision and positivity towards life.

The definition of self is much soothing to feel rather to understand. Self is a place where all the feelings and emotions gather. In other words self is the subject of human's own experience of perceptions, emotions, and thoughts. In easy manner it can be conceived that anything that is being experienced cannot be experienced without an experiencer, and that experincer is none other than self. In some other trends of philosophy, the self is seen as a reflexive perception of oneself, the individual person. The line, "Hallo! I am here", repeats after every stanza time and again from its very beginning to the end that indicates that self exists in spite of difficulties confirming its immortality.

The present research paper is an attempt to throw light upon the realistic depiction of one's self in Dalvir Singh Gahlawat's poem "Self". On the hard cover of his anthology readers find poet's connection of self to his wife. It is pertinent to say that soul is the echo of self as soul is calm but self is the bundle of all existing emotions. Such piece of art by Gahlawat is so soothing that it connects the term self to every human being and his soul. As self is pure, simple and very essence of the last layer of man's personality so the language of this poem is.

The Philosophy of "Self"

Self is not visible but it exists. Every phenomenon either it is living or non- living, has its self. Self is the basis and the root. Self is the breath and without self, man is lifeless, then why self is being challenged by anyone, why someone has to prove his or her self? So many times in life man has to assure himself that he too has his own self or he should be proud of himself.

Gahlawat represents the common man's celebration of self who is recollecting the memories of birth and development of his self. The opening lines of the poem seem to maintain poet's pride and confidence upon his self as Ulysses had who as per Mazzotta, Guiseppe, the Sterling Professor of Humanities for Italian "begins his journey by placing himself outside the pattern of temporal generation" (Mazzotta 43). The poet compares the self with a sapling which faces so many hurdles even in its early

stage and grows as a big tree by the support of nature. Difficulties can't stop one to grow big. Though, it encounters both internal and external world. The poet is not ready to accept even the way of hurdles, the way of natural calamities as he accepts that this may be the way but it may not be his way and that is why he remains struggling through his whole life from his very childhood to his juvenility to make his remaining period probably a happy one.

The poem opens, "Hallo! I am here… Between you and them" (Gahlawat, "Self": 13). "I" is the pronoun used here for the one's self. Though "I" is the symbol of ego but here "I" is the sign of existence of one's self. One's presence between "You" and "Them" i.e. between the man (who belongs) and the vast world can be proudly accepted. The man was not fully aware of his self but self existed there with him as David Hume gives the theory of self:

> We are never intimately conscious of anything but a particular perception; man is a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed one another with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual flux and movement". (Hume, 6)

"I" reminds his upbringing to that man in following lines;

> Once was a sapling,
> Watered by someone ("Self" 13)

"I" took a long period of time to come at this juncture. He was like a sapling, an infant at the beginning of life. He took birth as an individual's self but his immature questions and dilemmas are answered and solved by other people. His thirst for knowledge was satisfied by outer world. Perhaps this is the reality of life to which the poet describes by the activity of watering by others means self gets experiences from other than the man who belongs to him so "I" nurtured and nourished by man's dearest people in the same realistic manner as an infant fondles by his family.

> Hindered by the foes,
> By the grace of God,
> Still, standing there. ("Self" 13)

Like sapling "I" too had to suffer various problems but such obstacles could not shake his self-confidence because the almighty God always showered blessings upon him and helped him to stand strong. Once again the poet presents a view from real life where man faces different negative situations but God does not let down man's self and his self turns out into confidence.

"I" still stands firm and reminds the man that it exists between him and the world, when the poet describes such thing it seems that all living thing of the world gets power and hope from their selves. It seems that whenever they find that they are in dilemma they get proper directions from their own selves; it also seems that the self assures one that though you ignored me but I was there and will be always when you need me. The poet uses these lines again and again after every stanza and increases the essentiality and importance of self in everyone's life.

Further the poet expresses the struggle of "I" in different inverse situations of life:

> Tried to become a tree,
> By thunder, could not be free. ("Self" 13)

A sapling has to come across immense adverse situations to bloom, to become a fruitful tree. In reality, the self of a man goes through varied conditions to achieve fullness. Just as a little sapling has to face thunders alone without the shelter of its gardener, but in spite of all the oddities it survives so proudly, in the same manner as a man's self ("I") encounters a number of painful circumstances.

> Felt alone, gardener gone,
> Strived much, faced such, ("Self" 13)

In realistic manner the process of maturity of one's self faces difficulties in a synchronized manner, it is shaken and broken in oddities and at one point of time it finds a little ray of hope that fills enthusiasm in it.

> Someone came, got gain,
> Gradually enthusiastic again,
> Caught the train,
> In the middle, stood there. ("Self" 13)

Once again the self caught the train i.e. though the difficulties try to shake self-trust but once they go through the self of man they find his self more strong and once again self reminds the man that it still exists between man and the world as the poet repeats in the line once again.

The poet symbolizes man's self with a little sapling in dexterous manner. He puts up the whole process of development of man's self and tiny sapling. What can be more realistic and more just to compare one's self other than a sapling? Self and sapling both are created by God; both come across hurdles of life; both suffer in adverse situations right from the start but they develop beautifully and secure a splendid as well respectable place in the world. Bothare the symbols of truth, courage and confidence.

Self and sapling both celebrate their victory over negative situations but life is not so smooth so they are destined to put themselves in the troubles again and again. It is the very truth of life that one has to go and go towards the path of ambition without any malice. The achievement and valour of one's self and the sapling continue in concluding lines: " Rejoiced glancing branches." ("Self" 14)

In the concluding stanza, the poet presents the universal truth of life that more damages give more finishing to the metal, in the same manner the scars and wounds give strength to self and enhance its capacity and stamina to survive in unfavourable phases of life. In this stanza the poet's outlook towards life seems positive because he is happy to see the human beings; to be happy in the world as branches flourishing and spreading all over the tree in the same way the farmer becomes happy to see his crops waving and prospering. The poet suggests that whenever we find golden opportunity to flourish we must avail it by avoiding the petty things of life:

Thought there are chances,
Came out from the silly dances, ("Self" 14)

The poet also suggests that the journey of self is not a bed of roses but it is too tough to cover the way without hard work. He emphasizes upon the suggestion to keep always learning something even in the adverse situation:

Entered into the literary houses,
Saw the sea of pursuit of podiums,
Tried to dip avoided the whip,
It was deep, needed not weep, ("Self" 14)

If we do hard work and have faith and control upon ourselves then the ultimate result becomes positive as it is rightly said: "Mastering others requires force. Mastering the self requires strength." (Laozi 35) God also helps those who help themselves, therefore, the poet through this poem suggests to be positive, confident and dynamic in order to find conducive result.

Knew how to swim by chance,
Got the support knot of Reed,
Touched the shore, stood there. ("Self" 14)

The essence of the poem is to face difficulties in order to be great, to have the knowledge of self as, "Self-knowledge alone eradicates misery" (Alladi 22). The self and the sapling both go through various difficulties of life but their trust and their knowledge of self do not let them fall.

Reconciliation

The poet describes some similarity between 'I' and 'Sapling'. Both have their existence in the world; they take birth as an infant and later get nourishment by nature. Both get upbringing by other people, as they both get love and affection by their near and dear. While 'I' gets attention of his family, sapling gets the same from the gardener. Both have to face a lot of difficulties during the process of completion. They are tortured by different adverse situations but the support of the Almighty and self-belief never let them fall. After every passing situation negative or positive, favourable or unfavourable, they achieve victory because of self-reliance. In such comparison one can find that how beautifully the poet maintains the pride and valour of one's self symbolized by sapling. No one can challenge God's will but trust in God and self-confidence that always find a better way to survive in all the oddities of the universe.

Conclusion

Thus in this poem Gahlawat explains the philosophy of self and defines it as the essential qualities that make a person distinct from all others, i.e. self seeks to describe essential qualities that constitute a person's uniqueness or essential being. Such uniqueness exists in every one in this world, whether man or woman, plant or animal.

The rationalization of the poem lies in need to be brave to face the truth because the difficulties which the poem mentions are the difficulties of everybody and thus

they become generalized. The generalization becomes truth and therefore we should be ready to face this truth. The poem offers verifiable account of the world describing the exposure of a 'reality', making a 'region of awareness' which each reader has to pass through for himself. The poem has coherent time –sequence i.e. childhood, adolescent and youth period. It seems that the poet is far from the old age when he uses social networking sites to unlock his treasure and obtain the knowledge: "Sometimes I attended the Facebook account for enhancing my knowledge in literary field" (Gahlawat "Preface") and that is why he could not unfold the experience of that age.

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